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Yale-UN Oral History Project

Sir Donald Logan
James S. Sutterlin, Interviewer
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YUN INTERVIEW
SIR DONALD LOGAN
LONDON, ENGLAND
APRIL 22, 1991
INTERVIEWER: JAMES S. SUTTERLIN

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JSS Sir Donald, I want to first express appreciation for your participation in this Yale University Oral History project related to the United Nations and if we may, I'd like to talk this morning about the Suez crisis in 1956. And if I could I would like first to ask you, for the record, what your position was at that particular time in the British government.

DL I was assistant private secretary to Selwyn Lloyd the British Foreign Secretary. I'd been appointed at the end of 1955 and joined him soon after he assumed office in January 1956. I was with him over the next three years and saw that very early on in his occupation of the post he was concerned about the Middle East, if only because it reflected the great concern Eden had about showing the role of Nasser in Egypt. Selwyn, taking over as foreign secretary, felt he'd been promoted a bit before his time and therefore it was fairly natural that he took considerable account for Eden's views. However, by the end of January or February he persuaded Eden that before he made up his mind about Middle East policy he would want to go to the Middle East, and particularly to see Nasser, to see whether it was possible to come to some accommodation, or rather to reconcile British foreign

policy in the Middle East with what Nasser was intending to do. That took him to Egypt on the 1st of March 1956 for a interview with Nasser to try to take stock of the man and to see what could be done. It was while he was away at dinner with Nasser that we received in the British Embassy the news of the dismissal of General Glubb, the British military commander of the Arab Legion in Jordan. That was clearly something that was going to convince Eden that Nasser was behind all these moves. We had the embarrassing and awkward decision to take - whether to get this information through to Selwyn, knowing it would be a very considerable blow to him, or whether to hold it back to give him the chance of sorting the man out and coming to his own conclusion, then fitting it with this new development afterwards. But we knew that Eden would have already seen it and it would be difficult for him later to explain to Eden that he had not "learned" of the dismissal until later. And so we sent it to the Palace where he was dining. Although the message got through to Harold Caccia who was at the dinner, he was not able to give it to Selwyn until the end of the conversation. So our conflicting concerns were met, and Selwyn was left free to get his own assessment of Nasser before having to adjust to the news from Amman. He really did want to try to find a way of avoiding confrontation with Nasser, and of persuading

Eden that there was some other way forward.

Then we went on a tour of the Middle East for the next ten days. There were various attempts to work out a Middle East policy - particularly with the United States, and the issue of the Aswan Dam. With all this, I had little to do. Then there was the nationalization of the Suez Canal at the beginning of July.

JSS What was Selwyn Lloyd's impression of Nasser?

DL He always had the idea in the back of his mind that we ought to be able to live with the man. He never fully shared Eden's determination to get rid of him. I don't think he really went along with the equation of Nasser with Hitler, or as Eden preferred with Mussolini.

JSS I wanted to ask you that because in reading the literature of the time, including Selwyn Lloyd's book and Pineau's book, the phrase often appears, "Hitler-like". It occurred a few months ago in descriptions of Saddam Hussein and so I was wondering whether in fact that did represent Selwyn Lloyd's views. Did he think of Nasser in these terms?

DL No, I don't think he did. In any case there he was and, Hitler or no, one must try somehow to get the best out of it.

JSS Which leads me to another question. His French counterpart, Christian Pineau, also saw Nasser just about the same time during those months in the summer, and he

appears to have had a somewhat similar impression that this was a man you could eventually live with. However in later meetings which Eden and Selwyn Lloyd had with the French they seemed to have gotten the impression that Pineau was very what we would call "hardnosed" about it and was not interested in a settlement. Could you give your recollection of that, of this bilateral interplay between the French and the British on the question of how to deal with Nasser?

DL I think the thing that was uppermost in the French mind was what was going on in Algeria. They suspected Nasser of being deeply involved in Algeria and were determined to topple him for that reason.

JSS For reasons other than the Canal?

DL The Canal issue came along to make it all the more important that they should get rid of him. They saw the Canal very much as a French company and they felt that this was yet another example of Nasser undermining French interests.

JSS There were I think consultations not at a very senior level among the British, French and the Americans during that summer about what to do about Nasser. Do you recall that there was any consensus that emerged from these conversations (or conversation) that included the Americans?

DL I was not really involved in those. It was Eden and

Shuckbrugh who were doing the work on that.

JSS I have a general question now. You mentioned that Lloyd became foreign secretary in January 1956, so he was almost new on the job but he had had experience at the United Nations earlier as minister of state, I think. My question is, did you gain the impression that he had any particular perception of the United Nations - of the effectiveness of the organization - as he undertook his work as foreign secretary?

DL Yes, I think his time as minister of state at the United Nations gave him a very good impression of the United Nations and he thought he could very well work with it.

JSS A positive impression?

DL Yes.

JSS Because that leads to the next question. As the situation with Egypt intensified, and particularly at the time when the indications of nationalization became credible, was there any thought of going to the United Nations at that point - bring the whole question to the United Nations before the actual crisis erupted?

DL From what point?

JSS Before the nationalization.

DL Before nationalization? No, the issue then was the financing of the Aswan dam, and the World Bank's role in that as the Soviet Union's offer of arms to Egypt developed.

JSS Although there were already threats I think, spoken threats from Nasser.

DL I don't think they were significant enough to suggest going to the United Nations.

JSS I see. But there was no rejection, so to speak, of going to the United Nations at an earlier stage. It just wasn't considered back then. (DL: That's right) Another question I have of a general nature is the attitude toward Israel. In that tour of the Middle East, by the way, did Selwyn Lloyd include Israel?

DL Yes, we were in Tel Aviv on the way back.

JSS Did he meet the Israeli leaders at that point - Ben Gurion?

DL I can't remember whom we met - but he went there to meet them so he must have met them. Was Golda Meir Foreign Minister? I think she was but he went there for that purpose. I just can't remember the personality.

JSS Did Selwyn Lloyd enter this crisis, so to speak, with any particular attitude toward Israel or the Israelis?

DL I don't think he did. He certainly didn't have any prejudice against them. It has never occurred to me before to question what his attitude to Israel was, or to distinguish it from general attitudes toward Israel at that time. It was only about nine years since we had been in Palestine and felt we had been brutally turned out. We were not blaming the Israelis for that but the

way the Israelis had made it difficult for the mandate force didn't foster sympathy on our part.

JSS One reason I ask this question is because it is often reported that there was a strong pro-Arab sentiment in the Foreign Office at that point. Could you confirm that?

DL I don't know what it means. There were always Arabists in the Foreign Office of course. There are people expert on Asia, there are people expert on Africa. This business that the foreign office is always pro-Arab seem to me quite absurd. Our interests in the Middle East have always been closely connected with the Arabs and therefore it would be rather absurd if there was not understanding, sympathy for those people with whom we had to deal. I certainly think the idea that the Foreign Office was pro-Arab at that time in comparison with the attitude of the people of the country is grossly exaggerated.

JSS In any event the policy that eventually followed does not seem to represent what the Arab experts might have recommended.

DL Certainly not. And Anthony Eden had spent a great deal of his time surrounded by Foreign Office people. I think he was probably happiest when he was surrounded by Foreign Office people.

JSS Which raises the question - what were the dominant

influences on Selwyn Lloyd and Eden, and for that matter from the Foreign Office, in dealing with this crisis?

DL From what date?

JSS Well, let me begin at a particular point. That summer was a summer of considerable tension on the borders of Israel and Jordan, and at one point Britain felt compelled to warn Israel that if Israel should take action against Jordan then the British treaty with Jordan would come into effect. Was the Tripartite Declaration at all a consideration? Because just to jump ahead, I can't find much evidence that the Tripartite Declaration was considered alive at this point. May I ask that question right now? As this tension grew in the summer the Tripartite Declaration in theory was still in effect, but was it alive? Did you consider it a live document?

DL From Eden's point of view, it was unfortunately not dead.

JSS Really.

DL Yes, he certainly regarded it as an impediment to what he wanted to do. And he had to dispose of the impediment.

JSS And to jump far ahead, if indeed he approached this whole problem as if the Tripartite Declaration still had force, what would have been the American role then in the event of an Israeli attack against Egypt? The Tripartite Declaration would seemingly have meant coming to the support of Egypt.

DL That was the impediment. That was the difficulty about

the Declaration, that it implied that, but that was unthinkable after the nationalization of the Canal.

JSS So that was taken into account?

DL In Eden's view, it was a very real problem. He had to dispose of it.

JSS And how did he dispose of it?

DL He warned the Jordanians that they could not rely on it. I think Selwyn covered that in his book.

JSS If I read that I had forgotten it, but that's interesting. I knew there was a warning given both to Jordan and to Israel but not that the Tripartite Declaration was mentioned.

DL The Jordanians were warned that they could not rely on the Tripartite Declaration if as a result of the activities on their border they were to be attacked by Israel.

JSS This is where I'd like to begin the question of influence. Who had influence, who a dominant factor at this time? Were Eden and Selwyn Lloyd acting more or less on their own, very much "hands on", without taking counsel from the experts in the foreign office?

DL We're talking now about the period after the nationalization of the Canal?

JSS Well just before the nationalization.

DL The nationalization of the Canal changed the course of

consultation and preparation of policy. Before, there was close consultation between Eden and Lloyd, between Lloyd and the Foreign Office and between Eden and some members of the Foreign Office whom he knew personally. That was going on over the Aswan Dam issue right up to the end of July.

After the nationalization of the Canal Eden was determined that something quite serious had to be done, and Nasser deposed. And he made no secret of it. He was a man who had always liked to work with a small group of people with whom he felt empathy, working together. Increasingly he collected that kind of person around him as he faced what he recognized was a real national crisis and a personal crisis for him. Selwyn Lloyd was always in that group. Increasingly, as the advice he was receiving from the Foreign Office was more cautious than he wished, Eden was discarding his usual sources of advice and working only with those who were prepared to follow his line, and that led to the virtual exclusion of Foreign Office participation except by Lloyd himself and of Evone Kirkpatrick the head of the Office.

Then the counterpart to that was that, more and more, policy was being formed by ad hoc groups, groups being created for that purpose, groups which were very difficult to locate. They were partly military, they were partly intelligence, but they were mostly personal

around Eden. The war cabinet was called the cabinet by the press but was in fact called the Egypt committee, whose members were appointed by Eden to take on the crisis.

JSS But Selwyn Lloyd was always part of the inner circle. (DL: Always). Lloyd reports again in his book that he met with Dag Hammarskjöld during the summer after the tension between Israel and Jordan was very high, and they had a conversation about Nasser. Were you present at that meeting which I think was at the airport? He seemed to have gotten some impression about Hammarskjöld at that particular point.

DL He admired Dag Hammarskjöld.

JSS Well, this is exactly what I wanted to ask. Starting at this point, and going ahead further through the whole history, what was Selwyn Lloyd's impression of Dag Hammarskjöld?

DL He admired him. He thought Hammarskjöld had a considerable role to play and he attempted to develop that role in the conversations that he had with him at the United Nations in mid-October.

JSS The UK and France took the initiative to call a meeting of the Security Council at the beginning of October.

DL Yes, and in the margin of that, there were the talks with Hammarskjöld, the Secretary General, in which Pineau, Lloyd and Fawzi took part.

JSS Switching from Dag Hammarskjöld now to the American member of the cast, Foster Dulles. A great deal has been said in regard ...

DL But to get back for a moment to the talks of with Hammarskjöld, Selwyn had great hopes that those talks had opened up a way of avoiding the use of force.

JSS I wanted to ask that question. Let me ask that right now because these were the tripartite type talks that included Lloyd, Pineau, and Fawzi, the Egyptian foreign minister. First of all there is the question of who took the initiative in arranging these talks which were outside the framework of the Security Council. In your recollection or your impression, was it Selwyn Lloyd or Dag Hammarskjöld who took the initiative to bring the three together?

DL I can't remember. I would have expected it to be Hammarskjöld, but Selwyn Lloyd enthusiastically joined in. That's the one thing he wanted to do, to avoid the use of force which he could see coming closer and closer in Eden's time table. He believed at the end of the talks that he got just sufficient out of Fawzi for him to be able to succeed in that. He hoped that a date at the end of October would be set (in fact I think it was going to be the 29th of October, the date of quite a different development) for another meeting in Geneva, and he genuinely hoped that. He got just sufficient out of

Fawzi to be able to follow that line.

JSS

Because I believe Dag Hammarskjöld also felt and was encouraged by about the outcome of these talks. What happened? Why was it not possible to pursue this later? What was the decision on the British side that moved more directly to war?

DL

It was hardly a decision on the British side. It was the fact that the French and Israelis had got to the point where they were ready to go, provided they could bring in the British Canberras. Unknown to Selwyn, General Challe had arrived at Chequers while we were in New York, and we were called back early by Eden. Only on returning to London was explanation given as to why we had to leave New York. Selwyn reckoned that in another day or so he could have got further, but he had to accept it. It wasn't so much a decision as the fact that the Israelis and the French had come to the point when decision had to be taken trilaterally on whether or not to resort to the use of force.

JSS

I'd like to ask a question there about the timing of the knowledge. I think Selwyn Lloyd has indicated in his book (as I think you just mentioned) that he did not have knowledge at the time that these negotiations were going on in New York about the French/Israeli plan. But there other indications that the French had informed Ben Gurion as early as the 1st of September that the British and

French might welcome Israeli participation in military action in Egypt. Was this much known by Selwyn Lloyd?

DL The beginning of September? No. During that month he became aware that the French were supplying aircraft to Israel, but he did not read anything into that.

JSS But the real question is whether before even going to New York for the meetings which began on 3 October, Selwyn Lloyd already had some knowledge, at least of the possibility of Israeli participation in the joint...

DL Not until the meeting with the French in Paris on 16 October. I have no reason to think that he knew about it before, and in his book he denies that he did. He gave these an account of the meeting.

JSS And at that point it was only the question of possible Israeli participation in a joint action of some kind.

DL Yes, it was if the Israelis were to do this and what would the British position be? Which was a very awkward one because Eden was in no mood to stand idly by if the Israelis had attacked. If the Israelis as a result of planning with the French had opened an attack it would have been highly embarrassing for Eden, who had been one of the most belligerent up to now, to have sat back and said, "Well of course there's no question of our going to help the Israelis carry out the overthrow of Nasser." It would have been an impossible position for him to take. And it was all the more difficult for him to go to

Nasser's aid under the Triparte Declaration.

So when the French put the point (as they must have done at that meeting or subsequently) that "we want your help to give because the Israeli's won't start this up unless Tel Aviv is being protected and therefore they want the RAF Canberra aircraft to be involved. He had to find a way of joining in but at the same time recognized that by now about half the country were following the Opposition Line, which had gradually switched away from the use of force. The country was about equally divided.

JSS At that point? And what was Selwyn Lloyd's impression of Pineau, what was their personal relationship?

DL It was good but not close. They were of different minds. Pineau, as his book shows, was not really concerned to deal with things step by step, but Selwyn was very much that kind of person. In his youth, he had loved playing with toy soldiers and reconstructing battles, very different from the instinctive approach of Pineau. And of French policy, too.

JSS The agreement had already been reached on the evacuation of the UK base at Suez which I believe had been objected to by some elements in the Conservative Party in England. How strong was this domestic influence in the decision-making of Eden and Selwyn Lloyd, who was also a politician, in connection with Suez?

DL These elements were very strong indeed in support of

Eden's determination that force might have to be used. There were scenes in the House of Commons. The Suez group was very vocal and Eden was drawing strength from that. It was a small group but it was essentially a vociferous group.

JSS I'd like to go back now just for a minute to the American side which we broached earlier - Dulles and Eisenhower. Could you talk a little bit about the relationship between Selwyn Lloyd and Dulles?

DL They had more in common than Selwyn Lloyd had with Pineau. They both had non-conformist backgrounds, they were both lawyers, and they approached problems in the same sort of way. And Selwyn all the way through felt that it was his role, paramount role, to work closely with Dulles. But quite soon he found it very difficult because Dulles was highly ingenious in thinking up new ideas which often, from our point of view, seemed to have little connection with his previous ideas. And so when working on one of his ideas you suddenly found that he'd gone off to Duck Island and come up with a very different one. It was difficult to keep up with him.

JSS Were these seen really as a delaying move on the part of Dulles?

DL Yes.

JSS The position of Eisenhower, though, was more consistent from the beginning of the crisis in which he consistently

spoke against the use of military force. Was this taken seriously, how was this interpreted by Lloyd and by others on the British side? That Eisenhower perhaps didn't need to be taken so seriously because Dulles was saying something different, or what?

DL Yes. Roger Makins, the ambassador in Washington, always pointed out that the point of view of Eisenhower was not to be ignored but Eden felt that he was close enough to (Ike) to be able to deal with that when the time came. Selwyn felt "Well, Dulles keeps coming up with ideas, we're closely working with him, surely Eisenhower is aware of all this and so we're working together".

JSS So did this add then to the surprise at the ultimate nature of American policy, that in fact, it was Eisenhower who prevailed?

DL It was to Eden's astonishment that things worked out that way. He felt that he had his lines out to Eisenhower, that he'd known him during the war, that it was a close personal connection which would work in the end. Eden, I am sure, was astonished at the stand that the Americans took at the end. And I think that went for Lloyd as well.

JSS I'd like to go ahead now to the meetings with the French at Sèvres. I believe you participated throughout. Would you just give your impression of those meetings at which the Israeli, the whole Israeli leadership was present?

DL

Yes, I've got a very precise impression of those meetings because of the way in which they came about. On the day before we went to Paris, the only thing I was aware of was that a French general had been to Chequers the previous weekend and had talked to the Prime Minister. But I had only seen the very briefest reference to that meeting, saying that a French military plan - I can't remember the wording, something like - French military plans had been discussed. There was no record of that meeting.

I was with Selwyn Lloyd in his constituency at the weekend of October 21. While there he received instructions from Eden to come back to London quickly and to be prepared to take on a new assignment the following day. And Selwyn said to me, "You'd better come with me," but it was only in the plane going over on the following day that he told me that we were going to meet with the Israelis.

I had no idea just how it was going to unfold. Indeed, when we arrived at the private home in Sèvres, and were taken into the room where the Israelis and the French had already been discussing, I felt highly embarrassed that I was there as a junior member of the Foreign Office, unprepared and sitting with half a dozen senior ministers around the table. I asked Selwyn if he really wanted me to stay. Selwyn himself, I think had no

very detailed brief for that meeting except to make sure that the Israelis and the_____ accepted really the formula that Eden had already laid down, namely that British forces would only intervene on the basis that they were intervening to separate the two sides and for that reason there must be a serious threat to the Canal to justify intervention.

JSS And was that Eden's idea? (DL: Was what?) The idea that Britain could only intervene in order to separate...

DL Oh sure, yes, of course. It was a pretext. Eden was being asked to help the French to get the Israelis to launch the attack that would be, he hoped, Nasser's downfall. Eden saw that he couldn't simply say, "right, we are going to do this with Israel" because the feeling in the country at the time was too strong to make that acceptable but he had to find a way of covering his action, a pretext. And the pretext that he worked out, and he must have worked it out at the meeting in Paris on 16 October, was, "Well, we can only do this on the basis of separating the forces." The French never went along with that. They had to accept it but they never believed in it, and made little attempt to make it credible.

JSS Yes, to jump ahead now. Would you say that that's perhaps why it was somewhat easier for the French to accommodate to the situation that actually developed than it was for the British?

DL Yes but the French didn't have the same opposition. Algeria was still in their mind, and in the middle of it all on October 22 they arrested Ben Bella, the Algerian leader. The situation in Algeria at that time I'm sure made the French determined that really every effort must be made to get rid of Nasser.

JSS And perhaps, would you say that this was also a reason why the French were less insistent than the British on the participation of French and British forces in the eventual peacekeeping operations - that they never really believed in it?

DL Possibly, I haven't thought that through.

JSS But going back to the Sèvres meeting, did you have - number one, what language did you use given this group that...

DL English.

JSS English, entirely? And did you have any particular impression of the Israelis that were present - one person who was not at cabinet level but who was there was Mr. Perez. I think he was an important element in the whole plan.

DL Yes, he was Director ...

JSS Director General of the Department of Defense...

DL Yes, yes, that's right.

JSS Did he seem to be the leading speaker on the Israeli side?

DL Oh no. It was Ben Gurion.

JSS Ben Gurion?

DL The conversation was with Ben Gurion on the first day, with Mollet Pineau and Selwyn, Perez and Dayan being there also.

JSS And the second meeting, Selwyn was not there, I believe?

DL No. For the second meeting I went with Pat Dean, on the Wednesday.

JSS And Anthony Eden spoke to you directly before going to that second meeting with some instructions.

DL Yes. I had already been sent to Paris alone on the previous day. The Monday meeting had been left with the impression that Selwyn would go back and report to Cabinet and give the Cabinet's answer to the question: "how soon will the British aircraft come into action?" When we got back on Monday night, it was clear that Cabinet could not respond that day and so I was sent back on Tuesday to explain to Pineau personally that he must wait a day for the answer. Pineau didn't wait but came back himself to London on Tuesday night and saw Eden and Selwyn Lloyd on Tuesday evening.

Then on Wednesday morning - at 8:30 in the morning Pat Dean was called to see Eden and told to go to Paris. Dean was not aware of what had been going on. Eden told him briefly that there had been conversations and Dean was to cancel his day's engagements and go to Paris that

morning. His purpose was to be to make it clear to the Israelis that British participation in the operation could not be counted upon unless the Israeli operations represented a serious attack on the Canal. Those words were repeated over and over again to Dean, orally, and he was then told to see me and I would go with him to explain what had been going on before. He went first to see the head of the Foreign Office, Evone Kirkpatrick, because he was so astonished to be given these instructions, quite unaware of what had been happening either during that week or, indeed, the previous week. Kirkpatrick told him he must do what he was told. He then came to me and we set off. I explained to him on the trip over what had been going on Monday and Tuesday.

The meeting then resumed at Sèvres with Pineau representing the French, Ben Gurion, Shimon Perez and Dayan were still there, and the French and Israelis were anxious to get a decision. They wanted to know what it was that we had still to find out. And so Dean and I concentrated on saying to the Israelis, "well look, you must really understand that we won't come in unless it really is a serious attack on the Canal and you haven't told us what it is you intend to do." Dayan, being a clever man, was not going to disclose his plans in great detail but we drew up a map of the Sinai Peninsula and gradually got him to indicate the places where there

could be Israeli activity on 29 of October and left it to us to judge whether those places would represent a significant, serious attack on the Canal. Dean and I reckoned that in fact we had got enough out of him for Eden to accept that there would be a sufficiently serious attack.

There was then a piece of paper produced, which had not been mentioned before, because throughout the whole week it had been an informal personal discussion. We read it through carefully and I told Dean, who had of course not been informed in any detail of the Monday meeting, that in my view it was an accurate record of what had been talked about during the week. It seemed to me that to have a record of what had been discussed during those days which was precise and accurate was better than to have nothing, particularly in the very tricky situation that had arisen. I advised Dean that I thought he could sign it as a record of the conversations that had been going on during the week. It described itself as just that, was not couched in any of the usual forms of agreement between governments and it specifically said that it was to be referred to governments for their agreement.

So he signed it, three copies of the document in French, one for each of the participating countries. We brought our copy back to Eden who was horrified that

anything had been put on paper. I think he recognized that he should have made clear to us his determination not to have anything put on paper because he didn't hold it against Dean that he had signed it. But next morning he asked that the translation of the paper which had been meantime prepared by the Foreign Office, all copies should be sent over to number 10. Dean and I were sent back on Thursday, the following day, to persuade the French to have the document destroyed. We were still of course incognito.

We arrived on Thursday morning at the Villacoublay and were taken to Pineau's office in the Quai d'Orsay. His immediate response was, "Well I don't think the French government will agree with this. In any case the Israelis have their copy and they have already left in their aircraft. However, wait and we'll think about it." So Dean and I were taken into the grand reception rooms of the Quai d'Orsay. We spent hours there without any lunch. After a time we found the doors were locked. And it wasn't till 4:00 in the afternoon that we were called back to Pineau and told, "the French government doesn't agree that the document should be destroyed and in any case, the Israeli have taken their's to Israel."

We had to go back and tell Eden that we had not succeeded. I always concluded that our copy of the original document which we had given to Eden would be

destroyed since that's what he wanted everybody else to do. And sure enough, when the 30 years had elapsed after which British documents are made public, the Foreign Office were concerned that they could not find it and asked me where it was. I told them I was sure they could stop looking for it because they would never find it. When the '56 papers came out, all the Suez papers that I ever knew about were all there, including some absurd little things - little bits of paper of mine with a scribbled note to Selwyn saying, "you'll remember this happened when some other thing happened". A kind of thing I expected to be thrown away right away in a wastepaper basket. These sort of things come out in the documents, the deliberate policy being to make public as much as possible.

I'm quite certain that our copy of the Sèvres document had been destroyed. As a result I've been at pains to collect the various versions of the document that have come out, the one in Dayan's book, the one in Pineau's book - Dayan's is in English, Pineau's is in French. I've tried to marry those two with the original text. I asked Pineau if he knew where the French original text was. He maintained he didn't know. I wonder.

JSS

And it's not - I happen to have with me the text from the Pineau book on the Sèvres...

DL That is accurate except that, surprisingly, it misses out one article. But as a participant in the meetings I have been allowed access to the Israeli's copy and have been able to reconstruct a full English text which appears in Keith Kyle's book "Suez" (Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1991). I have taken pains to reproduce the format too, because in this sort of thing, the format is important.

JSS Yes, it is referred to in some French documents as the Treaty of Sèvres.

DL Exactly, it isn't a bit like that. It is a record of conversation.

JSS It is what could be called a protocol, a compte rendu.

DL Yes, exactly, that's right. It began "les conversations qui se sont dérouler à Sèvres sont les suivantes" and at the end "les provisions du présent protocol doivent demeurer rigoureusement secrètes. Elles entrent en vigueur après l'accord des trois gouvernements".

JSS Après l'accord?

DL Yes.

JSS And there's no title given for the people who signed?

DL Not at all, it is not even dated.

DL It is a good rule in diplomatic negotiations that if you reach some sort of agreement by oral discussion it's a good idea to get it down on a piece of paper to make sure everyone agrees with the terms that have been used and

that the meaning is clear.

JSS I want to move on now back to the United Nations and start with a question. In his book Selwyn Lloyd suggests that he had thought of the idea of United Nations forces possibly being used in the Canal and had articulated this in a statement he made in the House of Commons. Do you have any recollection of that? This would have been before Lester Pearson's initiative.

DL Whether it was before or not I wouldn't know but certainly Selwyn had great hopes that Lester Pearson would successfully launch the idea of peacekeeping. Certainly quite early on Selwyn was keen on the idea of getting a UN peacekeeping force and keen on encouraging Lester Pearson to launch it.

JSS And there were then consultations between the Canadian side and the British government before the actual resolution was put forward by Pearson?

DL I'm not sure about government negotiation on that, no. But certainly personal between Lloyd and Pearson, yes. At the General Assembly meetings.

JSS Because there was rather a close relationship between Selwyn Lloyd and Lester Pearson.

DL Yes, right, yes.

JSS In the course of these consultations and contacts, did the question of Commonwealth solidarity play an important role?

DL Yes, I think so, certainly.

JSS Lester Pearson apparently had a fear that the Commonwealth was going to be very negatively affected if the crisis continued. Is that accurate?

DL Yes, I'm not sure that was the predominant influence in British policy after the failure of the military force. But certainly it was a factor, yes.

JSS But that leads up to my next question. What were the major factors in the British decision to withdraw from the Canal?

DL Well I think first of all, deep disappointment that the action had not been understood in the United States and had indeed been actively opposed. Secondly, the economic pressures which developed and in which the United States played a leading role became quite serious. I do not think that the note from Bulganin played any great role; it was the realization that there was not going to be support from the United States, that since the action had not been quickly successful and had not been accepted in the United States, the opposition in Britain was going to be more and more vociferous against it. And that led fairly quickly to the difference between the British and the French over ceasing military actions. The French really wanted to go on, the British commanders, having got involved, really wanted to go on. But Eden felt that Eisenhower, as he would have said, had let him down. The

U.S. was bringing economic pressure. He felt he couldn't continue.

JSS And when the final decision was made to withdraw, at least according to Pineau's account, the British side did not give the French side advance notice - why was that?

DL It was all fixed up in the middle of the day. Eden felt that he'd got to stop. The pressures were coming so strongly from Washington that he'd got to stop.

JSS With or without the French...

DL He'd got to stop, yes. If he stopped the French were not then strong enough to carry on on their own.

JSS To what extent was Eden's health a factor as perceived by Selwyn Lloyd? Was there any point where decisions had to be made primarily by Selwyn Lloyd or was Anthony Eden totally in charge?

DL If we're talking about the beginning of November I don't think that there was any indication at that time that his illness had anything to do with it. I think it was at the end of November, that he was ill and went off to Jamaica.

JSS Yes, but there's some indications that his health was not good earlier.

DL He had had these operations. But I don't think it was apparent at the end of October, or at the end of November that his health was a factor. I doubt it was apparent to Selwyn Lloyd that Eden was a sick man, or that Eden's

judgments were being affected by his ill health.

JSS That's exactly the question that I was asking, that it was not a factor. Now to go ahead to Pearson's initiative in proposing that a peacekeeping force be established and the establishment of a peacekeeping force. Dag Hammarskjöld was the next one to have extensive conversations with Nasser about the peacekeeping force and the conditions under which it would be there. Were you on the British side, was Selwyn Lloyd, conscious of, and concerned about, the arrangements that were being made by Dag Hammarskjöld for the presence of the peacekeeping force?

DL I don't see why he should have been concerned, once they decided to abandon the attack, this was the only way out. There was disappointment that the British forces were to be excluded. Peacekeeping was new and the idea that people who had the force there were not to be part of the peacekeeping force was difficult to accept but in the end it had to be accepted.

JSS At this point then the British did not play a very prominent role in New York, is that correct? Whereas Pineau actually participated in the arrangements for the Israeli withdrawal from Gaza and Sharm el Sheikh, but the British side was not involved in this?

DL I have little recollection of that.

JSS I just have one other question and this is a broader-

spectrum question. All this happened at the same time as the Soviet action against Hungary. Did the developments in Hungary play any role at all in the calculations and the perceptions of Selwyn Lloyd as action against Egypt advanced?

DL No. The action was already launched on 29 October, and the Soviet Union's invasion of Hungary followed immediately. By then, Eden and Lloyd and the country generally were too preoccupied by what was going on in the Canal to be able to do anything about Hungary - if they ever could have done much. One day in the debate at the UN was set aside for Hungary in the middle of the Suez crisis. Nothing much came out of it, nor could come out of it, given the Soviet Union's attitudes to the UN at the time.

JSS Those are the questions that I had proposed. I just would like to ask finally if there is any other particular impression or thought that has stayed with you, of the actions and main protagonists in this crisis that you would like to put down on the record?

DL In subsequent situations that have arisen, I've tended to compare them with the Suez affair. Two years later the United States forces became involved in Lebanon. I think that was the first time U.S. forces intervened in the Middle East. Up to then I think US policy had been one of trying to solve Middle East problems by counseling

rather than by exerting force. In a couple of year's time the United States was beginning to do so. I suppose the difference was that the Middle East problems had developed over the years in such a way that the United States found that counseling was not enough over that time. Inevitably one compares it with the present situation over Iraq and as you said earlier, there is always a tendency to compare these people with Hitler.

In 1991 the United Nations became much more able to act as was originally intended as a result of the Soviet Union ceasing to be sort of an aggressive competitor. Therefore the Kuwait crisis has been dealt with in quite a different way. First of all, there was an open build up of sufficient force to be able to do the job. Open build up was not possible in '56; it had to be done more or less surreptitiously. And even the pretext that was hit upon was not sufficient to cloak it. The intention and the aim over Kuwait has been much more clearly stated from the start.

I think all this represents a development of US involvement, a change in the nature of US involvement in the Middle East - from '56 to now. One can't help wondering whether there isn't a parallel between what might have happened if we had succeeded in the Canal, in '56, and what's happened over Kuwait. Kuwait has been recovered; the Canal might have been recovered. But then

what? It was assumed that Nasser would fall, it was assumed that Saddam fall - but he hasn't.

JSS And neither did Nasser.

DL And there would have been involvement on the Canal. We'd have been sitting on the Canal a reversion to the military occupation of the Canal Zone. In Northern Ireland now we've got forces which enable us to have strong influence. But what happens? We have to retain them there all the time. One also wonders what would have happened if the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait had occurred 18 months or 2 years later. If it had occurred in 1992, American policy might have conceivably had its own impediment.

JSS Because of the election -

DL Because of the election, yes.

JSS Which is a question I did not ask earlier. The Israelis have suggested, that the British calculated that Eisenhower would not take any forceful action to prevent military action by the British and the French because of the concern over the American election that was coming up. Now, was this really as far as you know a

DL Sorry - do the Israelis say that the British thought that Eisenhower would not take...

JSS That he would be passive, because he would be too preoccupied with the election and that therefore you didn't need to worry about the Americans.

DL

I believe that was the French view, I'm pretty sure I heard the French express that view at the time. I do not believe that was the British view, I think that Eden took the view that he knew his friend Ike and his friend Ike would not let him down, that independent British action, whatever preoccupation was going on in Washington, would surely not be disowned.

JSS

Thank you very much. I'll stop there.



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