CEASE-FIRE IN EGYPT
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A first hopeful break in the war clouds over the Middle East, which the Soviets had started to rim with the sheet lightning of a third world war, took place at 7 o'clock last night when an order for a general cease-fire accepted by all four belligerents was proclaimed over the entire battle area. The effectiveness of this order will, of course, depend on its strict observance by all the fighting forces. But even if isolated clashes should continue, the order is in itself a great contribution to the restoration of peace.

In some cases, notably in the case of Egypt, the acceptance of the cease-fire must still be clarified. But, as announced by Secretary General Hammarskjold and Prime Minister Eden, the cease-fire is unconditional as between Israel and Egypt. The British and French have made their permanent acceptance subject to some conditions. The most important of these is the rapid creation of a United Nations police force "competent" to take over the task of separating the Israeli and Egyptian forces, to keep peace and order in the area, and to assure freedom of passage through the Suez Canal to the ships of all nations.

The creation of such a police force has been voted by the General Assembly of the United Nations and is now being formed. As announced by Secretary General Hammarskjold, eight nations, including Canada and the Scandinavian countries, have already offered a total of some 5,500 men, and more are expected. Mr. Hammarskjold has, therefore, felt able to assure Britain and France that their condition regarding the police force is being met.

The cease-fire, which should hamper Soviet efforts to intervene in the Middle East, marks compliance by all the belligerents of the first demand in the peace resolution adopted by the General Assembly on Nov. 2. There remain to be carried out the further demands for a withdrawal of all forces behind the armistice lines and for the reopening of the Suez Canal with secure freedom of navigation. These demands will be more difficult to carry out, but once the fighting is stopped there should be no insuperable stumbling blocks to peace. The United Nations police force will presumably remain on guard until all the powers involved agree to a peace that will include a permanent settlement between Israel and the Arab states and a new regime for the Suez Canal under international control.

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