

**Middle East - Suez story No
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Summary extract of message conveyed by
U.K. Delegation.

SUMMARY EXTRACT OF MESSAGE CONVEYED BY U.K. DELEGATION, 24 NOV. 1956

From other evidence and their warning to shipping by the Egyptians, it seems clear that mines have been laid off the southern end of the Suez Canal. It is estimated that these are probably buoyant mines. It will be necessary for these mines to be swept before any salvage ships can reach the Canal from the Red Sea end. Even if they are willing to do so, it is doubted whether the Egyptians could sweep these mines. Although various other countries east of Suez are in possession of mine-sweeping resources, it would clearly take a long time for them to get there with their necessary supporting services. From this, it therefore seems probable that before the Canal can be opened, it will be essential to call on the Anglo/French mine-sweeping resources that are already assembled for this task. We do not think it would be difficult to get coastal mine sweepers past the existing obstructions to Suez. There are four converted coasters at Aden fitted with wire seeeps which it might be possible to get on the spot by the end of the first week in December. There is also the French ship, "Jasmin" fitted with wire sweeps.