



SUPPLEMENT TO
The London Gazette
 OF TUESDAY 10th SEPTEMBER, 1957

Published by Authority

Registered as a Newspaper

THURSDAY 12 SEPTEMBER, 1957

*The Ministry of Defence,
 12th September, 1957*

DESPATCH BY
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OPERATIONS IN EGYPT—NOVEMBER to DECEMBER, 1956

The following despatch describes the operations in the EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN from 30th October, 1956, when orders were issued by Her Majesty's Government to be prepared in certain circumstances to initiate operations in EGYPT until 22nd December, 1956, when evacuation was completed. I am forwarding certain detailed recommendations on specific organisational tactical and technical matters separately.

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Background

On 11th August, 1956, in the appointment of Commander-in-Chief of the British MIDDLE EAST Land Forces, I was informed that, in view of EGYPT's action in nationalising the SUEZ CANAL, Her Majesty's Government and the French Government had decided to concentrate certain forces in the Eastern Mediterranean in case armed intervention should be necessary in order to protect their interests and that in this event I was to assume the appointment of Allied Commander-in-Chief of all British and French Forces engaged.

In my capacity as Commander-in-Chief MIDDLE EAST Land Forces I had already been engaged in planning for possible operations in the area but mainly in the event of BRITAIN

being involved as a result of her commitments through the Anglo-Jordanian Alliance.

It was now necessary to consider specifically what action should be taken against Egypt if her seizure of the Canal should result in hostilities.

The following forces were earmarked by the British and French Governments should operations prove to be necessary:—

BRITISH

Naval

Aircraft Carrier Task Group
 Support Forces Group, including Cruisers,
 Darings, Destroyers and Frigates
 Minesweeping Group
 Amphibious Warfare Squadron

Land

16 Independent Parachute Brigade Group
 3 Commando Brigade, Royal Marines
 10 Armoured Division
 3 Infantry Division

Air

Medium and Light Bomber Force
 Fighter/Ground Attack Force, shore-based and carrier-borne
 Reconnaissance, Transport and Helicopter Forces