

Marshal Bulganin's Messages to President Eisenhower, Sir Anthony Eden, M. Mollet, and Mr. Ben-Gurion on Middle East Situation. - Replies by Western and Israeli Leaders. - U.S. Rejection of Soviet Proposal for Joint Soviet-American Action in Egypt. - President Eisenhower's Message to Marshal Bulganin on Hungarian Situation.

During the first ten days of November a number of messages were sent by Marshal Bulganin to President Eisenhower and the Prime Ministers Great Britain, France, and Israel on the Middle East situation. These messages, and the replies thereto, are given below, together with the text of a letter sent by President Eisenhower, to Marshal Bulganin on the Hungarian situation.

In this letter (Nov. 5) Marshal Bulganin proposed that Soviet and U.S. naval and air forces should cooperate, with other U.N. members, in taking decisive "measures" to check Anglo-French "aggression" in Egypt and restore peace in the Middle East. It was worded as follows:

"In this troubled and responsible moment for the cause of peace, I approach you on behalf of the Soviet Government. A whole week has passed since the armed forces of Britain, France and Israel attacked Egypt ... Inhuman bombardment by the British and French Air Forces of Egyptian airfields, ports, installations, towns and inhabited localities is taking place. Anglo-French troops have landed on Egyptian territory ... An aggressive war against Egypt and the Arab people are unfolding before the eyes of the whole world. "The situation in Egypt calls for immediate and resolute action on the part of the United Nations. If such action is not undertaken, the U.N. would lose its prestige in the eyes of mankind and would disintegrate.

"The Soviet Union and the U.S.A. are permanent members of the Security Council and the two great Powers which possess all modern types of arms, including atomic and hydrogen weapons. We bear particular responsibility for stopping war and re-establishing peace and tranquility in the Middle East. We are convinced that if the Governments of the U.S.S.R. and the U.S.A. would firmly declare their will to ensure peace and oppose aggression, the aggression will be ended and war will cease.

"At this menacing hour when the loftiest moral principles and the foundations and aims of the U.N. are being put to the test, the Soviet Government approaches the U.S. Government with a proposal of close cooperation in order to put an end to aggression and stop further bloodshed. The U.S.A. has a strong navy in the Mediterranean. The Soviet Union also has a strong navy and a powerful air force. The joint and immediate use of these means by the U.S.A. and the Soviet Union, backed by a U.N. decision, would be a sure guarantee of ending the aggression against the Egyptian people and the peoples of the Arab East.

"The Soviet Government calls upon the U.S. Government to join their forces in the United Nations for the adoption of decisive measures to put an end to the aggression ... Such Joint stops by the U.S.A. and the Soviet Union would not threaten the interests of Britain and France. The peoples of Britain and France do not want war. Like our peoples, they desire to maintain peace.

"Many other States, besides Britain and France, are interested in immediate pacification and in the resumption of the normal functioning of the Suez Canal, which has been interrupted by the military operations. The aggression against Egypt has been committed, not for the sake of free navigation on the Canal, which was safeguarded, but as a robbers' war launched with the aim of restoring colonial rule in the East, which had been overthrown by the people. If this war is not stopped, it contains the danger of turning into a third world war.

"If the Soviet Union and the U.S.A. support the victim of aggression, other member-States of the United Nations will join us in these efforts. Thereby the authority of the United Nations will be considerably enhanced and peace will be restored and strengthened.

"The Soviet Government is ready to enter into immediate negotiations with the U.S. Government on the practical realization of the above-mentioned proposals, so that effective action in the interests of peace can be taken. At this moment, of history, when the fate of the whole of the Arab East and also of the world is being decided, I expect a positive reply from you,"

In reply, the White House published on Nov. 5 (a) a statement on Marshal Bulganin's letter, which, it was pointed out, had been released in Moscow before it was, received in Washington; and (b) a letter from President Eisenhower to Marshal Bulganin, sent on Nov. 4, dealing with the Hungarian situation

This statement described Marshal Bulganin's proposal, for joint Soviet U.S. military action in the Middle East as an "unthinkable suggestion" and as "an obvious attempt to divert world opinion from the Hungarian tragedy." It pointed out *inter alia* that the U.N. had already called for a cease-fire and the withdrawal of foreign forces from Egypt, and that the

Soviet Union was at that very moment "brutally suppressing the human rights of the Hungarian people" and defying U.N. resolutions to withdraw her forces from Hungary. The text was as follows:

"The President has received a letter from Chairman Bulganin which had been previously released to the Press in Moscow. This letter—in an obvious attempt to divert world attention from the Hungarian tragedy—makes the unthinkable suggestion that the United States should join with the Soviet Union in a bipartite employment of their military forces to Stop the fighting in Egypt.

"The Middle East question—in which there has been much provocation on all sides—is now before the United Nations. That world body has called for a cease-fire, a withdrawal of foreign armed forces, and the entry of a U.N. Force to stabilize the situation pending a settlement.

"In this connexion, it is to be regretted that the Soviet Union did not vote in favour of the organization of the U.N. Force. All parties concerned should accept these U.N. resolutions promptly and in good faith.

"Neither Soviet nor any other military forces should now enter the Middle East area, except under U.N. mandate. Any such action would be directly contrary to the resolution of the United Nations, which has called for the withdrawal of these foreign forces which are now in Egypt. The introduction of new forces under these circumstances would violate the U.N. Charter, and it would be the duty of all U.N. members, including the United States, to oppose any such effort.

"While we are vitally concerned with the situation in Egypt, we are equally concerned with the situation in Hungary; Soviet forces are at this very moment brutally repressing the human rights of the Hungarian people. Only last night the General Assembly, in emergency session, adopted a resolution calling on the Soviet Union to cease immediately its military operations against the Hungarian people and to withdraw its forces from that country.

"The Soviet Union voted against this resolution, Just as it had vetoed an earlier resolution in the Security Council. The Soviet Union is, therefore, at this moment in defiance of a decision of the United Nations, taken to secure peace and justice in the world.

"Under these-circumstances, it is clear that the first and most important stop that should be taken to ensure world peace and security is for the Soviet Union to observe the U.N. resolution to cease its military repression of the Hungarian people and withdraw its troops. Only then would it be seemly for the Soviet Union to suggest further stops that can be taken toward world peace.

"Since Chairman Bulganin has already released his letter to the President, it is proper to release a letter written by the President yesterday to the Chairman about the situation in Hungary."

The U.S. President wrote:

"I have noted with profound distress the reports which have reached me from Hungary. The declaration of the Soviet Government of Oct. 30, 1956, which re-stated the policy of non-intervention in the internal affairs of other States, was generally understood as premising the early withdrawal of Soviet forces from Hungary. Indeed, in that statement the Soviet Union said that it considered the further presence of Soviet Army units in Hungary 'can servo as a cause for an even greater deterioration of the situation.' This pronouncement was regarded by the U.S. Government and myself as an act, of high statesmanship. It was followed by the express request of the Hungarian Government for the withdrawal of Soviet forces.

"Consequently, we have been inexpressibly shocked by the apparent reversal of this policy. It is especially shocking that this renewed application of force against the Hungarian Government and people took place while negotiations were going on between your representatives and these of the Hungarian Government for the withdrawal of Soviet forces.

"As you know, the Security Council has been engaged in an emergency examination of this problem. As late as yesterday afternoon the Council was led to believe by your representative that the negotiations then

in progress in Budapest were leading to agreement which would result in the withdrawal of Soviet forces from Hungary, as requested by the Government of that country. It was on that basis that the Security Council recessed its consideration of this matter.

"I urge in the name of humanity and in the cause of peace that the Soviet Union take action to withdraw Soviet forces from Hungary immediately, and to permit the Hungarian people to enjoy and exercise the human rights and fundamental freedoms affirmed for all peoples in the U.N. Charter.

"The U.N. General Assembly is meeting in emergency session this afternoon to consider this tragic situation. It is my hope that your representative will be in a position to announce that the Soviet Union is preparing to withdraw its forces from Hungary and to allow the Hungarian people to enjoy the right to a Government of their own choice."

The following reply to President Eisenhower's letter was sent by Marshal Bulganin on Nov. 7:

"The question of the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Hungary comes completely and entirely within the competence of the Hungarian and Soviet Governments. The programme of the Revolutionary Workers' and Peasants' Government of Hungary (i.e. the Kadar regime ... gives complete information on any questions that may interest you.

"As to the Soviet Government's statement of Oct. 30, 1950, which was mentioned in your letter, there is absolutely no reason to doubt that the Soviet Government's policy has been and will be guided by the principles outlined in that declaration."

In a strongly worded letter to the British Prime Minister (Nov. 5) Marshal Bulganin called for the immediate cessation of Anglo-French "aggression" against Egypt, and asked what Britain and France would say if they were attacked by "rocket weapons." The text was as follows:

"The Soviet Government considers it necessary to draw your attention to the aggressive war which is being waged by Britain and France against Egypt, which has the most dangerous consequences for the cause of general peace.

The special session of the General Assembly adopted a resolution for the immediate cessation of hostilities and the withdrawal of foreign troops from Egyptian territory. Ignoring this, Britain, France and Israel are intensifying their military actions, continuing their barbaric bombardment of Egyptian towns and villages, and landing troops on Egyptian territory. The British Government, together with France and Israel, have thus embarked on a path of unprovoked aggression against Egypt.

"The reasons given by Britain to justify the aggression are completely unacceptable. The British Government declared that it had intervened in the Israeli-Egyptian conflict to prevent the Suez Canal zone from becoming a theatre of hostilities. With the Anglo-French intervention, the Suez Canal zone has become a theatre of war. Traffic on the Canal has been disturbed, bringing harm to the interests of States using the Canal.

"The aggression against Egypt cannot be justified by the special interests of France and Britain in navigation on the Canal. The Governments of Britain and France cannot usurp the right of decision in matters concerning freedom of navigation on the Canal, because there are also other interested Powers. These Powers condemn the aggressive actions of Britain and France and demand that peace and order should be preserved in the Middle East. It is well known that freedom of navigation on the Canal has been fully ensured by Egypt. The problem of the Suez Canal was merely a pretext for Anglo-French aggression, the aims of which are more far-reaching than appears.

"It cannot be concealed that an aggressive war is being waged against the Arab Peoples, against the national independence of the States of the Near and Middle East, for the purpose of restoring the regime of colonial slavery rejected by those peoples. Nothing can justify the fact that the armed forces of Britain and France—two great Powers, both permanent members of the Security Council— have attacked a country which only recently gained its independence and which does not have sufficient means for its defence.

"In what position would Britain have found herself if she had been attacked by more powerful States possessing every kind of modern destructive weapon? There are countries which need not have sent a navy or air force to the coasts of Britain but could have used other means, such as rocket techniques. If rocket weapons had been used against Britain and France, they would probably have called it a barbarous action. Yet in what way does the inhuman attack made by the armed forces of Britain and France on Egypt differ from this? ...

"We maintain that the British Government must ... put an end to the war in Egypt. We call upon you, upon Parliament, upon the Labour Party, upon the trade unions and the people of Britain— stop aggression stop the bloodshed. War may spread to other countries and become a third world war.

"The Soviet Government has approached the United States with a proposal to use naval and air forces, together with other U.N. members, to stop the war in Egypt and to restrain aggression. We are fully determined to crush the aggressors and restore peace in the East through the use of force. We hope at this critical moment you will display due prudence and draw the corresponding conclusions from this."

Sir Anthony Eden's reply to this letter was read by him to the House of Commons on Nov. 6, the text being as follows:

"I have received with deep regret your message of yesterday. The language which you used in it made me think at first that I could only instruct H.M. Ambassador (in Moscow) to return it as entirely unacceptable. But the moment is so grave that I feel I must try to answer you with those counsels of reason with which you and I have in the past been able to discuss issues vital for the whole world.

"H.M. Government have repeatedly said that the essential aim of the action taken by the British and French Governments was to stop the fighting between Israel and Egypt and to separate the combatants. This aim has now been virtually achieved. As regards the future, you know that the Canadian Government have proposed the establishment of an Emergency International United Nations-Force in the area. The General Assembly has taken the first steps to organize such a force. H.M. Government fully approve the principle of an International U.N. Force. Indeed, we suggested this ourselves ...

"If your Government will support proposals for an International Force whose functions will be to prevent the resumption of hostilities between Israel and Egypt, to secure the withdrawal of the Israeli forces, to take the necessary measures to remove obstructions and restore traffic through the Suez Canal, and to promote a settlement of the problems of the area, you will be making a contribution to peace which we would welcome.

"Our aim is to find a peaceful solution, not to engage in argument with you. But I cannot leave unanswered the baseless accusations in your message. You accuse us of waging war against the national independence of the countries of the Middle East. We have already proved the absurdity of this charge by declaring our willingness that the United Nations should take over the physical task of maintaining peace in the area.

"You accuse us of barbaric bombardment of Egyptian towns and villages. Our attacks on airfields and other military targets have been conducted with the most scrupulous care in order to cause the least possible loss of life. Some casualties there must have been. We deeply regret them. When all fighting has ceased it will be possible to establish the true figure. We believe they will prove to be small. They will in any event be in no way comparable with the casualties which have been and are still being inflicted by the Soviet forces in Hungary.

"The world knows that in the past three days- Soviet forces in Hungary have been ruthlessly crushing the heroic resistance of a truly national movement for independence—a movement which, by declaring its neutrality, proved that it offered no threat to the security of the Soviet Union.

"At such a time it ill becomes the Soviet Government to speak of the actions of H.M. Government as barbaric. The United Nations have called on your Government to desist from all armed attack on the people of Hungary, to withdraw, its forces from Hungarian territory, and to accept United Nations observers in Hungary. The world will judge from your reply the sincerity of the words which you have thought fit to use about H.M. Government."

The Soviet Prime Minister's letter to the French Prime Minister (issued on Nov. 5) was similar to that to Sir Anthony Eden. The text was as follows:

"I deem it my duty to address you concerning the situation which has arisen in connexion with the France-British aggression in Egypt. I must state with all frankness that the war against the Egyptian state, launched by France and Britain with Israel as their tool, may have extremely dangerous consequences for general peace.

"An overwhelming majority of U.N. member-states, at the special session of the General Assembly, supported the immediate cessation of military operations and the withdrawal of foreign troops from Egyptian territory. Nevertheless, military operations in Egypt are being extended. Egyptian towns and villages are being subjected to barbarous bombing. French and British troops have landed on Egyptian territory. The blood of innocent people is being shed. By acting in this manner the Government of France, jointly with the Governments of Britain and Israel, entered the path of unprovoked aggression against Egypt ... It is obvious that what is involved is not freedom of navigation on the Suez Canal, which was safeguarded by Egypt and which has now been interrupted by the armed operations of France and Britain, but by the wish of the colonizers to reimpose- the yoke of colonial slavery upon the peoples of the Arab East fighting for their national independence and freedom.

"During our meeting in Moscow last May we spoke of the fact that in your actions you are inspired by Socialist ideals. But what has the bandit-like attack against Egypt, which looks like an open colonial war, to do with Socialism? How can one reconcile Socialist ideals with the treacherous attack by France against a country which had only recently achieved its independence and which is not sufficiently armed to defend itself?"

"We are deeply convinced that the colonial war against Egypt runs counter to the fundamental interests of the French people, who, just as fervently as the peoples of Britain and of the Soviet Union, desire to preserve peace and to develop economic and cultural co-operation with other peoples. What would be the position of France if she were attacked by other States having at their disposal modern and terrible means of destruction?"

"In the interests of preserving peace, we appeal to you, to the Parliament, to the Socialist Party, to the trade unions, to the entire French people—put an end to armed aggression, stop the bloodshed.

"One cannot help but see that the war in Egypt may spread to other countries and develop into a third world war. I consider it my duty, to inform you that the Soviet Government has already addressed the United Nations and the President of the United States with a proposal to use naval and air forces, jointly with other members of the U.N., to stop the war in Egypt and curb aggression. The Soviet Government is fully determined to apply force in order to crush the aggressors and restore peace in the East.

"There is still time to use prudence and to prevent the bellicose forces from gaining the upper hand. We hope that at this decisive moment the French Government will show soberness. In the evaluation of the situation which has arisen, and will draw the appropriate conclusions from it."

The French Prime Minister replied as follows, to Marshal Bulganin on Nov. 8:

"I am no less conscious than yourself of the grave risks involved in recourse to force in the modern world. I also share your desire that the entire world should be at peace. I doubt, however, whether in present circumstances this can be achieved by menaces and by references to the possibilities of long-range weapons (a reference to Marshal Bulganin's "rockets" threat, I also doubt whether the Soviet Government has any authority to speak of the shedding of 'innocent blood' when it is itself shedding rivers of blood in Hungary.

"The operations we have been forced to undertake, the limited character of which you do not seem able to appreciate, are not operations of war against Egypt. They are designed solely to remedy certain aspects of the state of permanent insecurity which has been established in the Middle East—a state of affairs largely brought about by the encouragement given by certain Governments, including your own, to the Egyptian Government. It is perfectly clear that for many months the Egyptian Government has done everything in its negotiations designed to reach a satisfactory solution of the Suez question, the Egyptian Government has rejected any acceptable arrangement. It is certain that if the U.S.S.R. had exerted a moderating influence in Cairo, corresponding to the policy of peace and *détente* which it professes to uphold, the situation to-day would have been very different.

"If the U.S.S.R. has any real respect for the authority of the United Nations, it can show it by taking action, in conformity with the General Assembly's resolution, to bring to an end the operations it has launched in Hungary in violation of the laws of humanity, of justice, and of human rights.

"With regard to the Middle East, the position of France is as follows: We are ready to accept a definite cease-fire if it is accepted also by Egypt and Israel, and if the International Force, the creation of which has been decided upon by the United Nations, is able to carry out the tasks assigned to it by the General Assembly's resolution of November 2.

"We desire also that the Security Council should meet at Ministerial level to ensure the observance of the cease-fire and to regulate the problems of the Middle East."

In a threatening letter to the Prime Minister of Israel (Nov. 5) Marshal Bulganin alleged that Israel had acted as a "tool" of Britain and France, announced the recall of the Soviet ambassador in Tel-Aviv, and said *inter alia* that the continued existence of Israel as a State had been "placed in jeopardy." The text was as follows:

"The Soviet Government has already expressed its condemnation of the armed aggression by Israel, as well as Britain and France, against Egypt, which was a direct and open violation of the Charter and principles of the United Nations.

"The overwhelming majority of the nations of the world, at the special session for the General Assembly, also condemned the aggression against Egypt and called upon Israel, Britain, and France to cease military operations forthwith and withdraw the invading troops from Egyptian territory.

"All peace-loving mankind indignantly brands the criminal actions of the aggressors who have attacked the territorial integrity, sovereignty, and independence of the Egyptian State. Disregarding this, the Government of Israel, acting as a tool of foreign imperialist powers, continues the foolhardy adventure, challenging all the peoples of the East who are struggling against colonialism for their freedom and independence.

"Such actions by the Government of Israel plainly show how much all the false assurances of Israel's love of peace and its desire to co-exist peacefully with the neighbouring Arab States were worth. By these assurances the Government of Israel was in fact merely striving to lull the vigilance of other nations while preparing a treacherous attack against its neighbours.

"Carrying out the will of other people, acting according to instructions from abroad, the Government of Israel is toying with the fate of peace and with the fate of its own people, in a criminal and irresponsible manner. It is sowing such hatred for the State of Israel among the peoples of the East as cannot but affect the future of Israel, and which will place in jeopardy the very existence of Israel as a State.

"We appeal to the Government of Israel to come to its senses before it is too late and to halt its military operations against Egypt. We appeal to you, to the Parliament, to the working-people of Israel, to the entire people of Israel: Stop the aggression, halt the bloodshed, withdraw your troops from Egyptian territory.

"In view of the situation which has arisen, the Soviet Government has decided to advise its Ambassador in Tel-Aviv to leave Israel and return immediately to Moscow. We hope that the Government of Israel will duly understand and appreciate our warning."

The Prime Minister of Israel replied to this letter as follows:

"I have received your Note and have read it carefully, and I must point out that some of your arguments are based on incomplete and incorrect information that you have received.

"More than two years ago the ruler of Egypt organized a special force, under the name of *Fedayeen*, whose purpose was to penetrate surreptitiously with the boundaries of our country and to murder our citizens working in the fields, traveling along the roads, and dwelling in their homes. At the beginning, these groups operated only from areas occupied by Egypt, such as the Gaza Strip. Lately he (Colonel Nasser) has organized such groups of murderers in Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria, and the lives of our farmers along the borders are subject daily to their murderous onslaught. During the Suez crisis, the activity of those groups ceased. Three weeks ago, however, their activity was intensified.

"In an order dated Feb. 15, 1956, by the Commander of the Third Egyptian Division in Sinai, Major-General Ahmed Salem—a photostatic copy of which is enclosed herewith—it is written *inter alia*: 'Every commander is to prepare himself and his subordinates for the unavoidable war with Israel for the purpose of fulfilling our exalted aim—namely the annihilation of Israel and her extermination in the shortest possible time and by fighting her as brutally and cruelly as possible.'

"The ruler of Egypt, in contravention of the U.N. Charter, organized an economic boycott against Israel. He established a blockade against our freedom of the navigation in the Suez Canal and the Straits of Elath (Straits of the Security Council concerning freedom of passage of Israeli shipping in the Suez Canal./ after the Security Council, on 13 October this year, again forbade discrimination with regard to freedom of navigation on the Suez Canal. Egypt's ruler announced that discrimination against Israel would be continued.

"About two weeks ago the Egyptian ruler concluded a military pact with Jordan and Syria against Israel. Therefore the action that we carried out at the end of October was necessitated by self-defence, and was not an action dictated by foreign wishes as you allege. In response to the appeal of the special U.N. Assembly of the United Nations, we ceased fire, and for several days past there has been no armed conflict between us and Egypt.

"Yesterday I stated in the *Knesset* (Parliament), in the name of the Government of Israel, that we are willing to enter immediately into direct negotiations with Egypt to achieve a stable peace without any prior conditions and without any compulsion. We hope that all peace-loving States, and especially these that maintain friendly relations with Egypt, will use their influence in Egypt to bring about peace talks without further delay.

"I am constrained, in conclusion, to express my surprise and sorrow at the threat against Israel's existence contained in your Note. Our foreign policy is dictated by our essential needs and by our yearning for peace. It is not and will not be decided by any foreign fact. As a sovereign State we decide our path ourselves, and we join with all other peace-loving peoples of the world in striving for relations of peace and justice in our area and throughout the entire world."

The Soviet delegation at the U.N. presented a resolution in the Security Council on Nov. 5 proposing (a) that Britain, France, and Israel should "immediately, and not later than 12 hours after the adoption of this resolution, cease all military operations against Egypt and withdraw their troops from Egyptian territory within three days"; (b) that the U.S.A., the Soviet Union, and other U.N. members having at their disposal "powerful air and naval forces" should "give armed and other aid to the victim of aggression—the Republic of Egypt—by sending naval and air forces, military units, volunteers, military equipment, and other types of aid," unless Britain, France and Israel complied with the resolution "by a fixed date." The resolution said that such action should be taken in conformity with Article 42 of the U.N. Charter, and added that the Soviet Government was "ready to make its contribution toward the task of curbing aggression and re-establishing peace by sending to Egypt the air and naval forces needed for that purpose."

The Security Council, meeting on the same day, refused to put the resolution on its agenda, the voting being four against (the U.S.A., Britain, France, Australia) and three in favour (U.S.S.R., Yugoslavia, Persia), with four abstentions— Belgium, Nationalist China, Cuba, and Peru. Mr. Cabot Lodge (U.S.A.) said that the Soviet proposal would "turn Egypt into a still larger battlefield," adding that the U.S.S.R. had set a "new record of cynicism and disregard of the values of international morality" by presenting such proposals at a time when its own troops were carrying out "butchery" in Budapest.

At a press conference at the White House on Nov. 14, recalled that President Eisenhower had said that it would be the duty of all U.N. members, including the United States, to oppose "the introduction of any new forces in the Middle East," and asked the President whether this would "apply to intervention on the side of Egypt by so-called volunteers from the Soviet Union or Communist China." In reply, President Eisenhower said that "it would be the duty of the United Nations, including the United States, to oppose such an effort." (New York Times - New York Herald Tribune - Times - Manchester Guardian - Le Monde, Paris - Soviet Weekly)

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