

## Message from Anthony Eden to Dwight D. Eisenhower on the Suez Crisis (London, 27 August 1956)

**Caption:** On 27 August 1956, the British Prime Minister Anthony Eden sends the US President Dwight D. Eisenhower a letter in which he welcomes the results of the London Maritime Conference on the Suez Crisis. However, he is concerned at the foreign policy of the USSR, particularly the establishment of closer relations between Moscow and Cairo. He also outlines the measures he would like to take if Nasser refuses to negotiate, and explains that the United Kingdom and France are continuing their military preparations.

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TOP SECRET

FROM FOREIGN OFFICE TO WASHINGTON

Cypher/OTP

PRISEC

No. 3913  
August 27, 1956

D. 8.42 p.m. August 27, 1956

IMMEDIATE  
TOP SECRET

Please pass following from the Prime Minister to President Eisenhower.

Begins.

Dear Friend,

This is a message to thank you for all the help Foster has given. Though I could not be at the Conference myself, I heard praise on all sides for the outstanding quality of his speeches and his constructive leadership. He will tell you how things have gone. It was, I think, a remarkable achievement to unite eighteen nations on an agreed statement of this clarity and force.

Before he left, Foster spoke to me of the destructive efforts of the Russians at the Conference. I have been giving some thought to this and I would like to give you my conclusions.

I have no doubt that the Bear is using Nasser, with or without his knowledge, to further his immediate aims. These are, I think, first to dislodge the West from the Middle East, and second to get a foothold in Africa so as to dominate that Continent in turn. In this connection I have seen a reliable report from someone who was present at the lunch which Shepilov gave for the Arab Ambassadors. There the Soviet claim was that they "only wanted to see Arab unity in Asia and Africa and the abolition of all foreign bases and exploitation. An agreed, unified Arab nation must take its rightful place in the world".

/This policy

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27 AUG 1956  
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Foreign Office telegram No. 3913 to Washington

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This policy is clearly aimed at Wheelus Field and Habbaniya, as well as at our Middle East oil supplies. Meanwhile the Communist Bloc continue their economic and political blandishments towards the African countries which are already independent. Soon they will have a wider field for subversion as our colonies, particularly in the West, achieve self-government. All this makes me more than ever sure that Nasser must not be allowed to get away with it this time. We have many friends in the Middle East and in Africa and others who are shrewd enough to know where the plans of a Nasser or a Mossadeq would lead them. But they will not be strong enough to stand against the power of the mobs if Nasser wins again. The firmer the front we show together, the greater the chance that Nasser will give way without the need for any resort to force. That is why we were grateful for your policy and Foster's expression of it at the Conference. It is also one of the reasons why we have to continue our military preparations in conjunction with our French allies.

We have been examining what other action could be taken if Nasser refuses to negotiate on the basis of the London Conference. There is the question of the dues. The Dutch and the Germans have already indicated that they will give support in this respect. The Dutch may even be taking action in the next few days. Then there is the question of currency and economic action. We are studying these with your people and the French in London and will be sending our comments soon. It looks as though we shall have a few days until Nasser gives Menzies his final reply. After that we should be in a position to act swiftly. Selwyn Lloyd is telegraphing to Foster about tactics particularly in relation to United Nations.

Meanwhile I thought I should set out some of our reflections on the dangerous situation which still confronts us. It is certainly the most hazardous that our country has known since 1940.

I was so glad to see such excellent photographic testimony of your growing health and abounding energy. That is the very best news for us all.

With kindest regards,  
Yours Ever,

Anthony.

[Copies sent to No. 10 Downing Street].

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