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U.S. Voices Satisfaction on canal-clearing
effort, by Dana Adams Schmidt.

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U. S. Voices Satisfaction On Canal-Clearing Effort

Official Sources Assert Main Obstacle
Has Been British-French Insistence
on Using All of Salvage Fleet

By DANA ADAMS SCHMIDT

Special to The New York Times.

WASHINGTON, Dec. 24—State Department officials said today they were satisfied with United Nations progress toward clearing the Suez Canal.

They said they had no complaint to make against Secretary General Dag Hammarskjold or the Egyptian authorities.

The main cause of difficulties, they reported, has been British and French insistence until a few days ago that if any of the British-French salvage fleet participated in clearing the canal, all must participate.

They added, however, that last Friday the British and French agreed to let a part of their fleet participate as United Nations volunteers. To this the Egyptians agreed, they said.

The dispute now, the officials explained, concerns the degree rather than the principle

of British and French participation. The State Department officials made these remarks in reply to British and French complaints and demands.

Officials of the two countries have complained that Mr. Hammarskjold and his representatives in Egypt were being "pushed around" by the Egyptians. They have demanded that the United States take a stronger position, backing up the authority of the United Nations and putting direct pressure on President Gamal Abdel Nasser of Egypt to permit British-French participation in clearing the canal.

The British and French have insisted that the only one bringing any pressure to bear on the United Nations in the Middle East was President Nasser, and

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that in consequence the Secretary General usually did just what President Nasser wanted. Since British and French political pressure is at present ineffective, the argument continued, it is up to the United Nations to offset President Nasser's activities.

One of the officials compared Mr. Hammarskjold with a sailboat. "His course is determined by whatever wind blows strongest," the official said.

These views have not been formally conveyed to the State Department. As one diplomat put it: "It might be thought indelicate for us to speak in this way just now."

Competent State Department officials tend to minimize the importance of British-French participation in the canal clearing job. They said it was their understanding that Lieut. Gen. Raymond A. Wheeler, United States Army, retired, in charge of United Nations clearance operations, could do the work without British or French help. Without their participation, the officials remarked, "it won't take much longer."

They recalled that the United Nations General Assembly had approved Mr. Hammarskjold's initial report, in which he said he could undertake the task without the participation of countries that had been engaged in hostilities.

Now that Egypt has made the concession of allowing some British or French vessels to take part in the work, they said, Mr. Hammarskjold's problem was to organize a program that would look like a United Nations operation rather than a British-French operation with a United Nations label.

The Secretary General, they said, had to balance the need for getting the job done quickly against the importance of avoiding anything that would provoke violent incidents.

"In any case," one United States official remarked, "we have gained the strong impression that Mr. Hammarskjold is not a man who will let himself be pushed around by anyone."