**JECRC Model United Nations 2024**

**Historical Crisis Committee**



**AGENDA - The Suez Canal Crisis (1956)**

**Letter from the Executive Board**

Greetings Delegates!

It is an honor to welcome you to the Historical Crisis Committee at JECRC Model United Nations 2024. Model UN Conferences help you realize that no one is too small to make a change and no voice can ever go unheard, as long it intends to construct a solution. In this edition, we will be discussing the Suez Canal Crisis of 1956. The study guide, however, is in no way exhaustive and is only to provide you with enough background information to establish a platform for you to begin your research. We highly recommend that you do a good amount of research beyond what is covered in the study guide.

The delegates are expected to maintain a high level of diplomatic courtesy, and accurate awareness about one’s foreign policy leading to productive discourse in the most solemn demeanor. We aim to put you in a comprehensive environment, allowing you to excel in critical thinking, negotiation skills, lobbying capabilities, and tactical vision.

During committee, we will be following a strict plagiarism policy. You can either cite the original text in your speeches or you can paraphrase it. If you have any queries regarding plagiarism kindly reach out to the executive board.

Please consider the following points regarding the type of documents you might want to produce for the committee to substantiate your stand.

Valid and Binding:

1. All reports published by the United Nations and its agencies

2. Reports by Governments and their agencies. (Concerning their country only)

3. Reports and data sheets of internationally recognized baking and financial institutions such as the World Bank and International Monetary Fund.

Please feel free to reach out to the secretariat in case of any queries.

Regards,

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Muskan Prajapat (Vice-Chairperson)

**History of the Suez Canal**

The idea of connecting the Red Sea and the Mediterranean, via the Nile and its branches, was the Egyptian Pharaoh Senausert III of the Twelfth Dynasty. That was to promote trade and facilitate communication between the East and the West as the ships came from the Mediterranean, sailed through the Nile until Zagazig and then to the Red Sea via the Bitter Lakes that were connected to it at the time.

In 610 B.C., the Canal was left for sand deposition and a dam formed, thus, isolating the Bitter Lakes; which suffered from the absence of maintenance for a very long time, form the Red Sea. Necho II (also known as Nekós) did everything in his power to re-dig the Canal, but only managed to connect the Bitter Lakes to the Nile failing to connect them to the Red Sea.

In 510 B.C., Darius I gave a lot of attention to the Canal. He reconnected the Bitter Lakes and the Nile, but, like his predecessor, failed to connect them to the Red Sea except via small canals not suitable for navigation except during the flood season of the Nile.

In 285 B.C., Ptolemy II managed to overcome all the challenges that faced his predecessors as he restored navigation to the entire Canal after successfully digging the part between the Red Sea and the Bitter Lakes to replace the small unnavigable canals. During the reign of the Roman Emperor Trajan (circa 98 A.D.), there was a need for the Canal for trade purposes so he re-dug it. It started in Cairo; at the bay mouth, and ended in El-Abbasa where it connects to the old Nile branch in Zagazig.

The Byzantines (circa 400 A.D.) neglected the Canal completely until it became unnavigable due to sand deposition.

In 641 A.D., Amr Ibn El-A’as reopened the Canal for navigation and named it the Amir El-Mo’menin Canal. At the time, he thought of directly connecting the two seas, but the Caliph Omar Ibn El-Khattab stopped him from executing this due to his belief that water from the Red Sea would flood all of Egypt.

By 760 A.D., the Abbasid Caliph, Abu Jafar El-Mansur, ordered the Canal be filled with sand so as not to be used in the transport of supplies to the people of Mecca and Medina who rebelled against his rule.

That is how navigation between the two seas stopped for approximately eleven centuries during which land routes were used to transport Egyptian trade. In 1820, Mohammad Ali Pasha ordered part of the Canal be fixed for irrigation purposes of the lands between El-Abbasa and El-Qassasin.

The idea of a large canal providing a direct route between the two bodies of water was discussed in the 1830s, thanks to the work of French explorer and engineer Linant de Bellefonds, who specialized in Egypt.

Bellefonds performed a survey of the Isthmus of Suez and confirmed that the Mediterranean and Red seas were, contrary to popular belief, at the same level of altitude. This meant a canal without locks could be built, making construction significantly easier.

**Foundation of canal and Ferdinand de Lesseps**

Khedive Said Pasha (who oversaw Egypt and the Sudan for the Ottomans) had granted French diplomat Ferdinand de Lesseps permission to create a company to construct a canal. That company eventually became known as the **Suez Canal Company**, and it was given a 99-year lease over the waterway and surrounding area.

Lesseps’ first action was to create the Commission Internationale pour le percement de l’isthme des Suez—or International Commission for the Piercing of the Isthmus of Suez. The commission was made up of 13 experts from seven countries, including, most notably, Alois Negrelli, a leading civil engineer.

Negrelli effectively built upon the work of Bellefonds and his original survey of the region and took a leading role in developing the architectural plans for the Suez Canal. The commission’s final report was completed in 1856; two years later, the Suez Canal Company was formally established.

The Universal Company of the Maritime Canal of Suez was established on December 5th, 1858, with a capital of 200 million Francs (8 million Egyptian Pounds) divided between 400,000 shares at a price of 500 Francs each. Egypt’s portion was initially 92136 shares, and the shares reserved for Britain, the United States, Austria and Russia totaled at 85506, but were not bought as they refused to take part in the public offering.

As a result, Egypt took a loan for 28 million Francs (1120000 Egyptian Pounds) at a very high interest to buy those shares after the insistence of de Lesseps and out of a genuine desire that this project succeeds. At that point, the total number of shares owned by Egypt reached 177642 with a value of approximately 89 million Francs (3560000 Egyptian Pounds) which was roughly half the Company’s capital.

**Involvement of Britain in suez canal**

In 1875, Isma’il Pasha sold his forty-four per cent share in the Suez Canal Company to the British government to pay off debt.The British Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli bought 176602 shares from Khedive Ismail for a sum of 3,976,580 Pound Sterling. Those sold shares represented 44% of the total number of shares which entitled Egypt to 31% of the total profits of the Company.

The Egyptian government also waived its right to 15% of the Company’s annual net profit to the Crédit Foncier de France for a sum of 22 million Francs. At that point, the Company was financially controlled by France; owning 56% of the Shares, and Britain which owned the remaining 44%.

The British relied heavily on the Suez Canal. Eighty per cent of ships using the canal were British. It was a vital link to Britain’s eastern colonies, including India. Britain also relied on the Middle East for oil, carried through the canal.

In 1882, Egyptian anger at European interference in the country resulted in a nationalist revolt. It was in the interest of the British to quell this revolt, as they relied on the Suez Canal. Therefore, they sent military forces to curb the revolt. Egypt effectively became a British protectorate for the next sixty years.

A statement by Lord Grandfield on January 3, 1883 issued to the major powers declaring that the British government was willing to withdraw its army from Egypt at the nearest opportunity, when the conditions of the country would allow. He proposed organizing the Suez Canal’s position by means of an agreement made between the major powers.

 **The Constantinople Convention**

On March 30th, 1885, an international committee met in Paris to draft a document which ensures the freedom of navigation in the Canal at all times and for all countries, but, they failed to reach an agreement on it.

An agreement was made between France, Austria, Hungary, Spain, Britain, Italy, the Netherlands, Russia and Turkey to draw a final system that ensures freedom of navigation through the Suez Canal know an the Constantinople convention.

Article I:

The Suez Maritime Canal shall always be free and of commerce or of war, without distinction of flag.

Consequently, the High Contracting Parties agree not in any way to interfere with the free use of the Canal, in time of war as in time of peace.The Canal shall never be subjected to the exercise of the right of blockade.

Article II:

The High Contracting Parties, recognizing that the Fresh-Water Canal is indispensable to the Maritime Canal, take note of the engagements of His Highness the Khedive towards the Universal Suez Canal Company as regards the Fresh-Water Canal; which engagements are stipulated in a Convention bearing the date of 18th March, 1863, containing an expose and four Articles.

They undertake not to interfere in any way with the security of that Canal and its branches, the working of which shall not be exposed to any attempt at obstruction.

Article III:

The High Contracting Parties likewise und​ertake to respect the plant, establishments, buildings, and works of the Maritime Canal and of the Fresh-Water-Canal.

Article IV:

The Maritime Canal remaining open in time of war as a free passage, even to ships of war of belligerents, according to the terms of Article I of the present Treaty, the High Contracting Parties agree that no right of war, no act of hostility, nor any act having for its object to obstruct the free navigating of the Canal, shall be committed in the Canal and its ports, even though the Ottoman Empire should be one of the belligerent Powers.

Vessels of war of belligerents shall not re-victual or take in stores in the Canal and its ports of access, except in so far may be strictly necessary. The transit of the aforesaid vessels through the Canal shall be affected with the least possible delay, in accordance with the Regulations in force, and without any intermission than the resulting from the necessities of the service.

Their stay at Port Said and in the roadstead of Suez shall not exceed twenty-four hours, except in case if distress. In such case they shall be bound to leave as soon as possible. An interval of twenty-four hours shall always elapse between the sailing of a belligerent ship from one of the ports of access and the departure of a ship belonging to the hostile Power.

Article V:

In time of war belligerent Powers shall not disembark nor embark within the Canal and its ports of access either troops, munitions, or materials of war. But in case of an accidental hindrance in the Canal, men may be embarked or disembarked at the ports of access by detachments not exceeding 1,000 men, with a corresponding amount of war material.

Article VI:

Prizes shall be subjected, in all respects, to the same rules as the vessels of war of belligerents.

Article VII:

The Powers shall not keep any vessel of war in the waters of the Canal (including lake Timsah and the Bitter Lakes).

Nevertheless, they may station vessel of war in the ports of access of Port Said and Suez, the number of which shall not exceed two for each power.

This right shall not be exercised by belligerents.

Article VIII:

The agents in Egypt of the Signatory Powers of the present Treaty shall be charged to watch over its execution. In case of any event threatening the security or the free passage of the Canal, they shall meet on the summons of three of their number under the presidency of their Doyen, in order to proceed to the necessary verifications. They shall inform the Khedivial Government of the danger which they may have perceived, in order that that Government may take proper steps to insure the protection and the free use of the Canal. Under any circumstances, they shall meet once a year to take note of the due execution of the Treaty.

The last mentioned meetings shall take place under the presidency of a Special Commissioner nominated for that purpose by the Imperial Ottoman Government. A Commissioner of the Khedive may also take part in the meeting, and may preside over it in case of the absence of the Ottoman Commissioner.

They shall especially demand the suppression of any work or the dispersion of any assemblage on either bank of the Canal, the object or effect of which might be to interfere with the liberty and the entire security of the navigation.

Article IX:

The Egyptian Government shall, within the limit of its powers resulting from the Firmans, and under the conditions provided for in the present Treaty, take the necessary measures for insuring the execution of the said Treaty.

In case the Egyptian Government shall not have sufficient means at its disposal, it shall call upon the Imperial Ottoman Government, which shall take the necessary measures to respond to such appeal, shall give notice thereof to the Signatory Powers of the Declaration of London of the 17th March, 1885, and shall, if necessary, concert with them on the subject.

The provisions of Articles IV, V, VII and VIII shall not interfere with the measures which shall be taken in virtue of the present Article.

Article X:

Similarly, the provisions of Articles IV, V, VII and VIII shall not interfere with the measures which His Majesty the Sultan and His Highness the Khedive, in the name of His Imperial Majesty, and within the limits of the Firmans granted, might find it necessary to take for securing by their own forces the defense of Egypt and the maintenance of public order.

In case His Imperial Majesty the Sultan, or His Highness the Khedive, would find it necessary to avail themselves of the exceptions for which this article provides, the Signatory Powers of the Declaration of London shall be notified thereof by the Imperial Ottoman Government.

It is likewise understood that the provisions of the four Articles aforesaid shall in no case occasion any obstacle to the measures which the Imperial Ottoman Government may think it necessary to take in order to insure by its own forces the defense of its other possessions situated on the eastern coast of the Red Sea.

Article XI:

The measures which shall be taken in the cases provided for by Article IX and X of the present Treaty shall not interfere with the free use of the Canal. In the same cases, the erection of permanent fortifications contrary to the provisions of Article VIII is prohibited.

Article XII:

The High Contracting Parties, by application of the principle of equality as regards the free use of the Canal, a principle which forms one of the bases of the present Treaty, agree that none of them shall endeavor to obtain with respect to the Canal territorial or commercial advantages or privileges in any international arrangements which may be concluded. Moreover, the rights of Turkey as the territorial Power are reserved.

Article XIII:

With the exception of the obligations provided for in this treaty, no encroachment is legalized on the rights of sovereignty or prerogatives deriving from the firmans.

Article XIV:

The High Contracting Parties agree that the engagements resulting from present Treaty shall not be limited by the duration of the Acts of Concession of the Universal Suez Canal Company.

Article XV:

The stipulations of the present Treaty shall not interfere with the sanitary measures in force in Egypt.

Article XVI:

The High Contracting Parties undertake to bring the present Treaty to the knowledge of the States which have not signed it, inviting them to accede to it.

Article XVII:

The present Treaty shall be ratified, and the ratifications shall be exchanged at Constantinople, within the space of one month, or sooner, if possible.In faith of which the respective Plenipotentiaries have signed the present Treaty, and have affixed to it the seal of their arms.

**Military Coup of Egypt- 1952**

The Egyptian Revolution of 1952 was staged during the night of July 22 to the 23, 1952. This bloodless overthrow of the Egyptian govern-ment and King Farouk marked the end of directBritish inﬂuence in state affairs and the begin-ning of a new era in Egyptian history. Colonel Gamal Abdel Nasser (1918–70), the leader of the “Free Ofﬁcers,” justiﬁed the army’s overthrow ofcivilian government by referring to the Urabi revolution that took place 70 years earlier.

The revolution of 1919 was another episode in Egyptian history that greatly changed the courseof history leading up to the 1952 revolution. Other signiﬁcant historical elements include the continuous opposition to British inﬂuence, the volatility of liberal politics, the growth of nationalmass movements, the deteriorated economic situ-ation, and the king’s continuous involvement in affairs of the government.

**Aswan Dam and the nationalsation of Suez Canal**

The construction of the Aswan Dam was part of Nasser’s plan to modernise Egypt. Britain and the US had offered to fund its construction to win Nasser over. But Nasser’s deal with the Soviets didn’t go down well with the US and Britain, who withdrew their offer to fund the dam. The withdrawal gave Nasser a motive to nationalise the Suez Canal.

President Gamal Abdel Nasser declared in his historic speech in Alexandria on July 6th, 1956, the nationalization of the Suez Canal. The first article of the decree stipulates that “The Universal Company of the Suez Maritime Canal (Egyptian joint-stock company) is hereby nationalized. All its assets, rights and obligations are transferred to the Nation and all the organizations and committees that now operate its management are hereby dissolved.

Stockholders and holders of founders shares shall be compensated for the ordinary or founders shares they own in accordance with the value of the shares shown in the closing quotations of the Paris Stock Exchange on the day preceding the effective date of the present law.

The payment of said indemnity shall be effected after the Nation has taken delivery of all the assets and properties of the nationalized company.”