

Britain's consultation with Canada was initially prompt and frank. It demonstrated, however, that wide and sharp differences between them were unavoidable. Norman Robertson's position was increasingly difficult; by the end of October it was almost impossible. He saw Eden's policy as deliberate and calculated, not the result of ill-health or panic, and as the product of a deeply-flawed decision process in a divided cabinet. He reported on an almost unrelieved record of Anglo-Canadian discord. The British view of the act of nationalization and its compatibility with the crafting of an international regime for the Canal, of Nasser personally, of the wisdom of economic sanctions, of the role India and the Soviet Union could play, and most fundamentally, of the relationship between the threat of force and diplomacy and of the wisdom of the ultimate use of force, with its acknowledged corollary of bringing Nasser down and not merely to heel, all ran counter to the Canadian view. At the same time, Canada did not regard Anglo-French diplomatic preferences as optimal, regretted the refusal to negotiate with Egypt, and deplored their failure to use, and then their attempt to abuse, UN procedures, which gave the moral highground to Egypt, left open the possibility that Egypt and the USSR could indict them in the Security Council, and, most irritating of all, actually alienated the United States. Pearson's assumption, that using the UN to solve the dispute and maintaining Anglo-American accord were mutually consistent goals, was unfounded.

Canadian influence nil

In the first weeks of the Suez affair, Canada was undoubtedly well-informed of Anglo-French policy. Pearson did not like what he heard. London knew where Ottawa stood, particularly on the use of force. Eden, on August 17, wrote that Robertson's view was "far worse than anything the US government has ever said," and, in the hope that Pearson thought differently, that "I see no advantage in asking Robertson his opinion anymore." Robertson's sources of information, public and private, official and informal, from the Foreign and Commonwealth Relations Offices and the Joint Intelligence Committee, did not dry up. Pearson, in Ottawa and at NATO meetings, received many reports and was privy to a variety of assessments and points of view. At that level the Canadian government understood the issues. But it was effectively shut out from developments in Anglo-French relations, their military planning and ultimately from the collusion with Israel, and so were many of Eden's colleagues. In late October 1956, Pearson was concerned lest Israel strike at Jordan. In any case, he had failed entirely to influence British policy, though to be sure, Eden's conduct represented the triumph of an *idée fixe* over the evidence.

At the same time, Pearson had every reason to believe that the Eisenhower administration shared many of his views, for reasons that went beyond the political calculations of an election year. Eisenhower and Foster Dulles were opposed to the use of force and recognized that Eden and Prime Minister Guy Mollet of France were deadly serious about its use unless Nasser capitulated. They had no doubts about the impact on Atlantic and Commonwealth unity if force were used, and felt that a real threat to Middle Eastern and world peace existed. Dulles also, like Pearson, looked to the NATO allies to restrain Britain and France and to promote a negotiated settlement via the first London conference. But neither Dulles nor

Eisenhower had ruled out force irrevocably, their reservations were not total, and their sympathy for Britain and anti-pathy toward Nasser were well known. The record of Dulles's dealings with Britain from July to October demonstrates how Eden, with some wishful thinking, could find more than ambiguity in America's posture. But Pearson's sense that he was very much in step with Dulles was justified, even though the nuances of the Anglo-American relationship were not always understood. Furthermore, the economic and financial dependence of Britain on the United States evoked a reassuring axiom: sanctions are more effective against one's economic partners than one's enemies. If Canada could not influence Eden's policy, as Dulles hoped, then surely the United States could deter Britain from folly.

The negotiations in the Security Council, and among the three foreign ministers, Selwyn Lloyd, Christian Pineau and Mahmoud Fawzi, from October 5 to 13, brought the Suez affair to within distance of a negotiated settlement. But the act of collusion among Britain, France and Israel had begun at Sevres on October 22. On October 29, 1956, Israel attacked in the Sinai. On the following day, Britain and France issued their discriminatory ultimatum to Egypt and Israel, and on November 1 began bombing Egyptian airfields.

All that Canada had feared had come to pass — aggression against Egypt snatched out of negotiation, Anglo-American relations in serious disarray, the unity of the Commonwealth in jeopardy, important loyalties and friendships strained by anger, moral outrage, confusion and disillusionment, the UN flouted and even abused, and an opportunity handed to the Soviet Union, all made worse by flimsy excuses, pathetically weak explanations and the fact that collusion required further deception.

Pearson emerges

The fact that British and French vetoes handcuffed the Security Council on October 30 and 31 gave Pearson an opportunity to play a major creative role in New York from November 1, working with Dag Hammarskjöld. There were four issues which extended the crisis to April 1957: first, to bring about a cease fire; second, to secure the withdrawal of British, French and Israeli forces from Egyptian territory; third, to clear the Canal; and fourth, establish a regime for the operation, maintenance and improvement of the Canal. Pearson involved himself with them to serve six purposes: first, to ensure that Hammarskjöld did not resign as Secretary General of the UN; second, to see that the procedures of the General Assembly were used effectively and responsibly to contain the crisis and secure a settlement, and that anti-Western measures, invective and propaganda were kept to a minimum; third, to organize a novel form of emergency peacekeeping which become the UNEF scheme; fourth, to ensure that Anglo-American estrangement, deep, personal and bitter as it was, should be as temporary and benign as possible; fifth, to see to it that Israel complied with the UN resolutions but was not pilloried, that her complaints were not dismissed and that her legitimate security needs were not ignored; and finally, to handle the Suez affair imaginatively, as an opportunity to pursue a settlement of the Arab-Israeli dispute.

Pearson earned his triumph in that period between November 1956 and April 1957. But, without at all defacing the monument, a certain cautious revision must be aired,