

12-15-2006

# Anthony Eden, the Egypt Committee, and the Politics of Prestige during the Suez Crisis

Alexander Shelby  
*University of New Orleans*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.uno.edu/td>

---

## Recommended Citation

Shelby, Alexander, "Anthony Eden, the Egypt Committee, and the Politics of Prestige during the Suez Crisis" (2006). *University of New Orleans Theses and Dissertations*. 503.  
<https://scholarworks.uno.edu/td/503>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Dissertations and Theses at ScholarWorks@UNO. It has been accepted for inclusion in University of New Orleans Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks@UNO. The author is solely responsible for ensuring compliance with copyright. For more information, please contact [scholarworks@uno.edu](mailto:scholarworks@uno.edu).

Anthony Eden, the Egypt Committee, and the Politics of Prestige  
during the Suez Crisis

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the  
University of New Orleans  
in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts  
In  
The Department of History

by

Alexander Shelby

B.A. The University of New Orleans, 2002

December, 2006

## **Dedication**

I dedicate this research to two people who made a difference in my life. First, to my mother, Metha Kadour Shalabi; you gave the inspiration and support to try harder and be better. Second, to my wife, Diana Shelby; every time I talked to you I felt a surge of energy that motivated me to finish this research after Hurricane Katrina.

## Acknowledgments

This research began in the Fall of 2004 in Professor Günter J. Bischof's Cold War History class. The following year while attending Dr. Bischof's European History Seminar, he recommended that I continue my Suez paper. In the fall of 2006 Dr. Bischof agreed to head my thesis committee. As result of Hurricane Katrina, I found myself displaced in Florida. Dr. Bischof was kind enough to allow me to continue my thesis research while I was in Florida. As we maintained a correspondence online and he monitored my progress carefully; furthermore, Dr. Bischof wrote a letter to Edmund F. Kallina, the chair of the history department at the University of Central Florida telling him of my situation. So, it is an understatement to say that this research and thesis would not have been possible without the mentoring and support of Dr. Bischof. His inspiration and support is greatly appreciated.

I would like to thank the following individuals for their inspiration and mentoring: Dr. Gerald P. Bodet for his enlightening classes on British History. I am grateful that he agreed to be on my committee. It is an honor to have someone of Dr Alan Millett's stature on our faculty and I am extremely grateful he agreed to be on my committee. Professor Warren M. Billing's Historiography class provided me with a great deal of knowledge on how "to research the right way." Professor Edmund F. Kallina's hospitality and support while I was at the UCF was colossal. Finally, great deal of gratitude is owed to Professor Brandon Prins. Our after class discussions motivated me to try harder.

## Table of Contents

Abstract.....	v
Introduction.....	1
Eden, the Egypt Committee, and Nasser .....	3
Endnotes.....	55
Bibliography .....	60
Vita.....	64

## **Abstract**

The impact of the Gamal Abdul Nasser's nationalization of the Suez Canal on Anthony Eden's policy making during the Suez Crisis is the bases of this research. Using data from the Cabinet records of Eden's Egypt Committee, this research will demonstrate that Eden and the Egypt Committee acted irrationally during the Suez Crisis and by doing so created a schism in the Atlantic Alliance. This rift would force President Dwight Eisenhower to side with the Soviet Union against Britain to resolve the conflict. The effects of the crisis caused the British to lose their prestige as a world power and later, to withdrawal from the Middle East.

## Introduction

I believe it is essential in the highest interest... that Britain should at all hazards maintain her prestige among the Great Powers of the world... if a situation were to be forced upon us in which peace could only be preserved by the surrender of the great and beneficent position Britain has won by centuries of heroism and achievement, by allowing Britain to be treated, where her interests were vitally affected, as if she were of no account in the Cabinet of nations, then I say emphatically that peace at that price would be a humiliation intolerable for a great country like ours to endure.

David Lloyd George  
Mansion House speech of 1911<sup>1</sup>

The evening after Egyptian President Gamal Abdul Nasser nationalized the Suez Canal on July 27, Prime Minister Anthony Eden decided to form a war cabinet to deal with the crisis. This decision-making body was christened the Egypt Committee (EC) and would come to optimize the predicament of Britain's changed role in the world. The EC consisted of the most senior ministers in Eden's Cabinet: the Marquess of Salisbury, Lord President of the Council; Harold Macmillan, Chancellor of the Exchequer; the Earl of Home, Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations; Sir Walter Monckton, Minister of Defense; and Selwyn Lloyd, Secretary of State for Foreign Relations.<sup>2</sup> Since its conception on that Friday evening, the EC became the most influential element on Anthony Eden's decision-making and set a course of action that came to embody Eden's government during the Suez Crisis. From July 30 through November 4, the EC decided to follow the truculent policy of Nasser's destruction. Eden's government thought that Nasser's removal from power was the panacea to Britain's decline. Since Nasser's rise to power, they saw him devouring Britain's authority throughout the Near East. First, it began with his opposition to the Baghdad Pact.<sup>3</sup> Then, the EC saw his ubiquitous hand in General Glubb's dismissal. In making their decisions within the EC, members of that

decision-making body demonstrated the flawed policy of “group think,” which removed the possibility of individual choice.<sup>4</sup> This group thinking led Eden to make irrational decisions that were based on the EC’s fixed sensation with getting rid of Nasser at all cost and eventually would lead to the downfall of Eden’s government. Another consequence of the EC’s group think decision making was the end of Britain’s influence in the Middle East. Furthermore, the EC’s decision to use force in the early days of the Suez Crisis was based on Britain’s reputation among Arab countries. To the members of the EC, Britain’s standing and prestige as a great power was threatened by a third-rate power—mainly Nasser’s Egypt. Based on that assumption, the EC did not want to save the Suez Canal from Nasser, but wanted to save British prestige from Nasser’s challenge to Britain’s presence in the Middle East. Undeniably, the EC sought American support for the use of force to save Britain’s reputation in the region. When this failed, the EC then tried to buy time under the veil of seeking a peaceful resolution to the crisis through negotiation, while simultaneously Britain gathered the necessary resources for the invasion of Egypt.



## **Eden, the Egypt Committee and Nasser**

Anthony Eden is usually seen as the omnipotent hand that drove Britain over the edge during the Suez Crisis, but even though the final decision to go ahead with the operation was his, the influence and pressure he faced from EC, no doubt, led him to take that final step. To understand Eden's decision-making during the Suez Crisis, it is necessary to grasp the burden of his position. He faced a number of obstacles during the crisis that led to poor decision-making. In addition, the obligation to act in order to maintain Britain's influence and prestige in the Near East clouded Eden's judgment forcing him to make irrational decisions; however, he did not make these choices alone. The EC aided Eden with the war planning and policymaking during the Suez Crisis. In the early hours of the crisis, the world was clearly behind Britain and against Nasser's unjustified seizure of the Canal. Ostensibly, even Nehru and Tito, Nasser's allies, opposed Nasser's blatant act.<sup>5</sup> The EC was not pliant to the situation and its lack of dexterity would turn world opinion against Britain; forces both within and without Eden's government drove these incongruous decisions. The dynamics behind this irrational behavior was the maintenance of Britain's Great Power standing.

Anthony Eden, as Foreign Minister, negotiated the base withdrawal from the "the swinging-door of the British Empire" because the toll on Britain's resources was both economically and militarily too great to endure. Raids against British positions in the Canal Zone and rioting in Ismailia led to a change of policy towards King Farouk.<sup>6</sup> When the July 23, coup removed Farouk from power, Churchill did not raise a finger to help. The British hoped that the new Egyptian government would help solidify their position in the Canal Zone and help maintain Britain's influence, but for Nasser and the Free

Officers conformity with the British was the last thing on their minds.<sup>7</sup> When they demanded that the British withdraw from the Canal Zone in 1953, The U.S. encouraged Prime Minister Churchill to relinquish control. Eden and Churchill both agreed that 80,000 troops in the Suez Canal Zone were draining the UK's resources, yet Churchill remained reluctant to let go of the imperial past. As Eden insisted that Britain could not maintain a base in Egypt indefinitely and a new strategy was needed to guarantee Britain's oil interests, the Suez Group arose in opposition to Eden and his policy. The Suez Group presented their own solution to the problem calling it the "Waterhouse Theory" after Captain Charles Waterhouse. According to Waterhouse, a minimal of 10,000 troops were needed to hold the base indefinitely.<sup>8</sup> They accused Eden of removing a deterrent that Britain needed to uphold in order to sustain the Commonwealth and keep Middle Eastern rulers in line. Despite the Suez Groups ranting and Churchill's reluctance, Eden pushed through the Anglo-Egyptian Treaty in February of 1953, which said that Britain would leave the Canal Zone in its entirety by June of 1956.

With the withdrawal from the Suez Canal a foregone conclusion, Britain needed to secure its oil interests by other means. Since 1953, Britain tried to form a defensive pact in the Middle East around its principle allies, mainly Iraq and Jordan, in the region. With the shift in focus from India to the Near East, Britain pursued a defensive pact to maintain its Near East possession and keep the Soviet Union out of the region.<sup>9</sup> The plan's dual purpose was to prevent the Soviet Union from spreading into the region and help maintain Britain's influence. Without British involvement, Turkey and Iraq signed the Turco-Iraqi Pact in February of 1955. The British joined shortly after the formation of the pact and decided that this would provide protection against Communist incursion

while helping maintain their presence in the Near East.<sup>10</sup> The U.S. promoted the Baghdad Pact, but refused to join. In addition, the U.S. recommendations to Britain to remain out of the agreement were largely ignored.<sup>11</sup> Egypt too would not join and oppose the Baghdad Pact because Nasser saw the agreement diminishing his role in the Arab World and increasing Iraq's. He also suspected the defense agreement was Britain's attempt to reestablish her hegemony in the region.<sup>12</sup> When, in December of 1955, King Hussein of Jordan refused to join the Baghdad Pact, Eden blamed Nasser and Cairo radio's *Voice of the Arabs*.

The next blow to Britain's position came when King Hussein dismissed General Glubb, commander of the Arab Legion in Jordan, in March of 1955. Again, Eden blamed Nasser. The use of the airwaves by the *Voice of the Arabs* ridiculed King Hussein as a stooge of Glubb. Perhaps this did put pressure on Hussein to remove Glubb, but the final decision was the King's. Nevertheless, Eden blamed Nasser of having total control over Glubb's dismissal.<sup>13</sup> The General's banishment would frustrate Eden's vision for a regional defense pact for the Middle East and in turn, he would rage that he wanted Nasser immediately "destroyed."<sup>14</sup> Julian Amery of the Suez Group wrote in the *Times* that this was the, "bankruptcy of the policy of appeasement in the Middle East...we are now very close to the final disaster."<sup>15</sup>

Wanting to sustain stability in the Middle East in order to continue the unhampered flow of oil to Europe, the U.S. and Great Britain decided that stability to the region would come in the form of peace. In order to do this, they decided on a lasting solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict. Furthermore, this would lead to a defensive pact that would resolve future disputes and keep Soviet Russia out of the region.<sup>16</sup>

When Nasser announced the Aswan Dam project in the fall of 1955, the U.S. and U.K saw a chance to appease Nasser by funding the dam. This ran parallel to their policy of maintaining stability in the region and the vanguard of this policy now was Nasser. However, Nasser would not adhere to this strategy. In the spring of 1956, Nasser inflamed the West by recognizing Red China and then, in September of that year he completed an arms deal with Czechoslovakia. To the U.S. and Great Britain, it seemed that Nasser was allowing the Communist into the Near East and defying their policy. This, along with domestic concerns in the U.S., caused Eisenhower to withdraw support for the Aswan Dam project. Eden wrote to Eisenhower explaining that Nasser wanted to unite the Arabs under a federal system run from Cairo, the ultimate aim of which was a socialist system under Russian influence.<sup>17</sup> Nasser felt that the dam would cure Egypt's financial woes and drive Egypt's industry into a gold age of economic prosperity.<sup>18</sup>

When the final phase of British troops left the Suez Canal, in accordance with the Anglo-Egyptian agreement, on June 14, 1956, five days later the U.S. withdrew support and funding for the Aswan Dam. Furiously, Nasser decided to nationalize the Suez Canal on the evening of July 26, 1956. That night Eden was having an honorary dinner for the King of Iraq with Iraqi Prime Minister Nuri es-Said when the news of Nasser's decision came.<sup>19</sup> The months of appeasement, Eden felt, had culminated into this. As Nuri told Eden to be as forceful as possible and act early, Eden felt the pressure to respond almost immediately.<sup>20</sup> What would the Third World think if Britain allowed Nasser to get away with this action? "I had no doubt how Nasser's deed would be read," Eden later said, "from Agadir [Morocco] to Karachi. This was a seizure of Western property...on its outcome would depend whose authority would prevail."<sup>21</sup>

Hours upon hearing the news of Nasser's nationalization, Eden convened an impromptu meeting in the Cabinet Room at Number 10 Downing Street.<sup>22</sup> Present were Selwyn Lloyd, Lord Salisbury, Lord Home, Viscount Kilmer, Earl Mountbatten of Burma, Sir Gerald Templer, Sir Edward Boyle, Jean Chauvel, the French Ambassador, and Andrew Foster, the American Chargé d'Affaires.<sup>23</sup> Eden spoke first stating the importance of the canal to the West and the economic chaos that would follow if Nasser were allowed to "get away with it." Feeling he could not stand idle and watch Nasser eat away at British influence in the region, the time for appeasement, Eden felt, was over and action had to be taken before Nasser became too powerful. He went on emphasizing the importance of the canal declaring that, "The Egyptian has his thumb on our windpipe...this is the end. We can't put up with any more of this...our whole position demands strong action." When informed that legally Nasser has done nothing wrong, Eden raged, "I don't care whether it's illegal or not, I'm not going to let him do it. He's not going to get away with it."<sup>24</sup> He then turned to Mountbatten and asked what the military could do in response to Nasser's action. The First Sea Lord told Eden that the Mediterranean Fleet could be ready to set sail the next morning and commando reinforcements from Cyprus would join the fleet. A surprise invasion of Port Said would then be mounted and the port city could be held. However, taking the entire Canal was impossible with the troops available and the initial invasion would have to be reinforced soon or the whole effort would be futile.<sup>25</sup>

That evening, Andrew Foster's cable Washington to inform Eisenhower that the meeting was emotional and Eden expressed that immediate action might be the only solution. The British, Foster said, did not think it prudent to refer the matter to the United

Nations because that course would delay the matter.<sup>26</sup> Here, it seemed that Eden had a grasp of the situation. He knew that time was not on Britain's side and delayed action would only benefit Nasser. The longer the situation was allowed to linger, the less likely it was that force would be used. Nevertheless, Even if Eden wanted to act, contingency plans were not in effect.

That same night, Eden ordered Lord Mountbatten to stay up all night to prepare plans for a full-scale attack to retake the canal; however, the military was not prepared for such action and training for the special operation was needed. This call for immediate action caused the Chiefs to threaten Eden with resignation.<sup>27</sup> Harold Macmillan best summoned up the difficulty of the matter: "The truth is that we are caught in a terrible dilemma. If we take strong action against Egypt, and as a result the Canal is closed, the pipelines to the Levant are cut...oil production is stopped...if we suffer a diplomatic defeat...we have equally 'had it.' What then do we do?"<sup>28</sup> In addition to Macmillan's anxiety, Lloyd, equally if not more anxiously, summed the crisis as three months of extreme pressure, "each time as soon as success seemed in sight something happened to frustrate us. It was like walking up a mountain. Each time one gets to the crest of a hill it is only to find out that there is yet another one beyond it."<sup>29</sup>

Since the Soviet Union would veto any resolution presented to the U.N., the Cabinet agreed that U.N. action would not be prudent at the moment. The Cabinet gave careful thought for the economic option, but decided this needed time to take its toll on Nasser and they did not want to drag the situation for months. This option did not play into Eden's plan for a quick response to Nasser and other than agreeing to reverse

Nasser's act, no coherent course of action was decided that night. The meeting ended with Eden instructing the Chiefs of Staff to produce a military plan to take the canal.

The question of whether Eden was willing to go in alone all depended on Britain's means to carry out a military attack. Had the British the means to unleash an attack, Eden would have gone in and invaded Egypt, but there was a dearth in transport as Eden later confirmed when he stressed that, "Unless action could have been carried through exclusively by airborne troops, there was no alternative to an expedition from Malta. Unless we could fly all the forces needed, they had to swim."<sup>30</sup> The Suez Group blamed Eden for the lack of troops in the region. From Eden's point of view, Nasser was to blame; had he not adamantly opposed Britain at every effort made or allowed the Baghdad Pact to materialize, Britain could have had a regional rapid reaction force to protect Britain's assets.

The next morning, with the British Press demanding action, Eden telephoned Harold Macmillan, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and briefed him in on the events of the night before.<sup>31</sup> At eleven o'clock in the morning, Eden addressed the House of Commons. The leader of the Labour Opposition, Hugh Gaitskell condemned the Egyptian action and other Labor leaders stood up to denounce Nasser. With the majority of British Press—the *Guardian* being the exception and urging restraint—arguing that a strong line should be taken against Nasser, Eden and his colleagues were under the impression that the nation was behind any action they planned against Egypt; however, by mid-September, these feelings by Parliament and the British public would change.<sup>32</sup>

That Friday morning, the Cabinet faced the predicament of what sort of response to Nasser's action Britain could take. The Bank of England was given the authority to

hold Egypt's sterling reserves, the assets of the Suez Canal Company in London were protected, British subjects living in Egypt were warned to leave, and four Egyptian naval vessels anchored in British waters were delayed, "short of physical interference," from leaving."<sup>33</sup> The Cabinet also learned that Nasser had told the Ottoman Bank to turn over the Suez Canal Company's assets worth about £2 million.<sup>34</sup> Mountbatten suggested that no move should be made that would seem threatening to Egypt. Eden was reminded that Nasser had not broken any international laws. The Suez Canal was registered as Egyptian and, therefore, subject to Egyptian law. Moreover, Nasser announced that he would compensate the Canal shareholders. The Cabinet decided to use the counter argument that the canal was not Egyptian property, but an international entity subject to international law. Eden felt that Britain could deny Egypt's legitimacy by arguing the international role of the Canal, but this pitfall would place Britain in a morass of conferences and prolong the crisis for months—a situation that Britain wanted to avoid. Indeed Eden became so infatuated with this idea he would later say that, "Failure to keep the canal international would inevitably lead to the loss one by one of all our interest and assets in the Middle East."<sup>35</sup>

At this point, it is hard to determine if Eden still felt the same way about the military option as he did the night before. He did order the Chiefs of Staff to prepare a plan for the invasion of Egypt and the occupation of the canal.<sup>36</sup> In his memoirs *Full Circle*, Eden stated that force would only be used as a last resort, but in his letter to Eisenhower, after the Cabinet meeting, he stated that they could "not allow Nasser to seize the Canal" and needed to act quickly or "our influence and yours throughout the Middle East will...be irretrievably undermined."<sup>37</sup>



As early as March of 1956, MI6 reports on Nasser's intentions proved to Eden that Nasser wanted more. The reports originated from an Egyptian agent within the Nasser's government and predicted that Nasser was working to overthrow the governments of Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Libya, and Iraq while simultaneously replacing them with puppet regimes that were loyal to him. The end result of all this would be the establishment of the "United Arab States" with no borders, customs, and one economic system. The intelligence abstracts added that this policy had received the full backing of the Soviet Union.<sup>38</sup>

On the evening of July 26, the Cabinet decided to form the Egypt Committee. From this point forward, Eden would use the EC and not the full Cabinet to make decisions concerning the conflict. Indeed, during the crisis, the full Cabinet would not meet as often as it had in the past, and the EC would become the main crisis management body.

Precisely at seven in the evening, the next day the EC held its first meeting. Present at this meeting were Eden, Macmillan, Home, Lloyd, Watkinson, and Monckton. This was the core group of the EC. At certain periods, during the conflict, other Ministers would join to add their specialized interests to the discussion. At the moment, for Eden and his colleagues, Nasser's nationalization raised the question of canal dues. Macmillan told the EC that two problems had to be resolved on this matter. The first involved the question of where to pay the canal dues, the second raised the issue of controlling the assets held by the Suez Canal Company (SCC). As to the payment of canal dues, they decided that British and French ship-owners would continue to pay their dues to the SCC offices in London and Paris respectively. The U.S. and other countries would have to pay

the dues to Cairo for the time being. Britain's diminished role in world affairs became apparent when Eden asked Home what the Commonwealth could provide in military assistance.<sup>39</sup>

British employees that worked for the SCC presented a dilemma for the EC. Two choices were presented to the EC that evening: one, the employees could walk off the job, or two they could continue to work for the new administration. The problem with the first was that by walking off the EC feared that the Canal would be shutdown and this would hamper oil supplies. The second choice was equally discouraging, for if they allowed the employees to stay, Britain would be condoning Nasser's action. The EC decided that the normal function of the Canal outweighed concern for Nasser's action and voted to keep the employees working.<sup>40</sup>

Before the next EC meeting was held, Eden sent Eisenhower a message to inform him that Nasser threatened Western oil supplies and economic sanctions alone would not work without a show of force.<sup>41</sup> On Saturday July 28, Eden informed the EC that Eisenhower favored tripartite talks between the U.S, France, and the U.K., but did not support military action at this time. The Chiefs of Staff told the EC that Army reservists would have to be recalled, but this would raise suspicion that the Her Majesties Government (HMG) was preparing for war.<sup>42</sup> Eden told the Chiefs to present at the next EC meeting a number of military options that would conceal military preparations from the press and public.<sup>43</sup> Macmillan then proposed that Britain seek Israel's assistance to help with the military action against Nasser. But Eden refused his advice, stating that this would alienate Britain's allies in the Middle East.<sup>44</sup>

As the second day of the crisis passed, the EC had not yet chosen a definitive course of action. The members knew that Egypt could not be allowed to continue its collection of Canal dues, so they had to find a solution to this problem. They decided to mobilize the military, but did not have the transports available; the paratroopers needed were bogged down in a guerilla war in Cyprus. That afternoon, Eden found the time to go to Wiltshire, but remained in touch with London.<sup>45</sup> He left Lloyd to meet with Robert Murphy, the U.S. Deputy Secretary of State, and Christian Pineau, the French Foreign Minister.

Lloyd met with Pineau before he met Murphy on July 29 and told him that the U.S. was hesitating when it came to military action and that they would probably seek an international conference. Lloyd went on to state that it would be wise to go along with the Americans until Britain and France were prepared militarily.<sup>46</sup> The Foreign Minister only mentioned in his memoirs that he met Pineau a few minutes before he met Murphy and that Pineau had told him that the French were willing to go, “to the end in dealing with Nasser.” Lloyd informed the French Foreign Minister that the British Chiefs of Staff would have a plan ready by July 31.<sup>47</sup>

The other difficulties that added to Eden’s anxiety for a quick solution to the crisis were the number of reservists available to Britain and inner workings of shipping dues. As for the oil reserves, it was estimated that 60-70 percent of Britain’s oil passed through the canal and that reserves would only last six weeks if that route were cutoff.<sup>48</sup> This is what made the canal vital to Britain’s survival and now it was in Nasser’s hands. Eden made it clear to the Russians that the supply of oil was so essential to Britain that they

“would fight for it” if need be. To add to his torment, Eden learned that financial reserves would only cover three months of imports.<sup>49</sup>

Upon his return to London, Eden updated the House of Commons on the financial decisions his government had made against Egypt. He stated his intention that day that “no arrangements for the future of this great international waterway could be acceptable to Her Majesty’s Government which would leave it in the unfettered control of a single power which could, as recent events have shown, exploit it purely for purposes of national policy.”<sup>50</sup> Here, it seemed that Eden had defined Britain’s policy for the Suez Crisis, but this was an illusion.

Three days before, on July 27, the matter seemed simple; Nasser had committed an act of aggression against Britain, and it was up to Britain to show Egypt its place. Nevertheless, the political atmosphere was changing as Eden learned at the EC meeting that day. Sir Roger Makins, Britain’s ambassador in Washington, told Eden that the Americans were reluctant to take action against Nasser.<sup>51</sup> Lloyd’s meeting that weekend with Murphy confirmed this American policy. During the meeting when Lloyd hinted at the possibility of using force, Murphy cautioned Lloyd that the American people would not support military action. Instead of the use of force, Murphy discussed the advantages of calling an international conference.<sup>52</sup>

When the EC met that Monday morning, Lloyd presented his colleagues with the American proposal and suggested that it would be wise to hold tripartite talks. Here, the EC agreed with Lloyd, for the talks would provide the time needed to train and mobilize the troops. Lloyd advised that Britain should argue that the Suez Canal be placed under UN jurisdiction. Lord Home then suggested that the matter should be referred to the UN

at once and a push made to get Egypt charged with aggression. Home's argument, they decided, would not work because it would pit Britain against its Arab allies. As the Chiefs of Staff briefed the EC, they revealed that limited military action could be staged; nevertheless, since reinforcements would arrive too late, the small force in the area would fail to hold the canal. It was at this meeting when the committee decided to take the only option available to them—hold the conference of maritime powers.<sup>53</sup> The Chiefs asked the EC to state the goals of the operation. At this juncture, all unanimously agreed that, “While our ultimate purpose was to place the Canal under international control, our immediate objective was to bring about the down fall of the present Egyptian Government.”<sup>54</sup> Conversely, it was argued that this could be achieved by “less elaborate” means such as a covert operation or a military coup and would be less costly than physical control of the Canal. In the meantime, they authorized Macmillan to seize Egypt's assets in Britain and open negotiation with France about a joint military operation.<sup>55</sup>

The EC decided, since the military option was not available, to bide their time and go along with a conference to internationalize the canal. If Nasser rejected this, they expected, the international community to support the use of force. In the meantime, covert operations against Nasser would begin. Consequently, the EC members all believed that American support for military action would come soon. If the British played along, they believed, and diplomacy failed, then the Americans would come around to Britain's line of thought. Macmillan, the most belligerent member of the EC, remarked that, “Our general conclusion was that if action had to be taken it must be short and successful. For immediate needs we could no doubt expect American aid.”<sup>56</sup> In addition,

a conference, they agreed, would buy the British time to call up their reservists and prepare the proper equipment.

In addition to misinterpreting American signals for support, Eisenhower and Dulles made ambiguous statements that Eden and his colleagues interpreted to mean that the U.S. would support some form of military action; for example, Eden stated that Dulles guaranteed him that, if Britain had to resort to military action, Britain could rely on the U.S. moral encouragement.<sup>57</sup> However, the U.S. wanted a diplomatic solution to the crisis; Eisenhower knew that a military occupation of Egypt would do nothing in the end to reconcile the differences between the Britain and Egypt. “Unless the occupying power was ready to employ the brutalities of dictatorship,” Eisenhower believed, “local unrest would soon grow into guerilla resistance, then open revolt, and possibly wide scale conflict.”<sup>58</sup> Neither Eden nor the EC mentioned the difficulties and energy it would take to occupying Egypt. They were focused on one goal; the removal of Nasser from power and did not weigh the consequences of a long or even short, term occupation of Egypt.

While to the EC the crisis represented a serious challenge to Britain’s position in the Near East, Eisenhower later stated that he did not view the crisis, “as seriously as did the Prime Minister.”<sup>59</sup> The U.S. followed a policy of protracted diplomacy and hoped this would mollify Britain’s position. The London Conference epitomized this prolonged strategy. The Suez Group had always suspected this and accused the U.S. of following a systematic policy to destroy Britain’s position in the region. In fact, it was the U.S. that pressured Britain to evacuate the Suez Base back in 1954 and now they saw the U.S. opposing Britain in its most desperate hour at Suez.<sup>60</sup>

Eden and Lloyd told the EC at the second meeting on July 30, that the Americans and French were anxious to have a maritime conference. They all agreed at this time it would be wise to follow the American line. Lloyd suggested the conference's focus should be to internationalize the Canal along the lines of the Constantinople Convention; a letter to Nasser would follow stating the outcome of the conference and then "wait for her [Egypt's] reaction." Once Egypt refused to comply with the convention's demands, action would follow.<sup>61</sup> In the mean time, the Chiefs of Staff were given the authorization to recall reservist. Immediate concern now revolved around the transportation of troops to the theater of war. Eden asked Harold Watkinson, the Minister of Transportation, to join the EC to discuss the issue. Watkinson suggested that since there was a dearth of troop transports, the only option was to use commercial liners. On the other hand, Watkinson added, this would lead to a loss in revenue for those sectors.<sup>62</sup> Weighing the consequences of this action, the EC decided to limit transport for the initial phase of the operation. Eden then revealed to the EC that the French were anxious to participate and wanted to provide support and troops for the operation. The second meeting ended with Salisbury advocating cutting of the oil pipelines in Egypt and the War Minister Antony Head calling for quick action to "overthrow the present regime."<sup>63</sup>

At this point, the focus of the two meetings on July 30 revealed that the EC assessment was that force would be used after Nasser refused the ultimatum of the upcoming maritime conference. Consequently, the war cabinet decided that the policy was first to harass Nasser until he discredited himself before the world community and then attack him until he was removed from power. Publicly, the British would appear to

promote a peaceful path, while privately they were determined to embark on a path to overthrow Nasser.

In his memoirs, Eden does not mention the decision made on July 30, nor does he mention the Egypt Committee's decision on July 30-31; he begins recollections again on August 1.<sup>64</sup> The other members of the Egypt Committee all seemed to have been struck by similar amnesia. For example, although he described the Cabinet and Committee meetings with clarity on July 27, Macmillan's memoirs do not mention a word of July 30. He described a meeting that took place at his residency with Murphy and Andrew Foster, but does not explain any decisions made that day. His tone on that night did surprise Murphy:

Our conversation that night was easy and relaxed but it was not reminiscent of past association. Our thoughts were on Suez...I was left with no doubt that the British Government believed that Suez was a test which could be met only by the use of force...I was told the French saw eye to eye with the British on the necessity of making a stand, and that they were prepared to participate in a military operation.<sup>65</sup>

Macmillan described that it was his intention to "frighten" the Americans to think that military action was being considered, "We certainly did our best to frighten him [Murphy], or at least to leave him in no doubt of [our] determination."<sup>66</sup> Therefore, Macmillan later claimed in his memoirs that by using belligerent language he tried to frighten Murphy into believing that Britain was prepared for action and this would push the U.S. to treat the crisis more seriously. Perhaps that explains Macmillan's belligerent language to Murphy, but the fact remains that on July 30 the EC decided to remove



Nasser. Lloyd does refer to the July 30 meeting in his memoirs, but fails to mention the EC decision reached that day. Lord Butler, who was ill until July 30, claimed in his memoirs that he returned to his duties on August 2, but attendance records for the EC that day reveal that he actually attended the meeting.<sup>67</sup> Butler missed the first two meetings of the EC, but on July 30, he was back. By claiming he was still sick, it would seem that Butler did not want to be affiliated with the decisions of July 30.

The flaw in the EC's argument rested in a new approach to the crisis. Since they saw that Britain was limited in its military response to Nasser, they sought the ad hoc policy to internationalize Britain's predicament and hoped that maritime powers with similar grievance would come to Britain's aid. To give the British credit for the policy of seeking an international arrangement to the conflict would be flawed. As Lloyd indicated, the Americans proposed an international conference, but the British did not read Eisenhower and Dulles's intentions. The U.S. wanted to prolong the crisis in order to let tempers cool and avoid a military conflict. On the other hand, the British thought that a conference would legitimize the military option they were preparing; the end result would be U.S. aid and military support and, if not military support, at least moral support. Macmillan summed up the British point of view:

At this time, we could not believe that the American Administration especially under the President, who was so friendly, who had commanded our great armies and had shown such generous appreciation of British qualities of tenacity and courage would allow our rights and our interests to disappear in a fog of argument or sentiment or misunderstand our fixity of purpose.<sup>68</sup>

To the members of the EC, recent history had shown the U.S. had always had the transient position of noninvolvement in international conflicts, but would always come to Britain's defense when the United Kingdom needed assistance. However, Eden and his colleagues failed to realize that this was neither the era of the First World War nor the Second World War. The age of balance of power politics was over and the new period of ideological warfare was in full swing.<sup>69</sup> The U.S. was now more concerned with containing Communism than helping Great Britain maintain its imperial ambitions. The EC members did not recognize or want to recognize Britain's subordinate role in international politics.

A second flaw in the decision made on July 30 was that the EC did not anticipate the possibility that the conference might conclude that Britain had no legitimate right to the canal—the body of maritime powers might also reject Britain's position. In other words, the committee members did not consider probable alternative options; they only considered the outcome that they wanted. The EC focused on Nasser's rejection to the terms that would be presented to him and the military response or, even better, the international military response of maritime powers. The ramifications of this decision would not be seen until late October and early November when Britain found herself in a more complex situation.

On the afternoon of July 30, after the EC meeting, Eden, Salisbury, Lloyd and Macmillan met Murphy for lunch at Number 10 Downing Street. The British hoped to learn about the American stance to the crisis. To Murphy, the British appeared nostalgic, for they did not recognize their new position in the Cold War arena.<sup>70</sup> They seemed to prefer the nineteenth century policy of “gunboat diplomacy.”<sup>71</sup>

Later that night, Macmillan dined alone with Murphy at Number 11 Downing Street to discuss the crisis in its full details.<sup>72</sup> It was at this meeting that Macmillan hinted to Murphy what Britain's intentions were. Murphy then informed Eisenhower that the British saw Nasser's action as a challenge to their authority in the region and the only answer to this challenge would be the use of force. "I was left with no doubt," Murphy explained, "that the British Government believed that Suez was a test which could be met only by the use of force."<sup>73</sup> Nevertheless, Macmillan did not find the alacrity for military action from the Americans that the British were displaying.

The EC met three times the next day, July 31,—once in the morning, then in the afternoon and again in the evening. The number of meetings that day demonstrated the urgency within Eden's government to find a quick response to Nasser's action. At the moment, Eden decided that it would be circumspect not to inform Parliament of every move the EC made. He told his colleagues that the intension was to restrict Parliament and the public as much as possible about the movement of troops. Head stressed that if troops had to be recalled, Parliament had to authorize it. The EC decided to tell the House of Commons that the deployment was only a "precautionary movement" and was intended as a deterrent and not a preparation for war. Furthermore, the Chiefs of Staff informed the EC that the French would accept a British allied commander; they recommended General Sir Hugh Stockwell.<sup>74</sup> The Chiefs also presented the EC with the invasion plan. With the exception of nuclear weapons, they advised that HMG use all means available to her on military targets. This meant that military installations were legitimate targets for conventional, chemical, and biological weapons.

In addition to the decisions made that day, the EC elected to reject the American proposal to invite the members of the Convention of 1888 to the upcoming conference because this would include Russia and Egypt. According to Lloyd, by giving the Soviet Union a role to play in the conference, the EC construed that the USSR would be given a role in the outcome of the Canal's final status; moreover, since the EC members wanted to exclude Egypt, including Russia would give the Egyptians an indirect role.<sup>75</sup>

When Harold Macmillan met with his personal staff on August 1, he informed them the stated goal of the government was, "to produce another Egyptian government," that would conform to Britain's demands.<sup>76</sup> At that meeting, Macmillan revealed all the Egypt Committee decisions and minutes that were made up to that day. This confirmed that the EC decisions were not confined to the senior ministers in Eden's Egypt Committee. As Macmillan's staff meetings demonstrated, most junior ministers knew something about the courses the Eden's government intended to take. This is an important point, for after the crisis was over many within the Prime Minister's government would behave as if they knew nothing about the stated goals of the EC.

The EC assembled on the afternoon of August 1 before Eden and Lloyd were to meet Dulles. They discussed the upcoming maritime talks and the issues that would be brought to Dulles's attention; in spite of this, they kept in mind that no matter what happened during the discussions that the stated goal was the internationalization of the Suez Canal and bring about "down fall of the present Egyptian Government." Eden stressed the merits of the maritime conference. By going along with the talks, he thought, it would insure American participation or at least approval of a military response. The Committee's objective in attending the talks were:

- 1.) To give the military the time it needed to prepare for combat;
- 2.) To secure international control of the Suez Canal; if Nasser refused international control of the Canal, this would justify military action to the international community and not stain Britain's image when action was taken;
- 3.) To secure U.S. military, economic, and moral support.

The conference, the EC agreed, should not be allowed to get out of hand. Again, they stressed its purpose should be to give the Egyptian government an ultimatum followed by a military response once Nasser refused to comply.<sup>77</sup>

Again, the flaw in this rigid course of action was it did not consider alternatives. The EC's obstinate attitude to remove Nasser made Macmillan, Eden, Lloyd and Salisbury choose a course that would ultimately lead to disaster; for example, the insistence by the EC to secure international support and keep Britain's image untarnished would force Eden to choose between this and a successful outcome to the current crisis. Furthermore, the momentum of the conflict would now slip from Britain's intended goal of finding a pretext for war to the U.S.'s delaying tactic until war was no longer an alternative.

Another problem raised in the EC by Brook was the issue of two Egyptian Destroyers that had been purchased before the crisis. How could Britain release the destroyers and guarantee that they would not be used against the invasion force? Three choices were presented to the EC: one, they could allow the ships to set sail for Egypt; two, hold the ships indefinitely; or three, delay the departure until the crisis was resolved. The EC weighed the options and decided that the first would give Egypt two modern destroyers that could be used against the British forces. The second choice would

antagonize Egypt and this would have caused them to act against British ships going through the Canal. In the eyes of world opinion Britain would appear antagonistic, and this would go against EC policy. The third choice was the best course of the three, but this too presented a predicament. The problem the EC faced was how long could Britain hold the ships? At this point, after long deliberation, the EC decided that a fourth option would be possible. Since the ships were built in Britain, they needed British parts and weapons. The torpedoes and armaments on the destroyers were not interchangeable. Therefore, the EC decided to deny these armaments and parts to the Egyptians and this in turn would make them ineffective. All agreed that this would be the best option and Peter Thorneycroft, President of the Board of Trade, was given permission to carry out the task.

At this stage, both the U.S. and GB did not want to refer the matter to the UN. The British thought that UN action would be futile, for the Soviets could veto any resolution that was presented to the Security Council. On the other hand, the U.S. was opposed to UN action because it raised the issue of the Panama Canal, as Eisenhower and Dulles feared. The U.S. stressed that Suez was an international matter where Panama was an American one. Since the Constantinople Convention of 1888 proved that Suez was an international issue, a conference on that basis would be the best avenue to avoid reference to Panama, Eisenhower and Dulles thought.

The Commonwealth was informed of Britain's current position, and the EC wanted to know what these nations thought of the current crisis. Eden thought that the Commonwealth could help Britain at the upcoming conference and once the negotiations failed (as the EC hoped), the Commonwealth could provide Britain with some sort of

military support against Egypt. The anticipated tone was not what the EC wanted to hear. Instead, those nations within the Commonwealth that were not directly affected by the seizure of the Canal—Canada, in particular—did not want any entanglements in the crisis; those that were affected like New Zealand and Australia wanted to help resolve the matter peacefully.<sup>78</sup>

Also at the meeting of August 1, the EC received the Chiefs of Staffs analysis in a report entitled *Action Against Egypt*.<sup>79</sup> The EC received a lugubrious response from the Chiefs, who reported that this was a new type of war unlike anything seen before. After WWII, the British had 750,000 men under arms, but they were structured along NATO lines to deal with a large-scale war in Europe or insurgencies in the colonies.<sup>80</sup>

Consequently, British troops were insufficiently trained and equipped to deal with an overseas mission. This explained the reason HMG could not stage a show of force on July 27. That day, too, the Chiefs overestimated the worth of the Czech arms that Nasser received in September of 1955. Their planning for an initial response was based on the assumption that the Egyptians had trained with the new equipment and that some of the weapons they had were more advanced than British weapons; for example, the Egyptians had 45 new Mig 15s, 24 Il 28s and 300 new Soviet tanks delivered to them under the arms deal.<sup>81</sup> This caused the Chiefs to report to the EC that an invasion force could not be made ready for another five to six weeks.<sup>82</sup> First, the Chiefs told the EC that the forces in Libya could not be used due to the agreement with that country which stated that their use could not be directed against another Arab country. Second, the Chiefs assessed that Cyprus did not have a deep port to load and unload equipment; the nearest port was a thousand miles away in Malta. Finally, the airbases on the two Mediterranean Islands

needed repairs and maintenance. The Chiefs recommended the tactics of using shock troops to parachute behind enemy lines, followed by an invasion force of three divisions to hold the Canal Zone.<sup>83</sup> To add to their troubles the paratroopers required for the operation were engaged in an insurgency in Cyprus and needed to be brought back to Britain for training.

The EC now faced a predicament that seemed as complex as Nasser's initial action. They now knew that five to six weeks were needed to prepare the troops and equipment. If an invasion took place, the Arab World's opinion of Britain would turn hostile and was likely to lead to further losses of territory and influence. In addition, once in the Canal Zone, how would Britain keep it safely secure against Egyptian guerilla raids? With *fait accompli*, the EC chose to overlook these problems and focus on Nasser removal. They were overoptimistic, whatever the means, the removal of Nasser was morally correct. This tenaciousness was probably because Eden and his colleagues thought that Nasser's removal would solve Britain's entire host of troubles in the Middle East—like it did with its intervention in Egypt in 1882. The legacy of Britain's imperial past comes into play here on August 1, 1956. With all the facts laid down before them, the EC still espoused the pugnacious stand of Nasser's overthrow. Moreover, they were blind to reality, for Britain was not the power it was in 1882; they wanted to maintain Britain's prestige at all cost and believe the illusion of Britain great power status—that illusion would end with the crumbling of Britain's influence throughout the region.

If some of the EC members vacillated that day in going ahead with military action, the meeting with John Dulles, the American Secretary of State, would convince them to go along. He met Lloyd at the Foreign Office and began the discussion stating



that Nasser's control of an international waterway was intolerable. He went on to say that Nasser had to give up the Canal.<sup>84</sup> Dulles argued that first international opinion must be mobilized against Nasser and that force would be used as last resort. Lloyd found that the U.S. adamantly intended to follow an argument along the lines of the 1888 Convention. This would settle the issue of Panama, which the U.S. was so concerned about, yet the Secretary of State heartened Lloyd by stating:

A way had to be found to make Nasser disgorge what he was attempting to swallow... We must make a genuine effort to bring world opinion to favor the international operation of the canal... it should be possible to create a world opinion so adverse to Nasser that he would be isolated. Then if a military operation had to be undertaken, it would be more apt to succeed and have less grave repercussions than if it had been undertaken precipitately.<sup>85</sup>

As Dulles and Lloyd then walked over from the Foreign Office to Number 10, they noticed a crowd gathered cheering Dulles and the Americans. Like a thick intoxicating smog, anxiety filled the air over London. The people, prodded by media reports, saw Dulles as a savior who had come to redeem them from the insatiable "Egyptian Hitler." It comforted the public to know that the old wartime allies were working together again, or so it seemed.<sup>86</sup>

When they arrived at the Prime Minister's residency, Dulles handed Eden a message from Eisenhower stating that he felt Eden's pain during the crisis. The President went on to tell Eden that he was glad to see the allies agreed on the matter, but was concerned about Britain's belligerence:

But early this morning I received the messages, communicated to me through Murphy from you and Harold Macmillan, telling me on a most secret basis of your decision to employ force without delay or attempting any intermediate less drastic steps. We recognize the transcendent worth of the Canal to the free world and the possibility that eventually the use of force might become necessary in order to protect international rights.<sup>87</sup>

Eisenhower stressed to Eden that at this point in the crisis diplomacy was the most prudent and judicious course. In addition, the President stressed that public opinion in the U.S. and the world would not acquiesce to the use of force this early in the conflict.<sup>88</sup>

Moved by the crowd outside, Dulles presented Eden with encouraging words that resonated in Eden's ears for months.<sup>89</sup> Dulles repeated to Eden what he told Lloyd and stressed the internationality of the waterway. Eden mentioned that military plans were available if the U.S. wanted to see them, but Dulles responded that disclosure was not necessary at this time. Like the feeling of distress a few nights before, relief overwhelmed Eden that evening as he hurried to meet with his full Cabinet.<sup>90</sup>

Eden and Lloyd misconstrued Eisenhower and Dulles's words to mean that the U.S. would go along with the use of force as long as a genuine effort was made to negotiate. They cheerfully told the full Cabinet that the U.S. did not oppose the use of force. Repeating Dulles's words that Nasser must "disgorge" the Canal, he told them that a genuine effort had to be made to find a peaceful settlement in order to keep the U.S. on their side. When all efforts have failed, then the U.K. could go in with U.S. support. Dulles's words to "disgorge" and the "use of force" burned in their hearts and minds.<sup>91</sup> Dulles also agreed, Lloyd told the Cabinet, to send a communiqué to Egypt that strongly

condemned their action. When the Foreign Minister mentioned that it was arranged that the conferences composition was along the lines of the 1888 Convention and would include the Soviet Union, the Cabinet erupted in an uproar. Lloyd assuaged their fears stating that this list was not final and that Britain would insist that the U.S. have a timetable for the conference.<sup>92</sup> The timetable, they thought, would pressure the Americans not to drag on the negotiate process indefinitely. In addition to the 1888 Convention signatories, the conference included those nations that used the canal most according to tonnage and trade—this indirectly would include the United States. In all, twenty-four nations that were directly dependant on the Canal were invited to attend.

As of August 2, 1956, the nation was still behind Eden and his colleagues as the unity in the House of Commons clearly showed. For almost five hours that day, a debate ensued in the House of Commons over the conference. It seemed the British were now willing to compromise, for the tone in the Commons called for the internationalization of the Canal and not a reversal of Nasser's action. Eden began with a review of the terms of the tripartite meeting and the upcoming conference and he ecstatically added American support was forthcoming. He then went into the history of the Constantinople Convention of 1888 and the agreement that Nasser had endorsed six weeks ago.<sup>93</sup> After Eden spoke, Gaitskell issued a condemnation of Nasser and approval of the internationalization issue. Passionately comparing Nasser to Hitler, Gaitskell recalled that, "It was all terribly familiar...it is exactly what we had encountered from Mussolini and Hitler."<sup>94</sup> As other liberals approved of the conference, Walter Elliot, one of the Liberal leaders in the Commons, warned that if negotiations were allowed to drag on

until December, Nasser's victory would be complete, "Let us not find that we have lost the peace by talking too much about it."<sup>95</sup>

The issue of canal dues came up again in early August. Financial confusion was sparked when a group of perplexed bankers asked Macmillan whether shipowners should pay their dues to the old Suez Canal Company. Macmillan inquired why they were asking such an absurd question. They told him that they were worried that if an international court found Nasser justified in his action, they would then owe dues to the new nationalized company. At that moment, Macmillan erupted into a tirade, pointing out their argument was flawed and sided with Nasser. Disheartened, the bankers left Macmillan promising to do the right thing.<sup>96</sup> The British wanted shipowners to continue to pay their dues in London, where 55% of the dues were collected. Eden tried to solicit Dulles to support Britain in its pursuit to allow as little money as possible to pass into Nasser's hand; however, Dulles told Eden that the U.S. government was powerless when it came to American ships registered in other countries. As for domestic shipowners, Dulles replied that the U.S. could advise them, but if they refused to obey, the government could not force them to comply. As traffic flowed through the Canal, the EC's fear that a sense of normality would return to the Suez Canal was now realized.

At the EC meeting on August 2, Macmillan mentioned the idea of a military operation with Israeli support. Eden shrugged off this proposal as unrealistic.<sup>97</sup> Eden knew that Britain's allies in the Arab World would be forced to side with Egypt. Then not only would the Canal be lost, but all influence in the Middle East would be lost too; furthermore, there was the issue of the new Egyptian government that was to replace Nasser. How long would it last if Britain accepted Israel as a partner in a collision against

Egypt? Eden raised these questions in early August, but it would seem these thoughts did not cross his mind on October 22—the day he sent Lloyd to meet with the Israelis in Sèvres, France to plan the invasion of Egypt.

On August 3, Macmillan brought up the subject of Israel again. This time Eden did not calmly explain his point. Macmillan knew that the Arab World would not stand with Britain if Israel were to get involved, but he was also aware that time was not on Britain's side. The longer the crisis was allowed to drag on, the harder it became to reverse Nasser's actions. Before the EC meeting and without its approval, Macmillan held a conference with Winston Churchill and army officers who supported his position.<sup>98</sup> They decided that an Israeli attack on Egypt would be Britain's *casus belli*. Macmillan and Churchill's intentions were to reverse Nasser's action before the whole Middle East was under his control. Moreover, once British influence in the region evaporated the loss of Britain's strength and honor, they feared, would follow.<sup>99</sup> Therefore, Macmillan feared that Britain as he knew it, would no longer exist. His sense of urgency to attack Egypt was prodded by the fear of losing Britain's world power status—in other words, Britain's prestige. In his incessant attempts to goad his colleagues, Macmillan would split the Cabinet and the Egypt Committee into two groups—those who wanted to act and those who wanted to wait.

Eden and Lloyd were not opposed to the use of force, but were opposed to the use of Israel in an operation against Egypt. When the two mentioned it to Nuri, the Iraqi prime minister warned them that Nasser's victory would be complete if such a thing happened. When Eden spoke to Churchill on the subject, he surprisingly learned that his tone was similar to Macmillan's. As thoughts of conspiracy inundated Eden's mind, he

became paranoid to the point that he even took control—or at least tried—of all transactions within his government.<sup>100</sup>

With pressure now coming from within his own party, Eden's obsession with Nasser increased. His message to Eisenhower on August 5 revealed his belief that Nasser was omnipresent in all the troubles Britain faced. He told Eisenhower that:

Nasser has embarked on a course which is unpleasantly familiar...he seeks to further his ambition from Morocco to the Persian Gulf...I know that Nasser is active wherever Muslims can be found, even as far as Nigeria...I have never thought Nasser a Hitler; he has no warlike people behind him. But the parallel with Mussolini is close. Neither of us can forget the lives and treasures he cost us before he was finally dealt with. The removal of Nasser, and the installation in Egypt of a regime less hostile to the West, must therefore also rank high among our objective.<sup>101</sup>

Eden knew that Britain could not stage an operation alone, and Israel, as an ally was out of the question. But if he could persuade Eisenhower to join the crusade, then it was possible that Britain could remove Nasser and avoid collusion with Israel. This obsession would come to destroy Eden, for by alienating Nasser he would set the course of events that would lead to the invasion of November 4.

When EC met on August 7, Macmillan asked what the objective of an invasion was. He answered his own question by stating that the removal of Nasser from power was the main objective. Macmillan went on to warn his colleagues that unless Nasser was removed from power, the Canal and other British interests in the region would be threatened. His plan called for an invasion to be launched from Libya, ignoring the treaty

that Britain had with that country. Once this was achieved, he informed his colleagues, Alexandria would be taken and after that, a march on Cairo would remove Nasser from his seat of power.<sup>102</sup>

The EC would meet on August 8, 9, and 10, but would not meet again until August 14. Why did Eden decide not to hold any meetings until August 14? The conference was still a few days away, August 16. Days before the conference was to be held, Eden's colleagues noticed that the Prime Minister was jumpy and emotionally drained. The Permanent Under-Secretary Richard Powell described Eden as, "very jumpy, very nervous, very wrought..."<sup>103</sup> Eden's illness was beginning to take its toll and the ubiquitous medicine bag he carried around increased in size. At a certain point in the conflict, Horace Evans, Eden's Doctor, told Lord Butler that he could not live on stimulants anymore.<sup>104</sup> Evans recommended that Eden needed to rest and as a result, Lord Butler took over in Eden's absence.<sup>105</sup> Eden later admitted that he had to increase the dosage of drugs and stimulants since Nasser's seizure of the Canal because his pain from his illness was unbearable.<sup>106</sup>

It was a critical moment and Eden noticed that the unity of the country was fading. He addressed the nation on August 8. In the broadcast, Eden juxtaposed Nasser with plunder and proposed an end to the threat of the waterway. He stated:

The alternatives are now clear to see. If we all join together to create an international system for the canal...There will be wealth for all to share, including Egypt...But if anyone is going to snatch and grab and try to pocket what really belongs to the world, the result would be impoverishment for all...We cannot

agree that an act of plunder which threatens the livelihood of many nations shall be allowed to succeed.<sup>107</sup>

Eden next repeated a familiar tone used throughout the crisis comparing Nasser to the fascist regimes of Mussolini and Hitler. “The pattern is familiar to many of us, my friends: we all know this is how fascist governments behave and we all remember, only too well, what the cost can be in giving in to fascism...Our quarrel is not with Egypt, still less with the Arab World; it is with Nasser.”<sup>108</sup> It seemed that Eden was trying to send a message to Nasser not to attend the upcoming conference—now officially called the London Conference. Lord Butler later stated that, “The attempt to negotiate a settlement was not helped by Eden’s broadcast. This made it virtually impossible for Nasser to attend...”<sup>109</sup> By stating that “our quarrel is...with Nasser” was Eden trying to send a signal to Nasser not to attend the conference? Indeed, by stating that his “quarrel” was with the Egyptian leader, Eden personified the crisis and made it virtually impossible for Nasser to attend. If Nasser did not attend the conference and then refused its outcome, this would give Britain the pretext to go in and remove the threat. Eden was a seasoned diplomat and he knew that in diplomacy one does not antagonize the participants of a dispute days before they are to convene.

At the August 10, meeting of the EC the Chiefs of Staff rejected Macmillan’s Libya plan and presented “Operation Musketeer”, which called for a direct attack on Alexandria by an amphibious force combined with airdrops on Egyptian Army positions. This full-scale invasion called on the Anglo-French forces to neutralize Egypt’s resistance. General Stockwell stated that because Port Said was similar to a “cork in a bottle” and a concentration of forces into a small area like Port Said would be dangerous,



Alexandria, he argued, would offer the best field of battle.<sup>110</sup> The Chiefs told the EC the main objectives: First, destroy the Egyptian Air Force; second, civilian casualties and collateral damage were inevitable, but the port invasion could not be avoided; third, the nearby airfield should be taken swiftly, for it would provide for the airlift of troops and equipment; fourth, air and sea forces must combine firepower and destroy the Egyptian army as quickly as possible; and fifth, all this must be ready by September 15. The Chiefs recommended that the objective should be to take the Canal and not march on Cairo, for this would need more troops and equipment to occupy the capital city. They then gave the EC a list of the amount of troops that were needed.<sup>111</sup>

Anthony Eden opened the London Conference on August 16 at eleven in the morning with a brief statement on the common interest of the attendees. Lloyd then proceeded and Dulles followed.<sup>112</sup> Two proposals were presented; the first was made by India and called for the 1888 Agreement to be renewed and the Americans made the second calling for a new organization to run the Canal. Unlike the Convention of 1888, this would allow future members the right to join according to usage and trade. Furthermore, Dulles added that the Canal should be insulated from politics — it was to become neutral ground.

As emotions ran high, the debate continued until on August 22 a compromise was finally reached. The agreement, known as the Eighteen Power Plan, was confirmed and stated that the Canal was an international organ and will be maintained as such.<sup>113</sup> Prime Minister Robert Menzies of Australia was to lead a five-member team to Cairo and present Nasser with the results. The moment that Eden and his colleagues longed for had finally arrived. The Egypt Committee knew that only two outcomes were possible. Either

Nasser could accept the conditions of the London Conference or he would reject them. All depend now on the success or failure of the Menzies Mission.

The EC's assessment of the Menzies Mission was based on facts that were no longer fluid. Domestic polls showed that the public was beginning to recognize that nothing could be done about the current situation and it was better to follow the American line of negotiating a solution. Cabinet Secretary Sir Norman Brook pointed out as early as August 9 that public opinion was starting to vacillate over the Suez Crisis.<sup>114</sup> A Gallup Poll revealed that only 33 percent of those polled supported military action if Nasser refused to obey the Eighteen Power Proposal and the Labour Opposition too was growing doubtful.<sup>115</sup> As popular opinion grew haggard over the episode and the Menzies Mission left, the EC eagerly awaited news from Cairo.

Doubt and pessimism began to overwhelm the EC and the Chiefs of Staff. The resolve over a military operation was now broken. It began in early August when Cabinet and EC members gave tacit disapproval for military action. By August 22, Lord Butler began to show signs of anxiety over the current policies and began to voice his disapproval to his colleagues. Butler mentioned his apprehension to Salisbury who in turn sent Eden an alarming letter that Cabinet members were concerned over the legality of Britain's case.<sup>116</sup> However, Butler did not directly speak to Eden about his uneasiness until August 28. Perhaps he was afraid to face Eden alone, but the outburst in the Egypt Committee meeting of August 24 would give him the courage to talk four days later.

It was Walter Monckton, the Minister of Defense, who first blatantly expressed his distress over the military option at the committee meeting of August 24. When Macmillan and Eden monotonously began to repeat their belligerent language, Monckton,

worried that Britain's image would suffer by attacking Egypt, fervently responded that an invasion was not a foregone conclusion. The First Sea Lord Mountbatten too voiced his doubts about a successful campaign.<sup>117</sup>

The debate that day began when Eden proposed that once Nasser rejected the Eighteen Power Plan, the strategy was to go to the Security Council next, but a resolution would probably not be approved because the Soviets would veto it. Therefore, the EC decided not to seek a resolution and get caught up in a debate at the U.N. Formal U.N. support would be enough to begin military action. Eden wanted the Ministers to endorse the plan, but when Macmillan proposed that military operations could begin before going to the U.N., Monckton accused Eden and Macmillan of trying to "rush things through" and he could not "push the button" that made war a foregone conclusion. He asked them if they would have the support of the public and the international community if they went in.<sup>118</sup> At this point, Monckton was alone, for Eden and Macmillan had the approval of the other ministers. They rejected Monckton's logic and fired back that Britain's future gave them legitimacy.<sup>119</sup> William Clark, Eden's Press Secretary, noticed that EC members were all searching frantically for a "moral basis" to prove their case to Monckton.<sup>120</sup>

When Monckton was coldshouldered, Butler remained wary and did not speak out that day. Butler, Monckton, and Mountbatten were not as organized as Eden and Macmillan were, for if they were and voiced their discontent earlier they could have organized serious opposition to the plan. Nevertheless, Butler afraid of a backlash only, confided his opposition to a closed circle, Monckton would lose his job as Defense Minister for his opposition to Eden.<sup>121</sup>

It seemed that the very foundation of the Eden's government was shaken by the schisms of the EC. Lennox-Boyd, the Colonial Secretary, said he was "horrified" by the incident of August 24.<sup>122</sup> He told Eden that if division existed in the inner circle, then expectation of unanimous public support was probably nil.<sup>123</sup> He emphatically warned Eden if they did not show resolve in the EC, then Nasser's victory would be complete and Britain, "might as well as government (and indeed as a country) go out of business."<sup>124</sup> Butler thought that Eden alienated Nasser with his rhetoric. By comparing the Egyptian leader to Hitler and affiliating him with fascism, Butler felt that Eden was not making a sincere effort to resolve the conflict diplomatically.<sup>125</sup>

Eden was shaken by Monckton's outburst. He knew there was opposition to an invasion, but he never suspected his own defense minister had such strong feelings. Those who saw Eden having second thoughts wrote him letters to encourage him. Salisbury wrote Eden that it was well known that Monckton had doubt about an invasion, but the problem was, Salisbury revealed, Lord Butler was dissatisfied with the current situation and that there were a number of other younger members of the Cabinet who had not made up their minds.<sup>126</sup> Salisbury went on to tell Eden that unless he presented a resolute opinion these younger Cabinet members would oppose the current plan and the government would fall. Norman Brook gave Eden a blacklist of those ministers who could not be counted on. On the top of the list were the names of Lord Butler and Lord Monckton.<sup>127</sup>

With his inner circle split and the cabinet wavering, the burden was on Eden to find the strength to continue. He decided to try one more effort to nudge the Americans into action. The tactic, he decided, was to play the Communist card.<sup>128</sup> If successful, it

might be enough to push the U.S. to help Britain either militarily or morally. The problem with this course was that the British tried it before during the months prior to the crisis and it was unsuccessful then. Why did Eden think the Americans would go along this time? Furthermore, Eden ignored the Communist threat up until now. His ambassador in Moscow, Sir William Hayter, accused Eden of a lack of concern for the Soviets during the crisis.<sup>129</sup>

As the London Conference closed on August 24 and the attendees waited for word from the Menzies Mission, Eden ruminated on the crisis and the outburst at the EC meeting. His private secretary described him in a terrible state and his temper at an all-time high.<sup>130</sup> That weekend between serious contemplation and temper tantrums, Eden found the time to write Eisenhower. Hoping that the U.S. would go along with his tactic and not allow the Soviets into the Middle East, Eden's message emphasized the Soviet menace to Western oil supplies and the posed threat the region faced from the Kremlin:

I have no doubt the bear is using Nasser, with or without his knowledge, to further his immediate aims. These are, I think, first to dislodge the West from the Middle East, and second to get a foothold in Africa so as to dominate that continent in turn. In this connexion I have seen a reliable report from someone who was present at the lunch which Shepilov...there the Soviet claim was that they "only wanted to see Arab unity in Asia and Africa and the abolition of all foreign bases and exploitation. An agreed unified Arab nation must take its place in the world. The policy is clearly aimed at...our Middle East oil supplies. All this makes me more than ever sure that Nasser must not be allowed to get away with it this

time...It looks as though we shall have a few days until Nasser gives Menzies his final reply. After that we should be in a position to act swiftly.<sup>131</sup>

By using the “bear” analogy Eden hoped to convince Eisenhower that the elimination of Nasser would remove the Russian threat to Western oil interests.

Monday morning, August 27, the EC once more, reviewed its position. They could either go to the U.N. and present the charges against Nasser to the Security Council or ignore the U.N. and risk an international backlash. This all relied on the rejection of the Eighteen Powers Plan. In the end, the EC decided to go to the U.N. and sent a secret message to Eisenhower and Dulles stating that American help was needed in the Security Council.<sup>132</sup> Eisenhower was aware that something was brewing among the British and French, he was getting “bits of information” on British mobilization. Reports, too, were coming in that the French and British were evacuating their nationals from the Middle East.<sup>133</sup>

Eden convoked a full cabinet meeting to force his government to bring about a decision on the matter. He told the Cabinet that the government agreed that Nasser’s actions were a threat to Britain’s existence and that this threat has to be dealt with force if all efforts failed. Eden emphasized that all attempts would be made to find a diplomatic solution to the crisis. Monckton once more voiced his concern that public opinion at home and abroad were against any form of a military response.<sup>134</sup> Ignoring Monckton’s remark, Eden reassured those who were undecided that force would be used only as a last resort. The Cabinet agreed that action in the U.N. Security Council was the wisest option.<sup>135</sup>

The Menzies Mission arrived in Cairo on Sunday, September 2. The following day the Australian Prime Minister met with Nasser. Before meeting Menzies, Nasser saw Loy Henderson, the American ambassador in Cairo. He told Henderson that Ali Sabri, who represented Egypt in the London Conference, told him that Menzies was sent to give Egypt an ultimatum. "I want to reach an agreement." Nasser told Henderson, "Instead you sent this Australian mule to threaten me."<sup>136</sup> Upon meeting with Menzies, Nasser refused the Eighteen Power Proposal. Menzies in turn presented Nasser with the expected ultimatum. Seven days later the negotiations were at a stalemate; Nasser would not budge and Menzies left Cairo in failure.

The day Menzies arrived in Cairo, Eisenhower sent Eden a telegram stating that time should be given for the Menzies Mission to work and if that did not accomplish anything, U.N. action could result. Eisenhower was referring to the message that the EC sent on August 27, asking the U.S. for support in the Security Council. The President spoke frankly, telling Eden that force could not be applied at this time. Referring to the evacuation reports he received earlier he went on to say: "Even now military preparations and civilian evacuations exposed to public view seem to be solidifying support for Nasser...I must tell you frankly that American public opinion flatly rejects the thought of using force..."<sup>137</sup> This worried Eden. He thought that if he could not count on American military support at least he could count on them to support Britain in the U.N. On September 6, he wrote back to Eisenhower:

In the 1930s Hitler established his position by a series of carefully planned movements. These began with the Rhineland and were followed by successive acts of aggression...His actions were tolerated and excused...Similarly the

seizure of the Suez Canal is, we are convinced, the opening gambit in a planned campaign designed by Nasser to expel all Western influence and interests from Arab countries.<sup>138</sup>

Eden went on to make the Hitler/Nasser analogy and told Eisenhower that the Egyptian's ultimate goal is to control the world's oil resources. He warned the President to put down this "Napoleon of the Arabs" before the "ignoble end of our [Britain's] long history"<sup>139</sup>

On September 8, Eisenhower replied to Eden's telegram stating that Eden was applying too much worth to Nasser. He told the Prime Minister that Britain's history was not going to end because Nasser held a canal. The President wrote:

Whenever, on any international question, I find myself differing even slightly from you, I feel a deep compulsion to re-examine my position instantly and carefully. But permit me to suggest that when you use phrases in connection with the Suez affair, like "ignoble end to our history" in describing the possible future of your great country, you are making of Nasser a much more important figure than he is.<sup>140</sup>

However, Eden and the Egypt Committee did not see it that way. They tried to appease Nasser in the past, but Nasser would not be appeased. In their eyes, Nasser always appeared to want more, and he took more. When Eden spoke of "ignoble end," he meant the end of Britain's longstanding position and prestige in both the region and world. Being that it was not the same empire that it was in the eighteenth century, it was still an empire and that made Britain a great power with influence in world affairs. Initially, what Eden and his colleagues feared most was Nasser replacing them in the Middle East.



The situation was so critical that Eden decided to consult the Cabinet about calling back Parliament, which was on recess since late August. There he hoped to present his case and find support. After the Menzies Mission failed, the Egypt Committee approved the decision to go the Security Council with or without American support. That day the Chiefs presented the Committee with the new military plan, “Musketeer Revised,” which called for the capture of Port Said by amphibious assault. Monckton stressed that civilian casualties would be high and timing was important because the Mediterranean climate would soon worsen. It seemed that Monckton was trying to add as much pessimism to the whole venture as he possibly could. Monckton also warned that an attack after October 6 would be futile because the weather in the area would get worse.<sup>141</sup> Therefore, the decision to march on Cairo was thrown out because of the time restraint, and “Musketeer Revised” was Britain’s new Holy Grail.

It became apparent to Eden that the U.S. did not favor U.N. action when Dulles proposed the Users Club Association (later called SCUA or Suez Canal Users Association), which was yet another delay tactic by the Americans. Dulles was vague in what the precise use of SCUA was, but he said it would organize navigation, hire pilots, and supervise the management of the Suez Canal. Dulles assured Lloyd that if Nasser rejected this plan, future terms might not be so appealing. Yet, Dulles was not willing to deny the Canal dues paid by American shipowners.<sup>142</sup> This concerned the British for they foresaw another legerdemain attempt by Dulles to forestall the invasion.

Sir Ivone Kirkpatrick, the Permanent Under-Secretary of State, was furious with the Users Club proposal. He accused Dulles of leading Britain to its demise.<sup>143</sup> The morning before a full Cabinet meeting was to convene on September 11, Eden telephoned

Macmillan to convey his fears about SCUA.<sup>144</sup> That afternoon, Eden's Egypt Committee gathered to discuss the decision to go along with Dulles's new plan. He told his colleagues that they had three courses of action available: (1) military action along the lines recommended by the Joint Chiefs—keeping in mind that the U.S. would oppose the use of force at this time; (2) refer the matter to the Security Council—the U.S. was not in agreement here too; (3) go along with Dulles's SCUA alternative and keep the U.S. on the British side.<sup>145</sup> Eden believed by going along with the Users Club, he would bond the U.S. to Britain's strategy to remove Nasser.<sup>146</sup> Macmillan brought up that economic conditions would worsen if Britain kept delaying. This would “undermine our financial position” he told the Cabinet. Monckton again communicated his discontent with the use of force. He warned if the U.S. did not agree to go along, the Near East would erupt and the Britain would be isolated internationally.<sup>147</sup> The Cabinet decided to endorse SCUA.

The minutes of the Committee that day revealed why it endorsed SCUA. They hoped that by supporting this new initiative they would receive U.S. support in a Security Council resolution later. Moreover, that day the Committee decided to continue mobilization and approved “Musketeer Revised.”<sup>148</sup> Besides, the new military plan adjusted well to the delay for the Chiefs needed more time to prepare the armed forces.

As Eden's problems compounded, yet another one arose. The unity that he found in Parliament on July 27 was waning quickly among all parties. When the recalled members of the House of Commons arrived from their summer recess, Eden told them on September 12, that Egypt was in breach of the 1888 Convention and that Great Britain was coordinating with the French and Americans to resolve this breach. He went on to state that the canal should be placed under international control, but if Egypt refuses to

comply HMG would have no take whatever action it deemed fit “either through the United Nations, or by other means...”<sup>149</sup>

During the debate in Parliament, Eden even failed to unite his own party. The Conservatives raised concerns over the crisis and were split between the doves and hawks.<sup>150</sup> The Liberals and Labour united and wanted Eden to go to the U.N before any sort of military response; the Suez Group wanted military action to begin as soon as possible.<sup>151</sup> Lord Hinchinbrooke, an MP and member of the Suez Group, wanted immediate action and commented that Britain should not be afraid of using “a little gunboat diplomacy.”<sup>152</sup> Julian Amery pressured Eden to act now or all would be lost. Then, the Labor opposition voiced their concern. Gaitskell and his party refused to entertain the thought of action without U.N. approval.<sup>153</sup> Eden addressed Parliament and stressed that should Nasser refuse SCUA, Britain would be justified to use whatever method it deemed fit. At that moment, the Labor benches exploded with chants of “Resign! Resign!”<sup>154</sup>

Trapped between opposition in Parliament and in the EC, on September 14 Eden appeared to lose his nerve.<sup>155</sup> He met with the Suez Group leaders that day and tried to explain the government’s current policy; they were not convinced. A paradox in Eden’s decision-making occurred that day. Perhaps he was feeling the burden of trying to appease the Suez Group. He irrationally decided to antagonize Egypt and turn world opinion against Britain.

Going back to the debate in the Cabinet on September 11, which settled on going along with SCUA, Eden made a *volte-face* and decided to call-up the EC on September 14, to work on a new plan, named “Operation Pileup.” Up to this point in the conflict, the

EC focused on keeping the Canal open for traffic so that British ships would continue to use the Canal for the import of vital commodities, like oil, to Britain. The Anglo-French plan called for all Western pilots working for the Egyptian Canal Authority to walk out. This would leave the Egyptians with forty pilots out of 165 to operate the Canal. Then the Anglo-French ships would overwhelm the Canal with traffic forcing the Canal to close. Harold Watkinson, Minister of Transportation, told the EC that the strategy was to pile-up a “sufficient” amount of ships at both ends of the Canal to demonstrate Egyptian incompetence in operating the Canal.<sup>156</sup> This, Eden thought, would shutdown the Canal and force the international community to act. Once the Canal was shutdown, Eden recommended going to the Security Council to blame Egypt of violating the 1888 Convention for denying the right of passage.<sup>157</sup>

As that deadline for the walkout approached and the world awaited the outcome, Western pilots left their post on September 15 without interference. The anticipated moment came when fifty ships approached the Canal from each end and waited for transit. The chaos that was planned never materialized. The Egyptian pilots managed to run the Canal on their own and a record number of ships passed through the Canal that day. Nasser was ebullient to see his fellow citizens’ accomplish such a feat and declared, “We have emerged from this experience triumphant.”<sup>158</sup> Another pretext had slipped from Eden’s hands.

With the embarrassing failure of “Operation Pileup”, Eden entertained the Second London Conference, which met on September 19. Once again, the eighteen nations that approved the first plan all gathered in London for a dialogue on the Users Association. A couple of days after intense deliberation, the eighteen nations all agreed that SCUA

should manage the Suez Canal. The issue of Canal dues was not settled though. The British wanted canal dues denied to Egypt and paid to SCUA, but Dulles did not want to alienate Nasser before presenting the new proposal to him. Disenchanted with SCUA from the start, the British feared that this would only “crystallize *the status quo*.”<sup>159</sup> Lloyd talked to Dulles after the conference and found him unwilling to discuss the possibility of economic pressure. “Economic sanctions would hurt us more than him,” he told Lloyd. Dulles went on to stress to the Foreign Minister that they could discuss other possibilities short of war and sanctions.<sup>160</sup>

Macmillan left for Washington on September 20 to meet with Eisenhower. Dulles angrily told Macmillan of his disappointment of the French and British decision to go to the U.N. after they agreed to SCUA. As Macmillan tried to get the U.S. to support Britain on the issue of canal dues, Dulles disclosed to the Chancellor that the U.S. could not force shipowners to pay to the Users Association; in addition, the Secretary of State emphasized that Britain and France were ‘courting disaster’ by going to the U.N. and as to the use of force, Dulles told Macmillan that the U.S. would not hear of it at this time.<sup>161</sup> Macmillan sent a telegram to London stating that they had to act quickly, but did not mention that the Americans had strong reservation towards going to the U.N.<sup>162</sup>

Meanwhile, the French decided at the beginning of September not to follow the American line. As early as September 1, the French decided that their pretext for war would include Israeli participation. Moshe Dayan received a communiqué from Israel’s military attaché in Paris that the French wanted Israel to participate in an offensive operation against Nasser.<sup>163</sup> Upon hearing this news David Ben-Gurion, the Israeli Prime Minister, did not share Dayan’s enthusiasm. Because of Eden’s decisions in the past to

appease Nasser and evacuate the Suez Canal Zone, Ben-Gurion viewed the current crisis as Eden's own making. To Ben-Gurion, Eden's Anglo-Egyptian Base Settlement was an ill-advised solution; in addition, his vacillation during the current crisis upheld the Israeli Prime Minister's belief that Eden could not show resolve when it was needed.<sup>164</sup> The decision by the French to use Israel in an attack on Egypt sounded similar to Macmillan's recommendation to the Egypt Committee in late August. During those debates in the EC, Eden refused to listen to Macmillan's advice because he did not want to alienate his Arab allies, but by late September, desperate as pressure mounting from all sides, Eden now accepted the use of Israel in a military campaign.<sup>165</sup>

In September and October, the Egypt Committee would not meet as often as it did in late July and early August. In the fall of 1956, the discussions in the EC mainly dealt with the topics of U.N. action and military planning against Egypt. The reason that EC did not convene as often as it did was probably due to the fact of the controversy of August 24. On the other hand, Eden learned from conversations with Pineau about the Israeli option and Eden probably wanted to keep this within a closed circle of loyal ministers—mainly Lloyd, Macmillan and Salisbury. Lloyd was sent to Paris in early October to compromise on the course to take. The EC was never informed of Eden's revised intentions to include Israeli collusion; in fact, from October 17 until November 1 the EC did not convene. During this hiatus, Eden and Lloyd were busy holding talks in France.

When the Egypt Committee met on October 1, they discussed the approach Britain would present to the United Nations Security Council, but collusion with Israel was not mentioned that day. At one point during the conversation the point was brought

up that if Israel attacked Jordan, Britain was obliged by the Anglo-Jordanian Defense Treaty to protect Amman, so the EC decided to warn Israel not to attack the Hashemite Kingdom.<sup>166</sup>

At a full Cabinet meeting on October 3, Eden revealed that the Israelis intended to attack the Egyptians, but he stated nothing about collusion with Israel to his Cabinet. Eden suggested to though that, “the Jews had come up with an offer,” to attack Egypt.<sup>167</sup> The Cabinet members agreed that this would give them the pretext they needed to attack Egypt. When the Egypt Committee met on October 8 to discuss the Israeli option, Eden was absent and had to be hospitalized due to his illness. Macmillan seemed more aggressive towards Egypt and the U.S. during Eden’s leave. He demanded that Lloyd pressure Dulles and Eisenhower to accept that canal payments go to SCUA only.<sup>168</sup>

Eden and Lloyd arrived in France in late October to find out that the Israelis were already there. In the Parisian suburb of Sèvres, Pineau revealed the invasion plans to the Israelis. As soon as Ben-Gurion heard that the plan called on Israel to attack Egypt while Britain and France presented the ultimatum to the belligerents for withdrawal from the Canal Zone, he refused to let Israel play the antagonistic role while Britain and France appeared as the peaceful protagonists.<sup>169</sup> Moshe Dayan assuaged Ben-Gurion’s fears though when he announced the strategic boons of the invasion to Israel.<sup>170</sup> The tripartite talks ended with the Sèvres Protocol.<sup>171</sup> The tripartite powers agreed that Israel would start the attack on October 28.

When the Israelis attacked Egypt on Monday, October 29, the U.S. was totally caught off guard. Since U.S. intelligence reports indicated that Israel was massing troops on the Jordanian border, Eisenhower expected an Israeli raid on Jordan.<sup>172</sup> Eden’s blunder

was he was still indecisive on what course of action to take at that crucial moment. Although the invasion fleet was ready to go for sometime in late October, Eden did not order the invasion fleet to leave Malta until after the Israeli attack hoping to avoid collusion charges. This would delay the invasion forces a week before they arrived at the scene.

As the first reports of bombs dropping on Egypt came in, Eisenhower wanted to go the U.N. to demand an immediate ceasefire. Dulles, unaware yet of the collusion, proposed an Anglo-French-American sponsored resolution condemning Israel, but the French and British ignored his invitation. On October 30, the U.S. decided to press the issue alone in the Security Council. The U.S. presented the resolution condemning Israeli action. The British and French vetoed the American resolution. When the Soviets introduced their own resolution and the British and French vetoed this too, Eisenhower's fears of Anglo-French participation in the attack were realized. On November 4, Eisenhower decided to go to the General Assembly to introduce a resolution for a ceasefire.

By November 4, the Israelis accomplished their mission objectives and were ready to agree to the ceasefire. That Sunday, Lloyd walked through Carlton Gardens at Number 10 and found Eden haggard, but calm. In the garden that morning, the two Ministers reflected on the crisis and the American response. Aware that he could either accept the U.N. ceasefire or ignore it, Eden told Lloyd that he intended to go in. They both agreed that the months of preparing all came to this final decision, "we were in complete agreement that having got this far, it would be wrong to call off the operation," Lloyd later said.<sup>173</sup>



Two meetings of the EC were held that day one in the afternoon at 12:30 and another at 3:30 P.M. The first meeting discussed the U.N. resolutions that were presented that day. On the agenda also was the military operation. Head, who recently visited the forces in Cyprus, presented a report on Israeli progress. He told the EC that the Egyptian Air Force was defunct and that the amphibious units were on their way from Malta. Egyptian forces were retreating to Cairo either because they wanted to take advantage of Britain's reluctance to bomb civilian centers or because Nasser felt threatened and needed the forces for protection.<sup>174</sup> At the second EC meeting held at 3:30 P.M. it was reported that the U.N. wanted Britain's answer to the ceasefire resolution passed in the General Assembly that day. Eden's dilemma was he could comply with the U.N and stop the invasion force before it arrived or he could continue as planned and face the consequences. The terms were presented to the EC. Also mentioned was Israel and Egypt were willing to comply with the ceasefire ordered by the U.N. General Assembly.<sup>175</sup> When oil sanctions were mentioned, Macmillan frantically threw up his arms and yelled, "Oil Sanctions! That finishes it."<sup>176</sup> Once more, the EC was divided, but now its most hawkish member, Macmillan, became squeamish too.

Carrying signs and chanting to a crescendo against Eden's belligerence, the protesters in Trafalgar Square were heard in the Cabinet room where Eden was presenting three courses of action to his colleagues.<sup>177</sup> He told them that they could either allow the invasion to take place and turn the Canal Zone over to a U.N. sponsored force after British troops established themselves; 2) suspend action for twenty-four hours; or 3) give the combatants time to accept the U.N. ceasefire and call off the whole invasion. The Cabinet was split, but a majority of the Ministers wanted to go for the first option.

Monckton was the only member of the Cabinet to choose the third option.<sup>178</sup> The Anglo-French invasion began the next day on November 5, 1956.

The denouement of the British Empire was played out on Monday November 5, 1956. In the past few days before the invasion, Eden did everything he could to avoid contact with the Americans; at the U.N. Lloyd was instructed to ignore American demands for a ceasefire. Despite public discourse and American indignation, British paratroopers land in Suez that Monday. Two days later the Egypt Committee convened to discuss the American outcry at the U.N. and they reviewed the Argentina Resolution, which called for a ceasefire and a separation of combatants by a U.N. force. The only drawback to the resolution was that it excluded Anglo-French forces from participating in the peacekeeping. Speaking to the EC by telephone, Lloyd told his colleagues that their best choice was to accept the terms in principle, but abstain from voting on the resolution. They unanimously agreed with the Foreign Secretary's recommendation.<sup>179</sup>

Many in the Tory party were perplexed and outraged. They wondered why Eden would chose to cease combat a few days after the invasion began. Besides, the invasion force did not meet its objective of taking the Canal. Churchill commenting on the withdrawal told Head that, "I am not sure I should have dared to start; but I am sure I should not have dared to stop"<sup>180</sup> The spectacle of over one hundred thousand men setting off for a war which lasted barely a day and then returning has few parallels in the long gallery of military imbecility. The "grand old Duke of York" at least got up the hill.<sup>181</sup>

The reason Eden and the EC had a change of heart and decided to cease all hostilities was due to American financial pressure. Finding themselves ignored by the British at the U.N., Eisenhower and Dulles decided to hurt Eden and Macmillan were

they felt it most, their pocketbook. Macmillan was the first to wave the white flag. He informed Eden that Britain had to borrow money to keep the sterling from losing its value. As a result, the Bank of England lost \$50 million in two days.<sup>182</sup> He told Eden that the run on the sterling would cause the British economy to collapse and the whole expedition was not worth the cost of the continuing financial loss. Macmillan also recommended mending relations with the Americans since they needed to borrow money from the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.<sup>183</sup>

On November 15, Eden asked the Egypt Committee for recommendations to approaching the Americans. Eden was worried that Americans seemed to show a lack of concern for the present situation. He pointed out that Eisenhower did not see that the real threat was the Soviet Union.<sup>184</sup> However, Eisenhower was indifferent to Eden's feelings. When Eden decided to ask his colleagues in the immediate days after the conflict was over whether he should continue in office or leave, they all answered with an astounding no; Eden's isolation was complete.<sup>185</sup> On January 9, 1957, he resigned. He later wrote that the U.S. was in part responsible for the failure in Suez. By refusing to aid Britain during the Suez Crisis, Eden argued, the U.S. threatened to dissolve Western cohesion and allow the Soviet Union to spread its influence.<sup>186</sup>

Anthony Eden's obsession not to let "Nasser get away with it" caused his downfall. Eden did not understand Arab Nationalism nor did he care about Nasser's views on the subject. To Nasser, Eden's policies embodied a continuation of centuries of exploitation and occupation by foreign powers.<sup>187</sup> Nasser saw an opportunity to rid his nation of this subjugation and did so in late July of 1956 by nationalizing the Suez Canal. Eden, wanting to save his nation from being humiliated and becoming a second-rate

power, tried to prevent Nasser from keeping the Suez Canal and failed. When Nasser nationalized the Suez Canal in late July of 1956, the newly formed Egypt Committee engaged in excessive groupthink and that was its undoing. The EC concentrated all its efforts on a tough military response. The Americans sought a diplomatic solution to the crisis and tried to force the Eden government to do the same. The Egypt Committee followed the American course, but this was token diplomacy. This stratagem gave Britain the time it needed to prepare and fine-tune a military operation, as well as bring France and Israel into collusion for the military operation. The EC's failure to act quickly and decisively and its excessive secrecy not only led to the loss of the United States as a potential ally in the military response, but also to the decline of British public support for military action. "Group think" worked in the early weeks of the Suez Crisis; however, as the crisis dragged on and weeks passed by before a military campaign was staged, agreement within the EC for the military option also imploded and critics, in the Egypt Committee, to Eden's policy began to voice their concerns and doubts for a successful military campaign; moreover, Eden began to voice their concerns and doubts for a successful military campaign; moreover, Eden began to vacillate and his iron will to oust Nasser became uncertain too. As the failure of the invasion of Egypt became a forgone conclusion. Eden still went ahead, the invasion failed and weeks after the botched intervention he resigned as Prime Minister in ignominy. He lost his job and Britain its prestige as a great power.

---

## Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> The *Times*, London, July 22, 1911.
- <sup>2</sup> Selwyn Lloyd, *Suez 1956: A Personal Account* (London: Jonathan Cape Ltd, 1978), 85; this was not a fixed list sometimes other ministers attended.
- <sup>3</sup> The Middle East Defense Agreement initially proposed to look and work like NATO. The defense pact was to prevent Communist Russia from infiltrating the Middle East and threatening Western oil supplies. See Douglas Little, *American Orientalism: the United States and the Middle East since 1945* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 129-130; Jalal Ayesha, "Towards the Baghdad Pact: South Asia and the Middle East in the Cold War, 1947-1955," *The International Review*, Vol. 2. (August, 1989), 411.
- <sup>4</sup> Andrew Wheatcroft, *Infidel's: A History of the Conflict between Christendom and Islam* (New York: Random House, 2003), 343.
- <sup>5</sup> Keith Kyle, *Suez: Britain's End of Empire in the Middle East* (London: I.B. Tauris Publishers, 2003), 157.
- <sup>6</sup> Ismailia was the major city situated on the Suez Canal. Rioting broke out because of the of resentment of the British and their harsh treatment towards Egyptians. Britain reinforced the garrison in the Canal Zone and their numbers swelled to 80,000, who in turn became tied down in a guerrilla war.
- <sup>7</sup> Mohamed Heikal, *The Cairo Documents* (Garden City: Doubleday and Company, 1973), 72.
- <sup>8</sup> Captain Charles Waterhouse, "The Waterhouse Theory." WM Roger Louis and Roger Owen eds., *Suez 1956: The Crisis and its Consequences* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 64.
- <sup>9</sup> Jalal, "Towards the Baghdad Pact, 411.
- <sup>10</sup> Macmillan, *Riding the Storm* (London: Macmillan and Co Ltd, 1971), 185.
- <sup>11</sup> Little, *American Orientalism*, 129.
- <sup>12</sup> Lord Butler, *The Art of the Possible: The Memoirs of Lord Butler*, (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1972), 185.
- <sup>13</sup> Eden, *Full Circle*, 374.
- <sup>14</sup> Chester L. Cooper, *The Lions Last Roar: Suez 1956* (New York: Harper & Row, 1978), 86.
- <sup>15</sup> David Dutton, *Anthony Eden: A Life and Reputation* (London: Arnold, 1997), 379.
- <sup>16</sup> Memorandum by the Director of the Office of Near East Affairs (Wilkins), March 14, 1956, U.S. State Department, *Foreign Relations of the United States 1955-1957*, Volume XV: *The Arab-Israeli Dispute* January 1-July 26, 1956 (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 1990), 353-357 [hereinafter cited as FRUS].
- <sup>17</sup> Message From Prime Minister Eden to President Eisenhower, London, March 15, 1956, FRUS, 1955-1957, 15: 364-365.
- <sup>18</sup> Nasser, "The Egyptian Revolution," *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 41 (January 1955): 199-209.
- <sup>19</sup> Nuri was Nasser's main rival in the Middle East. Both competed for leadership in the Arab World and both wanted some form of a united federal system for the region. Nuri saw his vision embodied in the Baghdad Pact and Nasser saw his embodied in the United Arab Republic.
- <sup>20</sup> Selwyn Lloyd, *Suez 1956*, 74.
- <sup>21</sup> Eden, *Full Circle*, 472.
- <sup>22</sup> The Prime Minister's residency equivalent to the White House.
- <sup>23</sup> The American Ambassador to Britain Winthrop Aldrich left for a short vacation the day of Nasser's announcement. See Lloyd, *Suez 1956*, 75; also Telegram to the Department of State, July 27, 1956, U.S. State Department, *Foreign Relations of the United States 1955-1957*, Volume 25: *Suez Crisis* July 26, 1956 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1990), 3-5 [herein site as FRUS].
- <sup>24</sup> Neff, *Warriors At Suez*, 276.
- <sup>25</sup> Kyle, *Suez*, 136.
- <sup>26</sup> Dwight D. Eisenhower, *The White House Years: Waging Peace* (New York: Doubleday and Company, 1965), 35.
- <sup>27</sup> Cole C. Kingseed, *Eisenhower And the Suez Crisis 1956* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1995), 43.
- <sup>28</sup> Alistair Horne, *Harold Macmillan* vol. 1, (New York: Viking, 1989), 411.
- <sup>29</sup> Lloyd, *Suez*, 75.
- <sup>30</sup> Eden, *Full Circle*, 479.

- 
- <sup>31</sup> Macmillan, *Riding the Storm*, 101.
- <sup>32</sup> Hugh Thomas, *The Suez Affair* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1966), 32.
- <sup>33</sup> Eden, *Full Circle*, 478.
- <sup>34</sup> *Ibid.* 474.
- <sup>35</sup> *Ibid.* 475
- <sup>36</sup> *Ibid.* 476
- <sup>37</sup> Eden to President Eisenhower, July 27, 1956, FRUS, 1956-1957, 25:10.
- <sup>38</sup> Eden to Eisenhower, March 15, 1956, Peter Boyle, ed., *The Eden-Eisenhower Correspondence, 1955-1957* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 123.
- <sup>39</sup> PRO: CAB 134/1216; Egypt Committee (56) 1, July 27, 1956
- <sup>40</sup> PRO: CAB 134/1216; Egypt Committee (56) 1, July 27, 1956
- <sup>41</sup> Eden to Eisenhower, July 27, 1956, 1956-1957, FRUS, 25:10.
- <sup>42</sup> PRO: CAB 134/1216; Egypt Committee (56) 2, July 28, 1956
- <sup>43</sup> PRO: CAB 134/1216; Egypt Committee (56) 2, July 28, 1956
- <sup>44</sup> PRO: CAB 134/1216; Egypt Committee (56) 2, July 28, 1956; also see Sampson, *Macmillan*, 112. This was the first recorded account of suggested Israeli participation in military action against Egypt by Macmillan. He would continue to push this on the Egypt Committee until finally the EC decided to use Israel in a military attack on Egypt.
- <sup>45</sup> Wiltshire is a County in southern England where Eden owned a vacation home.
- <sup>46</sup> *Ibid.* 146
- <sup>47</sup> Lloyd, *Suez* 1956, 87.
- <sup>48</sup> Eden, *Full Circle*, 478.
- <sup>49</sup> *Ibid.* 401.
- <sup>50</sup> Eden, *Full Circle*, 483.
- <sup>51</sup> *Ibid.* 484.
- <sup>52</sup> Lloyd, *Suez* 1956, 88.
- <sup>53</sup> PRO: CAB 134/1216; Egypt Committee (56) 3, July 30, 1956.
- <sup>54</sup> PRO: CAB 134/1216; Egypt Committee (56) 3, July 30, 1956.
- <sup>55</sup> PRO: CAB 134/1216; Egypt Committee (56) 3, July 30, 1956
- <sup>56</sup> Macmillan, *Riding the Storm*, 110.
- <sup>57</sup> R.R. James, *Anthony Eden* (London: Macmillan, 1986), 475.
- <sup>58</sup> Eisenhower, *Waging Peace*, 40.
- <sup>59</sup> *Ibid.* 37.
- <sup>60</sup> Epstein, *British Politics in the Suez Crisis* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1964), 57.
- <sup>61</sup> PRO: CAB 134/1216; Egypt Committee (56) 4, July 30, 1956.
- <sup>62</sup> PRO: CAB 134/1216; Egypt Committee (56) 4, July 30, 1956.
- <sup>63</sup> PRO: CAB 134/1216; Egypt Committee (56) 4, July 30, 1956.
- <sup>64</sup> Eden refers in his memoirs to the meeting Lloyd held with Pineau and Murphy, but these two crucial days are skipped over. See Eden, *Full Circle*, 484.
- <sup>65</sup> Robert Murphy, *Diplomat Among Warriors* (Garden City: Doubleday & Company, 1964), 380-463.
- <sup>66</sup> Macmillan, *Riding the Storm*, 105.
- <sup>67</sup> PRO: CAB 128/1216; Egypt Committee (56) 3, July 30, 1956. also see Lord Butler, *The Art of the Possible: The Memoirs of Lord Butler* (Boston, Gambit, 1971), 187, for his account of being ill that day.
- <sup>68</sup> Macmillan, *Riding the Storm*, 103-104.
- <sup>69</sup> Balance of Power politics was a school of thought within the British government that advocated keeping the status quo in the world among Great Powers; for example, during the Crimean War, Britain sided with the Ottoman Empire in order to keep Tsarist Russia from gaining too much power and competing with Britain in the future. This policy eventually led to the First World War.
- <sup>70</sup> Murphy, *Diplomat Among Warriors*, 467.
- <sup>71</sup> Gunboat diplomacy was backed by the threat of attack. It was first developed in the mid-nineteenth century. It first know use was by Mathew Perry in 1853, when he opened Japan for commercial trade. Henry John Temple (Lord) Palmerston, who was Prime Minster of Britain in the 1850s, used a naval blockade of Greece in order to compensate a British subject for his loss of his property
- <sup>72</sup> The Chancellor of the Exchequer's residence.
- <sup>73</sup> Murphy, *Diplomat Among Warriors*, 463.

- 
- <sup>74</sup> PRO: CAB 134/1216; Egypt Committee (56) 6, July 31, 1956
- <sup>75</sup> Lloyd, *Suez 1956*, 94.
- <sup>76</sup> National Archives Online, Catalogue Reference: T/273/380, [www.documentsonline.gov.uk/download.asp?T=345544&S=I/05/00348994Y&E](http://www.documentsonline.gov.uk/download.asp?T=345544&S=I/05/00348994Y&E); All senior ministers in the Prime Minister's office had their own consulting cabinet. These worked similar to the PM full Cabinet or the Egypt Committee.
- <sup>77</sup> PRO: CAB 134/1216; Egypt Committee (56) 3, July 30, 1956, through PRO: CAB 134/1216; Egypt Committee (56) 8, August 1, 1956.
- <sup>78</sup> Kyle, *Suez*, 156-157.
- <sup>79</sup> PRO: CAB 134/1216; Egypt Committee (56) 8, August 1, 1956.
- <sup>80</sup> Selwyn Ilan Troen, and Moshe Shemesh, eds., *The Suez-Sinai Crisis 1956* (New York, Columbia University Press, 1990), 21.
- <sup>81</sup> Ibid
- <sup>82</sup> There is evidence to suggest that Nasser knew this at the start of the Suez Crisis. See Mohammad Heikal, *The Cairo Documents: The Inside Story of Nasser and His Relationship with World Leaders, Rebels and Statesmen*. (New York: Doubleday and Company, 1973), 88. Heikal gives an account of what Nasser did to decide whether it was the right time for a British invasion. After carefully weighing his options, his Cabinet decided that if the British could not respond in the early days of the conflict, than a military response was unlikely.
- <sup>83</sup> PRO: CAB 128/1216; Egypt Committee (56) 7, August 1, 1956.
- <sup>84</sup> Lloyd, *Suez 1956*, 98.
- <sup>85</sup> Eden, *Full Circle*, 487.
- <sup>86</sup> Lloyd, *Suez 1956*, 98.
- <sup>87</sup> Eisenhower, *Waging Peace*, 664-665.
- <sup>88</sup> Peter Boyle, ed. *The Eden-Eisenhower Correspondence*, 156-157.
- <sup>89</sup> Eden, *Full Circle*, 487.
- <sup>90</sup> Ibid, 488.
- <sup>91</sup> Ibid, 488.
- <sup>92</sup> Lloyd, *Suez 1956*, 100.
- <sup>93</sup> Eden, *Full Circle*, 490.
- <sup>94</sup> *The Times*, "Impressive Unity in the Commons." August 3, 1956
- <sup>95</sup> Lloyd, *Suez 1956*, 105.
- <sup>96</sup> Macmillan, *Riding the Storm*, 107.
- <sup>97</sup> PRO: CAB 134/1216; Egypt Committee (56) 9, August 2, 1956.
- <sup>98</sup> Scott Lucas, *Suez: The Lion's Last Roar* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996), 54.
- <sup>99</sup> Dutton, *Eden*, 396.
- <sup>100</sup> Kyle, *Suez*, 174.
- <sup>101</sup> Eden to Eisenhower, August 5, 1956, Boyle ed., *The Eden-Eisenhower Correspondence*, 158.
- <sup>102</sup> PRO: CAB 134/1216; Egypt Committee (56) 11, August 7, 1956.
- <sup>103</sup> Lucas, *Suez: The Lion's Last Roar*, 55.
- <sup>104</sup> Butler, *The Art of the Possible*, 194.
- <sup>105</sup> Macmillan, *Riding the Storm*, 174.
- <sup>106</sup> Dutton, *Anthony Eden*, 423.
- <sup>107</sup> Eden, *Full Circle*, 495-496.
- <sup>108</sup> Butler, *The Art of the Possible*, 188.
- <sup>109</sup> Ibid. 189.
- <sup>110</sup> Kyle, *Suez*, 172.
- <sup>111</sup> PRO: CAB 134/1216; Egypt Committee (56) 14, August 10, 1956.
- <sup>112</sup> Lloyd, *Suez 1956*, 115.
- <sup>113</sup> Eighteen nations (Australia, Denmark, Ethiopia, France, Federal Germany, Iran, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Pakistan, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, United Kingdom, and the United States) endorsed the agreement thus the name.
- <sup>114</sup> Kyle, *Suez*, 190-191.
- <sup>115</sup> Dutton, *Anthony Eden*, 397
- <sup>116</sup> Ibid. 399-400.

- 
- <sup>117</sup> PRO: CAB 134/1216; Egypt Committee (56) 21, August 24, 1956.
- <sup>118</sup> Kyle, *Suez*, 204
- <sup>119</sup> PRO: CAB 128/1216; Egypt Committee (56) 21, August 24, 1956
- <sup>120</sup> Dutton, *Anthony Eden*, 401.
- <sup>121</sup> Kyle, *Suez*, 204-205
- <sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*, 401.
- <sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*, 204.
- <sup>124</sup> As quoted in Dutton, *Anthony Eden*, 402.
- <sup>125</sup> Butler, *The Art of the Possible*, 188.
- <sup>126</sup> Kyle, *Suez*, 204.
- <sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>128</sup> Pearson, *Sir Anthony Eden and the Suez Crisis*, 56.
- <sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*, 57.
- <sup>130</sup> Dutton, *Anthony Eden*, 403.
- <sup>131</sup> Eden to Eisenhower, August 27, 1956, Boyle ed., *The Eden-Eisenhower Correspondence*, 160-161.
- <sup>132</sup> Kyle, *Suez*, 208.
- <sup>133</sup> Eisenhower, *Waging Peace*, 48.
- <sup>134</sup> PRO: CAB 128/30, Cabinet Meeting 62 (56), August 28, 1956.
- <sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>136</sup> Mohammad Heikal, *Cutting the Lion's Tale Cutting the Lions Tail: Suez Through Egyptian Eyes* (London: André Deutsch, 1986), 149.
- <sup>137</sup> Eisenhower to Eden, September 2, 1956, Boyle ed., *The Eden-Eisenhower Correspondence*, 161-164.
- <sup>138</sup> Eden to Eisenhower, September 6, 1956, FRUS, 1955-1957, 25: 400-403
- <sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>140</sup> Eisenhower to Eden, September 8, 1956, FRUS, 1955-1956, 25: 435-436
- <sup>141</sup> PRO: CAB 134/1216; Egypt Committee (56) 26, September 10, 1956
- <sup>142</sup> Anthony Nutting, *No End of a Lesson: The Story of Suez* (New York: Clarkson N. Potter, Inc., 1967), 61.
- <sup>143</sup> Lloyd, *Suez 1956*, 130.
- <sup>144</sup> Macmillan, *Riding the Storm*, 121.
- <sup>145</sup> Lloyd, *Suez 1956*, 132-133.
- <sup>146</sup> PRO: CAB 134/1216; Egypt Committee (56) 26, September 10, 1956; see also Eden, 536.
- <sup>147</sup> Lloyd, *Suez 1956*, 133.
- <sup>148</sup> PRO: CAB 134/1216. EC (56) 26, September 10, 1956.
- <sup>149</sup> Eden, *Full Circle*, 538.
- <sup>150</sup> New York Times, *Eden Talk Fails to Unify British*, September 13, 1956.
- <sup>151</sup> Nutting, *No End of a Lesson*, 62.
- <sup>152</sup> As quoted in, Epstein, *British Politics in the Suez Crisis*, 47.
- <sup>153</sup> Nutting, *No End of a Lesson*, 63.
- <sup>154</sup> Eisenhower, *Waging Peace*, 673.
- <sup>155</sup> Churchill, *The Rise and Fall of Sir Anthony Eden* (London: Macgibbon & Kee, 1959), 252
- <sup>156</sup> PRO: CAB 134/1216; Egypt Committee (56) 28, September 14, 1956
- <sup>157</sup> PRO: CAB 134/1216; Egypt Committee (56) 28, September 14, 1956
- <sup>158</sup> Kyle, *Suez*, 250.
- <sup>159</sup> Nutting, *No End of a Lesson*, 64.
- <sup>160</sup> Lloyd, *Suez 1956*, 145-146.
- <sup>161</sup> Macmillan, *Riding the Storm*, 135-136.
- <sup>162</sup> Lucas, *Britain and Suez: The Lions Last Roar*, 68.
- <sup>163</sup> Moshe Dayan, *Diary of the Sinai Campaign* (Jerusalem: Steimatzky's Agency Limited, 1965), 20.
- <sup>164</sup> Selwyn Han, ed. *Ben-Gurion's Diary: The Suez-Sinai Campaign* (New York, Columbia University Press, 1990), 298.
- <sup>165</sup> PRO: CAB 134/1216; Egypt Committee (56) 31, September 25, 1956
- <sup>166</sup> PRO: CAB 134/1216; Egypt Committee (56) 32, October 1, 1956
- <sup>167</sup> Hugh Thomas, *The Suez Affair* (London: Weildenfeld and Nicolson, 1966), 96
- <sup>168</sup> PRO: CAB 134/1216; Egypt Committee (56) 33, October 8, 1956



- 
- <sup>169</sup> Ben-Gurion, *Ben-Gurion's Diary*, 303.
- <sup>170</sup> Dayan, *Diary of the Sinai Campaign*, 62.
- <sup>171</sup> The faith of the Middle East seemed connected to Sévres. Another agreement called the Treaty of Sévres was signed on August 20, 1920 there. The agreement ended the Ottoman Empire.
- <sup>172</sup> Stephen Ambrose, *Eisenhower: Soldier and President* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1990), 423.
- <sup>173</sup> Lloyd, *Suez 1956*, 205.
- <sup>174</sup> PRO: CAB 134/1216, EC (56) 39, November 4, 1956.
- <sup>175</sup> PRO: CAB 134/1216, EC (56) 40, November 4, 1956.
- <sup>176</sup> Lloyd, *Suez 1956*, 206.
- <sup>177</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>178</sup> PRO: CAB, 128/30, CM 79 (56) November 4, 1956.
- <sup>179</sup> PRO: CAB 134/1216, EC (56) 41, November 7, 1956.
- <sup>180</sup> Thomas, *The Suez Affair*, 164.
- <sup>181</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>182</sup> Diane Kunz, *The Economic Diplomacy of the Suez Crisis* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1991), 131.
- <sup>183</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>184</sup> PRO: CAB 134/1216, EC (56) 44, November 15, 1956.
- <sup>185</sup> Kyle, *Suez*, 518-519.
- <sup>186</sup> Anthony Eden, "The Slender Margins of Safety," *Foreign Affairs*, 39 (January 1961): 167-173.
- <sup>187</sup> Gamal Abdul Nasser, *The Philosophy of the Revolution* (Washington: Public Affairs Press, 1955), 37.

---

## Bibliography

### I. Primary Sources

#### 1. Archival Sources

Public Records Office, Kew, London:

CAB 128/30

CAB 128/1216

#### Online Document:

National Archives Online, Catalogue Reference 19.

[www.documentsonline.gov.uk/download.asp](http://www.documentsonline.gov.uk/download.asp)

----- National Archives Online, Catalogue Reference:T/273/380,

[www.documentsonline.gov.uk/download.asp](http://www.documentsonline.gov.uk/download.asp)

#### 2. Printed Sources

##### United States:

U.S. State Department. *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1955-1957: vol. XV: The Arab-Israeli Dispute*. U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, 1990.

-----, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1955-1957: vol. XVI: Suez Crisis July 26-December 1956*. U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, 1990.

#### 3. Memoirs, Dairies, and Letters:

Boyle, Peter, ed. *The Eden-Eisenhower Correspondence, 1955-1957*. Chapel Hill: The North Carolina University Press, 2005.

Butler, Lord. *The Art of the Possible: The Memoirs of Lord Butler*. London: Hamish Hamilton, 1972.

Cooper, Chester L. *The Lions Last Roar: Suez, 1956*. New York: Harper and Rows, 1965.

---

Eden, Anthony. *Full Circle: The Memoirs of Anthony Eden*. Boston: The Riverside Press, 1960.

Eisenhower, Dwight D. *Waging Peace: The White House Years 1956-1961*. New York: Doubleday and Company, 1965.

Ferrell, Robert H., ed. *The Eisenhower Diaries*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1981.

Dayan, Moshe. *Diary of the Sinai Campaign*. Tel Aviv: Steimatzky Agency Limited, 1965.

Heikal, Mohamed. *The Cairo Documents: The Inside Story of Nasser and His Relationship with World Leaders, Rebels and Statesmen*. New York: Doubleday and Company, 1973.

----- . *Cutting the Lions Tail: Suez Through Egyptian Eyes*. London: André Deutsch, 1986.

Ilan, Selwyn, ed. *Ben-Gurion's Diary: The Suez-Sinai Campaign*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1990.

Lloyd, Selwyn, *Suez 1956: A Personal Account*. London: Jonathan Cape Ltd, 1978.

Macmillan, Harold. *Riding the Storm 1956-1959*. London: Macmillan and Co Ltd, 1971.

Murphy, Robert. *Diplomat Among Warriors*. Garden City: Doubleday & Company, 1964.

Nasser, Gamal Abdul. *The Philosophy of the Revolution*. Washington: Public Affairs Press, 1955.

Nutting, Anthony. *No End of a Lesson: the Story of Suez*. New York: Clarkson N Potter, Inc. 1967.

## **II. Secondary Sources:**

### **1. Books:**

Ambrose E. Stephen. *Eisenhower: Soldier and President*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1990.

Churchill, Randolph. *The Rise and Fall of Sir Anthony Eden*. London: Macgibbon & Kee, 1959.

---

Dutton, David. *Anthony Eden: A Life and Reputation*. London: Arnold, 1997.

Epstein, Leon D. *British Politics in the Suez Crisis*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1964.

Ferguson Niall, *Empire: The Rise and Demise of the British World Order and the Lessons for Global Power*. New York: Basic Books, 2002.

Freiberger, Steven Z. *Dawn Over Suez: The Rise of American Power in the Middle East, 1953-1957*. Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 1992.

Horne, Alistair. *Harold Macmillan*. New York: Viking, 1989. vol. 1

James, Lawrence. *The Rise and Fall of the British Empire*. New York: St. Martin's Griffin, 1994.

James, R. R. *Anthony Eden*, London, 1986.

Janis, Irving L. and Leon Mann, *Decision Making: A Psychological Analysis of Conflict, Choice, and Commitment*, New York: Free Press, 1977.

Kingseed, Cole C. *Eisenhower and the Suez Crisis of 1956*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1995.

Kyle, Keith. *Suez: Britain's End of Empire in the Middle East*. London: St. Martin Press, 1992.

Kunz, Diane. *The Economic Diplomacy of the Suez Crisis*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1991.

Little, Douglas. *American Orientalism: The United States and the Middle East Since 1945*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002.

Louis, WM Roger and Roger Own, eds. *Suez 1956: The Crisis and Its Consequence*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989.

Lucas, Scott, ed. *Britain and Suez: The Lion's Last Roar*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996.

Neff, Donald. *Warriors at Suez*. New York: The Linden Press/ Simon & Schuster, 1981.

---

Pearson, Jonathan. *Sir Anthony Eden and the Suez Crisis*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003.

Sampson, Anthony. *Macmillan: A Study of Ambiguity*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1967.

Thomas, Hugh. *The Suez Affair*. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1966.

Troen, Selwyn Ilan and Moshe Shemesh, Editors, *The Suez-Sinai Crisis 1956*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1990.

Wheatcroft, Andrew *Infidel's: A History of the Conflict between Christendom and Islam*. New York: Random House, 2003.

Yergin, Daniel. *The Prize: The Epic Quest for Oil, Money, & Power*. New York: Free Press 1991.

#### **Articles**

Jalal, Ayesha, "Towards the Baghdad Pact: South Asia and Middle East Defense in the Cold War, 1947-1955," *The International History Review*, 11. (August, 1989), 411.

New York Times. September 13, 1956.

New York Times. August 3, 1956.

Aldrich, Winthrop. "The Suez Crisis: A Footnote to History," *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 46 (April 1967): 541.

Eden, Anthony. "The Slender Margins of Safety," *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 39 (October 1962): 165-173

Nasser, Gamal Abdul, "The Egyptian Revolution," *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 41 (January 1955): 199-209.

---

## VITA

Alexander Shelby grew up in Eustis, Florida, a suburb of Orlando. In 1994 he moved to New Orleans, Louisiana with his parents. In 1996 Alexander entered the University of New Orleans, but left in 1997 due to his parents moving to Greenville, North Carolina. While in Greenville, he attended East Carolina University for the spring and fall of 1999. That fall, Alex's mother fell ill and had open heart surgery forcing him to leave school yet once again to take care of his mother. In 2000, Alex returned to New Orleans to continue his studies pursuing a degree in Political Science. In 2002, he graduated from UNO and the following year he entered the UNO History Masters program. After Hurricane Katrina devastated New Orleans, Alex evacuated to Florida and began researching his thesis. The summer of 2006 became a memorable one for him when on July 2, 2006 Diana Saad became Diana Shelby making him the happiest man in the world. His plans after graduation are to continue and pursue a Doctorate in History.