

Suez Canal Crisis, 1956

Welcome

Dear Ambassadors,

I would like to extend my sincerest welcome to Brown University Simulation of the United Nations 2010 and the Suez Canal Crisis Committee. My name is Angad Kochar and I have the honor of serving as your chair this year! I am a junior Neuroscience concentrator here at Brown, but have been heavily involved in Model United Nations, amongst other various extra-curriculars, since my arrival here in 2008. In the past I have served as the director of the Russian Federation's Council of Ministers as well as Undersecretary General for BUSUN 09, and I am thrilled to be able to design and follow through with my own committee this year.

MUN and BUSUN have been really great experiences for me, and I really hope to be able to pass that on to you this November, however in order to do that I need some help from all of you. Our committee is a small one, and that can make for an all the more engaging experience, however it also requires that each member be prepared to the fullest of his or her abilities. Remember to do your best to represent the ideas and values of the delegation you are assigned, this is perhaps one of the most difficult things to accomplish in the context of Model UN, but gets far easier the more you know about your topic and your country.

This committee is somewhat unique in that it is a historical crisis committee. This means a number of things, namely that our negotiations will be set in the past, however, it also is not intended to be a historical re-enactment. The decisions that you make may alter the course that history takes, and the events introduced as part of the crisis may not coincide with events that actually happened. To that extent your debate will be about novel concepts and situations, and I am positive that

you will all succeed in making this both an educational, but more importantly, a really fun committee to be in.

The information contained within this guide is to be used as a research aid, and only introduces the issues and concepts that you will need to be familiar with this November, a number of helpful sources will also be provided to help kick-start your investigation.

If at any point in the coming weeks you have questions about the committee, BUSUN, or anything else I can help with please feel free to email me and I will get back to you as soon as I can.

With that said, welcome to Brown, BUSUN and MUN, for those of you who may never have done it before! I can't wait to see you in November, I am sure I have a lot to learn from all of you, and I truly hope that you enjoy yourselves to the fullest!

Sincerely,

Angad Kochar
Chair of the Suez Canal Crisis, 1956
Suez.canal@busun.net

Committee Members

- John Foster Dulles –
United States Secretary of State
- Baron Selwyn-Lloyd –
United Kingdom Foreign Secretary
- Christian Pineau –
Foreign Minister of France
- Golda Meir –
Foreign Minister of Israel
- Moshe Dian –
Chief of Staff: Israeli Defense Forces
- Walter Monckton –
Minister of Defence of the United Kingdom
- Maurice Jean Marie Bourgès-Maunoury –
Minister of National Defense of France

- Abdel Latif Boghdadi –
Egyptian Vice President
- Zakaria Mohieddin –
Minister of the Interior/Former Director
of the Egyptian General Intelligence
Directorate
- Abdel Hakim Amer –
Egyptian Chief of Staff/Commander in
Chief
- Mahmoud Fawzi –
Egyptian Minister of Foreign Affairs
- Rawya Ateya –
Egyptian Parliamentarian

Committee Format and Rules of Debate

Committee sessions will generally proceed in informal debate (or “moderated caucus”), with speaking times proposed either by the council chair or by individual advisors. Generally, members of the committee are discouraged from conversing amongst themselves while other members are speaking, and should instead write notes to one another or motion for an unmoderated caucus. The council chair reserves the right to interrupt debate to introduce guest speakers or news.

The committee will be divided into two forums that can freely interact with each other. The decisions made in one forum will influence the events of the entire committee and may require a response from the opposing forum. Due to the narrow time frame within which crisis committees have to react to developments in the current situation, and because the councils you will represent are not official United Nations organizations, UN resolutions will be considered beyond the scope of our committee. The powers of each council are slightly different:

Egyptian Council:

The Egyptian Council will function as the National Security Council of Egypt (ENSC). Under the auspices of President Nasser, the ENSC will have all the powers of a sovereign state. The wishes of this council can be conveyed in the form of a variety of documents, primarily including Press Releases, Diplomatic Communiqués, Directives, and Action Orders.

Press Releases can be used, either domestically or internationally, and are intended for the dissemination of information to the public. Press Releases can be particularly useful to address public unrest, or to make statements without addressing any other organization in particular.

Diplomatic Communiqués are communications sent to a particular person, organization or nation. They are considered private forms of communication and are generally secure, however do not underestimate the power of domestic intelligence agencies.

Directives are considered an executive order to a particular organization or government agency that the council has the authority to control. They require no preambulatory clauses and consist of a particular action requested of the recipient.

Action Orders are essentially directives, but only apply to military operations. Other than the President, who also serves as the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, only the Commander in Chief has the power to issue an action order. Note that only the President has the authority to declare war, a decision that will surely be taken under the advisement of the council.

The ENSC throughout the course of the conference may produce all of the above documents, and any others you may choose to conceive of. As far as voting procedures are concerned, unanimity will be considered ideal in substantive decisions, however keeping in mind

that some members of the council have positional authorities (i.e. commander in chief) which they may continue to discharge, it is possible for actions to be taken without the councils unanimous consent. All of the actions taken by the ENSC are subject to the approval of the President.

The Special Committee on Suez:

The Special Committee on Suez (SCS) is a consortium of representatives for international stakeholders in the Suez Crisis. It consists of members from France, Israel, the United Kingdom and the United States, and was founded to facilitate communication regarding a coordinated response. As a function of its multinational composition, no country is obligated to fulfill any of the agreements settled by the committee. It will therefore serve in an advisory role. Powers of the committee will be similar to that of the ENSC with the caveat that the appropriate home governments must approve all documents in order to be considered an act on behalf of the member nation. In addition to the documents recommended for the ENSC, the SCS may also consider issuing Joint Press Releases or drafting Treaties to be subsequently presented to the executive branches of the respective governments.

Background

The Suez Canal is an enormously important passage with regard to international trade. Because of its unique location, it allows ships to pass from Asia to Europe without going around southern Africa, saving large costs in time and money. At 102 miles long, it was originally completed in 1869 under the auspices of the Suez Canal Company, a private company consisting of a number of international shareholders. Due to its

pertinence to international trade and security, after the Egyptian civil war threatened its use, it was declared a neutral zone under British protection, established by the Convention of Constantinople.

During the mid-1900's Egypt sought to regain control over the canal. Initially reluctant, the United Kingdom agreed to withdraw its protective forces in 1954, and finished doing so with the withdrawal of 90,000 soldiers in June, 1956.

At the time of the Suez Canal Crisis, it is important to note that more than 60% of the oil used by Europe, the United Kingdom and France in particular, was imported via the Suez Canal, and any cease of passage through the channel could pose serious consequences.

Although the textbooks will say that the Suez Canal Crisis began on July 26, 1956, a number of earlier events played an important role in determining how the issue of ownership of the canal would play out. As early as 1948, Egypt began introducing regulations that restricted passage to ships that called on Israel.

In the Post WWII scramble between the United States and the Soviet Union to expand their spheres of influence, Egypt found itself in the position of being offered vast amounts of resources from both sides of a Cold War. Naturally, it played both sides, so when the US offered to fund the High Aswan Dam project in late 1955, Egypt responded with a list of conditions, that were deemed unsatisfactory by the US government, and instead accepted Soviet resources for military development. Seven months later, in July 1956, President Nasser of Egypt withdrew his conditions and requested the US aid for the project. At this time, however, the Eisenhower administration determined that times had changed, and that funding the Dam project was no longer in their interest. They formally withdrew their offer of support on July 19, 1956.

At the time, the largest international shareholders of the Suez Canal Company, a \$31

million (US) per annum venture, were the United Kingdom and France. That soon changed on July 26, 1956, when President Nasser nationalized the canal, justifying his actions by the claim that it was necessary to raise the required funds for the Dam project. This outraged the British and French administrations; the former demanded that Egypt reconsider, and further pressured the United States to get involved. The US was opposed to military intervention in the Middle East, so the UK and France turned to Israel to plan its repossession of the Canal.

In late October, 1956, Israel invaded Egypt. The UK and France issued demands that the two parties end the conflict and retreat to a new border 10 miles inland from the canal and submit to the deployment of British and French soldiers to occupy the land surrounding it. Egypt refused, and on October 31, 1956, much to the dismay of the United States, the UK and France invaded Egypt.

Current Situation (July 1956)

It is November 1st 1956, Egypt has been invaded by the United Kingdom, France and Israel after refusing to meet demands calling for withdrawal from the canal. Israeli forces are pushing from the Northeast into the Sinai Peninsula. Egypt is mobilizing to respond, but their forces are falling quickly to combination of British, French and Israeli Forces.

Egypt has aligned with Syria and Jordan who are both considering providing military aid to Egypt in order to thwart the western offensive. The situation is escalating and has the potential ignite an all out war in the middle east on the heels of the Israeli war of independence and Resolution 181 that had established some semblance of political order to the region.

Bloc Positions:

United Kingdom and France

Britain and France are furious falling empires. They are in favor of strict military intervention forcing evacuation of locals and soldiers allowing them to take control of the canal. They can not however afford to be considered aggressors, hence the partnership with Israel to instigate conflict. The two European powers are trying to use their alliance to draw the United States into the fray. Britain is especially frustrated by recent changes to Egyptian Foreign Policy that are working against their efforts to control the spread of Soviet Communism via the Central Treaty Organization (Baghdad Pact).

United States of America

The United States' investment in and reliance on the Suez Canal for both profit and oil is negligible. Given the perceived precariousness of military intervention in the Middle East, the US is adamantly opposed to any sort of violent coercion.

The United States is a member of the tripartite agreement, a treaty between the UK, France and the US in with the intent of maintaining peace in the Middle East. One of the stipulations of the accord required all three countries to act in the case military action in the Middle East threatened the recently defined borders.

Remember that the United States is in a very delicate situation at the height of the Cold War, and any small conflict in which the superpowers take sides has the potential to escalate to a full-scale global conflict. The US, while currently opposed to violence in the Middle East, does not want to cooperate with soviet authorities against the interests of its European Allies for the sake of not alienating itself from its democratic anti-communist

supporters.

Egypt

Egypt seemed to be in a very desirable situation for a developing country during the cold war. They were in control of a vital shipping port, and both superpowers were swooning over them in an effort to expand their respective influences in the Middle East. After proposing the Aswan Dam project to the US, Egypt sought aid from the USSR. There is speculation that this was one of the factors that caused the US to back out.

Egypt also has heavy involvement in the Arab-Israeli conflict and has begun aligning themselves with neighboring nations in order to protect itself.

The situation has changed; their military resources are nowhere near sufficient to defend their borders from an assault by the coalition of the UK, France and Israel. If no solution is found soon, Egypt is in danger of losing a significant amount of territory in the Sinai peninsula to Israel and the sizeable revenue associated with ownership of the canal.

Israel

The Suez Canal is not nearly as vital an asset to Israel as it is to its European allies, however it has a vested interest in the security of Egypt and the rest of the Middle East after the recent adoption of new borders in the region. Israel feels threatened by the presence of a number of its Arab neighbors who oppose its existence, and a show of overwhelming force would potentially be a large contribution to the future of its national security.

Press, 2001. Print.

PDF Accessible at:

<http://www.press.umich.edu/pdf/0472108670-06.pdf>

Foreign Policy Agenda

U.S. Department of State. April 2006. Vol. 11 Number 1

PDF Accessible at:

<http://www.america.gov/media/pdf/ejs/ijpe0406.pdf>

United Nations General Assembly Resolution 181 (II):

Future Government of Palestine. 1947

Available at:

http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/United_Nations_General_Assembly_Resolution_181

Helpful Resources

McDermott, Rose. *Risk Taking in International Politics*. 1st ed. Chap 6. Michigan University