

Arab-Israeli Dispute

U.S. Efforts To Obtain a Settlement Between Egypt and Israel; the Beginnings of Operation Alpha, January 1–August 26, 1955¹

Editorial Note

On January 4 and 13, 1955, the United Nations Security Council continued its consideration of the case of the *Bat Galim*, an Israeli flag ship which had been seized by Egyptian authorities at the southern end of the Suez Canal on September 28, 1954. The Council had taken up the matter in October 1954 at Israel's request. For related documentation, see *Foreign Relations, 1952–1954*, volume IX, Part 1, pages 1660–1741 *passim*.

On January 4, the Representative of Egypt informed the Security Council that his government had released the crew of the *Bat Galim* on January 1; that his government intended to release the ship and suggested that the vessel's cargo might be placed aboard a neutral vessel for shipment to Haifa; and that a subcommittee of the Egypt-Israel Mixed Armistice Commission should discuss arrangements for the ship's release.

The Representatives of the United States, the United Kingdom, France, and Brazil, with the support of the Representatives of Belgium, Peru, and New Zealand, commended the dismissal of charges against the *Bat Galim's* crew but disagreed with Egypt's interpretation of the provisions of the Constantinople Convention of 1888 to justify its refusal to allow free and unobstructed passage of Israel's ships through the Suez Canal. They maintained that Egypt's action was also contrary to the Security Council's resolution of September 1, 1951, which had called upon Egypt to terminate its restrictions on the passage of international shipping through the Suez Canal. (U.N. doc. S/2322) (The

¹ For previous documentation, see *Foreign Relations, 1952–1954*, vol. IX, Part 1, pp. 975 ff.