



STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

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Address by the Prime Minister of Canada,
Mr. L.S. St-Laurent
on the International Situation
November 4, 1956

I think it my duty to speak to you tonight about the very grave events of the last two weeks. I should like first to talk about the Middle East crisis. I would like to explain to you the Government's recent actions in the context of our general policy in the Middle East. For the last few years peace has been precarious in this area, especially around the borders of Israel, whose creation as a state was recommended by the United Nations General Assembly with Canada's support in November 1947.

While the tensions arising out of the situation in the Middle East have continued, Canada has steadily encouraged efforts to secure a fair settlement based on the principle that Israel should live and prosper -- but not the principle that it should expand at the expense of its Arab neighbours.

A recent communist intervention in the Middle East has contributed directly to the present crisis. By supplying offensive weapons in large quantities to Egypt the Communist world threatened to upset the balance of power between Israel and its Arab neighbours. In order to help redress this potential imbalance Canada agreed a few weeks ago to authorize the export of 24 F-86 jet fighter planes to Israel over a six-month period. We realized however that a permanent settlement between Israel and its neighbours arranged by the United Nations was the only way in which peace could be preserved in the long run.

Egypt's nationalization of the Suez Canal Company increased the dangers inherent in the Middle East situation. The Egyptian action introduced a threat to the trade on which the economic life of many countries depends. It placed the control of shipping in the Canal in the hands of a government which for some years has been denying access to the Canal for Israeli ships in defiance of a Security Council resolution.