

**Middle East - Suez story No
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Suez story - 15

4 Sept. 56

Lloyd, Selwyn (British Foreign Minister)

- 1 letter from D.H.

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In your personal message to me early in August you kindly promised to let me know of any developments arising out of the London Conference on the Suez question which might be of interest to me. I much appreciated the indication of your wish to maintain a contact on this issue which may prove vital to the future of the United Nations.

I also noted, in one of your early speeches on the matter, that you considered the London Conference -- and, I take for granted, the ensuing discussions in Cairo -- as being actions within the framework of Article 33 of the Charter. I am sure that this statement was helpful and that it was generally appreciated as clearly establishing your wish to see the matter develop within the framework of the Charter.

In the past few weeks I have had occasion to regret that I had no easy line of access to you, as at some points the developments seemed to me to call for an exchange of views in order to enable me to act and react in a way helpful both to a solution of the problem and to the maintenance of the status and stature of the United Nations. I have had the best of contacts with Mr. Crosthwaite, but I would be less than frank if I did not tell you that, in the somewhat embarrassing situations facing me, I would have greatly appreciated the possibility of a current contact through Sir Pierson Dixon, as your accredited Ambassador.

The Rt. Hon. Selwyn Lloyd, C.B.E., T.D., Q.C., M.P.
Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs
Foreign Office
London, S.W.1

We all now hope for good progress in the Cairo talks. In the light of your earlier reference to Article 33, I assume that if they were to fail and if a new conference were not to be summoned, it would be your intention to follow the rule laid down in Article 37 and thus bring the matter to the Security Council. The only alternative open under the Charter would seem to be action directly under Article 51, although I fail to see how such action on your part could be justified unless Egypt unexpectedly resorted to an "armed attack"; at all events, however, such action would also bring the matter to the Security Council table.

Apart from my substantive responsibilities as Secretary-General I have, of course, a formal reason for giving the greatest attention to the Suez problem. If, in spite of all, things were so to develop as to leave the procedures prescribed in Articles 37 and 51 aside, it would unavoidably put a heavy emphasis on the formal duties of the Secretary-General under the Charter; such a situation seems to be one of those which call for the use of the corrective provided by Article 99, if we are to remain true to the constitution of the Organization. You know me well enough to appreciate that, in such a situation, I would not hesitate to let myself be guided solely by the UN law and to act accordingly.

As to possible solutions of the basic problem, I cannot help but feel that within the framework of the London principles, an arrangement can be found which would fully safeguard Egyptian susceptibilities, while providing strong international guarantees -- stronger indeed than you had under the previous system. However, I repeat what I have already said on a previous occasion: I think that it

will be most difficult to find such a solution, or to give it the proper status, outside the UN framework. For that reason I hope that the talks will not be permitted to break down until the possibilities which open up, when the UN is brought into the picture, have been fully explored. As it is difficult -- not to say impossible -- to undertake such an exploration on the basis only of printed documentation, I hope that you, if you embark on it, will not hesitate to use whatever assistance we informally may provide.

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Viscount Cranborne, then Lord Privy Seal: "Speaking personally, I suggest that it will be necessary in the new organization, that the chief permanent official ... who will be an international official and therefore not open to the same embarrassment as the Ministers of individual states, should be empowered to bring before its members, on his own initiative, any potentially dangerous development at an early stage before the aggressor has had time to gird himself for war. Unless there is some provision of that kind it will, I believe, be impossible this time, as it was the last time, to keep the situation under control." Parliamentary Debates, House of Lords, 15 April 1943. As Lord Cecil observed in the same debate, "The advantage of (a very similar) procedure is that it removes the necessity of any single power appearing as the hostile critic of any other power. That would be done as a matter of routine by the secretariat...." Ibid., 14 April 1943.

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