

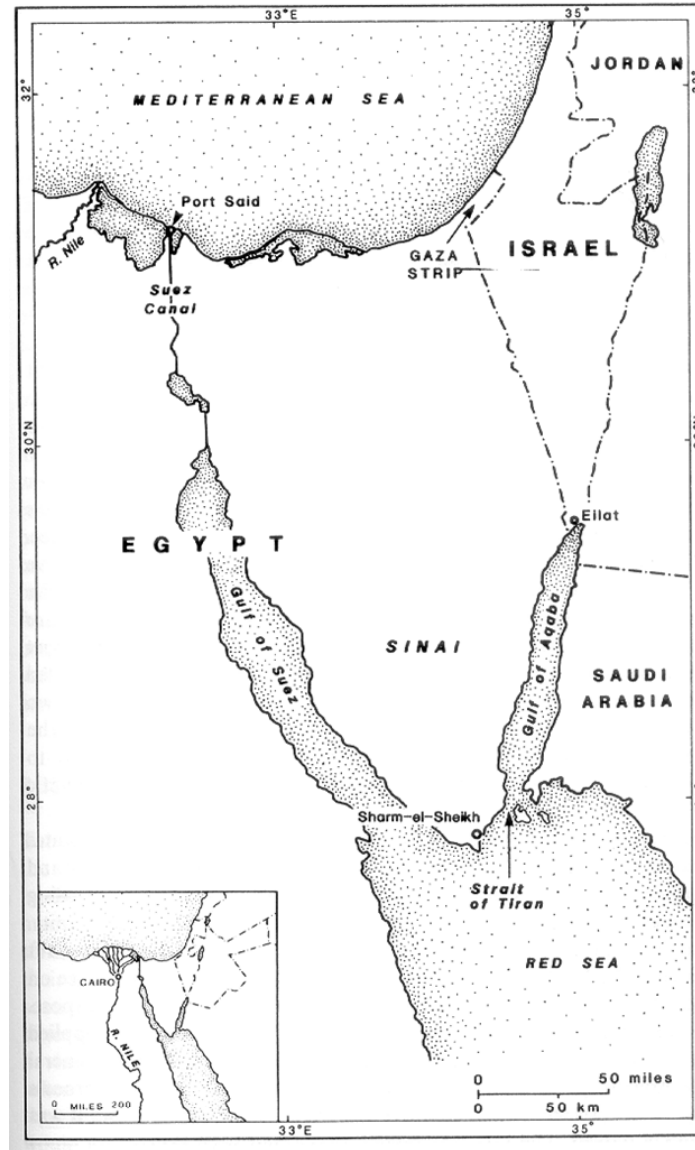
The background of the slide is a faded, grayscale photograph of UN peacekeepers in a desert environment. Several soldiers in helmets and carrying equipment are visible, some walking in the distance and others in the foreground, though they are out of focus. The terrain is sandy and uneven.

THE SUEZ CRISIS AND THE FIRST “UN PEACEKEEPING FORCE”

Dr. Walter Dorn

based on a presentation
by Dr. David Last, RMC

13 April 2011



A. James, 1990

Suez, Sinai and the Gaza Strip

LEAD UP TO THE CRISIS

- 1948 - Arab-Israeli war
- 1949 - Armistice
 - » UNTSO created
- 1952 - Nasser's coup in Egypt
- 1953 - Restrictions on Canal
- 1954 - Nasser takes power openly
- 1955 - Fedayeen attacks
- 1956 (July) - Western aid stopped
 - Nasser *nationalizes* Canal

INVASION 1956

- Oct 29 - Israeli forces move into Sinai
- Oct 31 - Anglo-French ultimatum to withdraw from Canal
- Nov - British and French seek to take Canal
 - “To protect it”
 - Bomb Egyptian airfields
- Nasser decides to “plug” the Canal

“Suez - a smash and grab raid that was all smash and no grab.”

Harold Nicolson, English diplomat,
in a conversation with Antony Jay, November 1956

Social-psychological Dimensions

- Divided public opinion in UK
 - Conscription, national service, and war fatigue
- Rising anti-colonialism
- Pan-Arab nationalism
- European reluctance to “pass the torch”
- US as the new policeman
- US presidential election
- Eisenhower not informed of British-French-Israeli plan



Gamal Abdel Nasser

UN RESPONDS

- Security Council resolution meets veto of France and UK
- General Assembly resolutions:
 - 998, 4 Nov 1956 - “stop that!”
 - 1000, 5 Nov 1956 - “we’re coming in...”
 - 1001, 7 Nov 1956 - “...only if it’s OK with Egypt”
 - November 20: Good Faith Agreement revealed to the General Assembly, except for secret memoranda
 - 1120, 24 Nov 1956 - “Br & Fr, You’re still there!”
 - 1124, 2 Feb 1957 - “Israel, you’re still there!”
 - 1125, 2 Feb 1957 - “carry on monitoring...”

Executive direction, authorisation

Exhortations, protests, complaints

Slide: D. Last

THE IDEA FOR A FORCE

“the UN [to] send an international force to the area, position itself *between* the warring parties and bring an end to the hostilities...

“A truly international peace and police force ... large enough to *keep these borders at peace* while a political settlement is being worked out.”

– Lester Pearson, speech to UNGA,
2 November (emphasis added)



Lester B. Pearson, Governor of Canada for Ontario, at the UN, addressing the UN General Assembly, Second Assembly of the United Nations

- Earlier supported creation of a permanent UN force.

INSTRUCTIONS TO THE SG



Ralph Bunche, Sir Brian, and Dag Hammarskjöld



Organizing the first peacekeeping force, the UN Emergency Force;
November, 1956 (UN photo)

- Prepare a plan
 - Within 48 hours
 - Gain acceptance from the parties
 - Find the troops
 - Field them
-
- “Leave it to Dag” and Ralph!

DEPLOYMENT

- Nov. 6:
Hammaraskjold
plan
- UNTSO Staff
became temporary
UNEF
- Selection by SG
based on “balanced
political and
geographical
representation”



J. Gardam, The Canadian Peacekeeper (1992)

“Canadians join UN Force in Egypt. The first contingent of Canadian troops to reach Egypt as part of UNEF marches from a plane at Abu Suweir airport near Ismailia, 24 Nov 1956, Maj Norman Tower leading.”

Two UNEF Commanders



ELM Burns (Canada),
First UNEF Commander



Indarjit Rikhye (India),
Last UNEF Commander

CANADA'S FIRST NOBEL PEACE PRIZE



Lester B. Pearson 1957

– As Secretary of State
for External Affairs

Hammaraskjold's View



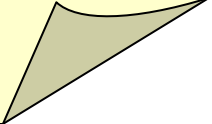
Dag Hammarskjöld,
1905-1961

- 10 Nov 56: Egyptian “veto” over troop selection would be infringement of Secretary-General’s authority
- Assured Nasser that Force would be of “purely international character”
- *Wanted* it understood that UNEF would only be withdrawn when UN deemed appropriate, not on demand of Egypt
- Hammarskjöld adamant about independence of the Secretary General

An Independent Secretary General

“As a servant of the Organisation, the Secretary-General has the duty to maintain his usefulness by avoiding public stands on conflicts between member nations unless and until such an action might help to resolve the conflict. However, the discretion and impartiality thus imposed on the Secretary-General...may not degenerate into a policy of expediency. He must also be a **servant of the principles of the Charter**, and its aims must ultimately determine what for him is right or wrong. For this he must stand.”

- Secretary General's Speech to the Security Council, 31 Oct 1956,
cited by Urquhart, *Hammaraskjold*, p. 174 (emphasis added).



The Central Compromise

- Good Faith Agreement
- Hammarskjold asserted right to determine *composition* of the Force
- Agreed to send only *Cairo-approved* contingents, as practical measure
- Egypt's sovereign rights regarding UNEF would be *guided* by UNGA 1000, "in good faith"
- UNEF's actions would be guided "in good faith" by the tasks set for the Force
- *Implied* that it would remain only with Egypt's consent

"The UN, understanding this to correspond to the wishes of the Government of Egypt, reaffirms its willingness to maintain UNEF until its task is completed."

UN A/3375 Report of the Secretary General on UNEF, 20 Nov 56
cited by Urquhart, *Hammarskjold*, p. 174.

Impartiality and Consent

- Any Egyptian request for termination (or adjustment of the mission)
 - Referred to the UNEF Advisory Committee
- Committee could decide to act on the request or refer it to the General Assembly for consideration
- Second and Third memoranda to the Good Faith Agreement, **kept secret at Franco-British request**, gave Egypt a veto over troop contributors
- Advisory Committee made up of troop contributors
 - Therefore Egypt had veto over the members of the Committee that would adjudicate on requests by the Egyptian government

Chapter VI and “1/2”

“The use of military force by the UN other than that under Chapter VII ... requires the consent of the states in which the force has to operate.”

UN A/3512 Report of the Secretary General pursuant to General Assembly Resolution 1123 (XI) 24 January 1957.

Cited in “Neutral Not Impartial”

UNEF Mandate

- Secure & supervise cessation of hostilities, including withdrawal of armed forces of France, Israel & UK from Egypt
- After the withdrawal, to serve as *buffer* between Egyptian and Israeli forces

Origin of the concept of “classical” peacekeeping

UN-Egyptian Relations

- Nasser interpreted “impartiality” as “pro-Egyptian”
- Compromise on composition of force
- Mostly non-aligned, pro-Egyptian contributors (Brazil, Canada, Columbia, Denmark, Finland, India, Indonesia, Norway, Sweden, and Yugoslavia)
- Nasser sought to veto Canadian battalion from Queen’s Own Rifles
 - Perceived British connection
 - Canada contribute logistics and communications elements
 - 56th Recce squadron of Royal Canadian Dragoons and Lord Strathcona’s Horse regiments, several officers from Queen’s Own
- The least Nasser would settle for was that contributing states be opposed to the aggressor’s action

[Nasser’s objections were based on a fear that Canadian policy] “while so far favourable to Egypt in the General Assembly, might later veer to the ‘Western’ if not the British stance over the issue of control of the Canal.”

- Lt Gen ELM Burns, *Between Arab and Israeli*, p. 200

UNEF Preparation and Mounting: Stages

- Identify Troop Contributing Nations (TCNs)
- Negotiate with Host Nation and Belligerent States
- Negotiate Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA)
- Negotiate with TCNs on size and composition of the force
- Overcome logistics and command frictions
 - Canadian contributions: logs, comms, recce

UNEF I Deployment, August 1957

Phase 1 - Suez Canal

Nov-Dec '56

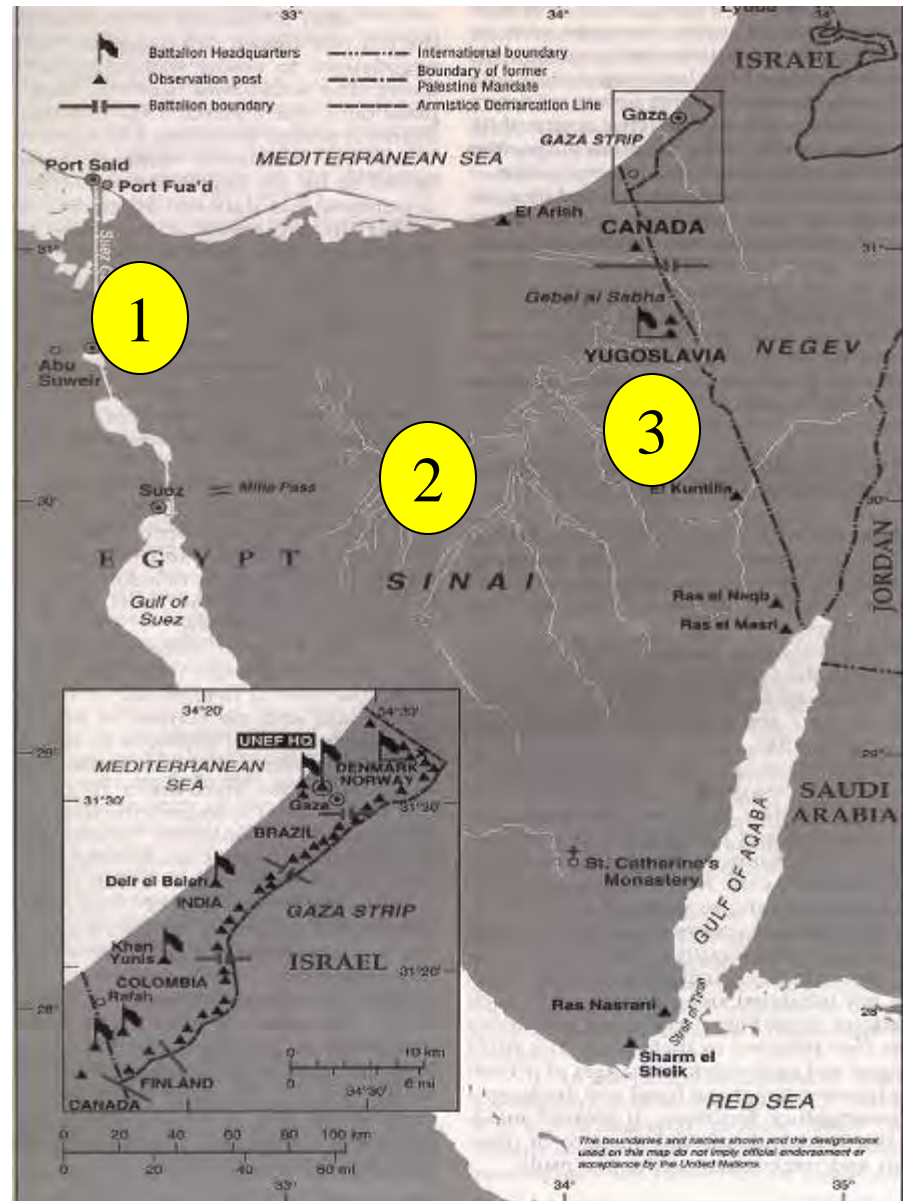
Phase 2 - Sinai

Dec '56 - Mar '57

Phase 3 - borders

Mar '57 - May '67

Follows withdrawal of
belligerent parties



PHOTOS FROM THE FIELD:
Canadians in UNEF



Canadian peacekeeper John Gardam at the wheel



J. Gardam

Corporal Gaffney shows a compass to a local



J. Gardam

Corporal Gaffney talks to locals

Canadian Forces Photo Unit ME 1194A



Ferret scout car in the desert (often not as good as a camel)

Lots of Sand!



UN





UN Photo 62558

Observation post at the Gulf of Aquaba,

After a Decade: End of UNEF I

- 1960s (early) - Tension on Israeli-Jordanian and Israeli-Syrian fronts
- 1964 - PLO and El Fatah formed
- Increasing frequency and severity of raids against Israel
- 1967 - Israeli Syrian tensions peak
- 16 May 67 - Egyptian commander asks UNEF commander (Rikhye) to vacate Ops
- SG U Thant (Burma) meets UNEF Advisory Committee
 - No question of Egypt's right to deploy troops to UN locations; some question about UNEF withdrawal
 - Deployment around UNEF would have serious consequences for safety
- Egyptian Foreign Minister informs TCNs that UNEF has terminated
- 16-18 May - SG works on Egypt to leave UNEF there and pull back from border
- Did not invoke Article 99 due to SC deadlock

WEATHER

Clear and cool, but a
light rain shower at
night. Windy, with a
fresh rain.

THE TELEGRAM

20 PAGES
WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY, MARCH 24, 1957

10 CENTS
10¢

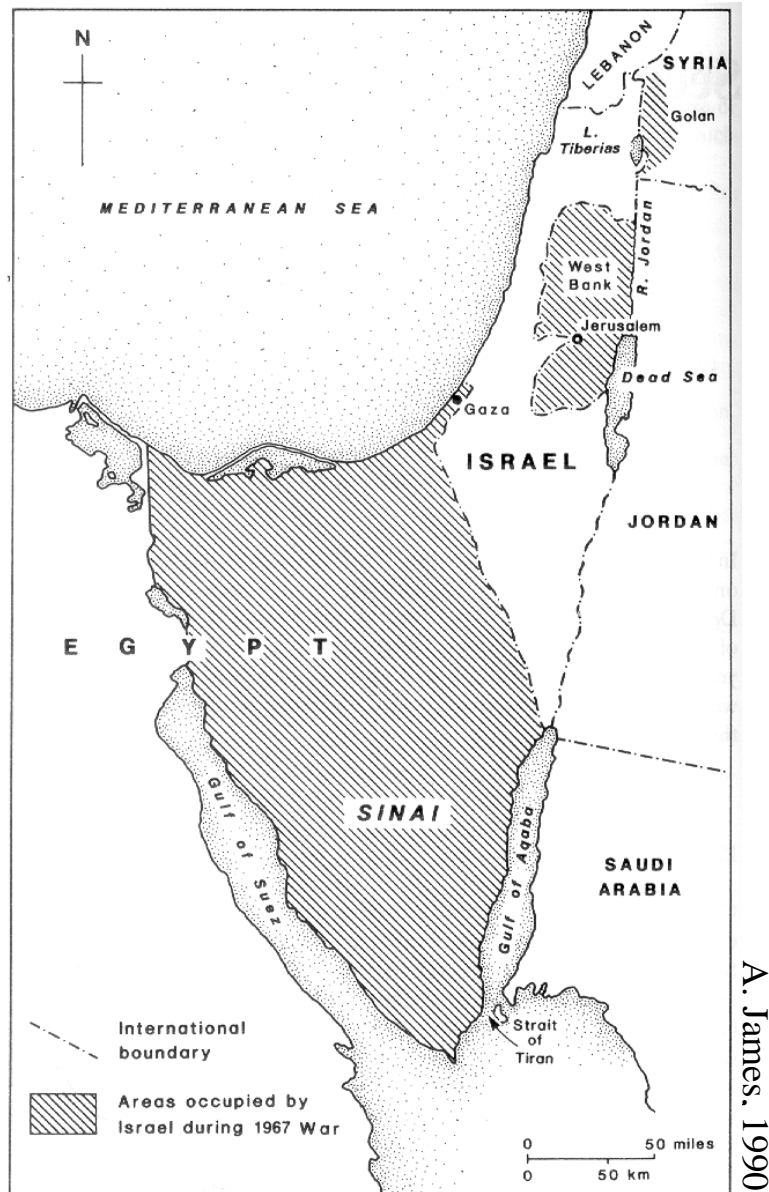


1857 | 1957

'A LOSS OF FACE' FOR CANADA, SAYS Dief

Nasser boots out our troops





Areas occupied by Israel after
1967 Six Day War

Some Features of UNEF

- Use of General Assembly to avoid Anglo-French veto
- Face-saving element for Britain and France
- Neighbouring mission (UNTSO) provides staff and assistance to expedite mission start-up
- Elements of secret diplomacy remain
- Front-line negotiation for withdrawal/separation of forces
- Prevarication by belligerent parties (UK, Fr, Israel)

Peacekeeping Impartiality

- Hammarskjold-Nasser Good Faith Agreement
- Finalized status of UNEF
- Core principles:
 - Consent of the host nation/belligerent states
 - Non-involvement of superpowers
 - Self-defence or non-use of force

Neutrality or Impartiality?

- Neutrality implies inaction and non-involvement
- Impartiality implies judgement and active engagement
- Did Egypt's "veto" limit the scope for UNEF's impartiality in field operations?
- Could Egypt order UNEF troops out?

UNEF Creates Precedent

- Composition/makeup
 - Formed units (battalions)
 - Armed
 - Larger size
 - Max 6,073 in Feb '57; 3,378 on withdrawal Jun '67
 - Cf. UNTSO: max 572 (1948); typically 300
 - cf. UNMOGIP: 30-60.
 - Non-P5; Middle powers
 - Initially: Brazil, *Canada*, Colombia, *Denmark*, Finland, India, Indonesia, *Norway*, Sweden and Yugoslavia
 - Selection by SG: Commander and troop contributors (as was case with UNMOGIP)
- Command structure

UNEF II (1973-79)

- Yom Kippur War (October 1973)
 - Egyptian and Syrian attack
- Again draws peacekeepers from UNTSO
 - UNFICYP (Cyprus) as well
- Interpositioning with large buffer zones
- Technology
- Followed by Multinational Force and Observers (MFO)
 - After Camp David accords of 1979

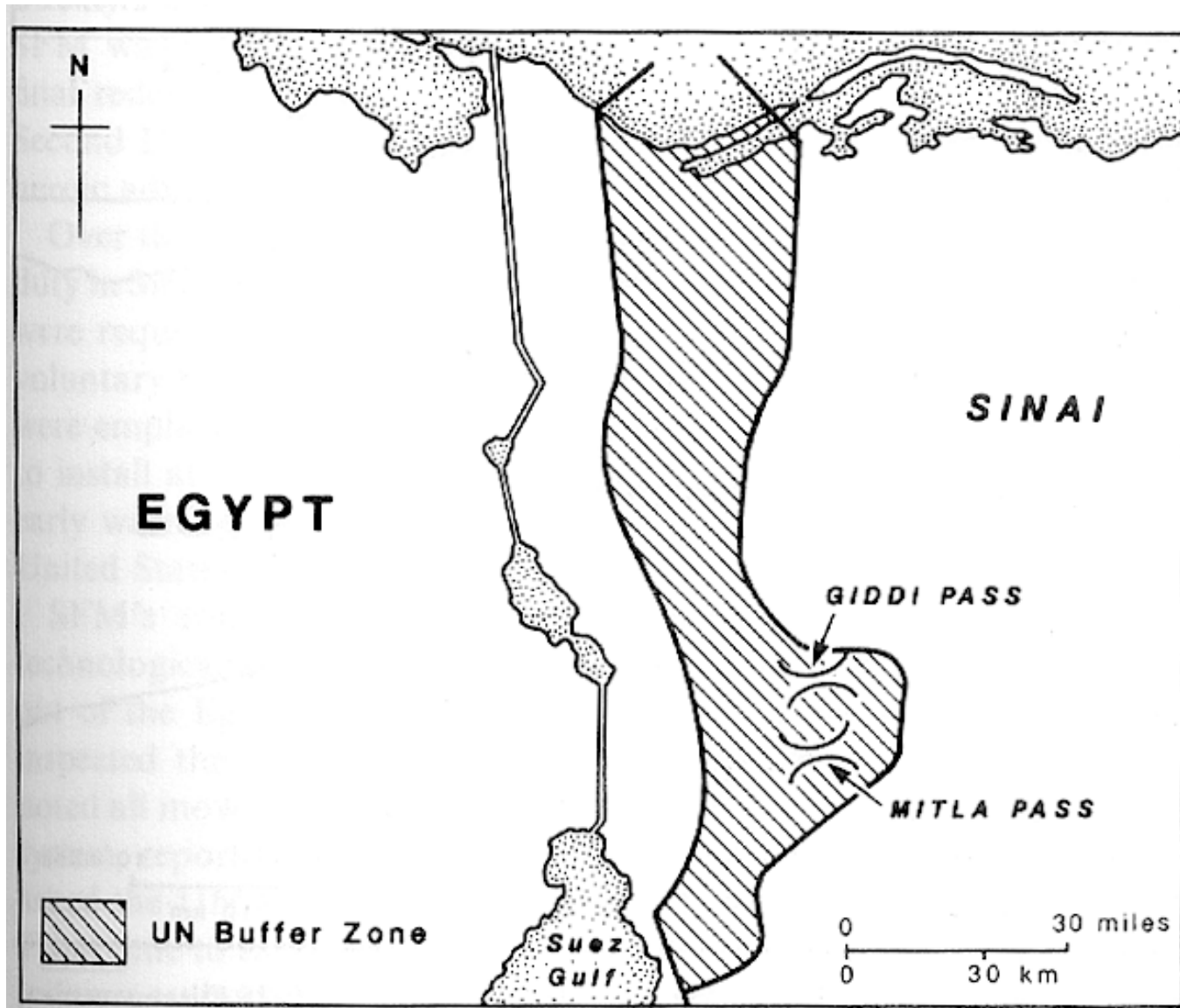
“DEJA VUE ALL OVER AGAIN” FOR SIR BRIAN





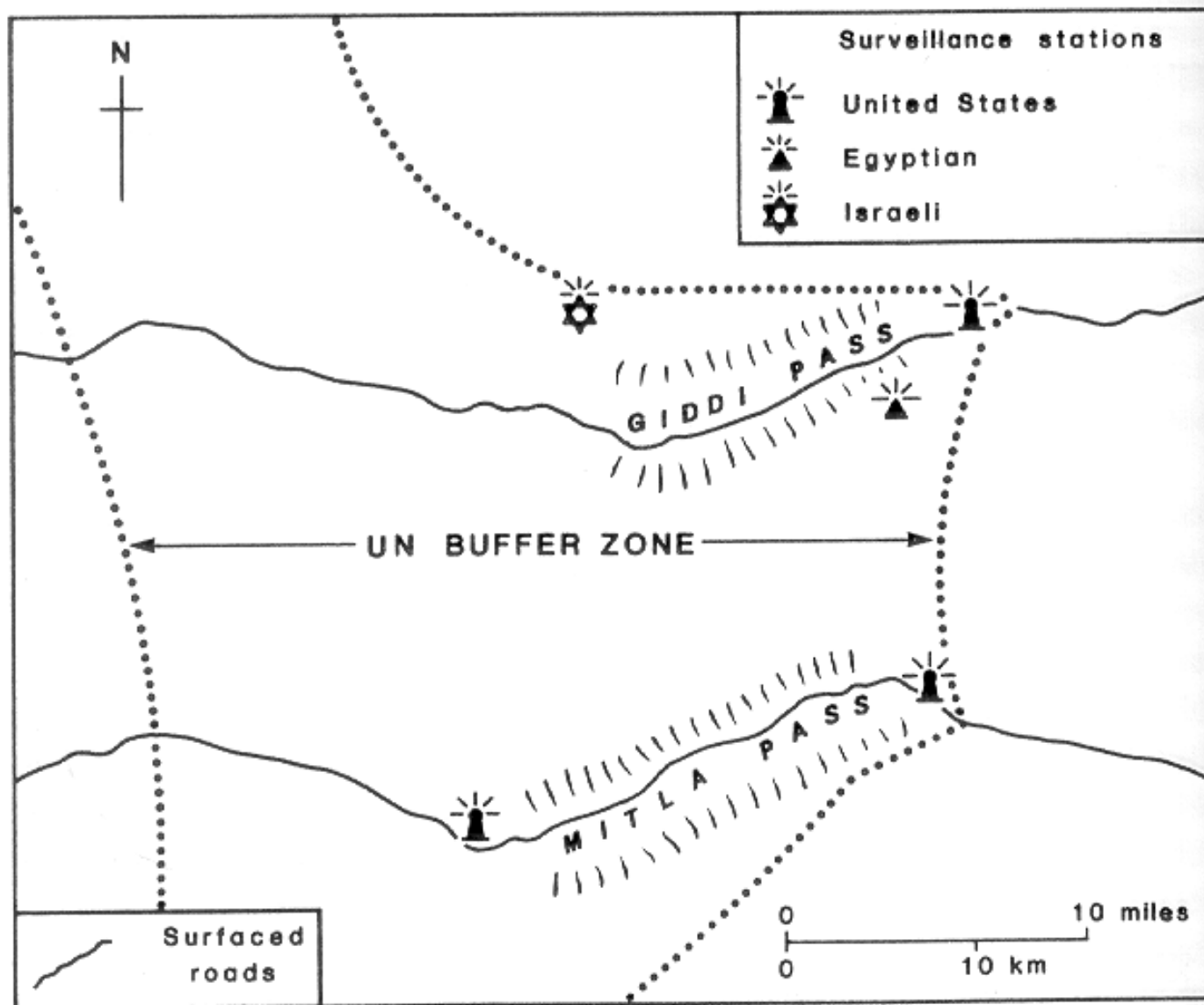
UN Photo 134263

Biweekly Inspections, Traversing the Canal Near Near Ismailia



A. James, 1990

1975 UN Buffer Zone in the Sinai



A. James, 1990

National surveillance stations in Sinai the 1975 Disengagement Agreement

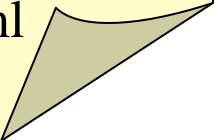
FROM OBSERVERS TO FORCES

“[I]n 1956, during the Suez crisis, military observers weren't enough. The armies of Britain and France were in Egypt. The Israelis were in Egypt. There were three armies to be got out, and in order to do that, you had to have a **buffer zone** between them and the Israelis, otherwise you would simply carry on the war by other means. So then we put in the first peacekeeping force.”

– Sir Brian Urquhart

Quote from

<http://globetrotter.berkeley.edu/UN/Urquhart/urquhart6.html>



COMPARISON

Observer Missions

- Small size (dozens/hundreds)
- Individual observers
- Unarmed
- Mature, middle-ranking officers
- Live on economy (MSA)
- Live in the community
- Status of “experts on mission”
- “Alert but inert”?

Peacekeeping Forces

- Larger (thousands)
- Contingents / formed units
 - Some exceptions
 - Usually light infantry battalions
 - Parallel chains of command
- Incl. non-commissioned and junior officers
- Keep national salary
- Unit weapons, equipment, communications
- Self-sustainment in field conditions
- Occupy and even hold territory

FUTURE PEACEKEEPING FORCES

- Evolutionary
 - Standby
 - Standing
- Permanent?