

## CHURCHILL TO EISENHOWER, April 5, 1953

My dear Friend,

Thank you so much for your letter. You know the importance I attach to our informal interchange of thoughts.

5 Of course my Number One is Britain with her eighty million white English-speaking people working with your one-hundred-and-forty million. My hope for the future is founded on the increasing unity of the English-Speaking world. If that holds all holds. If that fails no one can be sure of what will happen. This does not mean that we should seek to dominate international discussions or always try to say the same thing. There are some cases however where without offending the circle of nations the fact that  
10 Britain and the United States took a joint initiative might by itself settle a dispute peaceably to the general advantage of the free world.

It was for this reason that I hoped that Anglo-American unity in Egypt and also in the Levant including Israel, would enable us without bloodshed to secure our common military and political interests. I did not think it would have been wrong for Slim and Hull 1 with our two Ambassadors to have presented the package to Naguib and then seen what he had to say about it. This was on the basis that you would  
15 not be asked by us to contribute money or men to any fighting if things went wrong as they may well do now.

However, you have decided that unless invited by Naguib, who like all dictators is the servant of the forces behind him, we cannot present a joint proposal. We therefore have to go it alone. I think however that the fact that Britain and the United States are agreed upon what should be done to  
20 preserve an effective base there seems as far as it has gone, already to have had a modifying and helpful influence. Mere bluster by Naguib has not so far been accompanied by any acts of violence.

There is a view strongly held on the Opposition side of Parliament that we ought to abandon Egypt altogether. It is argued that the interests in the Middle East which we bear the burden of defending are international and NATO interests far more than British. The postwar position of India, Pakistan and  
25 Burma makes the Suez Canal in many ways more important to them than to us. Even in the War, as you will remember, for three years we did without the Suez Canal. We can keep our contacts with Malaya and Australasia round the Cape as we did then. We could maintain our influence in the Levant and Eastern Mediterranean from Cyprus and our interests in the Persian Gulf from Aden. The great improvement of the right flank of the Western Front achieved by the Yugo-Tito-Greeco-Turko  
30 combination has made the danger of a physical Russian attack upon Palestine and Egypt definitely more remote in distance and therefore in what is vital namely in TIME. It is pointed out that if we brought our troops home and under their rearguards our worthwhile stores valued at about £270 million and also cancelled the £200 million so-called sterling debts (incurred in defending Egypt in the War) we should experience great relief.

35 If your advisors really think that it would be a good thing if we washed our hands of the whole business I should very much like to be told. It is quite certain that we could not justify indefinitely keeping eighty thousand men over there at more than £50 million a year to discharge an international task in this area. If with your influence this burden could be largely reduced the great international Canal could continue to serve all nations, at any rate in time of peace, without throwing an intolerable  
40 burden upon us. It is for these reasons which have nothing to do with Imperialism that I persevere.

As all this seems to have something to do with history in which we have both occasionally meddled, I am sure you will not mind my putting the matter before you as I see it.

With kind regards,

Yours very sincerely,

45 Winston

The Churchill-Eisenhower Correspondence 1953-1955,

Edited by Peter G. Boyle, The University of North Carolina Press, 1990.

1 Field Marshall Slim of Great Britain and John F. Hull, U.S., Army vice-chief of staff, selected as U.S. military representative for talks with the Egyptian government.