

U.N. Security Council Meeting. - Anglo-French Veto of U.S. and Soviet Resolutions. - Calling of Emergency Session of General Assembly.

The Anglo-French action was upheld by the French National Assembly on Oct. 30 by 308 votes to 182, the only parties opposing being the Communists and about half the Poujadist deputies. The Council of the Republic also gave its approval the same evening by 289 votes against 19.

M. Guy Mollet made the following statement:

"The aggressive policy of Egypt is known to the National Assembly. For many months military aid by the Soviet Union and its satellites has enabled Egypt to expand her armaments considerably, to the detriment of her economy and of the already miserable living standards of her population ... Recent developments have given clear evidence of Colonel Nasser's expansionist aims—the renewal of guerrilla attacks against Israel's frontiers, followed closely by the setting-up of a single military command by Egypt, Syria, and Jordan, thereby increasing the menace already weighing upon Israel.

"Israeli forces crossed the frontier yesterday and are advancing towards the Suez Canal ... We know the people of Israel—we know their resolution, the courage with which they till their difficult soil, the courage with which they maintain the independence of their country while surrounded by hostile peoples. We know their attachment to the Rights of Man and to the fundamental principles of democracy. We know, finally, the repeated provocations to which Israel has had to submit from certain Arab countries. We know that these countries, acting more and more under Egyptian instigation, have openly proclaimed their intention to 'wipe Israel off the map.'

"We also know the regime of Colonel Nasser ... We have not forgotten his repeated refusal to allow the free passage of Israeli shipping through the Suez Canal, in defiance of the United Nations. Three months ago he seized the Canal in violation of international treaties. We know his intrusion into the Algerian drama ... In view of all these facts ... the French Government cannot see its way either to condone or to condemn Israel's action. In accordance with the U.N. Charter we have supported the U.S. demand to acquaint the Security Council with the situation. I hope the Security Council's decision will be taken after an objective study of all aspects of the problem, and not only of the events of the last few hours.

"Must we, however, have sole recourse to the Security Council only? The slowness of its procedure would make such a decision unwise, apart from the fact that immediate repercussions are to be feared. The battles which are impending will be fought in the Suez Canal area, and security of transit and the free passage of shipping through the Canal are at stake. Our first concern must be the restoration of peaceful conditions in the area. The fighting is not yet on a large scale ... and resolute action can bring about a speedy ending of hostilities while assuring the regular functioning of the Canal.

"This afternoon the French and British Governments addressed a solemn appeal to Israel and Egypt calling upon them to cease all operations by land, sea and air and to withdraw their forces from the Canal Zone on both sides. At the same time the Egyptian Government have been requested to allow Franco-British forces to be stationed temporarily at three points on the Canal—Port Said, Ismailia, and Suez—to guarantee the free passage of shipping of all nations. If, at the expiration of the time-limit, these requests are not met, the Franco-British forces will take the necessary measures to secure compliance by either side. I emphasize that the measures envisaged are temporary. They are directed neither against Egypt nor against Israel ...

"The French and British Governments have informed the U.S. Government of their preoccupations and their decisions. I have sent a personal message to President Eisenhower explaining the situation, and I hope—and all France hopes—that the Franco-British initiative will be supported by his high authority. The French Government is conscious of the gravity of the decisions taken. It is also conscious of the gravity of the consequences which the absence of these decisions would involve."

M. Mollet concluded by stressing the complete unity of views between France and Britain and the complete solidarity between the two countries. He called upon the Assembly to signify by a "massive vote" its approval of the Franco-British initiative.

The 368 votes in support of the Government comprised 99 Socialists (out of 100), 83 Independents (out of 85), 73 M. R. P. deputies (out of 74), 30 Radicals (out of 46), 21 Social Republicans, 15 U.D.S.R. deputies,

all 14 Dissident Radicals, all 13 R. G. R. deputies, 11 *Paysans*, 5 Poujadists, and 4 *non-inscrits*. The 182 opposing votes included the 149 Communists and *progressistes* and 28 Poujadists, together with a few Overseas deputies. Fifteen deputies abstained from voting, including 11 Radicals (among them M. Mendès-France), whilst 18 deputies (including six of the seven Overseas Independents and seven Poujadists) did not take part in the vote.

It was understood that the Poujadists had originally decided to support the Government on national and patriotic grounds, but that M. Poujade (who is not a deputy) had instructed them not to do so because it was “not fitting that France should fight for the Queen of England.”

M. Mendès-France, the Radical leader, issued a statement on the same date calling upon the French Government to convene a meeting of the “Big Four” without delay “to prevent a conflagration in the Middle East and to save peace.” Expressing the fear that “we are perhaps on the eve of general war,” he said that a conflict between Israel and the Arab-States could not easily be localized, and that the existing tension about the Suez Canal, now three months' old, might “set a spark to the powder.”

The Security Council met on Oct. 30 to consider urgently an American resolution censuring Israel and demanding the immediate withdrawal of her armed forces behind the established armistice lines. The Council meeting had been called at the request of Mr. Cabot Lodge, the U.S. representative, acting on direct instructions from President Eisenhower. In spite of British requests for a postponement of the debate the U.S. delegate insisted on an immediate vote, in which Britain and France vetoed the resolution. The British and French delegates also used the veto against a similar Soviet resolution which was subsequently presented.

The text of the U.S. resolution was as follows:

“The Security Council, noting that the armed forces of Israel have penetrated deeply into Egyptian territory in violation of the armistice agreement between Egypt and Israel, and expressing its grave concern at this violation of the armistice agreement:

- (1) Calls upon Israel immediately to withdraw its armed forces behind the established armistice lines.
- (2) Calls upon all members: (a) to refrain from the use of force or threat of force in the area in any manner inconsistent with the purposes of the United Nations: (b) to assist the U.N. in ensuring the integrity of the armistice agreements: (c) to refrain from giving any military, economic or financial assistance to Israel as long as it has not complied with this resolution.
- (3) Requests the Secretary-General to keep the Security Council informed on compliance with this resolution, and to make whatever recommendations he deems appropriate for the maintenance of international peace and security in the area by the implementation of this and prior resolutions.”

Mr. Cabot Lodge declared that the Israeli military operations against Egypt had made it necessary for the Security Council to take urgent action, and that failure by the Council to react at this time would be “a clear avoidance of its responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security.” The U.N. had a “clear and unchallengeable responsibility for the maintenance of the armistice agreement,” and the U.S. Government felt it “imperative” that the Council should act in the most prompt manner to determine that a breach of the peace had occurred, to order that the military actions started by Israel should cease immediately, and to make clear its view that the Israeli armed forces must be immediately withdrawn behind the armistice lines. “We, as members of the Council,” Mr. Lodge declared, “accordingly should call upon all U.N. members to render prompt assistance in achieving a withdrawal of the Israeli forces. All members specifically should refrain from giving any assistance which might continue or prolong the hostilities. No one nation should take advantage of the situation for any selfish interests. Each of us and all members of the U.N. have a clear-cut responsibility to see that the peace and stability of the Palestine area are restored forthwith. Anything else is an invitation to disaster in this part of the world.” Mr. Lodge added that the U.S. resolution, if promptly adopted, would effectively deal with the Israeli penetration of Egypt, and that if it was complied with the Israel the basis for the 12-hour “ultimatum” by Britain and France would disappear. This did not imply that the U.S.A. considered that the “ultimatum” was justifiable or in accordance with the U.N. Charter.

Mr. Sobolev (Soviet Union) asserted that Israel could not have attacked without “encouragement from those aggressive circles which are not interested in maintaining peace and are casting about for any available pretext to move their forces into the area.” He alleged that the Anglo-French action was an attempt to take advantage of the situation to seize the Suez Canal and constituted aggression against Egypt. He therefore supported the U.S. resolution, declaring that the Council had the double duty of demanding

that Egypt and Israel should cease hostilities and of warning Britain and France that they had no right to use the disturbances in the Middle East “for their own selfish ends.”

Sir Pierson Dixon (U.K.) pointed out that in the British Government's view “the first consideration is that the fighting between Israel and Egypt must stop, and the second consideration that unless hostilities can quickly be stopped, free passage through the Canal will be jeopardized.” It was with these twin purposes in mind that the French and British Governments had addressed the Israeli and Egyptian Governments and had undertaken to safeguard freedom of passage through the Canal by sending armed forces to occupy three key points temporarily.

After specially emphasizing the temporary character of the proposed action, Sir Pierson Dixon referred to allegations made in earlier debates by M. Shepilov (the Soviet Foreign Minister) that Britain and France were an occasion to settle their difference with Egypt about the Suez Canal by force. “At that time we treated the allegations with the contempt which they deserved,” Sir Pierson declared. “That is not our object, and it has never been our object. Mr. Sobolev insinuated something of the same kind and alleged that certain Powers had prompted the Israeli Government to take action against Egypt. The contrary is, of course, the truth.

“We have done everything in our power to lower tension in the Middle East, and if tension has increased, it is because, unhappily, neither Israel nor its Arab neighbours has seen fit to listen to our advice and to that of our friends. Since this advice has not been heeded, the present explosive situation has arisen. How can we have confidence, much as we should like to, that some future injunction by the Security Council would in fact prove effective to deal in time—and time is of the essence—with a situation which is rapidly getting out of control?”

In conclusion, Sir Pierson Dixon contended that there was nothing that the Council could do in the present situation to help matters. He hoped therefore that Mr. Cabot Lodge would agree that nothing would be gained in the circumstances by pressing the U.S. resolution.

M. Brilej (Yugoslavia) supported the U.S. resolution, accused Israel of contempt for the Security Council's authority, and denounced the Anglo-French move as “a unilateral application of force without authorization from the U.N. and without any justification in treaty obligations.” **M. Cornut-Gentille** (France) supported the arguments put forward by Sir Pierson Dixon and expressed the view that there was no point in considering the U.S. resolution at the present stage.

When the U.S. resolution was put to the vote it was supported by seven members of the Council (U.S.A., U.S.S.R., Cuba, Peru, Persia, Yugoslavia, and Nationalist China) and opposed by Britain and France, with Australia and Belgium abstaining; because of the British and French veto it was therefore defeated. Mr. Sobolev then re-submitted the resolution in an amended form as suggested by Nationalist China and Persia, omitting clause (2) of the U.S. resolution [i.e. the clause calling on all U.N. members to refrain from the use or threat of force, as well as asking all countries to cut off military, economic, and financial aid to Israel until she withdrew behind the armistice lines]. Instead, the Soviet resolution, in addition to calling upon Israel immediately to withdraw her forces, called on “all the parties concerned” to cease fire immediately. Despite this change, however, the Soviet resolution was also vetoed by Britain and France, the voting being seven to two, with the U.S.A. and Belgium abstaining; the seven votes for the resolution were those of Australia, Nationalist China, Cuba, Persia, Peru, the Soviet Union, and Yugoslavia.

Mr. Lodge explained afterwards that he had abstained because he objected to the omission in the Soviet resolution of the aforementioned clauses which had formed part of the U.S. resolution. **Sir Pierson Dixon** had previously explained that he would vote against the Soviet resolution for the same reason as he opposed the U.S. draft—because “the sentiments of the proposals in themselves are unobjectionable, but they are not in our view appropriate to the circumstances prevailing.”

During the debate the President of the Security Council received a communication from the Egyptian Government protesting against the France-British “ultimatum” and asking that the Council be convened immediately to consider “this Anglo-French act of aggression.” The statement added: “In the meantime, and until the Security Council has taken the necessary measures, Egypt has no choice but to defend herself and safeguard her rights against such aggression.”

In view of the Anglo-French veto against the U.S. and Soviet resolutions, the Security Council met again in emergency session on Oct. 31 and adopted a Yugoslav resolution calling an emergency session of the U.N. General Assembly to make recommendations on the action undertaken against Egypt.

At the beginning of the meeting **Dr. Hammarskjöld** (the U.N. Secretary-General) read a personal statement calling upon all member nations to “honour their pledge to observe all Articles of the Charter,” and stressing that the discretion and impartiality imposed on him could not degenerate into a policy of

expediency. “He [the Secretary-General] must be a servant of the principles of the Charter.” Dr. Hammarskjöld declared, “and its aims must ultimately determine what, for him, is right and wrong. For that he must stand. Were the members to consider that another view of the duties of the Secretary-General than the one he has stated would better serve the interests of this Organization, it is their obvious right to act accordingly.” [This statement was first taken to imply that Dr. Hammarskjöld intended to resign, but it was subsequently stated by U.N. officials that he had only desired to emphasize that if any member disliked the role he had played in the Palestine and Suez questions, they should make known their objections.

Following Dr. Hammarskjöld's statement, however, Mr. Ledge, Mr. Sobolev, Sir Pierson Dixon, and other Council members assured him of their confidence and asked him to continue in office.

On the Yugoslav resolution Sir Pierson Dixon maintained that the proposal to call the U.N. General Assembly in emergency session was “out of order,” and that the procedure adopted at the time of the Korean War for calling such sessions did not apply in the present case. His formal motion to that effect was, however, defeated by six votes (U.S.A., U.S.S.R., Peru, Cuba, Yugoslavia, and Persia) to four (Britain, France, Australia, and Belgium), with Nationalist China abstaining. The Yugoslav resolution was then adopted by seven votes (U.S.A., U.S.S.R., Yugoslavia, Nationalist China, Cuba, Persia, and Peru) to two (Britain and France), with Australia and Belgium abstaining.

The Yugoslav resolution adopted by the Council [since the British and French veto did not apply to this decision] was as follows:

“The Security Council, considering that a grave situation has been created by the action undertaken against Egypt, and taking into account the lack of unanimity of its permanent members, which has prevented it from exercising its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security in the present case.

“Decides to call an emergency special session of the General Assembly as provided in the General Assembly Resolution 377 (V) in order to make appropriate recommendations.”

[The aforementioned General Assembly resolution had been adopted in 1950 for the specific purpose of enabling the Assembly to overcome the Soviet veto in the Security Council—see 11069 A.]