

style uniforms, and even more Canada's Commonwealth connection, Nasser was full of suspicion. Overcoming these was the high point in Norman's diplomatic career, and exhausting.

Nothing in Norman's energetic diplomacy, or in his reporting, is out of line with Canada's Middle Eastern interests which were not, at that moment, very different from those of the two superpowers. Britain and France, however, in collusion with Israel, had clearly committed "aggression" against Egypt. The United States and the Soviet Union, in step with almost the entire international community, wanted the three aggressors to withdraw, and the crisis to be contained. Canada fully concurred, but at the same time was concerned to minimize the humiliation of its wayward motherlands and to ease the painful rift within the Western alliance. Having initiated the UN peace keeping operation, Canada was also eager to avoid the embarrassment of having its forces rejected as part of the UN emergency force under Canadian General E.L.M. Burns.

Norman's reports were sympathetic to Egypt's position, but less harsh in their criticism of Israel, Britain and France than, for example, those coming from Norman Robertson in London. In a letter to his family, he said he understood why "nations around Israel have good cause for worry and concern with this tough, intransigent and aggressive neighbour planted down in their midst." He was never as critical of Israel, however, in his official reporting. His basic sympathy was, as always, with the underdog, in this case Egypt with its poverty and military vulnerability. At every opportunity, he warned the Egyptians against reliance on the Soviet Union for support. Nor did he think that Nasser was disposed to move that way if only the Western powers could recognise his psychological need to be treated as a "partner" and not a client. He was weak on ideology, Norman believed; if he had a model in the Communist world, it was Tito. His position vis-à-vis the Soviet Union reminded him of Chiang Kaishek's in 1925-27.

Another historical analogy helped Norman overcome Nasser's deep suspicion of Canada's Commonwealth link with Britain; Norman explained Canada's attitude to the Chanak incident of 1922, and its role during the Washington Conference of 1921, to illustrate the early display of its effective independence. In an argument with another Egyptian leader, Norman suggested that suspicions of the Canadian troops in UNEF be met with the explanation that they were "1,200 Burns of various ranks," a reference to the justly popular General E.L.M. "Tommy" Burns.

Norman at first found Nasser in conversation to be "simple, friendly and unaffected." Later he was moved to describe his behaviour as that of a "morose and turbulent