

the Hungarian crisis, in and outside the UN? In the longer term, what were the consequences of Soviet and American conduct in 1956, their indictments of each other and their efforts at self-justification? The US had stood firmly on principle over Suez but had its hands tied in relation to Hungary; the Soviet Union had championed Egyptian sovereignty and "saved" Hungary from fascism. Escott Reid's book is a point of departure for the exploration of such reasoning.

Second, and expanding on his *Envoy to Nehru*, Escott Reid shows how he was sometimes ahead of Pearson and yet complemented the attempts to manage Afro-Asian opinion in the General Assembly. Pearson understandably paid particular attention to Krishna Menon and Arthur Lall because of India's standing in the nonaligned movement and the Commonwealth, and her influence at the UN and with Egypt. Throughout the emerging crisis, while avoiding public identification with the various Menon initiatives, Pearson attempted to keep India in step and to avoid the dismissal of her views by Eden and Lord Home, who matched each other in their contempt for what they saw as Indo-Egyptian collusion. Escott Reid's task in New Delhi was to convince a stubborn and reluctant Nehru to influence Nasser in a positive way, to make a more responsible and credible response to the Hungarian crisis despite his anger over Suez, to drop his double standards for judging Suez and Hungary, and to continue to collaborate with Canada despite their differences. Pearson, for example, never indicted Britain and France publicly for violating the Charter. Menon, the self-ascribed champion of Egyptian sovereignty, wanted sanctions brought against them. Finally, Nehru must be persuaded to join in the rebuilding of Commonwealth rapport and be shown how desirable it was that he restore relations with the West through the good offices of President Eisenhower. These were formidable tasks to be attempted in dramatic and critical circumstance, made more difficult by Nehru's remarkable loyalty to Menon. Escott Reid's book, written with fire in the belly, with skill, insight and a delightful personal touch, is a distinct success. It is, in fact, more convincing than any work to date by Indian scholars on this remarkable episode in Nehru's career.

The consequences of the Suez crisis reach out to the present, although it is not always easy to distinguish between trends that were set in motion as opposed to being merely accelerated. Escott Reid sees 1956 as a climactic year, a turning point, and he likes the might-have-beens of history. But there are occasions when history forgets to turn.

Post-Suez Nasser

In the Middle East, patterns of great significance were established. Nasser, young and inexperienced, having followed the Israeli example of seeking influence through Czech arms, had thrust upon him degrees of adulation, status and prestige, and faced challenges and opportunities of such magnitude that they were beyond his and Egypt's capacities. Before Suez his goals were modest and attainable. His preoccupation was with domestic reform. He had settled with Britain on the Canal in 1954 and had relinquished the Sudan. He was, until March 1956, entirely acceptable to Britain and the United States, if not to France. After the Suez crisis, Nasser embarked on a more dramatic domestic course. Egypt ran its new asset, the Canal, effectively. National planning,

state control of the economy, industrialization and greatly enhanced economic ties with the Soviet Union, while resulting in domestic tension, gave Egypt a new image. Her military power increased. Nasser himself became the preeminent leader in the Arab world with unquestioned legitimacy. Nasserism interpreted Arab nationalism; Pan-Arabism made local, national and dynastic concerns far less relevant. He went on the offensive, sometimes against his own better judgment, from the Yemen to North Africa. Inter-Arab relations and the Arab-Israeli conflict took much of their cadence from the fate of the United Arab Republic, the union with Syria in 1958, and Nasser's career. He became the Arab champion, an international figure of consequence, setting the standards for dealing with the USA and USSR, and showing how to play them off against each other.

Post Suez Israel

The Suez crisis confirmed that Israel was a permanent reality, a major factor in the Middle East with legitimate security needs. Her identification with the West, and then with the United States, was forged in the aftermath of the 1956-57 crisis. Israel was fortunate that United States anger was directed mainly against Britain and France. It was the last occasion when she had to risk serious US opposition. These developments meant that the regional balance of power, never in Israel's favor, was almost irrelevant. Israel became the principal ally of the United States and a factor in her domestic politics; the United States became the principal supplier of Israel's arms. With a decisive margin of superiority in key weapons systems, and able to rely unfailingly on Arab disunity, Israel could seize the initiative and largely dictate the patterns of events. Thus, while Suez marked Israel as the tool of imperialism and a client state, and identified Zionism with colonialism in Arab rhetoric, Israel became the least constrained state in the international system. Israeli leaders were and are committed realists; the function of the state is to secure, conserve and dispense power. Thus, they were in 1956, and remain, willing to do whatever is required, including territorial expansion, to preserve national security. Quite predictably, these policies have produced vigorous domestic debate as to whether Israel, between 1948 and 1967, missed several chances to secure peace or whether the only issue was when wars would be fought and whether they would be wars of choice or unavoidable. In 1956, this debate was between the so-called Moshe Sharett and Ben Gurion schools; Menachem Begin returned to it in 1986. Whatever the evidence, one day Arab dignity must be restored if there is to be peace.

These consequences, focused on Egypt and Israel, had further regional repercussions. Arab politics in Syria, Iraq, Jordan and the Lebanon, were radicalized. The Palestinian question was transformed from a humanitarian one, largely a matter of refugees, to a political one with territorial and strategic implications. Palestinian nationalists looked to Egypt and then developed a separate identity from the mid-1960s. Nasser took up the Palestinian cause and encouraged its militancy. The Arab-Israeli issue thus became an interstate regional conflict, which bred a pattern of war and successive, predictable, Israeli victories.