



GimBMUN 2026

Historical Security Council

Study Guide

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Gimnazija Bežigrad, Ljubljana

Historical Security Council – Study Guide

Written by

Dimitrius Demarcus Serbius ex Municipium Naissus III

Svittus Carniolus Cevapius ex Colonia Emona

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INTRODUCTION

Introduction of the chairs

Dear Delegates,

It is with great pleasure that we welcome you to the historical council of Bežigrad MUN 2026.

We are honoured to be chairing this year's historical council as the committee will devolve into the 1956 Suez Crisis, one of the most tumultuous periods of human history that severely impacted our world and our history. By investigating these key events you will peek into many controversial and even illegal actions that molded our current day history. This committee offers a unique and intellectually stimulating experience but with a twist, like no other UN committee has, where you will be able to override with joy while discussing most interesting events in history through “what if” scenarios and alternation of history as you will be able to create the future on your own.

We hope that this study guide will serve as a launching pad for your research into this unique historical period, which has been the basis for major changes and developments in the realm of global politics and the emergence of international organisations. With great anticipation for the upcoming conference, we wish you all the best during your preparation. We look forward to meeting each and everyone of you and seeing you debate.

Your chairs,

Dimitrije Cocojević and Svit Purič

Introduction to the committee

The Historic Security Council functions within the framework of the Security Council but with a crucial difference from other MUN committees: it focuses on past events. Delegates in this committee have the unique opportunity to revisit and influence significant historical occurrences, potentially altering their outcomes with the thrilling twist of not knowing how history in the future will unfold. You will be representing key figures and nations with the knowledge, resources, and political alliances of the time, and it will be up to you to negotiate, strategize, and decide the course of history.

Delegates will be provided with dates and historical context, and figures of the given situation. They must pretend they don't know what happened in reality, and must represent historical figures or nations with their policies and resources they represented.

Our goals are not only to deepen your understanding of the period but also to challenge you to think critically about diplomacy, leadership, and consequence. As this is a crisis-style historical council, be prepared for unexpected developments that may shift the balance of power at any moment.

Partaking in the conference offers an extremely valuable experience where you are going to build your skills in historical analysis, debate and roleplay. It will also encourage delegates to think strategically with limited modern hindsight, you will also gain useful knowledge in diplomatic history and improve your research skills.

As delegates, your collective objective is to shape the world in alignment with your agendas. Every action, whether through collaborative directives or individual initiatives driven by personal motivations, holds the potential to reshape history. Therefore, let us engage in discussions with innovation, collaboration, and a commitment to effecting positive change.

Introduction to the topic

The Suez Crisis of 1956 was a major international conflict triggered by Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser's nationalization of the Suez Canal, a vital waterway previously controlled by British and French interests. The crisis carried a tumultuous worldwide response defined by years of economic regression and despair in lives of many. Most players in the region, prompted by the influence of world powers, sought a solution to the crisis, regarding only national interest, eventually leading to all-out war. It didn't help the situation that the more prominent figures in the conflict were already contentious rivals, in the form of the Arab and Israeli Governments. High tensions, unresolved rivalries, layered by the crisis, were the final straw that initiated the Second Arab-Israeli War.

THE SUEZ CRISIS

History of the topic

HISTORY OF THE CANAL

The Suez Canal's construction was finalized in 1875, financed by the Egyptian and French Governments. The Canal's role was significant in strengthening trade between Asia and Europe, playing a crucial role in reinforcing the economies of world powers, whilst simultaneously offering the surrounding countries in the region prosperity and a chance at increased development.

At the Convention of Constantinople in 1888, the canal was declared a neutral zone under British protection. Despite this convention, the canal was closed off by Britain and France to non-allied shipments during the First World War. The importance of the canal was furthermore accentuated during the Second World War, in the form of key oil shipments and raw materials to Allied Forces.

After the World Wars, the canal's geopolitical importance became prominent in the eyes of global superpowers, especially the British. Thus, the British heavily fortified the Suez garrison, making it one of the biggest in the world, but at a cost of straining Anglo-Egyptian relations. With heavily militarizing the region, Britain ensured themselves as main player in Middle Eastern affairs. Egypt experienced radical shifts in domestic politics, prompted by economic instability coupled with Britain's involvement, which led to unrest and an increasing hostile attitude towards Britain and its presence.

LEADUP TO THE CRISIS

In October 1951, the Government of Egypt unilaterally declared the termination of the Anglo-Egyptian Treaty of 1936, which had accorded the United Kingdom the right to maintain a military presence at the Suez base for a further period of 20 years. The United Kingdom, invoking its treaty rights and the strategic significance of the Suez garrison, declined to withdraw its forces. This development was followed by a marked increase in acts of hostility directed against British personnel and assets within Egypt, which the local authorities did not effectively mitigate.

In January 1952, British forces undertook an operation to disarm an auxiliary police barracks in Ismailia, which had been identified as a source of unrest. The confrontation resulted in the deaths of 41 Egyptian personnel. The incident triggered widespread anti-Western demonstrations and riots in Cairo, leading to extensive property damage and the deaths of several foreign nationals, including 11 British citizens. These developments contributed to increasing political instability

and served as a catalyst for significant change. On 23 July 1952, a military coup led by the nationalist Free Officers Movement, under the leadership of General Muhammad Naguib and future President Gamal Abdel Nasser, overthrew King Farouk, leading to the establishment of the Republic of Egypt.

In the aftermath of the 1952 coup, Britain sought to improve relations with Egypt, leading to agreements in 1953–54, including the planned end of British rule in Sudan by 1956 and the phased withdrawal of British forces from the Suez base within 20 months, as outlined in the 1954 Anglo-Egyptian Agreement. While the Suez Canal Company was to remain under foreign control until 1968, tensions persisted. Egypt's President Nasser viewed Britain's growing ties with Iraq and Jordan, particularly the formation of the Baghdad Pact in 1955 (which was a military alliance with the aim of aligning the Western powers' Cold War containment strategy against Soviet influence in the Middle East), as a threat to Egypt's regional leadership. These developments escalated tensions, ultimately culminating in the Suez Crisis.

Egypt's goal under Nasser's rule was to realize their nationalistic views of an Arab half-continent.

In the early 1950s, the United States sought to build a NATO-style alliance in the Middle East to contain Soviet influence, centered on Egypt. While American officials viewed Egypt as strategically vital, they struggled to balance support for anti-colonial nationalists with their alliances with Britain and France. Nasser's ties with CIA officers led Washington to overestimate its influence in Egypt. However, Nasser resisted joining the proposed Middle East Defense Organization (MEDO), viewing British imperialism—not Soviet communism—as the primary threat. Despite U.S. efforts to promote Arab unity against the USSR, Nasser prioritized ending British presence in the region. In 1955, the U.S. backed the formation of the Baghdad Pact, excluding Egypt. Nasser saw this, along with an Israeli raid on Gaza, as a Western ploy to pressure Egypt and promote rival Iraqi leadership. These events soured U.S.–Egypt relations and marked the beginning of Nasser's shift away from the West.

Nasser pursued a non-aligned strategy, playing the U.S. and Soviet Union against each other to secure military aid. While he initially sought American arms, U.S. concerns over Israel, Congress, and the Tripartite Declaration blocked sales. Meanwhile, Khrushchev's new Third World strategy embraced nationalist leaders like Nasser. Encouraged by China and Yugoslavia, the USSR offered arms via Czechoslovakia, culminating in Egypt's 1955 arms deal—alarming the West. France viewed Nasser as a dangerous revolutionary. The convergence of anti-colonial support, Soviet alignment, and regional ambition placed Nasser at the center of escalating Cold War tensions in the Middle East.

Due to Egypt's ultimate goal of a Pan-Arab half-continent and public support of all Palestinian sovereignty movements, relations with Israel and their main arms supplier France highly deteriorated. Although the public backlash of Western powers was critical, Egypt continued its ultimate goal of aligning itself with the other Arab countries in the region.

Current situation

THE CRISIS

On July 26, 1956, all the political pressure and tensions in the region culminated with a speech given by Nasser in Alexandria, announcing the nationalization of the Suez Canal, while simultaneously closing the Straits of Tiran and blockading the Gulf of Aqaba to Israeli usage. He justified the move as a sovereign right and to finance the Aswan High Dam after the United States and Britain withdrew funding. This was due to Nasser's supposed sympathies with the communist bloc, including an arms deal with Czechoslovakia and recognition of the Chinese Government in Beijing.

In the process, Nasser violated the Constantinople Convention of 1888 and the 1949 Armistice Agreements. Shocked by the events, both Britain and France began diplomatic and military contingency planning, and Britain also froze Egyptian assets. The West's immediate response was in the form of a tripartite meeting between the United States, the United Kingdom, and France. The meeting's main goal was to discuss further actions regarding Nasser's nationalization of the canal, prompting the London Conference of Canal-Using Nations, inviting the biggest users of the canal. With mediation efforts failing, both Britain and France maintained plans for military actions.

29th OCTOBER

On 29 October 1956, Israel launched Operation Kadesh, initiating the military phase of the Suez Crisis. Israeli paratroopers were dropped east of the Mitla Pass, a strategic route toward the Suez Canal, while armored units advanced from the Negev Desert toward the Gaza Strip and Sinai interior. The official Israeli justification was to stop fedayeen raids and ensure freedom of navigation, particularly through the Gulf of Aqaba. The rapid Israeli advance threatened key Egyptian positions.

There is a fear that the countries may be drawn into an intense open conflict.

30th OCTOBER

On the 30th the Anglo-French issued an ultimatum. They are framing themselves as peacekeepers ready to intervene if both sides do not withdraw from the canal zone.

On 30 October 1956, Britain and France executed the political step: issuing a 12-hour ultimatum to both Egypt and Israel. The ultimatum demanded that both armies halt hostilities and withdraw ten miles from the Suez Canal.

Egypt, regarding this as an infringement on its sovereignty, rejected the terms outright. Israel, already deep in Sinai, did not comply either. British and French leaders Anthony Eden and Guy Mollet used Egypt's refusal as justification for military action. Naval task forces, already assembled in the Mediterranean, moved into position. Meanwhile, Israeli units captured key points in northern Sinai and advanced toward the canal.

With Egyptian refusal, Britain and France forces began coordinated air strikes, thus leading to Operation *Revue* the following day

31st OCTOBER

On 31 October 1956, Britain and France began the combat phase of their Operation. The plan started with extensive air strikes against Egyptian airfields to achieve air superiority before any amphibious landings. RAF and French Air Force bombers targeted runways, hangars, and aircraft across Egypt, including in Cairo, Alexandria, and the canal zone. The strikes significantly reduced Egypt's operational air capability, though not without civilian casualties and international condemnation. Naval forces closed in on Port Said, preparing for a seaborne assault. Egyptian forces scuttled ships in the canal to block navigation and deployed ground troops to defend strategic points. President Nasser addressed the Egyptian public, framing the attack as imperialist aggression. While Britain and France claim their objective is to safeguard free navigation and end hostilities.

In the prior days, the information leaked, claiming that the states of Israel, France, and Great Britain have come to an agreement on a joint operation, where the events from 29th to the 31th October were prearranged. The British Prime Minister has denied the existence of such events.

PAST UN ACTIONS AND RESOLUTIONS

Resolutions:

- United Nations Security Council Resolution 95
- United Nations Security Council Resolution 118
- United Nations Security Council Resolution 119

UN actions:

29th OCTOBER

The Israeli invasion of Egypt's Sinai Peninsula on 29 October 1956 immediately drew the attention of the United Nations Security Council. That evening, emergency consultations began in New York as reports confirmed large-scale Israeli advances. Several members, led by the United States and the Soviet Union, called for urgent deliberations to address what they viewed as a breach of the 1949 Armistice Agreements. Egypt submitted a formal complaint, requesting that the Council demand an immediate withdrawal of Israeli forces. Initial discussions revealed deep divisions: while some permanent members sought a ceasefire resolution, Britain and France—covertly linked to the invasion—adopted delaying tactics, arguing for verification of facts before action. Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld prepared to brief the Council on the crisis. No resolution was adopted that day, but the groundwork was laid for urgent Security Council debates over the following 48 hours, as the situation rapidly escalated.

30th OCTOBER

At the UN, the United States submitted a draft Security Council resolution calling for Israel to withdraw behind its armistice lines; however, Britain and France vetoed this resolution, preventing its adoption. The Security Council was thus unable to act decisively, and diplomatic deadlock ensued.

On 30 October 1956, the Security Council met in formal session to debate the Israeli invasion. The United States submitted a draft resolution calling for Israel to withdraw behind the 1949 Armistice lines and for all member states to refrain from the use of force. Egypt's representative condemned the attack and accused Britain and France of complicity. Britain and France, having issued their ultimatum to Egypt and Israel earlier that day, used their permanent-member status to block decisive Council action. Both vetoed the US-backed resolution, preventing its adoption. The Soviet Union expressed strong support for Egypt and warned of broader consequences if foreign troops remained. Secretary-General Hammarskjöld urged restraint but faced a paralyzed Council. The

deadlock highlighted the political rift within the UN, where two of the aggressor states held veto power, effectively shielding themselves from immediate censure or enforcement measures under the Charter.

31st OCTOBER

Meanwhile, the UN Security Council, citing the failure of its permanent members to maintain international peace, adopted Resolution 119, invoking the “Uniting for Peace” resolution. This unprecedented step called an emergency special session of the UN General Assembly to seek alternative means to restore peace. At the General Assembly session that followed, delegates approved the creation of the United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF), the first-ever UN peacekeeping force, to help oversee a ceasefire and separate Israeli and Egyptian forces.

By 31 October 1956, Anglo-French air strikes against Egypt made Security Council inaction untenable. In an unprecedented step, the Council adopted Resolution 119, sponsored by members outside the conflict, invoking the Uniting for Peace procedure under General Assembly Resolution 377 A(V). This legal mechanism allowed the matter to be referred to an emergency special session of the General Assembly when the Security Council was unable to act due to vetoes by permanent members. The resolution passed with Britain and France opposing, but lacking enough votes to block it. Secretary-General Hammarskjöld began logistical planning for the Assembly session, which would consider measures to restore peace. The shift to the General Assembly opened the door to collective recommendations, including the eventual creation of the United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF)—the first large-scale UN peacekeeping mission—although this would only be approved in the days that followed.

SUMMARY AND ADDITIONAL RESEARCH

Summary

By November 1, 1956, the World is entering into a new crisis, one that is threatening to destabilize the North-African and Middle Eastern grounds severely. In the fourth month, after Egypt's president, Nasser, announced the nationalization of the Suez Canal, the Israeli troops walked into the Sinai Peninsula. The following day, on October 30th, a joint ultimatum was issued by the French and British states, calling for a ceasefire and withdrawal of both Egyptian and Israeli armies ten miles from the strip. With neither of the two complying, the French and British entered the conflict directly, with their militaries. RAF and French Air Force bombers targeted runways, hangars, and aircraft across Egypt, including in Cairo, Alexandria, and the canal zone. Egypt is responding and has already deployed additional ground troops and blocked the Suez Canal. The situation may evolve further.

Useful links and further reading

The UN:

https://www.un.org/en?_gl=1*17890d6*_ga*MTIxNzU0NzYwNy4xNzU1Nzc2NDI2*_ga_TK9BQL5X7Z*czE3NTY3NDQzNDcjbzMkZzAkDDE3NTY3NDQzNTMkajU0JGwwJGgw

Past un resolutions: <https://main.un.org/securitycouncil/en/content/resolutions-0>

The UN charter: <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/un-charter/full-text>

The Geneva Convention:

<https://www.icrc.org/en/law-and-policy/geneva-conventions-and-their-commentaries>

https://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/documents/atrocities-crimes/Doc.33_GC-IV-EN.pdf

Encyclopedia Britannica: <https://www.britannica.com>

Internet Modern History Sourcebook:

https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/mod/modsbook.asp?_ga=2.258267213.679179012.1756745055-268081928.1756745055

Key terms

Suez Canal – a sea-level waterway running in Egypt, stretching from Port Said and Port Fuad in the north to the Isthmus of Suez in the south. It is considered the major connecting route between the Mediterranean and the Red Sea, and such a bridge between Europe, Africa, and Asia

Cold War - Intense geopolitical rivalry between the USA and the USSR and their respective blocs, which split the world in half and put many smaller non-aligned countries in a very difficult position. It began quickly after the Second World War and lasted until the dissolution of the USSR. The war functioned through many indirect sanctions, proxy wars, and propaganda, featuring escalating tension and an arms race. Up until 1956, the most infamous events include: the Korean War, the Hungarian Uprising, and the Suez Crisis.

Zionism – a modern national Jewish political movement, which pursues the creation and support of a Jewish national state in Palestine.

Arab League – a regional organization of Arab states in the Middle East. Its creation was sparked by the rise of Pan-Arabism, a notion of cultural and political unity among Arabs.

Guiding questions

What factors are considered for the creation of the current situation?

What is the regional and global importance of the Suez Canal?

What is the social and political situation in Egypt?

How does the rise of Zionism affect the actions of Israel?

How do the relations between the major superpowers, such as the USA and the USSR, influence the Middle Eastern grounds?

What influence do traditional colonial powers have in the world and over their former colonies?

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