

Suez canal



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The Suez Canal has been a vital shipping link between the Red Sea and the Mediterranean Sea. Almost immediately after it was constructed, it had significant impact on world trade because it provided the shortest ocean link between the two surrounding oceans. At the time of the crisis, it represented the only direct means of travel.

It was important for the flow of trade between Asia, the Middle east, Europe, and the United States • It was meant to provide free passage to all who use the Canal; however, Britain and France desired to control it for colonial interests and commercial shipping. In 1956, it became the focus of a major world conflict.

It was one of the most controversial events in British history since WWII. In the same year the UN faced a major crisis threatening the stability of the Middle East, they also created and deployed the United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF) Rising Conflict: A few months prior to the crisis, the United States followed by the United Kingdom decided to withdraw funding for the Aswan Dam project in Egypt o The Aswan Dam Project was going to be built on the Nile River.

This dam was a key power on controlling floods, irrigation, and even produce hydroelectricity. Without their support with the project, President Gamal Abdel Nasser of Egypt threatened to take over the Suez Canal and use all profits to complete the dam. The French and British reacted strongly, and a combined Anglo-French military force invaded Egypt in attempt to win back control. Met with international condemnation, Israel expressed it's concern about Egypt's intrusion into Israel from the Gaza (then Egyptian land).

Seeking to build up a credit with the Great Powers of Europe, Israel agreed to launch a major strike against Egypt. This made the French and British to express grave concern of peace to the Israelites which allowed them to land their own troops as "peacekeepers" to separate the Israeli and Egyptian armies. Israeli forces launched an attack on Egypt on October 29th, occupying the Sinai and Gaza Strip. A few days later, the British and French troops landed in the Suez Canal Zone. This prompted the UN to call for an emergency session to discuss the state of affairs. UN Initiative: Peacekeeping: Once the UN had realized that this conflict was going to happen, and with backing from other nations, they called together an emergency session, to discuss their intervention in the conflict. Canadian Affairs minister, Lester B.

Pearson, was in perfect position to carve out a middle ground between two extreme positions. His diplomatic efforts failed to change the plans of Britain and France though. France and Britain were condemned at the UN for starting to bomb Egyptian positions and the Western alliance is ripped apart. Pearson decided to propose the first UN peace-keeping force but the fury in the General Assembly would not allow for it. He argued that current proposals did not go far enough to deal with tensions within the Suez.

At the Security Council, the crisis was discussed, but nothing could be done collectively due to France and United Kingdom's bias on the matter. Canada lacks a permanent seat which allowed for France and the UK to veto the ideas therefore a consensus could not be reached. The UN decided to unite for the world's first peacekeeping force, and the ceasefire was decided on as a way of stopping the conflict briskly. A "good faith agreement" was worked out and served as the basis of the stationing of UNEF in Egypt. The

timing of Pearson's proposal was Key in the approval of the forces in Egypt. Due to international pressure and the arrival of UNEF, British and French forces withdrew from Egypt by the end of 1956. In the spring of 1957, Israel withdrew their forces as well o The British and French troops were ordered out by their leader and replaced with a band new neutral force of soldiers called UN Peacemakers, sent out by UNEF. The UNEF troops patrolled, supervised, and established a buffer zone between the two nations and created peace among them.

Also, the UNEF force was comprised mainly of nations that were not part of big treaties such as NATO or the Warsaw Pact Aftermath/Suez Canal Today: Today, the Canal is operated by the Suez Canal Authority and it continues to ship many things to various places around the area. Though the conflict has ended (resolved by the UN and kept in peace for a period of time, there is still a small force, known as the Multinational force and observers, that are still in the Middle East o They are sworn to protect the peace between Egypt and Israel o They operate checkpoints and observation posts as well as patrol around the borders to verify the peace treaties between the two nations. To this day, Canada has been part of every major peacekeeping operation United Nation's/Canada's Role: Lester B. Pearson, Canada's External Affairs Minister, was the one who suggest the notion of a UN-led "peacekeeping" force to the special emergency session of the General Assembly. His suggestion(s) culminated in the formation of the first official armed UN peacekeeping mission o The first commanding officer was the Canadian General E. L.

M. Burns Canada made a name for itself through an innovative peacekeeping scheme that want continue on for decades. If Canada had not become involved in the Suez Crisis, as a neutral party, it could have escalated into a world war. The deployment of the UNEF acted as a precedent for the way the international community would deal with conflict in the years to come. The UNEF formed the basic principles of peacekeeping o It set an example for future peacekeeping deployments. The approach of the force during the crisis has helped define Canada's international military role for the next five decades, as well it's strong peacekeeping tradition