

Message from Nicolas Bulganin to Dwight D. Eisenhower on the Suez Crisis (5 November 1956)

Caption: On 5 November 1956, Nikolai Bulganin, President of the Soviet Union Council of Ministers, sends a letter to the US President, Dwight D. Eisenhower, in which he calls for the United States to form an alliance with Moscow in order to put an end, even by military means, to the armed attacks to which Egypt is being subject.

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Message from Nicolas Bulganin to Dwight Eisenhower (5 November, 1956)

ESTEEMED MR. PRESIDENT:

In this troubled and responsible moment for the cause of universal peace, I approach you on behalf of the Soviet Government. One week has passed already since the armed forces of Britain, France, and — obedient to the will of external forces — Israel, without any reason attacked Egypt, bringing in their wake death and destruction. Inhuman bombardment by the British and French Air Forces against Egyptian airfields, ports, installations, towns, and inhabited localities is taking place. Anglo-French troops have landed on Egyptian territory. From the invaders' fire tremendous values created by the hands of the Egyptian people are perishing and the toll of human life is mounting every day.

An aggressive war against Egypt, against the Arab peoples whose sole fault is that they upheld their freedom and independence, is unfolding before the eyes of the entire world. The situation in Egypt calls for immediate and most resolute action on the part of the U.N. Organization. In the event such action is not undertaken, the U.N. Organization will lose its prestige in the eyes of mankind and will fall apart.

The Soviet Union and the United States 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 calm in the area of the Near and Middle East. We are convinced that if the Governments of the U.S.S.R. and the United States will firmly declare their will to insure peace and oppose aggression, the aggression will be put down and there will be no war.

Mr. President, at this threatening hour, when the loftiest moral principles and the foundations and aims of the United Nations are being put to the test, the Soviet Government approaches the Government of the United States with a proposal of close cooperation in order to put an end to aggression and to stop any further bloodshed.

The United States has a strong navy in the zone of 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 United States and the Soviet Union according to a decision of the United Nations would be a sure guaranty of ending the aggression against the Egyptian people, against the people of the Arab East.

The Soviet Government turns to the U.S. Government with an appeal to join their forces in the United Nations for the adoption of decisive measures to put an end to the aggression. The Soviet Government has already turned to the Security Council and the special extraordinary session of the General Assembly with suitable proposals. Such joint steps of the United States and the Soviet Union do not threaten the interests of Britain and France. The popular masses of Britain and France do not want war. They, like our people, desire the maintenance of peace. Many other states also, together with Britain and France, are interested in the immediate pacification and resumption of the normal functioning of the Suez Canal, interrupted by the military operations.

The aggression against Egypt has not been committed for the sake of free navigation along the Suez Canal, which was safeguarded. The piratical war was launched with the aim of restoring colonial order in the East, an order which had been overthrown by the people. If this war is not stopped it carries the danger of turning into a third world war.

If the Soviet Union and the United States will support the victim of the aggression, then other states, members of the United Nations, will join us in these efforts. By this 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 Government of the United States on the practical realization of the above-mentioned proposals, so that effective action in the interests of peace might be undertaken within the next hours.

At this tense moment of history, when the fate of the entire Arab East is being decided, and at the same time the fate of the world, I await your favorable reply.

With sincere respect,

BULGANIN