

**Middle East - Suez story No  
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story No 37-40 - 32**

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Middle East / Suez story - 39

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Jan. 57

D.H.'s reply to questions (in London)  
conc. Canal clearance.

*Reply to questions via  
the Swedish Government  
based on a talk in London,  
Jan. - 57.*

- 1) This is not true. We have the maximum of ships necessary working on each single wreck in the Canal. To have available more ships would not have speeded up the clearance in this phase. I leave aside the fact that British naval units could not have worked in the interior of Egypt the very month after military occupation.
- 2) It is true that no written reply has been given, but I could have received one if I so required. The oral reply is that if I insist on a formal reply now, it would accept my proposal for formal negotiations between the Government of Egypt and the Secretary-General, adding, however, "time and place to be agreed". I guess this addition has two explanations, probably, firstly, a wish to keep open the possibility of negotiations in Cairo, and, secondly, a wish to have some slight time margin on which to play.
- 3) Dulles has written to me, but he has taken a much softer stand than Selwyn Lloyd seems to have expected. The idea to introduce the International Bank already now, is French, and the purpose is obviously to get a tool for continued pressure on the Egyptians. By being custodians of at least part of the funds collected, the users would, it is thought, have a remaining bargaining tool with the Egyptians. However, why should the Egyptians accept such an arrangement, whether it is proposed before or after the reopening of the Canal? Their position in this special respect is not weaker now than it would be after the re-opening if we avoid payment arrangements to be made so as to prejudge negotiations in any direction. The whole idea seems to me to be a last and unrealistic attempt to establish outside control, with a risk for continuous frictions - if it can be achieved at all. The approach outlined in October, with active cooperation and a system of checks and balances, is a more promising one and does not require support from added economic pressures.

- 4) Lloyd does speak on a SCUA basis. The matter has been raised there (in the Executive Board) by France and England. The reason he gives for his indirect approach, is, of course, ridiculous. First of all the British have approached me directly on these very lines; second, I have had practically daily negotiations with the British ambassador; and third, these discussions have in no way been tainted by any such political considerations as now indicated by Lloyd.
- 5) What he and the French try to do, is to build up a kind of collective pressure on me (a great number of countries have, on their inspiration, brought up identical points). They have done so - without any striking restraint - several times before, and should know by now that this is not the way to get anywhere. I have to follow a line of our own which embodies independently the best possible balance between the reasonable viewpoints on the various sides. This has so far worked remarkably well. Any other policy would wreck our negotiation possibilities to the detriment first of all of the West.
- 6) I have reason to believe that the Egyptians would accept some kind of suspense account system in order to get around the corner 1 March, i.e. that they would accept payments with such reservations as the Americans introduced already before the crisis, thus giving the users full protection of their negotiation position while, on the other hand, not putting in their hand a card to be used for added pressures.

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