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### American involvement and policy during the Suez crisis - 1956

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code 259

AMERICAN INVOLVEMENT AND POLICY DURING  
THE SUEZ CRISIS - 1956

A Thesis Submitted to the Graduate Division in Partial  
Fulfillment of the Requirements for the  
Degree of Master of Science

By

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APPROVED:

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KANSAS STATE COLLEGE OF PITTSBURG

Pittsburg, Kansas

July, 1965

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"Suez Canal," *International Affairs Almanac*, 1962, p. 680.

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Suez Canal (Cairo: U.A.R. Information Department, 1960), p. 3.  
Shahalla El Khatib and Omar Z. Ghobashy, The Suez Canal: Safe and Free Passage (New York: Arab Information Center, 1960), p. 5. Cited hereafter, Khatib and Ghobashy, Suez Canal.

<sup>3</sup>Suez Canal, Information Please Almanac, 1965, p. 680.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

"The Suez Canal has been a blessing and a curse. Perhaps since the digging of the Canal began in 1859 and after its completion in 1869, it has been subjected to more controversies than any other construction project in history."<sup>1</sup>

The Suez Canal, in Egyptian territory between the Arabian Desert and the Siani peninsula, is an artificial waterway 103 miles long, between Port Said on the Mediterranean and Suez on the Red Sea. "Crossing the isthmus between Asia and Africa, the Canal's geographic location has made its strategic value in international affairs greater than that of any other maritime passage in the world."<sup>2</sup>

Construction work, directed by the French engineer Ferdinand de Lesseps, began on April 25, 1859 and the Canal opened on November 17, 1869. The cost was 432,807,882 francs.<sup>3</sup> The construction was completed under a ninety-nine year concession right, granted to de Lesseps by the Viceroy of Egypt, who was under the suzerainty of the Sultan of Turkey in the then Ottoman Empire. The construction authorized

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<sup>1</sup>Suez Canal (Cairo: U.A.R. Information Department), p. 3.

<sup>2</sup>M. Fathalla El Khatib and Omar Z. Ghobashy, The Suez Canal: Safe and Free Passage (New York: Arab Information Center, 1960), p. 6. Cited hereafter, Khatib and Ghobashy, Suez Canal.

<sup>3</sup>"Suez Canal," Information Please Almanac, 1965, p. 680.

de Lesseps to form a company, Companie Universelle du Canal Maritime de Suez, to construct, maintain, and operate the Canal. The capital of the company was to be offered for subscription to all the people of the world. The director was to be appointed by the Egyptian Government, from among the company's shareholders. "Ten per cent of the net profits were to go to the founders, 15 per cent to the Egyptian Government and 75 per cent to the shareholders."<sup>4</sup> "The company itself was registered in Egypt, with head offices in Egypt and administrative offices in Paris. Throughout its many arrangements with successive Egyptian governments the canal was always acknowledged to be an integral part of Egypt."<sup>5</sup> France, though a major canal user, has been principally concerned with the administrative and economic aspects of the company. The stock of the company was owned by a quarter of a million small investors. Britain, on the other hand, was mainly interested in the security of the Canal, since it represented the shortest and most economical route to India and the East. The British Government owned 44 per cent of the shares, and the British shipping represented 70 per cent of all traffic. The Canal became, as Bismark said, "the spinal column of the British Empire."<sup>6</sup> In the 1880's,

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<sup>4</sup>Khatib and Ghobashy, Suez Canal, p. 7.

<sup>5</sup>Terence Robertson, Crisis (New York: Atheneum, 1965), preface xiii. Cited hereafter, Robertson, Crisis.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., preface xiii.

Egyptian nationalists revolted against Turkish domination and the Viceroy asked Britain to station troops at key points along the Canal to prevent it from being blocked. The British troops remained for seventy-four years.

A convention of the major Canal-users met in Constantinople in 1888 and signed an agreement that provided for the guaranteed freedom of passage for all ships of all nations, and the impartial use of it in both times of war and peace. By the time the Ottoman Empire had collapsed after World War I, Britain had become the official custodian of the Canal's safety.

With the advent of thermonuclear weapons, far flung bases, such as that at Suez, were rendered obsolete. In 1954, Britain and Egypt worked out an agreement under which British troops would evacuate the Canal Zone by 1956. In June of 1956, the last British troops pulled out, and on July 26, 1956, the Government of Egypt nationalized the Suez Canal Company, precipitating the Crisis that involved armed hostilities toward Egypt on the part of our allies, and a split in the Atlantic Alliance that has yet to be fully repaired.

troops and the clearance of the Canal for passage. In Chapter four there is a discussion of the aftereffects of

#### Objectives of the Thesis

The objective of this thesis is to present the American position in the fall of 1956, during the Suez Crisis, which

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conclusions drawn from our policy over Suez.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., preface xiii-xiv.

for twenty-one days held the world on the brink of World War III. This study explains American Foreign Policy, during this critical period, in the vital area of the uncommitted world, struggling between communism and capitalism.

The writer has undertaken this topic knowing full well that this could not be a fully documented or definitive study of the American position, since much of the material is of a confidential nature and most of the documents are still classified. Nevertheless, the writer has attempted to be as factual as possible and has documented the evidence where possible.

Diplomacy, which Organization of the Thesis was used by this

This thesis is organized into five chapters. The first chapter is an introduction. The second chapter deals with the major events that led the United States to develop a foreign policy for the Middle East, and how that foreign policy led directly to our involvement in the crisis. Chapter three is the core of the thesis, since this section discusses in detail the actual policy followed during the course of the crisis, from nationalization to the withdrawal of foreign troops and the clearance of the Canal for passage. In Chapter four there is a discussion of the aftereffects of our policy, especially with regard to the Atlantic Alliance. The final chapter consists of a summation of the problem and conclusions drawn from our policy over Suez.

Pittsburg, Kansas, and Porter Library, Kansas State College of Pittsburg. Finer, Hullett Over Suez (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1964), p. 11. Cited hereafter, Finer, Hullett.



### Source of Research Data

The publications of the United States Government and the memoirs and diaries of the men most closely involved in the crisis are the principal and primary sources in this study.

The secondary material used consisted mainly of books and articles appearing in periodicals and newspapers. To date, only one published book is entirely devoted to the American policy in the Suez Crisis and that is one by Herman Finer, Dulles Over Suez: The Theory and Practice of His Diplomacy, which was published in 1964, and was used by this writer as a guide to the complicated actions of the United States, when forming its policy during the crisis.

The sources of material for this study are greatly reduced, because of the recent nature of the events. The writer was unable to secure any materials from the Eisenhower Library, in Abilene, Kansas, since their materials, publications, and documents are not available for research at this time.

Inquiries to the Department of State, Washington D.C., resulted in a selected bibliography which has been a useful aid in this study.

The major sources for this study were found in: New York Public Library (42nd. Street Branch), Pittsburg Public Library, Pittsburg, Kansas, and Porter Library, Kansas State College of Pittsburg.

Finer, Dulles Over Suez (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1964), p. 11. Cited hereafter, Finer, Dulles.

Geographically, the CHAPTER II "is the natural meeting place of three continents - Europe, Asia and Africa. In this region converge the main intercontinental land routes and the shortest water routes. Control of the Near East, therefore,

EVENTS LEADING TO THE AMERICAN INVOLVEMENT IN THE SUEZ CRISIS OF 1956

Certain events forced the United States to take an active interest in the Middle East. The series of events, however, involved the United States in the smoldering feud between nationalism and colonialism which erupted in 1956 as the Suez Crisis. Another factor that influenced American policy was a strong humanitarian feeling for world Jewry, that complicated our efforts to establish a workable policy with the Arab world.

Lack of Development of a United States' Foreign Policy in the Middle East Following World War II

The Middle East, which is sometimes called the Near East, is that group of nations consisting of Egypt, Syria, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, and Yemen. Neighboring states, closely involved, are Turkey to the northwest, Iran (Persia) to the northeast, and various coastal areas, like Kuwait, the Bahrein Islands, and Libya. Within each of these Moslem countries there can be found regions of extremely complicated problems and passions. In 1947, a further irritant was added to this area with the "solution" of the Palestine question and the subsequent rise of the Jewish State of Israel.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Herman Finer, Dulles Over Suez (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1964), p. 11. Cited hereafter, Finer, Dulles.

Geographically, the Middle East "is the natural meeting place of three continents - Europe, Asia and Africa. In this region converge the main intercontinental land routes and the shortest water routes. Control of the Near East, therefore, has always been a prime requirement for world power."<sup>2</sup> In addition to its function as the central crossroads of the world, the Middle East has the recent distinction of being the world's richest petroleum center. This strategic value of the region's oil reserves can, therefore, scarcely be overstated in this industrial age.<sup>3</sup>

Until the first World War the American interest in the Middle East was largely cultural. American diplomacy concerned itself with the protection of American citizens and of their rights to preach, to teach and to trade. American missionaries, though they made few conversions to Christianity, had a significant and beneficial influence in bringing Western thought, ideals, and educational methods into the Middle East. They made no small contribution to the growth of nationalism. American opinion, periodically, expressed itself in favor of freedom and against those governments which ignored and suppressed it. The picture of America in the public mind, where it existed at all, was of a benevolent but distant friend. As a government and a nation, however, the United States took no stand and had no policy.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>E. A. Speiser, The United States and the Near East (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1952), p. 120. Cited hereafter, Speiser, Near East.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 125.

<sup>4</sup>John C. Campbell, Defense of the Middle East - Problems of American Diplomacy (New York: Harper & Bros., 1962), p. 29. Cited hereafter, Campbell, Middle East.

During the interwar period, American policy was essentially confined to that of oil companies in search of concessions. Aside from the national concern to see that American firms got their fair share of the promising business, under the auspices of the "open door," Washington did not formulate a national policy between the Western Europeans and the increasingly restive people they ruled in the Middle East.<sup>5</sup> The United States was content to let the European powers rule their respective colonies as they saw fit.

The second world war brought the United States into direct contact with Middle Eastern Affairs. American troops, supplies, and technical assistance flowed into the Middle East as a result of the war emergency. By the end of the war, "the United States found itself playing a major part, by reason of its role as a leading Allied power, intent on winning the war and laying the foundations for a stable peace."<sup>6</sup>

While President Roosevelt generally went along with Churchill's plan to let Britain "play the hand" in the Middle East, he nevertheless showed his interest in the future of the Arab world, when he conferred with top Arab leaders in the Canal Zone, following the Yalta Conference. When the war ended, the United States found itself deeply immeshed

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<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 30.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 31.

<sup>7</sup>Finer, Dulles, p. 12.

<sup>8</sup>Speiser, Near East, p. 123, quoting speech by Truman, April, 1946.

in world affairs and could not afford to return to its traditional policy of isolation.

American interests, in the Middle East, expanded rapidly after the war.

First, in the event of another world war America's physical survival itself might depend on the strategic location of the Middle East. The more bases the United States could have scattered around the world, the less likely it would be to suffer a complete knockout in the first atomic strike by a hostile power. From bases in the Middle East, America could contain the U.S.S.R. and could assert a continuous threat over her sources of oil in Baku and Batum, as well as over all her major industrial installations as far north as Leningrad and west to the Urals. And, furthermore, the Middle East was especially close to the soft underbelly of Russia, soft in loyalty and soft with her richest harvests of grain - the Ukraine.<sup>7</sup>

Other factors that increased the interest of the United States were the vast financial interest American companies held in Middle Eastern oil concessions, and the possibility of protecting the Suez Canal, through which most of the oil had to be transported.

President Truman, in an Army Day address, in April of 1946, referred to the Middle East "as an area which 'presents grave problems . . . contains vast natural resources . . . lies across the most convenient routes of land, air and water communications . . . might become an area of intense rivalry among outside powers' which rivalry 'might suddenly erupt into conflict'."<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup>Finer, Dulles, p. 12.

<sup>8</sup>Speiser, Near East, p. 123, quoting speech by Truman, April, 1946.

While the United States had no Middle Eastern foreign policy, as such, Soviet threats of expansion forced immediate decisions on "Washington in 1947 to take a clear stand on its political and military commitments in the northern belt of the Middle East and thus to define a new frontier of American security."<sup>9</sup> Though these actions were generally in line with those of Great Britain, the United States was not just following the British lead, but was making decisions on its own. Because of this, Anglo-American relations were not marked by complete harmony, especially when American diplomatic forays occasionally clashed with the well established colonial policy of the British system.<sup>10</sup>

In assuming its role as a world leader, in such a relatively short amount of time, American interests had developed so fast, and in such a revolutionary fashion, that a clear appreciation of our commitment in the Middle East, with all its implications, was not in evidence. Hence there could be no purposeful policy to pursue, for it was as yet unformed.<sup>11</sup> It was due to this lack of policy, and an inherited problem from Britain's Whitehall that the United States became involved in a situation that turned the Arab world against us and destroyed the possibility of extending

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<sup>9</sup>George Lenczowski, The Middle East in World Affairs (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, (1952), p. 426. Cited hereafter, Lenczowski, Middle East.

<sup>10</sup>Campbell, Middle East, p. 33.

<sup>11</sup>Speiser, Near East, p. 242.

the influence of N.A.T.O. into the Middle East. This was the "solution" of the perennial crisis over Palestine.

The Creation of Israel and the Arab Reaction

In 1917, a hard pressed British government issued the Balfour Declaration as a war measure against the Central powers. This was a conditional grant to establish a Jewish "homeland" in Palestine without destroying either the political or economic rights of the existing Arab communities. In the years that followed these limitations were whittled away.

The Jewish population in the Holy Land, less than 50,000 at the turn of the century, increased rapidly with the advent of Adolf Hitler, and threatened the land's absorptive capacity . . . . The ensuing three-way conflict between the uncompromising Jewish nationalists who demanded a state, the Arab nationalists who insisted on self-determination, and the Mandatory Administration, led to illegal immigration, violence, and sabotage. The British were caught between the fire of the two conflicting nationalisms.<sup>12</sup>

By the late forties the situation had become so tense that a solution had to be found. America, like Britain, ostensibly sought a solution in Palestine that would safeguard the rights of both the Arabs and the Jews. But a basic difference in approach, between the two Allied powers, prevented any effective joint action. Britain was primarily concerned with safeguarding its relations with the Arab world, and its strategic and perilous hold on the Suez Canal. American policy, while mindful of those considerations, reflected a

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<sup>12</sup>Alfred M. Lilienthal, There Goes the Middle East (New York: The Bookmailer, Inc., 1961), p. 3. Cited hereafter, Lilienthal, Middle East.

Cited hereafter, Truman, Trial and Hope.

strong humanitarian feeling that a haven in Palestine (but apparently nowhere else) must be opened to the persecuted remnants of European Jewry. Coupled with this was the not inconsiderable pressure exerted by the Zionist organizations that helped to mold this humanitarian policy. As a consequence, neither London nor Washington, singly or together, in could develop an effective or consistent program to solve the problem.<sup>13</sup>

The very first American attempts at a solution ran up against insoluble dilemmas and against a split in opinion at home, not only among the public but between the authorities. The State Department was opposed to President Truman when, brushing aside moderation and compromise, he endorsed on October 4, 1946, the Jewish Agency's claim to a viable Jewish state in control of its own immigration and economic policies, in an adequate area of Palestine.<sup>14</sup>

President Truman, in his own defense, wrote in his memoirs, Years of Trial and Hope, that a little known feature of America's Middle East policy was that:

Like most of the British diplomats, some of our diplomats also thought that the Arabs, on account of their numbers and because of the fact that they controlled such immense oil resources, should be appeased. I am sorry to say that there were some among them who were also inclined to be anti-Semitic.<sup>15</sup>

In contrast, Truman's Secretary of Defense, James Forrestal,

<sup>13</sup>Campbell, Middle East, p. 35.

<sup>14</sup>Pierre Rondot, The Changing Patterns of the Middle East (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1962), p. 120. Cited hereafter, Rondot, Changing Patterns.

<sup>15</sup>Harry S. Truman, (Memoirs) Years of Trial and Hope (Garden City: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1956) II, p. 164. Cited hereafter, Truman, Trial and Hope.



noted in his diary, that our Palestine policy had been for "squalid political purposes."<sup>16</sup> Thus the American contribution to the difficult problem took the form of periodic Presidential statements, that urged the admission of more Jews to Palestine and private aid to immigration, all of which irked Britain and only added to the local pressures in Palestine itself.<sup>17</sup>

By the spring of 1947, the British decided to place the controversy over Palestine before the United Nations. The United Nations formed a committee to study the problem and finally produced a partition plan for Palestine, which passed in the General Assembly by a vote of thirty-three to sixteen, (U.S., U.S.S.R. and France voted for, Britain abstained) on November 29, 1947. The Plan, in general, called for an end to the mandate and for Jerusalem to be placed under permanent international trusteeship; the establishment of two separate states, one Jewish and one Arab, both to be independent, though linked economically. Each state was to consist of three distinct sections of land, connected by precarious corridors.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup>Walter E. Mills (ed.), The Forrestal Diaries (New York: The Viking Press, 1957), p. 508. Cited hereafter, Mills, Forrestal.

<sup>17</sup>Campbell, Middle East, p. 36.

<sup>18</sup>Report on Palestine, A Report to the General Assembly by the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine (New York: Somerset Books, Inc., 1947), full text of recommendations, p. 137-211.

The Jews readily accepted the plan but the Arab states rejected the plan and the American government was forced to acknowledge the inability to enforce this international attempt at a solution, where upon the Jews criticised the government for shirking its responsibility, to the beleaguered Jews of Palestine.<sup>19</sup>

"If criticism of the United States is in order; it is not because this country imposed her will on others but rather because the government was not itself clear as to what to do."<sup>20</sup>

"The British reached the conclusion that the best thing for them was to withdraw from Palestine. This they did and there appeared to be some danger that by creating a vacuum so suddenly a state of anarchy would ensue."<sup>21</sup> The Jews of Palestine, however, were prepared to take action. At midnight, on May 14, 1948, the time the British mandate ended, the new Jewish state of Israel proclaimed its independence. Eleven minutes later, President Truman announced to the press, through his press secretary, the de facto recognition of the provisional government of Israel.<sup>22</sup> (The U.S.S.R. gave it de jure recognition on May 17, 1949). American foreign policy

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<sup>19</sup>Rondot, Changing Patterns, p. 120

<sup>20</sup>Speiser, Near East, p. 224.

<sup>21</sup>Emil Lengyel, The Changing Middle East (New York: The John Day Company, 1960), p. 47. Cited hereafter, Lengyel, Middle East.

<sup>22</sup>Truman, Trial and Hope, p. 164.

had taken its first major stand in the Middle East.

"On May 15 the Arab armies of Lebanon, Syria, Trans-Jordan, Iraq and Egypt invaded Palestine with the intent of driving the Jews into the sea. The Arab-Israel war had begun."<sup>23</sup> On the surface the Arabs, who had numbered nearly forty million, as opposed to the only one million Jews in Israel, should have easily destroyed the Jewish State, however, the Arab governments could not resolve their own differences, despite a common objective. The course of the Arab-Israeli war created astonishment everywhere. The Israeli Army was able to check and repel the forces of the Arab League in almost every engagement, which resulted in a general stalemate that the United Nations expanded into a shaky truce.

The outcome of the Arab-Israeli war was twofold. First, under fire, Israel had asserted her right to exist as a nation and would have to be considered a factor in all matters of Middle East import in the future. Another important feature of the war was the fact that Israel occupied more territory at the end of the war than it had by the partition plan of 1947, and it remained under the control of Israel even after the armistice agreements between Israel and the

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<sup>23</sup>Harry B. Ellis, Israel and the Middle East (New York: The Ronald Press Co., 1957), p. 115. Cited hereafter, Ellis, Israel.

Rondot, Changing Patterns, p. 122.

contiguous Arab states.<sup>24</sup>

The Arab states were forced to resign themselves to the existence of Israel but they refused to recognize it, and considered their defeat only a temporary one. They also never forgave America for standing god-father for the Jewish state.<sup>25</sup>

The problem of 500,000 Arab refugees, forced from Israel by the war, further accentuated the split between Israel and her Moslem neighbors. The concomitant of the Jewish victory was the rise of Arab nationalism. The failure of the Arabs in the Palestine war inflamed internal revolutions throughout the Moslem world, that erupted in several countries, whose import and extent was only gradually realized.

In 1949, the Syrian army, in a bloodless coup d'etat, ousted the established government. In 1952, a revolution occurred in Egypt and swept away a corrupt monarchy and ruling aristocracy.

These tremors in the vast and fabulous land of Egypt did more than Syria's confusing coup to start the invisible crumbling of the Middle East. . . . Waves of unrest, the prelude of the Middle East's internal revolution, spread from the Baghdad populace (on the move since November 1952) to the Arab refugees (always in ferment) and the budding proletariats bunched round the oil installations and preparing the ground for

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<sup>24</sup>Halford L. Hoskins, The Middle East (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1954), p. 107. Cited hereafter, Hoskins, Middle East, p. 129-130.

<sup>25</sup>Rondot, Changing Patterns, p. 122.

The first strikes on the shores of the Persian Gulf. Such was the fruit of the Palestine drama of 1948 which had been the first cause of the military risings against the rule of the privileged and against government by pashas.<sup>26</sup>

The Americans were cast, as the imperialists who grafted Israel to the Middle East, and who incorrectly judged the vital importance of the Arab-Israeli dispute. The Arabs noted the vast financial assistance Israel received, in comparison to their own shares, and noted that for allowing the other hand, continued to maintain a state of alert and American air bases, within their own nation, they received purchased military equipment whenever she could. A miniature arms race had developed. The tripartite statement was intended to stress, to the governments concerned, that the Western powers would not tolerate any renewal of the Arab-Israeli war. They concluded, therefore, that the United States was only interested in establishing themselves in the Middle East, in view of a possible war against the Soviet Union.

The American government dispersed its effort in various forms and proceeded from one contradiction to another. They disappointed the Jews and offended the Arabs. Thus, the lack of an established American policy, in the light of America's position in the world, must be counted as one of the principal factors in the failure of the west to bring peace and stability to the Near East.<sup>27</sup>

In 1950, the Western powers (France, Great Britain, and the United States) attempted to put an end to this chaos, by the issuance of the tripartite declaration.

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<sup>26</sup>Ibid., p. 129-130.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid., p. 132-134. after, Hurewitz, Diplomacy.

The Beginning of an American Policy in the Middle East

The tripartite declaration was made necessary because the conclusion of the Arab-Israeli armistice, in 1949, had not led to a formal peace settlement. Britain's resumption of arms shipments, in accord with its treaty obligations to Egypt, Iraq, and Jordan, was accompanied by widespread talk in the Middle East of a "second round" against Israel. Israel, on the other hand, continued to maintain a state of alert and purchased military equipment whenever she could. A miniature arms race had developed. The tripartite statement was intended to stress, to the governments concerned, that the Western powers would not tolerate any renewal of the Arab-Israeli war.<sup>28</sup> The declaration was worded as follows:

The Governments of the United Kingdom, France, and the United States, having had occasion during the recent Foreign Ministers meeting in London to review certain questions affecting the peace and stability of the Arab states and of Israel, and particularly that of the supply of arms and war material to these states, have resolved to make the following statements:

1. The three Governments recognize that the Arab states and Israel all need to maintain a certain level of armed forces for the purposes of assuring their internal security and their legitimate self-defense and to permit them to play their part in the defense of the area as a whole. All applications for arms or war material for these countries will be considered in the light of these principles. In this connection the three Govern-

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<sup>28</sup>J. C. Hurewitz, Diplomacy in the Near and Middle East A Documentary Record: 1914-1956 (Princeton: D. Van Nostrand and Company, Inc., 1956), pg. 308. Cited hereafter, Hurewitz, Diplomacy.

hostile governments wish to recall and reaffirm the terms of the statements made by their representatives on the Security Council on August 4, 1949, in which they declared their opposition to the development of an arms race between the Arab states and Israel.

2. The three Governments declare that assurances have been received from all the states in question, to which they permit arms to be supplied from their countries, that the purchasing state does not intend to undertake any act of aggression against any other state. Similar assurances will be requested from any other state in the area to which they permit arms to be supplied in the future.

3. The three Governments take this opportunity of declaring their deep interest in and their desire to promote the establishment and maintenance of peace and stability in the area and their unalterable opposition to the use of force or threat of force between any of the states in that area. The three Governments, should they find that any of these states was preparing to violate frontiers or armistice lines, would, consistently with their obligations, as members of the United Nations, immediately take action, both within and outside the United Nations, to prevent such violation.<sup>29</sup>

This statement was issued on May 25, 1950.

The tripartite declaration, while sound in its concern for the preservation of peace and stability in the Middle East, annoyed the Arab states. They rejected it on June 21, 1950, on the grounds that it implied Arab recognition of Israel, and might harm their sovereignty and independence.<sup>30</sup>

As a Palestine affair continued to remain in a crisis stage, the cold war between East and West broke into open

<sup>29</sup>Department of State Bulletin, (June 5, 1950), p. 886.

<sup>30</sup>Hurewitz, Diplomacy, p. 311.

<sup>31</sup>Hurewitz, Diplomacy, p. 329.

hostilities in Korea. Many American, and Western European officials, viewed this willingness to resort to open aggression as a possible first in a series of steps by the Communists to destroy, by the use of force, vulnerable countries of the free world. America, besides stopping them in Korea, would have to build a network of defensive alliances around the periphery of the Communist bloc.<sup>31</sup> "The glaring weakness of the Middle East seemed almost an open invitation to aggression. To Washington and to London the pressing need to do something about organizing a more solid defense there was clear."<sup>32</sup> The Western search, for ways to strengthen their position in the Middle East, quickly gained momentum. While British power was shrinking, the overriding strategic problem at the time was to keep the Suez Canal, and its bases, within the Allied orbit. The United States, therefore, took the initiative in persuading Britain, France, and Turkey to join an allied Middle East Command.<sup>33</sup> The idea was to establish a purely military command, since an alliance like the North Atlantic Pact was impossible under the present unsettled conditions. It was unfortunate that this proposal was presented in 1951, a year when nationalistic manifestations

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<sup>31</sup>Campbell, Middle East, p. 38.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., p. 38.

<sup>33</sup>Hurewitz, Diplomacy, p. 329.



against the West were extremely strong. Iran nationalized the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company, and the Arab-Israeli dispute had brought a number of serious border clashes, plus the fact that the Egyptian government demanded the British get out of Suez, leaving no room for compromise. It had been hoped that the Middle East command would pacify the Egyptian feelings somewhat, by substituting an international force, to replace the purely British forces already stationed there. However, the allied powers did not consult the Egyptian government, in formulating its plans, which was an affront to the Egyptian nationalistic sensitivities. It was in this highly charged situation that the Four-Powers seized the opportunity to present their proposal to Egypt. What they failed to realize was that "in the final analysis, the Western powers and Egypt were at cross purposes. The allies were anxious to bolster their defenses against the USSR; Egypt to rid itself of foreign controls."<sup>34</sup>

The American government and its allies had, once again, completely misread the Arab feeling in the Middle East. Egypt immediately rejected membership in the Command. The Arab world, for its part, denounced the defense plan as an imperialist alliance to partition the entire Middle East, and called on the Americans and British to choose between the friendship of the Jews or the friendship of the Arabs.

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<sup>34</sup>Ibid., p. 329.

To the Arabs, the dominant issues were Israel and Imperialism. The Arab world was basically pan-arab and not interested in choosing sides in the overall East-West struggle. The Western powers, for some reason, could not conceive this fact. Between 1951 and 1952, the United States and Great Britain continued their attempts to graft a defense organization on the Middle East without solving any of its political problems. "If anything could be concluded by American policymakers from the experience of those years, it was that the old roads led nowhere and that some new approach would have to be tried."<sup>35</sup>

The newly elected Republican administration came into office in 1953 and promptly began to formulate a new approach policy. The new look began with Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles, spending two and one-half weeks (11-28 May, 1953) in the Middle East, on a fact finding mission. Upon his return to the United States, Secretary Dulles reported to the American people his findings via nationwide radio and television, and laid down the new policy that the United States would pursue in the Arab world. His conclusions were that:

Most of the peoples of the Near East and South Asia are deeply concerned about political independence for themselves and others. They are suspicious of the colonial powers. The United States too is suspect because, it is reasoned, our NATO alliance with France and Britain required us to try to preserve or restore the old colonial interests of our allies. . . .

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<sup>35</sup>Campbell, Middle East, p. 49.

The United States should seek to allay the deep resentment against it that has resulted from the creation of Israel. . . .

Today the Arab peoples are afraid that the United States will back the new State of Israel in aggressive expansion. They are more fearful of Zionism than of communism, and they fear lest the United States become the backer of expansionist Zionism.

On the other hand, the Israeli fear that ultimately the Arabs may try to push them into the sea.

In an effort to calm these contradictory fears the United States joined with Britain and France in a Declaration of May 25, 1950, Tripartite. . . . It must be made clear that the present U. S. administration stands fully behind that Declaration. . . . United States policies should be impartial so as to win not only the respect and regard of the Israeli but also of the Arab peoples. We shall seek such policies. . . .

A Middle East Defense Organization is a future rather than an immediate possibility. . . .

While awaiting the formal creation of a security association, the United States can usefully help strengthen the interrelated defense of those countries which want strength, not as against each other or the West, but to resist the common threat to all free peoples.

In conclusion, let me recall that the primary purpose of our trip was to show friendliness and to develop understanding. These peoples we visited are proud peoples who have a great tradition and, I believe, a great future. We in the United States are better off if we respect and honor them. It profits nothing merely to be critical of others.

President Eisenhower's administration plans to make friendship-not faultfinding-the basis of its foreign policy.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>36</sup>Department of State Bulletin, (June 15, 1953), p. 831-35.

<sup>38</sup>Campbell, Middle East, p. 50.

Based on the findings of his trip, the strategy of Mr. Dulles gradually began to take form: Settle the Suez problem, while preventing any exacerbation of the Arab-Israeli conflict, and contribute to the stability of the area by limited expenditures for military and economic aid. And because he had also learned that defensive measures could not be imposed on the Middle East states from the outside, the Secretary turned his efforts toward building a different type of defense wall around the area.<sup>37</sup>

In Cairo, Secretary Dulles had learned that the general Arab feeling leaned toward neutralism, being similar in that respect to India, but that the Arab states of the northern tier, along the Soviet borders, were most aware of the Soviet menace, and it was here that he decided to concentrate his efforts for the defense of the Middle East. "The northern tier concept seemed to offer the opportunity to strengthen those nations that wanted to be strengthened, without permitting troublesome problems like Suez and Palestine to hold up progress where it could be made."<sup>38</sup>

One further circumstance was crucial in determining America's future in the Middle East. Arab feeling was vehement against the last vestiges of colonialism, mainly British, which remained in the region. Therefore, it became Dulles' policy to press the British to evacuate their Suez Canal Zone base.

From the beginning of his policy, it is apparent that Secretary Dulles was especially anxious to give Egyptian

<sup>37</sup>Lilienthal, Middle East, p. 72.

<sup>38</sup>Campbell, Middle East, p. 50.

politicians a reason to bring Egypt into his overall plans for a Northern Tier Alliance. He had set out to win over the military junta leader, General Naguib, with small but gracious acts. One of these included the presentation of a pearl-handled revolver inscribed: "To General Naguib from his friend Dwight D. Eisenhower."<sup>39</sup>

Dulles continued to woo Egypt, while continuing to press forward with his Northern Tier program in other countries. The cornerstone of any such alignment would have to be Turkey, easily the strongest state in the Middle East and a member of N.A.T.O. The Turks, natural enemies of Russia for centuries, were anxious to see such an alignment take place in order to protect their eastern flank from a possible Soviet invasion. By the end of 1953 the Eisenhower administration concluded plans to sell arms to Pakistan with the understanding that Pakistan would cooperate in a regional defense. In April 1954, this plan was implemented when an agreement of friendly cooperation was signed between Pakistan and Turkey. While it had the markings of Dulles' Northern Tier Alliance stamped all over it, this agreement did not bear the open stigma of western participation. By this measure it was hoped other Arab states would feel free to join in this mutual alliance pact. The next logical move, for Secretary Dulles, was to link the Pakistan-Turkey alliance with a land bridge, since

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<sup>39</sup>Finer, Dulles, p. 14-16.

Pakistan and Turkey are not adjacent to one another. The nation chosen to fulfill this need was Iraq.

The United States quickly concluded an arms agreement with Iraq, by which Iraq would receive both military and technical assistance, "solely to maintain its internal security and its legitimate self defense, and that it will not undertake any act of aggression against any other state."<sup>40</sup>

The "new look" policy of the Republican administration was taking effect, and in two years Secretary Dulles had placed the United States directly in the forefront of formulating a defensive network, without disturbing the status-quo of the Arab situation, and by his impartial attitude in the Arab-Israeli dispute, was winning friends. The arms deal with Iraq paved the way for the eventual formation of the Baghdad Pact. It further showed how quickly Secretary Dulles was able to develop a foreign policy in the Near East, that was acceptable to all sides.

#### The Growth of American Foreign Policy

While the Northern Tier program began to take shape, the United States continued to encourage Egypt to join the new alliance.

The Americans, convinced of the importance of Egypt (even more so after the coup of 1952) wanted to make it the Middle Eastern centre of their defense system and so greatly expand this

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<sup>40</sup> Charles D. Cremins, *The Arabs and the World: Nasser's Arab* Hurewitz, *Diplomacy*, p. 346-347. (Eric A. Praeger, 1963), p. 139. Cited hereafter, Cremins, *Nasser's Policy*.

system in depth. They therefore urged the British to make substantial political concessions to Egypt and withdraw their troops in order to pave the way for reconciliation with the West. . . .<sup>41</sup>

In Egypt itself, General Naguib was replaced as Premier by Colonel Gamal Abdel Nasser, the behind the scenes power in the revolution. Nasser, a fiery nationalist and political genius, from the beginning of his reign, was a man of action. He cleared the way for serious negotiations on a settlement of the Canal base issue, by taking a conciliatory attitude into the discussions with the British.<sup>42</sup> As a result of this attitude, and continuing pressure from the United States, plus the increasing evidence that even the strongest military base would be of questionable value, if surrounded by a bitterly hostile population, the British were forced to enter into serious negotiations with Egypt.<sup>43</sup>

An agreement was reached on October 19, 1954. The major point agreed upon was that all British forces would be completely withdrawn and that both parties would uphold the 1888 Convention guaranteeing freedom of navigation of the Canal. (The right of passage in the Canal did not include Israeli shipping, which had been prohibited from the Canal, a clear

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<sup>41</sup>Rondot, Changing Patterns, p. 138.

<sup>42</sup>William F. Longgood, Suez Story: Key to the Middle East (New York: Greenberg, 1957), p. 120. Cited hereafter, Longgood, Suez Story.

<sup>43</sup>Charles D. Cremeans, The Arabs and the World: Nasser's Arab Nationalist Policy (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1963), p. 139. Cited hereafter, Cremeans, Nasser's Policy.

violation of the 1888 Constantinople Convention, but no mention is made of it in this treaty). Anthony Eden wrote of this agreement in his Memoirs: "A Government, therefore, was

not willing This agreement was a declaration of convenience for Britain and Egypt. Neither country wanted the existing state of affairs to continue. The agreement's most serious weakness was not recognized by many at the time. Egypt still proclaimed herself at war with Israel and there was nothing in the clauses to limit or restrain future Egyptian ambitions, except a reaffirmation of the freedom of the Suez Canal. Nor were there any evident reasons for insisting on this. The hope was rather that Anglo-American co-operation, strengthened by the agreement, could work more effectively for improved relations between Israel and the Arab states. During the next twelve months our two Governments plodded steadily after schemes to that end. I did not then foresee the extent of Egyptian expansionist aims over other Arab states, nor the growing menace which Egyptian words and acts, such as the fedayeen raids, would later bring upon Israel. It is probable that the absence of British forces from the canal zone, however circumscribed they had been, facilitated aggressive Egyptian activities, both overt and covert, against her neighbors. . . .<sup>44</sup>

On November 7, 1954, the United States granted forty million dollars to Egypt to further her economic progress after having encouraged Egypt to conclude the Suez agreement.<sup>45</sup>

With the conclusion of the Suez base agreement, the United States and Britain hoped that the Egyptian leaders would cooperate with the West, for the defense of the Middle East. In the Western minds, the agreement was a formulation

<sup>44</sup>Anthony Eden, The Memoirs of Anthony Eden, Full Circle (Cambridge: The Riverside Press, 1960), p. 289-290. Cited hereafter, Eden, Full Circle.

<sup>45</sup>Cremeans, Nasser's Policy, p. 140.



of the old alliance idea. For the Egyptian Government however, the agreement was simply a means to expedite the withdrawal of foreign troops. The Egyptian Government, therefore, was not willing to trade its newly found independence for a ready-made foreign policy. If there was to be such an alliance at all, it would have to be on terms acceptable to an independent Egypt.<sup>46</sup> Since the Suez Base agreement did not provide a basis for an area defense arrangement, the British and American governments continued to search for a formula which would provide this objective of Western policy. From the very start, it is reported Secretary Dulles disliked associating United States' policy with that of Britain, in the Middle East, because he considered Britain's approach to the area contained the stain of colonialism.<sup>47</sup>

On January 12, 1955, the Government of Iraq announced its decision to conclude an alliance with Turkey, which had already concluded a treaty with Pakistan; bringing the northern tier concept close to realization. This alliance became known as the Baghdad Pact. The Eisenhower Administration presented the Pact to the American public "as a

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<sup>46</sup>Dwight D. Eisenhower, Mandate for Change 1953-1956 (Garden City: Doubleday and Company, 1963), p. 427. Cited hereafter, Eisenhower, Mandate.

<sup>47</sup>Roscoe Drummund and Gaston Coblentz, Duel at the Brink: John Foster Dulles' Command of American Power (Garden City: Doubleday and Company, 1960), p. 148. Cited hereafter, Drummund and Coblentz, Duel at the Brink.

<sup>47</sup>Craneans, Nasser's Policy, p. 141.

bold, imaginative action, braintrustered in Washington and executed by America's allies. It was depicted as forging 'a ring of steel' around the borders of the Communist world."<sup>48</sup>

Iraq's association with the Baghdad Pact had explosive consequences which were to shape and turn the subsequent policy of Arab affairs and external policy. The Egyptian regime quickly responded to Iraq's challenge to its leadership of the Arab world. All the resources of Egyptian propaganda, diplomacy, contacts, and personal prestige were thrown into battle against Iraq's decision. Nasser attempted to rally Arab nationalist sentiment against Iraq, for violating the solidarity of the Arab League, and warned other Arab states that the alliance was not against their real enemy, Israel, but was instead with the creators and supporters of Israel's existence, the Western Powers.<sup>49</sup>

Iraq stuck by its decision and answered Nasser's propaganda barrage with its own, but no other Arab states joined the Pact, save for Pakistan, which already had an alliance with Turkey, and Iran which joined for defensive purposes. When Great Britain became the only Western power to join the Pact, it assumed the responsibility for the direction and assistance given to the members. The United States, while refusing to join the Pact, did offer moral

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<sup>48</sup>Ibid., p. 147.

<sup>49</sup>Cremeans, Nasser's Policy, p. 141.

support to its members. Anthony Eden, would write in later years, on America's refusal to join the Baghdad Pact:

In recent years the United States has sometimes failed to put its weight behind its friends, in the hope of being popular with their foes. The practical consequences of this uncertain diplomacy are illustrated by United States treatment of the Baghdad Pact. Having played a leading part to inspire the project, the United States Government held back while Britain alone of the Western powers joined it. Worse still, they tried to take credit for this attitude in capitals like Cairo, which were hostile to the Pact. Then, by a series of hesitant steps, they drew nearer the Pact, sending an observer and spending money, but still not joining it. An ounce of membership would have been worth all the hawing and saved a ton of trouble later on.<sup>50</sup>

In addition he wrote:

Anglo-American policies towards Egypt on the other hand were at this time closely in accord. . . . We agreed that the future of our policy in the Middle East depended to a considerable extent on Nasser. If he showed himself willing to co-operate with us, we should reciprocate. . . .<sup>51</sup>

The Western powers, though Nasser attacked the Baghdad Pact, looked forward to an era of cooperative relations with Egypt. The United States had already given forty million dollars in economic aid, after the agreement on Suez, and was prepared to give some military assistance under the mutual assistance program. The Americans set out to win Nasser's confidence and put relations on the very soundest basis.

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<sup>50</sup>Eden, Full Circle, p. 374-375.

<sup>51</sup>Ibid., p. 374.

<sup>53</sup>E. H. Hutchinson, Violent Truce: Arab Israeli Conflict 1951-1955 (New York: The Devin Adair Company, 1956), p. 119. Cited hereafter, Hutchinson, Violent Truce.

Prime Minister Nasser, however, was not rushing into any close relationships with the West. While he accepted American economic aid, he turned down military aid because it included the sending of American military advisory groups into Egypt to supervise its use. This made the terms unacceptable, because the Egyptian people needed time to get used to independence and freedom from foreign occupation. Nationalism. "Neutral Events, rather than waiting for an Egyptian alliance with the West, soon forced Egypt to make some crucial decisions and establish a policy toward the West.<sup>52</sup>

#### Deterioration of U. S.-Egyptian Relations

On February 28, 1955, Israeli army units attacked Egyptian military installations in the Gaza Strip. The Israeli forces killed thirty-eight persons and wounded thirty-one. This was the first reprisal raid against Egyptian controlled territory and called for an immediate and drastic response. The United Nations Security Council quickly condemned Israel for their actions, but this act increased domestic pressures in Egypt for the government to take military action. The Revolutionary Command Council, Egypt's governing body, became desperate because it realized that any such action would be disastrous for Egypt, in the light of Israel's military strength.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>52</sup>Campbell, Middle East, p. 68.

<sup>53</sup>E. H. Hutchinson, Violent Truce: Arab Israeli Conflict 1951-1955 (New York: The Devlin Adair Company, 1956), p. 119. Cited hereafter, Hutchinson, Violent Truce.

The Israeli raid exposed Egyptian military weakness and no one realized this better than President Nasser. Nasser countered the Gaza raid and the Western Alliance proposal, with the formulation of an Arab approach to foreign policy. The approach chosen was that of neutralism, a program that later became known as positive neutralism and Nasser adopted it to the frame of Arab nationalism. "Neutralism was put to service in the cause of Egyptian nationalism and the U.S.S.R. was the first to benefit."<sup>53</sup>

President Nasser next turned to the problem of securing arms to defend Egypt and secure its borders from Israeli attacks. Egypt first turned to the United States for military equipment, but again would not agree to conditions required of all recipients under the mutual security program. This resulted in a long delay, until finally the United States agreed to sell some of the necessary equipment to Egypt, only under the condition that payment be made in dollars, which Egypt could not spare.

Infuriated at the delays in Washington, Nasser turned to the Soviet bloc and suddenly concluded a deal for large quantities of arms in return for bartered Egyptian cotton. The announcement was made public by Nasser on September 27, 1955. Although they had had unofficial warning of the impending deal:

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<sup>53</sup>Rondot, Changing Patterns, p. 142.

The actual arms deal hit Dulles and other State Department officials with the force of a thunderbolt, in spite of previous rumors. It was humiliating to be outsmarted. It was a blow that kindly and considerate action toward Egypt had met with ingratitude and contempt and derision. In one single stroke, in one adept thrust, the Soviet Union had vaulted over the Baghdad Pact, over the Northern Tier of countries, and after centuries of unsuccessful effort had jumped, brazen and powerful, plumb into the Middle East.<sup>54</sup>

While the arms deal was unsettling, to say the least, the United States at this time was more concerned with the health of its President, who had suffered a heart attack on September 23, 1955, and did not immediately respond to the news from Egypt. The first official statement came from Secretary Dulles, in a news conference, on October 4, 1955. During the course of this statement, Mr. Dulles made two observations. The first was that the Arab states, as independent nations, had every right to do whatever they wished in the matter. Secondly, from the standpoint of the United States, Soviet delivery of arms threatened the peace and stability of the area.<sup>55</sup> After issuing this statement, Secretary Dulles:

Considered the harsh realities which conspired to thwart his plans to contain Communism, and reevaluated the advice he was getting from Henry Byroade, the United States Ambassador in Cairo, and from George Allen, Assistant Under Secretary in charge of Near Eastern Affairs at

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<sup>54</sup>Finer, Dulles, p. 28.

<sup>55</sup>Paul E. Zinner, Documents on American Foreign Relations 1955 (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1956), p. 355-356. Cited hereafter, Zinner, Documents.

the State Department.<sup>56</sup>

Byroade and Allen believed the best policy for the United States could be served by acts of friendship toward Nasser and Arab nationalism. Among these friendship gestures might be the financing of the Aswan High Dam project. The Aswan High Dam project, if it could be constructed, was pictured by Nasser as the rational step to revolutionize the Egyptian standard of living. Two million acres of new land could be irrigated, and a limitless amount of electricity could be generated. It could relieve the economy, by helping to industrialize northern Egypt, and relieve unemployment problems. When completed, it would balance the Egyptian economy and, for this reason, was one of Nasser's biggest ambitions. The cost, however, was staggering, much greater than Egypt could ever afford. Nasser realized he needed outside help for such an ambitious project and began sounding out the World Powers on the possibility of receiving help for the proposed Aswan Dam.

The United States Government, in 1955, was interested in the project in hopes, that in providing such an expression of America's friendship, it would check Egypt's drift toward the Soviet bloc. On this account, Sherman Adams, Presidential Assistant, wrote:

When Dulles first discussed the proposed financing of the Aswan Dam at a meeting with

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<sup>56</sup>Robertson, Crisis, p. 18.

the leaders of both parties in Congress, Lyndon Johnson questioned the need for large amounts of economic aid for Egypt. Dulles told the Democratic leader of the Senate that the grant-loan arrangement under consideration would make it unlikely that Egypt would change her affiliation with us for the next ten years.<sup>57</sup>

In December of 1955, the United States Government decided to go ahead with an offer of fifty-six million dollars, as an initial grant on the project. Britain would contribute fourteen million and the World Bank would loan an additional two hundred million dollars.

At this juncture Nasser appeared to have triumphed. The policy of neutralism was opening new fields to Egypt, arms from the Soviet bloc to fight Israel and at the same time financing was offered for the projected Dam. Egypt stood on the threshold of a brilliant political future with no strings attached.<sup>58</sup> Nasser, however, failed to grasp the opportunity. He balked at the American proposal, especially where it called for no side deals with the Russians. Nasser held up the negotiations for several months, while he thought about the terms. He further showed his scorn for the West, when he announced Egypt's recognition of Red China, and continued a build-up of his military forces on the Israeli borders. He

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<sup>57</sup>Sherman Adams, Firsthand Report (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1961), p. 248. Cited hereafter, Adams, Report.

<sup>58</sup>Sidney Nettleton Fisher, The Middle East (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1960), p. 630. Cited hereafter, Fisher, Middle East.

*Ibid.*, p. 249.



denounced the British and French for refusing to recognize nationalist movements in Cyprus and Algeria, and he tried to once again to break up the Baghdad Pact.<sup>59</sup>

Nasser, evidently did not understand the principles of capitalism, because while the Western allies could stand the verbal abuses, they also noted that arms shipments and the subsequent payments of Egyptian revenues, were rapidly depleting Egypt's financial resources. This was significant to the West, because it would make the Aswan project more of a liability than it had when the offer was originally made, in December of 1955. It was not possible to get Nasser to understand that the loan was economic, rather than solely political, and that the conditions also went along with necessary financial cautions.

Dulles did not hurry the loan along, the offer had been made and it was up to Cairo to make its decision. While Nasser delayed and continued to attack the West, and mortgage the economy to the Soviet bloc, the United States began to reassess its offer.

Public opposition began to snowball against the loan to Egypt. Sherman Adams stated: "It was extremely doubtful if the President could have obtained Congressional approval of the grants and loans to the Egyptians at that point had he asked for them."<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>59</sup>Adams, Report, p. 249.

<sup>60</sup>Ibid., p. 249.

The moment Cairo became aware of these signs of a shifting American policy, the Egyptian Ambassador hurried back to Washington to accept the offer of the loan from the consortium of the United States, Britain, and the World Bank.

On the afternoon of Thursday, July 19, 1956, Secretary Dulles asked the Egyptian Ambassador, Mr. Ahmed Hussein, to come to the State Department. When he arrived, Mr. Dulles announced the withdrawal of the United States' offer to help finance the High Dam project at Aswan. Mr. Hussein hurried back to his office to telephone his government in Cairo. He was too late, the Government already knew. Mr. Dulles, contrary to diplomatic practices, had communicated a statement of the American withdrawal to the Press, before he notified the government concerned.<sup>61</sup> The press release from the State Department, in part, read:

Developments within the succeeding 7 months have not been favorable to the success of the project, and the U.S. Government has concluded that it is not feasible in present circumstances to participate in the project. Agreement by the riparian states has not been achieved, and the ability of Egypt to devote adequate resources to assure the project's success has become more uncertain than at the time the offer was made.

This decision in no way reflects or involves any alteration in the friendly relations of the Government and people of the United States toward the Government and people of Egypt.

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<sup>61</sup>Paul Johnson, The Suez War (New York: Greenberg, 1947), p. 1. Cited hereafter, Johnson, Suez War.

<sup>63</sup>Campbell, Middle East, p. 75.

The United States remains deeply interested in the welfare of the Egyptian people and in the development of the Nile. It is prepared to consider at an appropriate time and at the request of the riparian states what steps might be taken toward a more effective utilization of the water resources of the Nile for the benefit of the peoples of the region. Furthermore, the United States remains ready to assist Egypt in its efforts to improve the economic condition of its people and is prepared, through its appropriate agencies, to discuss these matters within the context of funds appropriated by the Congress.<sup>62</sup>

As a result of the American decision, the World Bank also cancelled its loan, which was interdependent with the United States' loan; Britain followed suit and withdrew its offer of financial aid on the project.

The manner in which the offer was withdrawn, to the accompaniment of a statement saying the ability of Egypt to devote adequate resources to assure the project's success, even with the projected outside financing, had become more uncertain, was taken by Abdel Nasser as an attempt to humiliate him and his country. He certainly overplayed the 'insulting' character of the statement, but that a clear rebuff was intended can hardly be doubted, for Washington might have continued to delay and to point out obstacles still to be surmounted. That it was the first clear manifestation of a new American attitude toward Egypt was also apparent, one which took more account of the resentment of Turkey and other pro-Western states that Egypt was getting more from the United States for being naughty than they did for being good.<sup>63</sup>

Nasser's reply, to the Anglo-American action, was to catch the world by surprise and deal a mortal blow to the

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<sup>62</sup>Department of State Bulletin, (July 30, 1956), p. 188.

<sup>63</sup>Campbell, Middle East, p. 75.

hope of Egyptian cooperation with the West. Nasser seized the Canal and nationalized the Canal Company.

AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY DURING THE SUEZ CRISIS  
 His statement was that he had approved that the Canal Company  
 The seizure of the Canal Company, by the Egyptian Government, and its worldwide effects, nearly precipitated World War III. The actions of the United States Government, in dealing with this crisis, and the policy that followed, is the focal point of this chapter.

Egypt Seizes the Canal  
 The Anglo-American decision to withdraw the loan was a calculated insult aimed at discrediting Nasser and all other neutrals that attempted to blackmail the West. By this action, Dulles and Eden seemed to think they could cut the power structure out from underneath the Egyptian leader. This, however, did not get a chance to materialize, because Nasser quickly countered the Western move by taking the obvious course of action. He seized the Canal on July 26, 1956, and thus threatened the oil supply to Western Europe.

In carrying out the plan to nationalize the Canal, Egyptian security police, armed with the Nationalization decree, "took over the headquarters of the Canal Company, and informed its employees - mainly British and French - that if they refused to carry on working they would be liable to prison sentences from three to fifteen years."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Johnson, Suez War, p. 8.

CHAPTER III

AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY DURING THE SUEZ CRISIS

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<sup>1</sup>Johnson, Suez War, p. 8.

That night, to a massed throng in Alexandria, Nasser announced the news of his decision to the Egyptian people. The text of his statement was that he had ordered that the Universal Company of the Suez Maritime Canal, be nationalized. It was an Egyptian joint stock company and had been chartered under Egyptian Law, thus giving him every right to do it. Furthermore, all profits from the company, and its operation of the Canal, would be used to build the Aswan High Dam. He further stated that Egypt would move forward despite the intrigues and double talk from the Americans; ending the tirade against the United States withdrawal of aid with this statement:

"Whenever I hear talk from Washington, I shall say, 'Die of your fury!'"<sup>2</sup>

The nationalization of the Suez Canal, by Nasser, while acceptable under international law as a basic right of a sovereign nation, if just compensation was made to those involved, brought immediate reaction from the Western powers. The next day, the Department of State released this statement to the Press:

The announcement by the Egyptian Government on July 26 with respect to the seizure of the installations of the Suez Canal Company carries far reaching implications. It affects the nations whose economies depend upon the products which move through this international waterway and the maritime countries as well as the owners of the

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<sup>2</sup>U.S. Department of State, The Suez Canal Problem-July 26-September 22, 1956 (Documentary Publication No. 6392, October, 1956), p. 29. Cited hereafter, Department of State, S.C.P.

Company itself. The United States Government is consulting urgently with other governments concerned.<sup>3</sup>

While this statement is somewhat obscure, concerning the American position, Richard Nixon, then Vice President, wrote later: "Whatever one may think of Premier Nasser's right to Egyptianize the Suez Canal- . . . our government has not disputed his right- . . . ."<sup>4</sup>

The United States then lodged a formal protest with the Egyptian Ambassador, concerning the tone and content of President Nasser's statements affecting the United States - Egyptian relations. It stated that:

entirely apart from the question of the seizure by Egypt of the installations of the Suez Canal concerning which the Department had made a statement on July 27, the United States Government was shocked by the many intemperate, inaccurate and misleading statements made with respect to the United States by the President of Egypt during the past few days, and particularly in his Alexandria speech delivered on July 26. He pointed out that such statements were entirely inconsistent with the friendly relations which had existed between the two Governments and peoples, and were alien to the frank and cordial relationships which have prevailed among American and Egyptian officials.<sup>5</sup>

The reason for such an innocuous statement, by the State Department, at this time, on such a crucial matter, was that the President, now full recovered from his stroke and preparing

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<sup>4</sup>Richard Nixon, The Challenges We Face (New York: McGraw Hill Book Company, 1960), p. 74. Cited hereafter, Nixon, Challenges.

<sup>5</sup>Department of State, S.C.P., press release No. 414, p. 33.

<sup>8</sup>Eden, Full Circle, p. 474.

for re-election, and the Secretary of State were on a trip through South America. It would not be until July 29 that a statement of the administration's policy would be made.

Mr. Dulles stated:

I have been particularly concerned with the Egyptian action in purporting to nationalize the Suez Canal Company. Such action strikes a grievous blow at international confidence. This action could affect not merely the shareholders, who, so far as I know, are not American, but it could affect the operation of the Canal itself. That would be a matter of deep concern to the United States as one of the maritime nations.<sup>6</sup>

The New York Times was led to speculate if Egypt would get away with the dramatic and vengeful seizure of the foreign-operated waterway.<sup>7</sup>

The attack by Nasser had been aimed essentially at the United States, but the seizure of the Canal and Company had a greater effect on the nations of Western Europe than it did on the United States, and their reaction was much stronger and more urgent than was America's. Prime Minister Eden dispatched a telegram, on the day of the announced seizure, stating that: "a man with Colonel Nasser's record could not be allowed 'to have his thumb on our windpipe'."<sup>8</sup> Eden recorded in his memoirs:

The Government considered the situation fully that Friday morning and decided that they could not

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 34.

<sup>7</sup>Osgood Caruthers, "Nasser's Bold Plans Link Canal and Dam," New York Times, July 29, 1956, p. E5.

<sup>8</sup>Eden, Full Circle, p. 474.



allow Nasser to seize control of the canal in defiance of international agreements. The canal was an international asset and had been recognized as such ever since the Convention of 1888. In recent years its importance had been greatly increased by the development of the Middle Eastern oil fields and by the dependence of Western Europe on them for a large part of its oil supplies . . . . The Government determined that our essential interests in this area must be safeguarded, if necessary by military action, and that the needful preparations must be made. Failure to keep the canal international would inevitably lead to the loss one by one of all our interests and assets in the Middle East, and even if Her Majesty's Government had to act alone they could not stop short of using force to protect their position.<sup>9</sup>

In France, a nation already at war with the Arab world in Algeria, Nasser's seizure offered the excuse the French Government needed to open a campaign of retribution against the man and country they believed were responsible for both arming and directing the Algerian rebels in their quest for independence.<sup>10</sup>

Thus, France and Britain, for different reasons, held similar aims. Neither was ready to act alone, without first consulting the Americans. They therefore called a meeting of the three powers in London, "to discuss the situation and align a joint policy" as Sir Anthony put it.<sup>11</sup> Eden sent the following message to Eisenhower, in part it said:

The ultimate threat is to the oil supplies to Western Europe, a great part of which flows through the canal . . . .

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<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 474-475.

<sup>10</sup>Johnson, Suez War, p. 42.

<sup>11</sup>Eden, Full Circle, p. 475.

immediate It is, however, the outlook for the longer terms which is more threatening. The canal is an international asset and facility, which is vital to the free world . . . .

We should not allow ourselves to become involved in legal quibbles about the rights of the Egyptian Government to nationalize what is technically an Egyptian company, or in financial arguments about their company to pay the compensation which they have offered. I feel sure that we should take issue with Nasser on the broader international grounds.

As we see it we are unlikely to attain our objectives by economic pressures alone . . . . We ought in the first instance to bring the maximum political pressure to bear on Egypt . . . . My colleagues and I are convinced that we must be ready, in the last resort, to use force to bring Nasser to his senses. For our part we are prepared to do so . . . .

However, the first step must be for you and us and France to exchange views, align our policies and concert together how we can best bring the maximum pressure to bear on the Egyptian Government.<sup>12</sup>

This was a strong statement, considering it was issued one day after Nasser's announced seizure, and only two weeks after the last British troops had been withdrawn from Suez.

The British threat to use force and its possible consequences however, must not have alarmed Mr. Dulles perceptively, because he sent Deputy Under Secretary of State, Robert Murphy, to London, to represent the United States in talks with Britain's Foreign Secretary, S. Lloyd, and the French Foreign Minister, M. Pineau. Perhaps Secretary Dulles was not overly worried about

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<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p. 476-477.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., p. 482.

immediate Anglo-French action because American intelligence knew that Britain and France could not undertake such an operation, because in order to land sufficient forces, in their present military condition, would require the expedition to swim from Malta, a thousand miles away. A fact Eden readily admits in his Memoirs.<sup>13</sup>

Dulles did not arrive in London until August 1, two days after the talks began, and he immediately made it plain that the American approach would be a legal and moral one. The European allies had already received reports from their ambassadors in Washington, that the State Department was cool and hesitant about taking urgent action. Mr. Dulles' arrival, and early statement, quickly verified this for the allies. To Eden, to would confirm his worst fears about America's reaction, of moral and legal pressures, "being brought against Colonel Nasser, in practice meant conferences and resolutions, but no action. The result would be words."<sup>14</sup>

The resulting action, of the three power London talks, ended with a Tripartite Statement, which was issued on August 2, 1956. It stated that while the governments involved recognized the action taken by the government of Egypt, as a legal right of an independent nation, they nevertheless viewed such an action as more serious because of the international implications of the Canal, and that its seizure threatened the

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<sup>13</sup>Ibid., p. 479.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., p. 482.

freedom of passage as guaranteed by the Convention of 1888. They concluded by recommending that the Canal be under an international arrangement for its operation, designed to assure the continuity of its operation. To this end they proposed a conference be held of parties to the 1888 Convention and other nations largely concerned with the use of the Canal. The Conference, to be held in London, would begin on August 16, 1956.<sup>15</sup>

An interesting sidelight to the American approach is cited by Eden, in that the United States, while stressing the international flavor of the Suez Canal, kept referring to the American control of the Panama Canal, as a private matter, and entirely different because it was between the United States and Panama; the United States Government was determined to keep it so. The French, on the other hand, had built the Suez Canal and had just as much of a privileged position as had the United States in Panama. France demanded immediate combined action because the real source of the problem lay with the retaliation by Nasser, against the American refusal to finance the Aswan Dam. Dulles did not believe this to be the case.<sup>16</sup>

In a report to the nation, on his return, Secretary Dulles made quite clear the reasons he felt Nasser had seized the Canal. He stated that he thought the nationalization had taken place to enhance the prestige of Egypt, and extend

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<sup>15</sup>Department of State, S.C.P., p. 34.

<sup>16</sup>Eden, Full Circle, p. 485-486.

Nasser's influence from the Atlantic to the Persian Gulf. The overt act was done in retaliation for the withdrawal of Anglo-American aid and as a blow against Western imperialism. He further stated, that it was inadmissible that a waterway, internationalized by treaty, should be exploited for the selfish aims of one country. The question of the problem was therefore not whether something should be done, but what should be done. Mr. Dulles, in his report, then went on to explain about the proposed London Conference of twenty-four nations. The twenty-four nations, to consist of three groups, would have eight in each group. The original eight of the 1888 Treaty, which included Egypt and the Soviet Union, the second group of eight included the nations who own the greatest volume of traffic that uses the Canal, and the third group of eight, nations which were dependent on the canal. It was Dulles' hope that the conference would settle the dispute peacefully.<sup>17</sup>

President Eisenhower reiterated Secretary Dulles' statements of the international importance of the Canal, by likening it to an international public utility.<sup>18</sup>

On Sunday, August 12, Eisenhower called a bipartisan meeting of the Congressional leaders to the White House, to discuss the Suez situation. His opening remark was that Nasser had announced he would not attend the London conference.

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<sup>17</sup>Department of State, S.C.P., p. 37-42

<sup>18</sup>Adams, Report, p. 250.

This would mean little likelihood of a peaceful solution to the problem. Dulles then explained to the Congressional leaders how difficult it had been to check the Anglo-French demands for military action. He explained that he held them back by warning them that world opinion would be against them and would be regarded as a violation of the United Nations charter. But, he stressed to the gathered leaders, he shared the same view that Britain and France held about Nasser, that he intended to unite the Middle East against the West. His final statement put the cards on the table: "They (Britain and France) have only agreed to bide their time until the conference. They call Nasser a wild man brandishing an ax."<sup>19</sup>

While Eisenhower and Dulles were informing the Congressional leaders on the gravity of the situation, in Washington, President Nasser was explaining why Egypt would not attend the London parley. In making a statement to this effect, President Nasser declared:

It is clear that the three Governments who issued the joint statement persist in alleging that the Suez Canal Company is an international agency and the Egyptian Government cannot change its character.

This ignores all the treaties and agreements which say that the Suez Canal Company is an Egyptian Company governed by Egyptian Law and also ignores the fact that the Egyptian Government will take over the administration of the canal when the Suez Canal Company agreement runs out.

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<sup>19</sup>Ibid., p. 251. State, S.C.P., p. 49.

<sup>21</sup>Adams, Report, p. 251.

It also ignores the fact that the canal is an inseparable part of Egypt . . . . The internationalization of the canal by the Egyptian Government in accordance with its sovereignty and any attempt to give the Suez Canal Company international status is merely an excuse to interfere in Egypt's internal affairs.<sup>20</sup>

The Egyptian refusal to attend the conference makes it difficult to understand why the conference was held, since no agreements could be reached without Egypt's approval. It is also strange that from the inception of the problem, the British and the French did not go to the United Nations, for a remedy to the situation, nor did the United States press for this action. One explanation, given by President Eisenhower, and quoted by his aide Sherman Adams, is that because of the French and British veto power, in the Security Council, and the possibility of a long and drawn-out debate before the General Assembly, the United Nations would be ineffective.<sup>21</sup>

This may have been the reason, but another one that must have entered into the thinking of the State Department was that the recent addition of many newly emergent nations to the United Nations, could upset the balance of power in the General Assembly, which the Atlantic partnership had controlled since its inception. Many of these nations, it must have been felt, were so strongly nationalistic that they would like nothing better than to get back at the colonial powers. This is supposed to most closely represent the thinking of Mr. Dulles

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<sup>20</sup>Department of State, S.C.P., p. 49.

<sup>21</sup>Adams, Report, p. 251.

on the matter of the United Nations and the Crisis.<sup>22</sup> for her The Conference opened, as scheduled, on August 15 in London. Of the nations invited, all accepted - except for of Egypt. Most of the nations that arrived had an economic interest in the Canal and were anxious to see that it was well-administered. By August 22, the business of the Conference was all but finally completed. During the course of the meetings three different proposals had been advanced, for resolving the dispute. The first idea was presented by Secretary Dulles; it asserted the principle of international control over the Canal, while recognizing the sovereign rights of Egypt and guaranteed her a fair share for the use of the Canal and proposed the negotiation of a new convention. The new convention would provide for an international board to operate the Canal and arbitrate disputes, in association with the United Nations.<sup>23</sup> Spain then produced a compromise plan, that suggested a joint Egyptian-international board and a separate court of appeals for disputes. India submitted an alternate plan, it provided for an international advisory board, a new version of the Convention, which Egypt would be required to sign and would be made subject to United Nations sanctions.

When the three plans were finally brought to a vote,

<sup>22</sup>The eighteen nations were: Australia, Denmark, Ethiopia, France, West Germany, Iran, Italy, Japan, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Pakistan, Portugal, Sweden, Turkey, United Kingdom.

<sup>22</sup> Johnson, Suez War, p. 53-54.

<sup>23</sup> Eden, Full Circle, p. 303.

<sup>25</sup> Department of State, S.C.P., p. 295.



eighteen nations voted for the American plan,<sup>24</sup> Spain for her own and India, Russia, Ceylon, and Indonesia voted for the Indian plan.<sup>25</sup> The conference then chose a committee of representatives to present to the Egyptian Government the decisions that it had reached; to explain the purpose and objectives of the proposal and to find out if Nasser would be willing to negotiate a convention on this basis.

Secretary Dulles returned to Washington on August 25 and made this statement: "The London Conference on the Suez Canal set in motion processes designed to lead to a fair and peaceful solution of the grave problems raised by the actions of the Egyptian Government . . . ."<sup>26</sup>

President Nasser responded to these proposals of the London conferees, by rejecting them flatly. In doing so, President Nasser restated his position that the Suez Canal and Company were an integral part of Egypt and he refused to allow any internationalization of them. He further added that the Government of Egypt had not violated any of its international obligations concerning the Canal, and in spite of the difficulties created by France and Britain, the Canal had continued to operate with regularity and efficiency. He then

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<sup>24</sup>The eighteen nations were: Australia, Denmark, Ethiopia, France, West Germany, Iran, Italy, Japan, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Pakistan, Portugal, Sweden, Turkey, United Kingdom, United States.

<sup>25</sup>Johnson, Suez War, p. 62. P., p. 318.

<sup>26</sup>Department of State, S.C.P., p. 295.

offered this added clause:

The crisis and the so-called 'grave situation' are therefore artificially created by the above mentioned quarters [France and Britain] as witness, among other things:

- a) Statements containing threats of force
- b) Mobilization and movement of troops by France and the United Kingdom;
- c) Inciting employees and pilots working in the Suez Canal to abruptly abandon their work, by France and the United Kingdom and some officials of the former Suez Canal Company; and
- d) Hostile economic measures taken against Egypt.<sup>27</sup>

Nasser then proposed another conference of his own which received little attention in Washington and none in London or Paris. The British and French by this time had had time to make the necessary military build up and preparations for the course of action they must have chosen. The British and French were apparently convinced that Nasser was another Hitler and his grab of the Canal was Hitler reoccupying the Rhineland all over again.<sup>28</sup>

France devised a new operation to bring Egypt to its knees. It called for British and French ship-pilots to quit their jobs in the Canal zone. Without these pilots, it was felt Egypt would be unable to operate the Canal and this would provide Britain and France with an excuse for military action. The combined Anglo-French invasion force

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<sup>27</sup>Department of State, S.C.P., p. 318.

<sup>28</sup>Robertson, Crisis, p. 88.

had by this time been readied for action and D-day was drawing near. Secretary Dulles was becoming suspicious of their actions. He knew they had had a military build-up on Cyprus and he feared that France and Britain might go it alone. If so, he would have to stop them because the Eisenhower administration had come to power in 1952 on a peace policy, and election day was only a few weeks away.<sup>29</sup>

President Eisenhower had already stated in a press conference, on September 11, that the United States would not go to war or use any force under the present conditions. Mr. Dulles must have then concluded that he would have to dissuade France and Britain from taking any military action. His best way to do that would be to alleviate their fears by an attractive alternative. Therefore, Dulles suggested to his allies a Suez Canal Users' Club. It was a new approach, based on the assumption that no new convention was necessary, since the one of 1888 provided all the rights that were required. Dulles' idea was that the users should club together, hire the pilots, organize navigation, and manage the canal's straits themselves. While it would be inconvenient, it might work and would keep money out of the hands of Nasser. This action would quickly deflate the Egyptian leader and would simply mean using the rights already granted by the earlier convention.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>29</sup>Johnson, Suez War, p. 68

<sup>30</sup>Eden, Full Circle, p. 515-516.

From the very start of this plan, it does not appear that it was very clearly worked out, and with the United States disclaiming itself from, and discouraging its allies from using force, Nasser, with the backing of Soviet Russia, thought he had little to fear. Eden wrote of this new proposal that:

The decision whether to endorse the American users' plan was one of the most crucial we had to face during the whole Suez Crisis. Its consequences were far-reaching. If we had told the United States Government that we did not consider the User' Club a workable proposition and that we preferred to go direct to the Security Council in support of the kind of resolution we had already shown them, and they had declined to approve, we would, I suppose, have forfeited, for the time being at least, something of their goodwill. On the otherhand, we would have avoided the long and dismal trail of negotiations in which we became involved in an effort to set up this Users' Club.<sup>31</sup>

The plan for the Users' Club was another deliberate attempt by Dulles to stall for time and hope a peaceful solution to the problem could be found. In a sense a race was on between, on the one hand the Egyptian Government,<sup>33</sup> who had seized the Canal and now was forced to recruit personnel to replace the Company's and, on the other, the Anglo-French alliance that had questioned the "theft" of the Canal, from the start, and were doing everything possible to show that Egypt could not handle the responsibility of controlling the Canal and would not negotiate a settlement.

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<sup>31</sup>Ibid., p. 536. p. 189.

<sup>33</sup>Eden, Full Circle, p. 534.

For our allies the race was not going well at all. The Egyptian Government did not stop ships that refused to pay the tolls, and British and French ships still paid their accounts in London and Paris. The American ships were paying tolls to the Egyptian Government, under protest. By paying Nasser, they indirectly were supporting his claims which weakened their allies position. Coupled with this was Eisenhower's statement which had promoted and promised a peaceful settlement of the dispute, and had dashed the diplomatic "cards of influence and intimidation from the hands of Britain and France."<sup>32</sup>

The British and French, for the time being, had no recourse but to agree to a new conference on the proposed Users' Association. Both countries realized it kept matters from coming to a head and doubted it had any intrinsic value, as far as settling the situation, but above all, Eden wrote, "it provided a means of working with the United States. I was prepared to lean over backwards to achieve this."<sup>33</sup>

While our allies were leaning over backwards to draw a firm commitment from America (it was hoped the User' Association might be it), Secretary Dulles began a series of strange diplomatic maneuvers. It began during a news conference on September 13, when he made a statement that left the press with the impression that Prime Minister Eden had

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<sup>32</sup>Finer, Dulles, p. 189.

<sup>33</sup>Eden, Full Circle, p. 534.

formulated the Users' Club plan, and the United States would participate in such an association. Dulles then stated that in forming such an association, he hoped it would get the operating problems out of the hands of the politicians and statesmen, and turn them over to the practical ship operators to deal with the practical Egyptian authorities, in hopes it would solve the problem. When asked what would happen if Egypt resisted this plan, as she had already vetoed the first plan, Mr. Dulles replied, again in devious terms, that if Egypt stopped or prohibited vessels from going through, then the alternative would be to go around the Cape, realizing it would involve added cost, inconvenience, and delay to the users of the Canal. When they asked if this meant the United States advocated, or was planning a boycott of the Canal, Dulles replied:

It is not a boycott of the Canal, as far as I know, to refrain from using force to get through the Canal. If force is interposed by Egypt, then I do not call it a boycott to avoid using force to shoot your way through. 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.<sup>34</sup>

On September 17, Mr. Dulles, as he was about to leave for the London Suez Canal Users' Conference, made this statement:

We are not trying to organize any boycott of the Canal but we cannot be blind to the fact that conditions might become such that transit

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<sup>34</sup>Ibid., p. 351. Department of State, S.C.P., p. 340-341.

<sup>36</sup>Finer, Dulles, p. 248.

through the Canal is impractical or greatly diminished. There must always be ways to assure the movement of vital supplies, particularly oil, to Western Europe. Accordingly, we are carrying out planning as a prudent precaution.<sup>35</sup>

The Second London Conference began on September 19, amid wild speculation among the eighteen members convened. No one really knew what the Users' Association was to mean; some thought it was to mean that they would club together, reach an accord, and if Nasser did not agree to it, then they would shoot their way through the Canal. Others must have thought it was to work out plans for a boycott, with the United States footing the bill for its allies, to keep them from using force. The only person who really must have known, for sure, was its originator, John Foster Dulles.

Nasser had already made it clear what he thought of the Users' Association, when he declared:

We shall not allow the Western-proposed Canal Users' Association to function through the Canal. We Egyptians shall run the Canal smoothly and efficiently and if, in spite of this, the Canal Users' Association forces its way through the Suez Canal then it would mean aggression and would be treated as such.<sup>36</sup>

The Users' Association was doomed before it even got started. The British and the French did not like the delay and Nasser rejected it before it had even drawn up a resolution. America, by its indecision, had been placed in the most awkward position, of attempting to mediate a problem

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<sup>35</sup>Ibid., p. 351.

<sup>36</sup>Finer, Dulles, p. 248.

that the belligerents did not want to mediate. Of the United States' policy in these affairs, Nasser is quoted as saying, "Really, the United States is a puzzle to me. I am not able to follow it."<sup>37</sup> With such an ominous beginning, the second London Conference became a debating society and not as the British and French had conceived it. They had hoped it would put teeth into the original plan of internationalizing the canal, but the Suez Canal Users' Association was loaded with pitfalls. Its membership had no obligations to the organization as it was conceived, and the clause defining how dues shall be paid, stated that the subscribing countries, to the Association, may pay the dues to the Association, but did not commit them to withhold them from Egypt, which would have been the main reason for forming the Users' Association.

The second Suez Conference, in London, met for only three days (19-21 September); the only concrete decision made was that a Users' Association would be established and provisions for its operation would begin at an early date.

The after-effects of the second London Conference made it absolutely clear to our European allies that the United States would not use or condone the use of force to resolve the situation. To them, the Users' Association made sense,

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<sup>37</sup>Ibid., p. 248.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid., p. 548.

<sup>41</sup>Campbell, Middle East, p. 103.



only as a means of bringing Nasser to terms, by defying his company's regulations and taking over the Canal's operations themselves.<sup>38</sup> Eden wrote: ". . . the American conception of the association was now evolving so fast that it would end as an agency for collecting dues for Nasser."<sup>39</sup> Therefore, he continued:

The Egyptian Government showed no readiness to compromise, though they had at first been apprehensive of the Users' Association. They feared for a while that it might be really effective. Re-assured on this point, they were content to stand put.<sup>40</sup>

Opinion in Cairo, and elsewhere throughout the world, was that with the break up of the second London Conference and the apparent disunity of the Western powers, the crisis no longer existed. To England and France, however, the United States' lack of support left them only a choice between force and surrender.<sup>41</sup>

#### Disunity of the West

That Britain and France felt deceived and disillusioned, following their talks with Secretary Dulles, would be an understatement. The United States bears a responsibility for this, because it was unwilling to see the seriousness of what its allies regarded as a vital issue and a promise

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<sup>38</sup>Campbell, Middle East, p. 103.

<sup>39</sup>Eden, Full Circle, p. 548.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid., p. 548.

<sup>41</sup>Campbell, Middle East, p. 103.

of a common course of action. If the United States did not sanction the use of force, it refused to explore other means of bringing pressure upon Nasser, to come to the bargaining table. Instead, the United States did not even favor economic measures against Egypt, and paid its Canal dues to the Egyptian authorities. On the other hand, the European powers, themselves, did not show a great deal of wisdom on this issue either. They were obsessed with forcing Nasser into a military showdown, and did not comprehend the strength of the American moral objection to this approach. The Europeans feared, too much, a parallel between Nasser's action and that of past dictators in Europe and refused to appease him, as they had in Munich. Thus, the American approach was a world-wide approach, as viewed in the international scope of East versus West, whereas the Anglo-French approach was one of immediate concern to see that Nasser did not become another Hitler.<sup>42</sup> In any event, communications between Washington and London-Paris virtually broke down, so far as the Suez question was concerned, after the failure of the London conferences. Security Council took up debate on the Crisis,

While the United States was still reluctant to take the matter to the United Nations, the failure of the Conferences to resolve anything, and the fact that two months had elapsed since the Canal had been seized, forced Britain and France

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<sup>42</sup>Ibid., p. 103-104.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid., p. 555.

to bring the issue before the Security Council. Dulles, while unhappy over the Anglo-French decision, did not attempt to dissuade them. However, the United States Government would not sponsor the letter sent to the President of the Security Council, requesting it be put on the agenda. It was to be an Anglo-French request.<sup>43</sup>

The Anglo-French move to put their case before the Security Council was done, in hopes that they could get the Canal out from under the control of a single government or individual, and to secure enforceable guarantees for the efficient management, maintenance, and navigation of the Canal. However, Eden wrote:

If the Security Council showed itself incapable of maintaining international agreements, . . . we would be prepared to use whatever steps, including force, might be needed to re-establish respect for these obligations.<sup>44</sup>

Eden then telegraphed this message to President Eisenhower: "You can be sure that we are fully alive to the wider dangers of the Middle East situation. They can be summed up in one word - Russia. . . ."<sup>45</sup>

As the Security Council took up debate on the Crisis, another curious turn of events took place for United States' policy. The opening statement by United States Representative Lodge, in the Security Council was: "The United States

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<sup>43</sup>Eden, Full Circle, p. 550.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid., p. 554.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid., p. 555.

welcomes the initiative which the Governments of the United Kingdom and France have taken in bringing the Suez Canal matter to the Security Council for its consideration."<sup>46</sup>

The United Nations Security Council, on October 13, adopted a six-point resolution which France, Britain and Egypt publicly accepted as the agreed basis for a negotiated settlement.

Among the requirements adopted was that "the operation of the Canal should be insulated from the politics of any country,"<sup>47</sup> the same concept Egypt had previously refused.

The United States and Secretary Dulles were overly gratified at this apparent progress and awaited direct negotiations between the parties to get under way and finally settle the dispute. Communications, however, had broken down so completely, that the Secretary, while gratified by the progress, evidently was oblivious to the reaction of his European allies to the Security Council resolution.

Eden wrote in his Memoris:

. . . the notion gained currency that the Security Council had prepared the terms for a peaceful and just settlement of the dispute. Those who wished to assure themselves that the easy path is also the wise one, pointed to the six principles, which all the members of the Council had endorsed. Six principles, when it had taken us three months of negotiation to carry practical working proposals for the future of the Canal to the United Nations,

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<sup>46</sup>Eden, Full Circle, p. 564.  
 Department of State Bulletin, (October 8, 1955), p. 560-561.

<sup>47</sup>Department of State, United States Policy in the Middle East, September 1956-June 1957 (United Nations Document No. S/3675, October 13, 1956), p. 120. July 8, 1956. ES.

only to have them smothered. At the end of that time we were to rejoice at being offered six principles in their place. The truth was starkly clear to me. Plunder had paid off.<sup>48</sup>

"It is inevitable that there will be a reckoning for this moral back sliding."<sup>49</sup>

Reckoning Over Suez however, that some thinking along these lines took place, and that it led to ever closer relations between

"The clouds were lowering and menacing in October 1956. The storm could not be far ahead. No record of events at that time can be true which does not take account of this."<sup>50</sup>

In 1950, the United States, France, and Britain had issued the Tripartite Declaration. Its aim was to maintain an equilibrium of forces and arms between Israel and the Arabs, and to safeguard the Armistice lines of Palestine. The Egyptian arms deal with the Soviet bloc changed all that and Israel immediately requested arms from the West. The United States would not sell arms to Israel, but did not object to France or Britain doing so.<sup>51</sup> A small arms race had quickly developed and Egypt was outdistancing the Israelis. This brought to Israel the hard fact that if she were to exist, she would have to fight a preventative war in the very near future.

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<sup>48</sup>Eden, Full Circle, p. 564.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid., p. 565.

<sup>50</sup>Ibid., p. 574.

<sup>51</sup>New York Times, "Palestine Chronology", July 8, 1956,

ES. <sup>52</sup>Campbell, Middle East, p. 105.

down, and The crisis over the canal, from which Israeli ships had always been barred, brought out more clearly the obvious parallel between the interests of Israel and those of the West in their common antagonism to Egypt. We cannot be sure to what extent Israel's leaders thought they could gain their own ends by acting as the cutting edge of Western policy, or to what extent British and French statesmen saw the advantages in having Israel do, or begin, the job they wanted done. We can be sure, however, that some thinking along these lines took place, and that it led to ever closer relations between France and Israel and finally to the dovetailed if not concerted action which marked the outbreak of the crisis at the end of October.<sup>52</sup>

As the presidential election race turned into the home stretch, in late October, President Eisenhower began to receive intelligence reports of a mobilization of military forces in Israel, far beyond what was employed in border skirmishes or commando operations. The United States sent an urgent appeal to David Ben-Gurion, Prime Minister of Israel, to halt him from taking an action that might renew fighting in the area. The American appeals carried little weight, however, because the United States had consistently refused to supply arms to Israel for her defense. Israel had received some arms aid from France and Canada, but still its capacity to resist, deteriorated as Nasser's forces became better equipped with Communist arms.

At the same time, in late October, Communist factions in Poland and Hungary revolted against Soviet occupation forces. In Hungary the revolt became so intense and wide spread that Russian reinforcements were called in to put the rebellion

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<sup>52</sup>Campbell, Middle East, p. 105.

down, and restore its puppet regimes to power. President "Eisenhower could do little but watch the Hungarians suffer and offer them sympathy, relief and asylum."<sup>53</sup>

While the United States was caught by surprise by the turn of events in Eastern Europe, Israel's armed forces attacked Egypt on the Sinai Peninsula. But, before the Security Council

It seemed obvious that the Israelis had been encouraged in this spectacular adventure by the British and the French. Under the terms of the Tripartite Declaration of 1950, the two Western European powers and the United States could use direct military force to intervene if Israel or Egypt broke their peace pact. The drive by the Israelis toward the canal gave the British and the French their excuse to invade Suez.<sup>54</sup>

The British and the French, moving quickly as if by pre-arranged plan, invoked the Tripartite Declaration, and sent an ultimatum to Tel Aviv and Cairo, calling for both sides to stop war-like actions and to withdraw ten miles from both sides of the Canal. The Egyptian Government was also asked to allow an Anglo-French force to occupy temporarily, key positions along the Canal. The objective of this action was to separate the belligerents and to guarantee freedom of transit through the Canal for ships of all nations. The over-all purpose, was of course, to bring hostilities to an end as soon as possible. The ultimatum gave the belligerents twelve hours to reply and if ignored, British and French

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<sup>53</sup> Adams, Report, p. 255.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., p. 255.

<sup>55</sup> Adams, Report, p. 255-256.

troops would go into Suez in whatever strength was thought necessary.<sup>55</sup>

### Reaction of the United States

The immediate reaction of the United States was to put the case before the Security Council. But, before the Security Council could act, it was informed of the ultimatum delivered by France and Britain to the Governments of Israel and Egypt. The ultimatum transformed the situation from a Middle Eastern conflict into a Western attack on Egypt.<sup>56</sup>

It was hard for Eisenhower to believe that Britain and France were in collusion with Israel against Egypt. The President and Secretary Dulles hastily drafted a resolution urging all members of the United Nations to refrain from using force in the Middle East. The British and the French vetoed this resolution, in the Security Council, and the break between the United States and her two oldest and closest allies was completed. The next day, October 31, British and French bombers attacked Egyptian airfields. The news caught the President by surprise and it shocked him. He had received no previous warning from the British or the French and had no advance information from American intelligence sources in Europe or the Mediterranean.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>55</sup>Eden, Full Circle, p. 589.

<sup>56</sup>Campbell, Middle East, p. 109.

<sup>57</sup>Adams, Report, p. 255-256.



In a nationwide address, that same day, President Eisenhower stated:

As it is the manifest right of any of these nations to take such decisions and actions, it is likewise our right - if our judgement so dictates - to dissent. We believe these actions to have been taken in error. For we do not accept the use of force as a wise or proper instrument for the settlement of international dispute . . . .

In the circumstances I have described, there will be no United States involvement in these present hostilities. . . .

At the same time it is - and it will remain - the dedicated purpose of your government to do all in its power to localize the fighting and to end the conflict. . . .

It is our hope and intent that this matter will be brought before the United Nations General Assembly. There - with no veto operating - the opinion of the world can be brought to bear in our quest for a just end to this tormenting problem. In the past the United Nations has proved able to find a way to end bloodshed. We believe it can and that it will do so again.<sup>58</sup>

Prior to hearing of the Anglo-French attack, the President had conferred with his top military and political advisors, and it was agreed "that if Russia came openly to Nasser's assistance, a war was inevitable."<sup>59</sup> The Anglo-French action changed that policy, because the President was stunned that our allies had not consulted the United States, in any way, and angry with them for making such a

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<sup>58</sup>Department of State, United States Policy in the Middle East, September 1956-June 1957 (Documentary Publication No. 6505, August 1957), p. 148-151.

<sup>59</sup>Adams, Report, p. 256.

move.

The Presidential address stated the United States would not become involved and would pursue the moralistic approach, by taking the whole matter before the United Nations. But, what was our position to be if the hostilities continued? Were we to assist Egypt against Israel, Britain, and France, if they continued to attack, or were we to pledge flowers for the funeral of Nasser?<sup>60</sup> This, the President did not touch on in his speech; he made no policy statement. E. J. Hughes, one of the President's speech writers, summed up the reason for this lack of clarity by stating: "The damn trouble is that we don't have a policy in this crisis, and you can't try to use a speech as a substitute."<sup>61</sup>

The General Assembly met on the morning of November 2, and as Sir Anthony Eden remarked: "It was not Soviet Russia; or any Arab state, but the Government of the United States which took the lead in the Assembly against Israel, France and Britain."<sup>62</sup> The dominant theme of the American reaction to the crisis was that the combined Anglo-French-Israeli aggressions on Suez, and the Sinai Peninsula, were a direct violation of the United Nation's Charter. The thought of

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<sup>60</sup> Emmet John Hughes, The Ordeal of Power: A Political Memoir of the Eisenhower Years (New York: Atheneum, 1963), p. 214. Cited hereafter, Hughes, Ordeal of Power.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., p. 217.

<sup>62</sup> Eden, Full Circle, p. 604.

our policy represented a determination to end the hostilities and a withdrawal of invading forces. As presented, this rather rigid legalistic approach required a return to the status quo ante, so that no change could be interpreted as a reward for aggression.<sup>63</sup>

The Allied strategy, while taking advantage of Soviet preoccupations with Hungary and an election eve atmosphere in the United States, hoped for a quick military victory and ousting of Nasser, before anybody could do anything about it. Their plans were upset, however, by the one factor they had forgotten to take into account. They underestimated the ability of the United Nations to take immediate action. If the United States and the Soviet Union ever cooperated on a single bit of world legislation, it was on this particular issue. The result was the General Assembly hastily passed, overwhelmingly, a series of resolutions calling for a cessation of fighting and the withdrawal of foreign troops from Egypt.

The Soviets became so carried away with the cooperative atmosphere of the United States - U.S.S.R. relations, that they proposed a joint military program to stop the British and French invasion of Egypt. President Eisenhower quickly rejected the Soviet proposal as a publicity stunt, to divert world attention from Soviet action in Hungary, and reminded

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<sup>63</sup>Campbell, Middle East, p. 114.

them that the General Assembly had already called on them to halt their operations in Hungary. Soviet Premier Bulganin also sent out letters to France, Britain, and Israel calling on them to stop hostilities or face the consequences.

The entrance of Soviet threats into the situation changed the complexity of the problem greatly. For the United States:

... the obvious danger existed that Moscow might be irresistibly tempted toward aggressive action, on a massive scale, by both hope and fear - the hope that Egypt signified a deep division of the West, and the fear that Hungary threatened a kind of earthquake within the Soviet sphere. The combination looked explosive. And the President described it pithily: . . . 'we may be dealing here with the opening gambit of an ultimatum. We have to be positive and clear in our every word, every step. And if those fellows start something, we may have to hit 'em - and, if necessary, with everything in the bucket'.<sup>64</sup>

The situation had become so tense, and the worldwide stakes so high, "that the crisis could end only in the flat terms of a choice between political and personal destinies: either Nasser must fall - or Eden must fall."<sup>65</sup> Israel's attack on Egypt had begun on Monday, October 29. By November 6, the combined pressure of the United States and the Soviet Union, along with the United Nation's resolutions, world opinion, and a general lack of support forced the Anglo-French forces to call off their assault, with only Port Said captured, in the drive to occupy the Suez Canal.

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<sup>64</sup>Hughes, Ordeal of Power, p. 223.

<sup>65</sup>Ibid., p. 224.

Israel, its military objectives accomplished, also called a halt to its operations. The military reckoning over Suez had ended, and the arduous task of repairing the damage began.

### The Withdrawal of Foreign Troops

Once the fighting had ceased, it became readily apparent to all nations concerned that the invasion had solved nothing. The Suez question was in just as much doubt as it had been before the invasion, save for the Anglo-French occupation troops. The situation had been further complicated by the entrance of the Arab-Israeli war into the overall question.

The Anglo-French-Israeli cease-fire had taken place for two major reasons: first the fearful pressure from the United States, and second the promise from the United States, as the leader of the United Nations, that a United Nations Emergency Force would be sent to replace their forces as a means of securing justice for Israel and to the allies in the Canal dispute.<sup>66</sup>

The constructive settlement that Britain, France, and Israel hoped their actions would bring about, were not forthcoming after the cease-fire. A stalemate set in, with British, French, and Israeli troops along the Canal awaiting

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<sup>66</sup>Finer, Dulles, p. 440.

<sup>67</sup>Zdan, Full Circle, p. 625.

<sup>68</sup>Campbell, Middle East, p. 110.

the arrival of the United Nation's Emergency Force. A tense deadlock followed the cease-fire. The United States demanded that all advantages gained from the invasion were to be scrapped. The Allies, Israel, and Egypt were to discuss their mutual problems on an equal footing in the United Nations. Concerning this situation, Eden wrote:

This was the most calamitous of all errors. Had we expected it to be perpetrated, our course might have been otherwise, but we could not know. As it seems to me, the major mistakes were made, not before the cease-fire or in that decision, but after it. I did not foresee them.<sup>67</sup>

For the United States, on the other hand, the cease-fire had been a victory for this country and the United Nations. United States policy makers, including the former lawyer Dulles, visualized their position as the salvation of the United Nations' peace keeping mission in the world and proof that the Rule of Law applied equally to all nations, friend or foe.

As a practical matter, the United States Government did not believe that this situation could permanently be solved by the use of force.

The Administration was also unwilling to let the Soviet Union reap all the benefits of acting in their behalf of the Arab peoples in a case like this in which the aggression was clear. In this way it had the chance to save some credit for the West with the Arabs, now more bitter than ever against Great Britain and France.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>67</sup>Eden, Full Circle, p. 625.

<sup>68</sup>Campbell, Middle East, p. 110.

<sup>69</sup>Finer, Muslims, p. 444, quoting speech by Dulles, January, 1957.

The results for Britain and France were disastrous. The abortive campaign had failed to accomplish its desired results. The Canal, which they had gone in to protect, was closed to all shipping for months, as a result of deliberate Egyptian actions, that involved scuttling forty ships during the fighting and shortly after the cease-fire. The oil pipelines, from the Middle East, were cut by the blowing up of pumping stations in Syria.

The British and French tried desperately to salvage their claims in the United Nations, and with the United States, but in vain. The United States had won an important prestige victory in the Suez Crisis, and it was not willing to sacrifice its recently gained Afro-Asian goodwill to take a conciliatory attitude toward its belligerent Allies. Another factor was, the United States held the economic trump cards over Britain and France. If they refused to withdraw the United States could withhold oil supplies from the Western Hemisphere, and could exert other economic measures that would stop the dollar flow to Europe.

Our obligations to the United Nations would be upheld and those who operated outside it would have to pay the consequences. "As Dulles observed in January, 1957, 'the entry of Allied troops had been illegal, and it was not proper to say that they could stay until they had gained certain political objectives'."<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>69</sup>Finer, Dulles, p. 444, quoting speech by Dulles, January, 1957.

As far as the British and French were concerned, their only course of action was to swallow their pride and resentment and extract themselves, and their troops, as soon as was possible, from this unfortunate affair.

By Christmas of 1956, British and French troops had been withdrawn, a United Nations force had taken up positions eastward from the Canal zone, and the dispute over the Canal was as far from a solution as ever. Internationalization of the Canal was dead, and beyond recall.

Nasser's victory, on that issue, discomfited not only the British and the French, but also the United States, which had helped him to win it. Israel, for her part, also was pressured by the United States and the Soviet Union to withdraw. The difficulty of Israel's decision was based on the fact that it had won a military campaign, and while it could not afford to alienate the United States, which was its money line, Israel needed more assurances for its own existence from the United Nations, to recognize its particular problem in the Arab world, before it would withdraw. Secretary Dulles recognized that special concession would have to be offered to Israel or the problem of withdrawal would be magnified. Dulles therefore sent a diplomatic note to Israel, stating that the United States would pursue a policy within the United Nations to produce a basis of understanding with regard to the Israeli use of the Gulf of Aqaba and administration in the Gaza Strip.<sup>70</sup> It was not too clear exactly what



these understandings were to be, but it did bring the evacuation and withdrawal that was desired.

With the final withdrawal of Israeli troops, behind the old armistice line, the crisis may be said to have reached its end, but the world was no closer to a solution than it was when the crisis began. While the problem remained the same, the participants did change considerably. France and Britain were ousted completely, leaving the United States as the sole Western power in the Middle East to protect vital Western interests there. The United States would have to play the hand alone in the Middle East, in the future.

The communists began to exploit their new found position, in the Middle East, by claiming the United States and Israel had concluded a secret treaty. The challenge from the Communist world had begun and the American Government had to redefine its role. The crisis, of 1956, and the actions of the American policy which brought about such an ominous outcome, called for a review of what had happened.

President Eisenhower and Secretary Dulles worked out a plan for protecting the security of the Middle Eastern nations against Communist aggression. This program became known as the Eisenhower Doctrine.

In essence, the Doctrine offered to assist any independent Arab nation against open Communist aggression and would provide the President with the authorized power to use

## CHAPTER IV

## THE AFTERMATH OF THE CRISIS

The immediate after-effects of the Suez incident forced the United States to adopt a new policy toward the Middle East, which became known as the Eisenhower Doctrine. The need for this policy, in the wake of the storm, brought a critical appraisal of Dulles' Suez policy and its results for America's security and worldwide interests.

The Eisenhower Doctrine

The defeat of the attempt, by Britain and France, to settle the Suez dispute by military force, destroyed their prestige and political power in the Middle East. The loss of Anglo-French influence, in that strategic area, created what Eisenhower described as a power vacuum. Unless the United States made clear to the rest of the world its intention to fill the vacuum, the Soviets could be counted on to move in and create an intolerable situation for us.

President Eisenhower and Secretary Dulles worked out a plan for protecting the security of the Middle Eastern nations against Communist aggression. This program became known as the Eisenhower Doctrine.

In essence, the Doctrine offered to assist any independent Arab nation against open Communist aggression and would provide the President with the authorized power to use

American Armed Forces to insure such protection. It was also in the Senate after being passed in the House with several Republican Senators felt that the possible use of military force during an indefinite agency was merely an attempt to make Congress share the responsibility for a decision.

President Eisenhower threw all his weight behind this proposal, and addressed Congress on January 5, 1957, on the importance he placed on such a measure. He stated:

The Middle East has abruptly reached a new and crucial stage in its long and important history . . . .

Just recently there have been hostilities involving Western European nations that once exercised much influence in the area. Also the relatively large attack by Israel in October has intensified the basic differences between that nation and its Arab neighbors. All this instability has been heightened and, at times, manipulated by International Communism.

Russia's rulers have long sought to dominate the Middle East . . . .

The reason for Russia's interest in the Middle East is solely that of power politics. Considering her announced purpose of Communizing the world, it is easy to understand her hope of dominating the Middle East.<sup>2</sup>

The President then asked Congress to approve his request for the authority to use armed forces in the Middle East and to provide funds to strengthen Middle Eastern countries, since words alone were not enough.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Adams, Report, p. 271.

<sup>2</sup>Department of State, U.S. Policy in the Middle East, September 1956-June 1957, p. 16.

<sup>3</sup>Adams, Report, p. 272-273.

The Eisenhower Doctrine ran into rough going in the Senate after being passed in the House without any difficulty . . . . many Democratic and several Republican Senators felt that the President's request for Congressional support in the possible use of military force during an indefinite future emergency was merely an attempt to make Congress share the responsibility for a decision that belonged to him, . . . . There was also the natural resentment of the supporters of Israel against courtship of the Arab nations, . . . . Critics also pointed out that the Eisenhower Doctrine did nothing about such immediate Middle Eastern problems as the continued dispute between Egypt and Israel and the working out of a permanent agreement with Egypt over the use of the Suez Canal, which at that time was still blocked and unusable.<sup>4</sup>

The decision on the Eisenhower Doctrine rested in the Senate where a strong anti-Dulles faction began a critical analysis of the Administration's actions during the past few months, and by using the guise of finding out more information about the ramifications of the Eisenhower Doctrine; indirectly they attacked the competence and character of Secretary Dulles.

The Senate even went so far as to send its own fact-finding committee to the Middle East, headed by Senator Hubert H. Humphrey. Criticism of Dulles

Senator Fulbright, during special Senate hearings on the President's Middle East Proposal, demanded that Secretary Dulles justify his whole past record of policy in the Middle East. While the Secretary was preparing an answer for that, Adlai Stevenson, with biting wit in commenting on the power vacuum remarked, "the first vacuum that should be filled

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<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 273.

is in the State Department and not in the Middle East."<sup>5</sup>

Dulles had run into a full storm of criticism from certain Senators and it fell to him to argue the case in detail for the new Doctrine against a critical reaction. Influential Republican voices joined in the critical attacks on the Secretary of State, stating that he had lost the confidence of Congress and our allies. When asked by reporters if they [Senators] expected to force Dulles to resign, Senator Fulbright proclaimed that Dulles had "outlived his usefulness."<sup>6</sup>

For months after Suez, Dulles did little to retrieve his position. To his closest friends he never revealed any doubt as to the rightness of the policy he had pursued. He remained alert to the criticism of his actions, but resisted attacks on his basic beliefs.<sup>7</sup>

The Senate even went so far as to send its own fact-finding committee to the Middle East, headed by Senator Hubert H. Humphrey. The overall conclusion of this committee was:

Eventually, after two months of debate and strong opposition the foreign policy of the United States has failed to keep pace with our obligations and responsibilities in the Middle East. In an area of the utmost strategic importance to ourselves and

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<sup>5</sup>Richard Goold-Adams, John Foster Dulles: A Reappraisal (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1962), p. 241. Cited hereafter, Goold-Adams, John Foster Dulles.

<sup>6</sup>Drummond and Coblentz, Duel at the Brink, p. 190.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 190.

by a our allies, we have for too long pursued a policy of drift and improvisation. We have confused our friends, and we have not retarded our enemies.<sup>8</sup>

When asked to comment on the personal attacks made against him, Secretary Dulles remarked that he did not believe that these attacks were any more than is traditional in American politics. He defended the stand he took on Suez, by claiming it was an honorable and sound position that would be justified by history. He reiterated his beliefs that the world had to be ruled by one Law for both friend and foe alike.<sup>9</sup>

During this period, Dulles had only one source of strength and support. It came from the President. He possibly could not have survived without it. The President used his press conferences to demonstrate his support and confidence in Mr. Dulles. He continued to insist, that in his opinion, Secretary Dulles was a Secretary of supreme rank among American Secretaries of State. Thus, the President placed his own prestige around Dulles and pulled him through his blackest moments.<sup>10</sup>

Eventually, after two months of debate and strong opposition, the Eisenhower Doctrine was approved in the Senate

<sup>8</sup>U.S. Senate, Report of Senator Hubert H. Humphrey on a Study Mission: The Middle East and Southern Europe, 85th Cong., 1st. Sess., 1957, p. 1.

<sup>9</sup>Department of State, U.S. Foreign Policy in the Middle East, p. 41.

<sup>10</sup>Drummond and Coblentz, Duel at the Brink, p. 191.

by a substantial margin of seventy-two to nineteen.

In the long view, the Eisenhower Doctrine may not have been of any great importance, but it was a statement by the American Government, that it was going to make its presence felt in the Middle East.

The French and the British were to get a certain satisfaction from the fact that so soon after forcing them out for intervention, the United States was forced to proclaim a doctrine of unilateral intervention of its own. It was, in their opinion, a vindication of their actions in the Suez.

While the Eisenhower Doctrine in itself formulated a policy for the Middle East, the United States was also forced to undertake to restore the unity of the Western alliance in the face of events that had transpired. The United States had deserted its allies and would now have to face the worldwide ramifications of following such a policy.

This new found respect was short lived, however, because during the months that followed the crisis, the American Government was

#### Worldwide Aftermath

Throughout the world there was a universal bewilderment and dismay about the Anglo-French adventure in Egypt. It was incomprehensible how statesmen of such magnitude as Sir Anthony Eden and M. Guy Mollet could have brought themselves to resort to force, in violation of the United Nations Charter.

What they had hoped to gain from such actions, and why did they abandon the acts of diplomacy and negotiation, to

resort to brute force? This being an act which enraged their allies and dishonored their obligations.<sup>11</sup>

The mood of our European allies before, during and after seems to have been one of frustration. Frustration, that with all their greatness and past glory, together they could not succeed once they had adopted a plan of operation. As they claimed, the United States vacillated in its policy towards the Middle East, they too changed their course in mid-stream more than once themselves.

Nevertheless, the aftermath brought a general anti-American feeling into Britain and France, a feeling based principally on injured pride, more than actual losses. In other parts of the world, America enjoyed a new found position for its moralistic views of equality under the law. The United States had championed a policy, which for years was one of the basic tenets of our democracy. This new found respect was short lived, however, because during the months that followed the crisis, the American Government was forced to dispatch troops to the Middle East to prevent a Communist take over. The Eisenhower Doctrine, which was hoped to improve our position in the Middle East, was bitterly assailed by President Nasser as an attempt to change one colonial master for another. "The vaunted rise in American prestige in the Middle East, expected by Dulles and

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<sup>11</sup>Johnson, Suez War, from introduction by Aneurin Bevin.



State Department officials as a reward for the Administration's enmity towards their allies' attack on Suez was dissipated."<sup>12</sup>

The after effects for the United States have been more tumultuous than the actual crisis, because nothing had been settled.

The United States and the United Nations, it may be concluded, acted somewhat like the Congress of Vienna in attempting to re-establish the status quo without resolving the underlying problems that had precipitated the crisis.

To Israel, Ben-Gurion wrote to President Eisenhower, the results of the situation, in spite of American promises, still leaves the sword of Damocles hanging over Israel's head.

To Egypt, ~~smug~~ with the realization that victory was theirs, through the efforts of American policy decisions, it was the dawn of a new day for pan-arabism, but the Eisenhower Doctrine, the Baghdad Pact, and the Israeli problem brought a general disillusionment with United States policies that claimed impartiality between two million Jews and forty million Arabs.

The overall after effect, however, was that the Atlantic Alliance was devitalized. Suez tore NATO apart and it has never been possible to fully restore its corporate morale. Its core of Britain and France were disenchanted with America

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<sup>12</sup>Finer, Dulles, p. 501.

and with one another. Furthermore, upon many European nations, especially The Suez War, in which both Britain and France withdrew in the face of American pressure and oblique Soviet threats to drop bombs on London and Paris, strengthened both governments' cases for building independent strategic nuclear forces.<sup>13</sup>

Britain, because of a special closeness with the United States, did receive advances in its nuclear technology in the aftermath, which drove France, lacking American assistance, away from the Anglo-American alliance toward a closer alliance with other members of the Common Market. Secretary Dulles attempted to stop this drift of France, away from the United States, but was unsuccessful in doing so, especially in the light of present day relations between the United States and France.

The lessons of Suez, for Britain and France, were only too clear, without the United States behind them, and without their own nuclear striking force, Europe as a whole was subject to Soviet nuclear blackmail. Suez had been a traumatic experience and a realization came over British and French leaders as to just how vulnerable they were to nuclear attack. This realization of weakness has taken two forms: first, that both Britain and France are now junior partners in the world arenas and secondly, that the two leaders of the world are the nuclear powers, Russia and the United States. The latter

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<sup>13</sup>Robert E. Osgood, NATO: The Entangling Alliance (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1962), p. 218. Cited hereafter, Osgood, NATO.

feeling has had a profound effect upon many European nations, especially because it has brought the fact to mind that the course of world events is now controlled by two nations and if that be the case then why should they be involved at all. Thus, one of the major forces in the post Suez Crisis events in Europe has been the rise of pacifism, ban the bomb programs, and talks of neutrality, all of which could, if implemented, deal a death blow to the Atlantic Alliance.

The weakening of NATO, by America deserting her allies, was a big price to pay in the worldwide struggle with Communism, to satisfy the righteousness concerning the rule of law.

Upon leaving office, Anthony Eden wrote:

. . . the aftermath of Suez would justify our policy and do so soon . . . . Further intervention would be inevitable in some part of the Middle East, certainly by ourselves and possibly by the Americans. I wanted to be there when that happened.<sup>15</sup>

It should be noted that in July, 1958, British and American forces landed in the Middle East. American in Lebanon, British in Jordan.

The aftermath left strained relations among the Atlantic partners and presented new and more difficult problems for the United States because since the alienation of the allies, there has not been a revival of the cooperative spirit or trust and unity that held firm in Berlin or Korea.

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<sup>15</sup>Eden, Full Circle, p. 652.

If, in the light of past events, we know that the Suez operation opened the Middle East for Communist penetration, its still greater ramification is that it drove a wedge into an alliance that is still recovering from its after effects.

from both sides of the question. While no definite conclusions can be reached without hearing from the American government that carried out the policy of the United States, we must be left to conjecture and personal beliefs.

No conclusion could be reached without recalling to mind the more important facets of the problem, which have been presented. The first was that Secretary Dulles, serving in a Republican Administration, inherited the problem of no established Middle Eastern policy from his Democratic predecessors. His first step was to declare the United States impartial in the established feud between Israel and the Arab states. He then attempted to establish a policy in the Middle East, based on an alliance of those nations closest to the Soviet borders. It was called the northern tier alliance and later the Baghdad Pact. At the same time he attempted to satisfy our desires to see Egypt join the alliance, and Egypt's desire to oust foreign troops from her soil. In 1954, Dulles engineered a treaty to do just that between Britain and Egypt.

## CHAPTER V

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

During the course of this thesis, the writer has attempted to present a rounded approach to the American involvement, from both sides of the question. While no definite conclusions can be reached without hearing from the American diplomat, that carried out the policy of the United States, much must be left to conjecture and personal beliefs.

Summary

No conclusion could begin without recalling to mind the more important facets of the problem, which have been presented. The first is that Secretary Dulles, serving in a Republican Administration, inherited the problem of no established Middle Eastern policy from his Democratic predecessors. His first step was to declare the United States impartial in the established feud between Israel and the Arab states. He then attempted to establish a policy in the Middle East, based on an alliance of those nations closest to the Soviet borders. It was called the northern tier alliance and later the Baghdad Pact. At the same time he attempted to satisfy our desires to see Egypt join the alliance, and Egypt's desire to oust foreign troops from her soil. In 1954, Dulles engineered a treaty to do just that between Britain and Egypt.

When Egypt concluded an arms treaty with the Soviet bloc in 1955, Dulles made a serious miscalculation. He continued his plan to woo Egypt's Nasser, by baiting him with aid for the Aswan High Dam. This was a serious mistake because it let Nasser think he could succeed by playing one side against the other. This did not work long because Dulles pulled America out of the see-saw battle. Nasser's reaction, however, while aimed at the United States, hurt our allies; France and Britain. and Israel had gambled that the pre-

Britain and France immediately wanted to show the petty dictator of Egypt a lesson, but Dulles prevailed upon them to call a new Convention to recognize the international status of the Canal. This, Dulles in brilliant diplomatic terms, was able to do, but Nasser rejected it. Again Britain and France wanted to use force, and again Dulles stopped them by proposing a Canal Users' Association, a hastily conceived plan that did effectively provide more time for a cooling off period, during which Dulles hoped Britain and France would forego their aggressive tendencies. This was not the case. Foster Dulles, the sixty-first American

The entire issue finally was taken to the Security Council of the United Nations, where nothing was resolved. Meanwhile, events external to the nationalization crisis brought a turn of events to the issue. A revolt broke out in Hungary against Soviet domination of that country, while in the United States the final and critical stages of an dispatched his duties as he saw fit, being personally

election campaign were closing rapidly. Using world pre-occupation with other events, Israel invaded Egypt, in what was termed a preventative measure. France and Great Britain then attempted to use the same preoccupation to carry out their own aims. The result was a poorly staged military campaign, and a resounding condemnation of the Anglo-French-Israeli aggression, by the United Nations, the United States included.

#### Conclusion

Britain, France, and Israel had gambled that the pre-occupations would enable them to succeed before anything could be done, and they gambled wrong. The result was that all three nations were branded aggressors, and forced, by world opinions and direct threats from Russia and the United States, to withdraw.

For all practical purposes, the crisis, as such, was ended with a lot ventured and nothing gained, especially in respect to the primary question of the control of the Suez Canal, and the intruding problem of Palestine.

The aftermath, however, found a villain, a scapegoat, his name, John Foster Dulles, the sixty-first American Secretary of State. Dulles was charged with gross incompetence and a lack of understanding of worldwide problems, but his President kept him on the job. To Dulles was entrusted the job of rebuilding the Atlantic Alliance and stopping the Communist penetration of the Middle East.

Dulles withstood the assault upon his character and dispatched his duties as he saw fit, being personally

responsible for helping to formulate the Eisenhower Doctrine, the first real Middle Eastern policy this country tried to pursue. The effects of the Doctrine were never felt, however, due to the untimely death of the Secretary. Thus all evaluations and conclusions on the American position and involvement are left to the speculator in ifs and buts, and the true story may never be known.

The actual turn of events, however, could not be foreseen, for as we spent our energies in Paris and London, the Arab-

### Conclusion

Israel. One immutable thought remains after completing this research. The United States chose the proper course to follow during the Suez Crisis.

The State Department, and its Secretary, John Foster Dulles, pursued a policy throughout the course of the crisis that was in keeping with the basic tenets of the American democracy. It is indeed unfortunate that in doing so, it alienated our allies, Britain and France.

Much has been written of how the United States deserted its allies in their time of need and did not fully appreciate the vital importance of the Suez Canal as it influenced the economies of Britain and France. These concepts are unsound since, in fact, Britain and France deviated from what they knew was the actual position of the United States who could more fully appreciate the importance of Suez to Western Europe's economy than the nation that was responsible for their remarkable growth after World War II. The truth of the matter is



that Britain and France, from the outset, were going to resort to force to re-establish their position in the Middle East, but found it militarily expedient to negotiate while they gathered their forces. Surely the Department of State must have realized this, and for that reason was necessarily vague in its approach, in an attempt to stall for time and a peaceful solution. The actual turn of events, however, could not be foreseen, for as we spent our energies in Paris and London, the Arab-Israeli dispute erupted and afforded Britain and France the opportunity for direct action. The United States policy, and particularly its Secretary of State, were not without fault in this complex situation. The State Department, under Dulles, was never in full accord with its Western allies, and this was based essentially on the puritanical view Mr. Dulles held on colonialism, leaving him always suspicious of their every action. He was never sure if they were acting as anti-communist nations or colonial powers, whose enmity he had felt during his trip through the Middle East. Parallel to his mistrust of the allies, was Dulles' failure to recognize any merits in neutrality, which he condemned with equal fervor as he condemned colonialism. But, he, himself, pursued an impartial program in the Arab-Israeli dispute.

Thus, our foreign policy was anti-communist, anti-colonial, and anti-neutral, all at the same time, which left little room for allies among the nations of the world. It

is no wonder that Mr. Dulles became a controversial figure, whose merits as Secretary of State are often questioned.

In the final analysis, however, for the purposes of this study, the fact that the aftermath of the crisis has had more lasting effect, does not invalidate the policy which America followed during the crisis. In spite of its faults, it was an honorable and just position to take and proved to the whole world that the United States believed in its credo, "with liberty and justice for all."

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