UN EMERGENCY FORCE

UN Action
In an emergency session of the UN Security Council on October 20, a resolution requested all members to refrain from the use of force in the area. Britain and France vetoed this resolution.

A resolution in the General Assembly calling on all parties to agree to an immediate cease-fire and halt the movement of military forces and arms into the area was overwhelmingly approved by the Assembly on November 2.

Canada's Resolution
On the night of November 3, the Hon. Lester B. Pearson, Canada's Secretary of State for External Affairs, submitted the following draft resolution to the UN General Assembly:

"The General Assembly, bearing in mind the urgent necessity of facilitating compliance with the resolution of November 2, requests, as a matter of priority, the Secretary-General to submit to it within 48 hours a plan for the setting up, with the consent of the nations concerned, of an emergency international UN force to secure and supervise the cessation of hostilities in accordance with the terms of the above resolution."

Early on November 4 the General Assembly voted 57-0 to approve this Canadian resolution.

The General Assembly reconvened on November 4 to hear the Secretary-General. Mr. Dag Hammarskjöld, report on the proposed UN Emergency Force.

The Assembly voted 57-0 early on November 5 in favour of a resolution establishing a UN Command and naming a Canadian, Major-General E. L. M. Burns, on an emergency basis, as chief of the UN Force.

The functions of the force were stated to be the determination of a cease-fire, the withdrawal of forces behind the armistice line, the cessation of raids across the armistice line, the strict observance of the provisions of the armistice and the taking of steps to re-open the Suez Canal and secure freedom of navigation.

Canadian operation in Egypt on November 27, 1956.

Anglo-French Policy
Prime Minister Eden in the House of Commons on November 3, declared that the United Kingdom and France would willingly stop military action in Egypt on the following conditions:

(1) The Egyptians and the Israeli Government would agree to accept a UN force to protect the peace;
(2) the UN would maintain such a force until an Egyptian-Israeli peace settlement could be reached and satisfactory arrangements had been made for the use of the Suez Canal;
(3) Egypt and Israel would allow limited Anglo-French detachments to be stationed in the Canal Area until a UN force was ready to take over.

Canadian troops at Suez

Canada's UN Contribution
On November 8 the Canadian Government chose the 1st Battalion, Queen's Own Rifles of Canada, to be the major component of the Canadian contribution to the UN Emergency Force for the Middle East.

On November 9 it was learned that the Queen's Own Rifles of Canada would not leave for the Middle East.

At the request of General Burns it was decided that Canada's offer of an infantry regiment to serve as an administrative group to fill the immediate and pressing need of the UN for such troops was augmented, but also placed at the disposal of the UN Commander to transfer UNF troops from Italy to Egypt.

On January 18 it was announced that the RCAF component of the UN Emergency Force would consist of aircraft and personnel for transport, reconnaissance and communications. The squadron is equipped with C-319 Otter and Dakota aircraft.

Current Affairs Map—April 1957

UNEF in Egypt
Goals for the force's strength as reported on November 10 were: 905 Canadians, 800 Colombians, 365 Danes and additional units from Finland, India, Norway, Sweden and Yugoslavia. Contingents from these countries were later supplemented by Indonesian and Brazilian contingents. The Canadian strength is now about 1,200.

The first contingent of Canadian ground troops left Dorval (Montreal) by RCAF aircraft for Capodichino, Italy on November 22.

The RCAF airlift of men and matériel from Capodichino to Abu Saif in Egypt began on November 24. Flights were staged through Suda Bay, an airport on the island of Crete. HMC8 Magnificent arrived at Port Said on January 12 with 520 Canadian men and matériel.

Israeli Withdrawal
Although British and French forces completed their evacuation of Egypt, Israeli troops remained in the Gaza Strip and Gulf of Aqaba regions.

The Israeli Government considered these areas to be most vital to the defence and economy of Israel. They demanded that UNF troops should take over these regions and that adequate guarantees of freedom of navigation should be given for passage in the Gulf of Aqaba.

At the beginning of March, however, after much consultation and discussion, Premier David Ben-Gurion ordered Israeli troops to withdraw from the Gaza Strip and the Gulf of Aqaba areas. UNEFPF troops immediately moved into these areas.