

**STRATEGY
RESEARCH
PROJECT**

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EISENHOWER, STRATEGIC OPERATOR AND LEADER

BY

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ABSTRACT

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Dwight David Eisenhower entered onto the world stage in early 1942 during the very darkest hours of World War II and exited in 1961 after leading the nation as our President for eight peaceful and productive years. The study examines his ability to lead at the highest levels of strategic military and political power. It argues that he is in fact one of our nation's few truly great leaders of vision and moral courage. The paper uses several of Eisenhower's key decisions during important events at critical points of his career to demonstrate his ability to make major visionary decisions while enduring extreme national and international political pressure and personal criticism. Lastly, the end results and implications of his decisions are discussed.

Eisenhower, Strategic Operator/Leader

LTC John W. Hall

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Introduction

Over the course of our nation's history many of our leaders have had a dramatic impact on the national and international scene. The roles of these leaders have varied from political to military to diplomatic, just to mention a few. Quite often, our leaders have been people possessing a great deal of creative talent or flashes of visionary inspiration. In a few cases, some leaders have catapulted to the heights of "Historical Greatness". Usually, they've achieved this lofty stature due to the events they've been involved in, not necessarily because of their individual abilities. However, in a few fleeting instances, some of our national leaders, over the course of our country's history, are recognized as being truly great. In most cases, this is due to unquestioned leadership ability, visionary thinking, and unequalled courage to make powerful decisions that have had a lasting impact on our nation and have shaped significant world events.

I firmly believe Dwight David Eisenhower, who operated at the highest levels of leadership for nearly two decades, is one of our few truly great American leaders. His tenacity and endurance are indications of his extraordinary abilities. Indeed, these qualities are part of his unquestioned success. He also possessed a strong sense of moral courage which he never compromised. He had the ability to make monumental decisions

which he instantly took responsibility for without reservation.

Several people would quickly argue this position. Many critics have postulated that he was an exceptionally competent officer and gifted administrator who simply happened on the world stage at the right time in history. There is no argument that world events changed Eisenhower's life dramatically. If World War II (WWII) hadn't occurred, he most likely would have retired from the Army as a happy, content, and historically obscure Colonel who had dedicated his adult life to the unappreciated profession of arms. Unfortunately, WWII did occur, and what happened to Eisenhower is now history.

Had he simply been a professionally gifted officer, he would most likely have become a senior General Officer during WWII due to the tremendous expansion of the Army. Chances are, he would have quickly dropped out of whatever lofty military position he held following the allied victories and returned to a quiet private life. But this is not what happened. Once Eisenhower was thrust on the world stage during a very dangerous and uncertain time, he remained there for several troubled years shaping and guiding our country and assisting numerous other countries. First, he crafted allied victory in Europe followed next by the creation of an international alliance that has been tremendously successful in averting nuclear world war and still exists today. Lastly, as President, he championed several new domestic, social, and economic programs because he understood the capabilities and needs of the people. He also understood the new

international dangers facing our country. Terrorism, energy control, and global devastation were now part of the international realities we had to contend with. He was committed to world peace and prosperity for the nation. The bottom line is, he dedicated his life to insure our country prospered and matured and did not become involved in another devastating worldwide international conflict.

I will quickly outline Eisenhower's early career followed by a detailed discussion of some of his significant decisions at the operational level as the Supreme Allied Commander in Europe during WWII. I'll then discuss the impact he had during the creation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and how his leadership thinking evolved to a international military strategic level. Lastly, during a very critical and unstable period in the Middle East, exacerbated by international intrigue from friendly world powers, Eisenhower provided visionary and courageous leadership on the political strategic level. His actions and determination resulted in a peace agreement between world and regional powers who were involved in a limited conflict that had the potential of developing into a world war. Here, he demonstrated to the world, specifically to the Soviet Union and all Third World Nations, that the United States would honor our treaties in support of nations who were victims of aggression, regardless of historical alliances. I'll discuss these events with a focused look at his leadership and decision making abilities as well as the future impacts of his decisions.

Early Years

Following graduation from West Point in 1915, Eisenhower soon found himself training soldiers for duty in Europe during World War I (WWI). By the end of the war he was 28 years old, a Major, and in charge of a training base of 10,000 soldiers. Here, he learned to handle large numbers of soldiers and manage massive quantities of materials, but he had not gained combat experience in Europe. Because of this, he felt he was far behind his peers.

"Eisenhower was deflated and depressed. He could hardly believe it had happened to him - he was a professional soldier who had missed action in the greatest war in history. He had never heard a shot fired in anger and now did not expect to in his lifetime."¹

During the two decades of peace following WWI, Eisenhower worked for several senior leaders of the time. This gave him the opportunity to witness senior command decisions while he was still young and it also exposed him to the strategic level of military decision making. First, General Fox Conner took Eisenhower under his wing and guided and trained him in command and staff procedures. More importantly, General Conner introduced Eisenhower to General Pershing who was the most famous and respected officer in the Army of that time. Eisenhower then worked for General Pershing on the War Monuments Commission in Europe. Later, Eisenhower became associated with General MacArthur. He first served with MacArthur when MacArthur was the Army Chief of Staff and later with him during MacArthur's time in the Philippines prior to WWII. MacArthur thought Eisenhower was

an extremely competent and gifted officer.

"MacArthur had the highest possible opinion of him. In personal reports MacArthur said that he was the best staff officer in the army, a man for whom no position was too high. He expected that Eisenhower would go right to the top in the next war."²

By 1941 Eisenhower was a Colonel and the Chief of Staff for the Third Army. During the large scale Louisiana Maneuvers, Third Army did very well due largely to the organizational and planning abilities of Eisenhower. In early 1942 Eisenhower was transferred back to Washington D.C. where he initially worked as the Assistant Chief of War Plans on the Army Staff. Soon, he was promoted to Brigadier General and named Chief of War Plans. Here, he reported directly to the Army Chief of Staff, General Marshall. In June of 1942, General Marshall sent him to London to command the European Theater of Operations. Following the U.S. landings and operations in Africa and Italy, General Eisenhower was selected to be the Supreme Allied Commander for the invasion of the European continent, liberation of France, and the destruction of the German armed forces.

Supreme Allied Commander, Europe - Operational Strategist

As Supreme Allied Commander, Eisenhower wasn't necessarily involved with the actual planning of the invasion of Europe or the conduct of the combat operations across France and Germany. He generally left the planning for the actual fighting to his two senior ground force commanders, Generals Montgomery and Bradley. Instead, Eisenhower was involved with military and political questions and decisions at the strategic level. Much, if not most, of his time was used in convincing his civilian and military colleagues and superiors of the wisdom of his positions. Several of his decisions prior to and during the campaign highlight these circumstances.

At the outset of planning for the cross channel invasion (OVERLORD) Eisenhower insisted upon control of the tactical and strategic air forces of the United States and Great Britain. This was a very controversial position and it was challenged by several senior military leaders and the Prime Minister of England. Not only did it attack the accepted military doctrine that was already in use, it challenged the professional positions and opinions of the leading American and British Air Corps Commanders. Eisenhower wanted to use all available air assets to attack the French transportation infrastructure prior to the invasion. He felt this was vital to the success of the invasion. With the destruction of the railway, road, and bridging networks, the Germans would not be able to move forces to counter attack, supply, or relieve the units involved in the

defense of France. Eisenhower based his reasoning on operational military and international diplomatic points.

"My insistence upon commanding these air forces at that time was further influenced by the lesson so conclusively demonstrated at Salerno: when a battle needs the last ounce of available force, the commander must not be in the position of depending upon request and negotiation to get it... In answer he pointed out that the venture the United States and Great Britain were now about to undertake could not be classed as an ordinary tactical movement in which consequences would be no greater than those ordinarily experienced through success or failure in a battle."³

His experiences gained during the earlier Salerno operation convinced him of the need to control all the air assets to insure proper coordination and planning. Also, the Allied Nations were placing their entire hope for a cross channel invasion in 1944 on this single operation. If the invasion did not occur, or worse, if the invasion failed, Russia might surrender and the war in the west would be lost.

The air corps commanders of the United States and Great Britain, Generals Spaatz and Harris, vehemently opposed Eisenhower's position. They didn't like the idea of working for Eisenhower's overall theater air commander, Marshal of the Royal Air Force Leigh-Mallory.

"To Harris and Spaatz the prospect of even temporarily allowing their bomber forces to be directed by Leigh-Mallory, a 'tactical' airman, was unthinkable. The long-range bomber would be 'misused', they argued."⁴

Also, they didn't agree with using the strategic bomber forces against what they considered to be tactical targets. Instead of attacking the transportation network of France, they preferred to use the bombers against targets they felt would have a lasting

impact on Germany's ability to wage war. These two respected air corps leaders received support for their views from England's Prime Minister, Winston Churchill. Eisenhower eventually achieved his goal of controlling all of the air assets but not before Winston Churchill imposed a great deal of personal and political pressure on him.

"Churchill put Eisenhower's views before the War Cabinet... The Transportation Plan, he feared, 'will smear the good name of the Royal Air Forces across the world.' "⁵

This must have been a tremendous amount of pressure on a man who, just a few short years earlier had been a relatively junior officer and who now was charged with the planning and conduct of the largest amphibious invasion in history. However, Eisenhower did not vacillate in his decision. He was able to work with Churchill and produce a command arrangement that satisfied them both. The impact of his decision may not have been immediately appreciated, however, years later he was vindicated.

"The Transportation Plan had won. Eisenhower and Tedder put the bombers to work on the French railway system. By D-Day the Allies had dropped seventy-six thousand tons of bombs on rail centers, bridges, and open lines... The German generals were 'strong in their belief that the various air attacks were ruinous to their counteroffensive plans' against the beachhead."⁶

The Broad Front Strategy Eisenhower developed and employed during the campaign also drew a great deal of criticism from various senior leaders, allied and U.S. alike. Eisenhower once again demonstrated confidence in his decision making powers and his vision for final victory as well as his ability to stand up to professional and public scrutiny and criticism.

"Following the successful drive to the Seine, reached during the last week in August, one of the great controversies of the war began to emerge. In its simplest terms, it was the question of a broad-front approach to Germany versus a single thrust. Both Army Group Commanders (and General Patton) advocated a single thrust into the heart of Germany... Eisenhower favored a broad front approach."⁷

Eisenhower's reasons for this contested strategy were based on an understanding of planning and organizing large scale operations along with his strategic vision for the destruction of Germany's army. He appreciated many aspects of the single-thrust concept, but he clearly understood the requirements involved in an offensive of such magnitude.

"Eisenhower was neither blind nor deaf to the advantages of a single thrust... Nevertheless a division still required something like 600 tons of supplies every day even when it was sitting still, and by that time Eisenhower had thirty-six divisions in action in France."⁸

By March 1945, his strategy was working.

"By March 27, however, Eisenhower's strategy was beginning to be vindicated, as the American bridge heads were making far greater progress than Montgomery's drive in the north."⁹

Not only did Eisenhower draw questions and criticism from several field commanders, once again he had to deal with powerful national leaders from Great Britain. Prime Minister Churchill and Chief of the Imperial General Staff, General Sir Alan Brooke, disagreed with Eisenhower's strategic vision. Both of these gentlemen spent much time and personal effort attempting to sway Eisenhower from his Broad Front Strategy. Not only did these gentlemen impose their advice on Eisenhower whenever they felt like it, Brooke was not entirely confident of Eisenhower's ability as Supreme Allied Commander.

"Churchill lectured him unceasingly on politico-military concepts. Brooke had strong views about the strategy he wanted to see applied to cleaning up the Germans, and did not deeply conceal his lack of confidence in how Eisenhower was running the war."¹⁰

Eisenhower consistently showed a unique ability to listen to their ideas while not becoming offended or offending them in return. I believe this is one of the true hallmarks of Eisenhower's greatness. He listened to opposing opinions without prejudice, and quite often he was able to convince his critics of the wisdom of his ideas. Even if he didn't change his critics opinions, he also didn't change his beliefs or decisions.

"It is a measure of Eisenhower's greatness as a commander and as a person that these differences never got out of hand. He spent endless hours in complex and often emotional arguments... without ever allowing any breach in the alliance to develop, and at the same time without ever compromising his own considerable authority or allowing his own concepts to be undermined."¹¹

There are many implications of Eisenhower's success while he was the Supreme Allied Commander. The fact that the Allies were overwhelmingly successful in Europe is a testament to Eisenhower's ability to command at the operational level. What is even more important, I believe, is the overwhelming success of the international coalition that he formed and held together during this critical period. Never before, had a military commander been called upon to create an international command organization of this size or complexity. Eisenhower accomplished this during some very dark hours of WWII without historical experiences to draw from or solid guidance from his political leaders. Also, he did this while enduring extensive criticism

and immense political pressures. Examples of his coalition building and international leadership continue to be studied and applied today by many countries.

Not only was he praised by national leaders and private citizens in this country, he was also revered by the allied nations he so ably led. This is surely the true testament to his ability to lead and command and provide visionary guidance. This is why, after a few short years following the great allied victory in Europe, Eisenhower was asked once again to return to Europe and lead the international movement to maintain peace in the face of a new and potentially more dangerous threat.

SACEUR, NATO - International Military Strategist

Eisenhower wasn't happy when President Truman asked him to come back on active duty and go to Europe as the Supreme Allied Commander (SACEUR) of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). "Eisenhower was not enthusiastic about becoming military leader of the Alliance."¹² Historically, he knew peacetime alliances and coalitions were usually weak and often failed to achieve their goals. Generally, the failures occurred due to a lack of resolve on the part of member states to honor their commitments of providing funds, resources, or soldiers. As the new SACEUR, the only thing he had to offer to NATO, was himself. Additionally, Eisenhower did not believe it was proper for one nation to defend another nation. The nation providing the forces would become disenchanted. The nation being defended, would eventually become unappreciative and unprepared to defend itself.

"He was convinced that American assumption of the defense of Western Europe was unnatural and, in the long term, unsustainable."¹³

Understanding all of the complications of the position, Eisenhower none the less approached his new duties with a determination unmatched up to that point by any international leader involved in the alliance. He understood the complicated and dangerous world situation and he appreciated the need for free nations to come together, whatever the cost, to protect themselves and to help build a collective security system. Although he didn't look forward to leaving home, he believed in NATO and the importance of the position of SACEUR.

"I hated the idea of leaving. But I believed in the NATO concept; to my mind, the future of Western civilization was dependent on its success."¹⁴

"I consider this to be the most important military job in the World."¹⁵

Many domestic and international challenges faced him.

Internationally, the countries of Europe were still suffering from the effects of WWII. Their economies were struggling to dig themselves out from under the ravages of the war while the Soviet Union was expanding into Eastern Europe and trying to push its influence into the governments and businesses of Western Europe. Additionally, within NATO, many member nations were at odds with each other over the command structure. Domestically, President Truman was having difficulty convincing Congress of the need to station American soldiers in Europe to help give credibility to NATO.

Command arguments and international understanding were the first challenges that Eisenhower had to deal with. He was working with several allies, international leaders, and old friends from WWII. None the less, much of the appreciation for the combined command structure that had been so successful during WWII, had disappeared. Actually, it seemed to him that he was starting over at the beginning. Only this time, his staff was much smaller and many nations were more self-centered and less interested in cooperation.

"There is no need, I presume, to tell you that the early task of organization here is cursed with all of the old concerns of national and service prestige,... Incidentally, it does seem odd to me that high governmental leaders have not learned something from past experiences."¹⁶

Also, even when national governments were interested, local leaders and private citizens failed to appreciate what NATO was all about and often failed to lend their support.

"We had an instance the other day that is indicative of the lack of popular understanding of what we are about... the (Paris) City Council voted 45 to 15 against allowing the Government to have the ground."¹⁷ (The ground in question was to be used to house American Officers assigned to NATO.)

Eisenhower didn't flinch from these challenges. Through his personal commitment, he created a command structure that was effective and representative of the entire international NATO structure. Field Marshal Montgomery (British) was the Deputy SACEUR, General Juin (French) was the Center Ground Force Commander, and the Personnel Chief was Italian. These are only a few examples of the arrangements he crafted but they show his understanding of the need to create an international mix to lead NATO.

Without question, the single biggest international military issue facing Eisenhower was the need to have military forces dedicated to support NATO. This was complicated by two significant problems. First, in the United States many Congressional leaders argued against sending large numbers of soldiers overseas for extended periods of time to defend Europe.

"How many troops? Where would they come from? Truman had said he intended to send more American divisions to Germany--there were two there already--but Taft and other Old Guard Republicans had challenged the President's right to ship American troops to Europe in peacetime."¹⁸

Second, in order for Europe as a whole to offer a large enough force to help deter the USSR, Germany would have to be included and allowed to contribute military forces.

"During the months after arriving in Paris I was extremely busy with many problems. One of the time-consuming tasks was to obtain agreement among the NATO nations on a plan for bringing West Germany forces into our security organizations."¹⁹

Two key elements of this problem challenged Eisenhower's ability to forge international trust and cooperation between the member nations and Germany. First, the NATO nations were afraid of rearming Germany so soon after WWII.

"The Allies were of course, reluctant to move on this issue. Only a relatively short time had elapsed since the end of hostilities in 1945; they could not forget Nazi Germany's immense military power and immense capacity for evil."²⁰

Second, the Germans were not enthusiastic about rearming,

"Adenauer was not among the early supporters of German rearmament; his experiences, and those of the German people in the Second World War, were still painfully fresh."²¹

Eisenhower accomplished this monumental task by focused determination and the power of his personality to draw people and institutions together to overcome individual prejudices for the accomplishment of a greater good. He believed it was his personal mission to make the member nations understand the importance of a strong military force to deter the Soviet Union. In order to create this force, Germany had to be allowed to participate.

"Eisenhower would have to persuade the Europeans that the Germans were their allies, not their enemies;... that a genuine military alliance of the NATO partners was, even if unique in history, nevertheless workable."²²

He traveled throughout the United States and Europe visiting congressional and allied leaders, continually communicating his message for a strong NATO and German membership.

"Eisenhower went after the British in his typical fashion- public speeches, private meetings with politicians, and extensive correspondence with his many friends in the British Government."²³

One of the central issues with allowing Germany to join NATO was the size of force they would be allowed to offer. Working with Eisenhower, the French developed a plan that allowed Germany to participate while setting a cap on the size of their formations.

"The French solution was the: 'Pleven Plan.' The Germans would build an army that would have no unit larger than a Division, as part of an integrated NATO force commanded by Eisenhower; the German contribution would be limited to 20 percent of the integrated force."²⁴

There were many difficulties concerning this issue, but in the end, Eisenhower was successful and German soldiers joined the ranks of NATO's military formations.

"When the Council interrupted their session on the 8th of September, all the members were prepared to accept the principle of German participation in the NATO forces."²⁵

When Eisenhower left Europe in the Spring of 1952, NATO was a much stronger alliance than it had been in January 1951. The member nations had a growing confidence in the capabilities of the organization. The fact that it was a deterrent force against Soviet expansion was now clearly evident to the world.

"The capstone came on May 27, when the Foreign Ministers of France, West Germany, Italy, and the Benelux countries signed the treaty creating the European Defense Community (EDC)."²⁶

The implications of Eisenhower's contribution to NATO and the world are clear. When the member nations agreed to honor the treaty, they established the conditions which insured communism couldn't spread to West Europe and World War III wouldn't occur.

"The Parties agree that an armed attack against one or more of them in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all... This was, indeed, an 'entangling alliance' - the first of its sort ever to be initiated by the United States in a time of peace."²⁷

Fifty years of peace without a world war is unquestioned evidence that NATO has been successful. The fall of the Iron Curtain in 1989 shows that NATO was strong militarily, economically, politically, and diplomatically. Additionally, if not more importantly, is the moral spirit of the organization that Eisenhower championed. I think this is a clear indication of the true greatness of this alliance. Other post-war alliances which were created for good reasons have not endured.

"CENTO (Central Treaty Organization, or the Baghdad Treaty), SEATO (Southeast Asia Treaty Organization), and, most recently, even ANZUS (Australia, New Zealand, and the United States, the ANZUS Pact nations)-did not stand the test of time."²⁸

These treaties were formed with good intentions, but they lacked the moral spirit or collective will of their members to endure.

Lastly, implications of Eisenhower's and NATO's success are still being enjoyed. NATO continues to exist today and includes several new members. Additionally, former members of the Warsaw Pact desire to join this alliance due to its strength and historical success. Member nations are keeping NATO strong and alive for the future.

"In 1994 a further Summit Meeting of NATO Heads of State and Government took place in Brussels. Alliance leaders confirmed the enduring validity and indispensability of the North Atlantic Alliance and their commitment to a strong transatlantic partnership between North America and Europe developing a Common Foreign and Security Policy and taking on greater responsibility for defence matters."²⁹

President, Deterrent Strategist

Eisenhower served our nation as President for eight years. During this time the tragic Korean conflict was brought to an end and the country enjoyed a period of unquestioned peace and economic prosperity. At the end of his Presidency, he was still very popular with the American public. The world community respected our international leadership role due largely to his personal character and commitment to world peace.

The 1956 Suez Canal crisis provides an excellent example of Eisenhower's leadership ability and moral courage to quell an international crisis before it spiraled out of control. COL Nasser became the leader of Egypt in 1954 following King Farouk's departure in 1952. This was the start of troubled relations between Egypt and several western powers, especially Great Britain, over the British Suez Base.

"The Egyptians resented its presence and made their displeasure evident by clandestine depredations including arson and raids, as well as by government protest."³⁰

Not only did Nasser want the British to leave Egypt, he had designs of expanding Egypt's influence over the entire region. "His vision and, before long, his activities ranged far outside the borders of Egypt."³¹ His desire to extend his control and expand Egypt's regional power, troubled neighbor nations, particularly Israel. Additionally, world powers such as the United States, Great Britain, and France were also greatly concerned.

"France accused him of fomenting troubles among the Arabs in Algeria; the British alleged that he was working covertly to generate discontent in Cyprus to embarrass them."³²

While continuing to negotiate with the United States and other western powers on several projects benefiting Egypt, COL Nasser was openly forming friendships and alliances with communist nations. They were anxious to gain access to the region's natural resources and readily agreed to work with Egypt. For example, in 1955, after failing to obtain weapons from the U.S., COL Nasser contacted the Czechoslovakian government and bought a large consignment of weapons ranging in cost from \$90 million to \$200 million. In 1956, COL Nasser's government formally recognized Red China, thus continuing to widen the gulf between Egypt and the western powers.

In addition to wanting the British out of the Suez Canal Base, irritating France and the U.S., and expanding relations with communist countries, this period of mid-eastern history is also marked with increasing tensions between Egypt and Israel.

"Throughout 1955 and early 1956 border fights between the Israelis and the Arabs continued. Late in 1955 outbreaks occurred almost daily, primarily in the Gaza Strip."³³

These events and actions were leading several nations, western and middle eastern alike, to question Egypt's intentions in general and COL Nasser's ultimate goals in particular. Even President Eisenhower had thoughts of trying to hurt the prestige of Nasser,

"Eisenhower and Dulles thought the Egyptian leader had gone too far, and they agreed that they should do something more to 'weaken Nasser.'" ³⁴

In June 1956, Great Britain pulled its garrison out of the Suez Canal Base thus allowing Nasser to achieve one of his major

national objectives. Shortly after that, on 26 July 1956, Nasser alerted his forces and swiftly nationalized the Suez Canal. "The fat," as Eisenhower said in his memoirs, 'was now really in the fire.' "³⁵ The stage appeared to be set for western and eastern powers to align themselves over this sensitive and strategic international asset. All international trading countries had a vested interest. Nasser's control of the canal allowed him to set shipping costs, movement times, and even deny certain countries access if he desired.

This unilateral action by Egypt also gave France, Great Britain, and Israel the opportunity they wanted to move forces into the region and seize control of the canal while at the same time disposing of COL Nasser. These countries formed a secret plan which called for Israel, supported by Great Britain and France, to attack Egypt. Israel would gain control of the Gaza Strip and Great Britain and France would regain control of the Suez Canal. Additionally, these countries, who were strong allies of the United States, assumed the United States would agree with their intended action and support their attack.

Intelligence reports alerted the United States that the Israelis were massing forces with the appearance of attacking Jordan. Eisenhower understood France had sold attack fighter aircraft to Israel, however, his intelligence sources revealed many more aircraft had been sold than announced and agreed upon by the United States and France.

"In mid-October, the President found out that the French had transferred sixty Myst'ere jet aircraft to Israel. This information came from high-altitude reconnaissance flights by the U-2, which had flown its first spy missions several months earlier. The French had reported the provision to Israel of only twenty-four Myst'eres."³⁶

When Israel launched its attack, they attacked Egypt as planned, not Jordan, as the United States had thought. All of this caused Eisenhower a great deal of concern due to the strong possibilities of a world war and the severe damage to the prestige of the western powers.

"Nasser and the Suez Canal are foremost in my thoughts. Whether or not we can get a satisfactory solution for this problem and one that tends to restore rather than to further damage the prestige of the Western Powers, particularly of Britain and France, is something that is not yet resolved."³⁷

This is the point where Eisenhower unquestionably showed his talent as an unequalled deterrent strategist and international leader. During this entire event, Eisenhower was the only international leader to provide steady, solid, uncompromising leadership. He did this by remaining in control and communicating his intentions and desires to all concerned.

"The proper response was to remain cool, gather all the information he could, consider the options, and use them to take control of the events... It was what he intended to do, and did, in October-November 1956, in one of his greatest moments as President."³⁸

"He told Dulles to 'make it very clear to the Israelis that they must stop these attacks'... If they continue, the Arabs would turn to the Russians for arms, and the ultimate effect would be to Sovietize the whole region, including Israel."³⁹

Additionally, Eisenhower displayed a great deal of political courage. This was an election year and one false move could

possibly cause him to lose the election.

"Eisenhower also believed that the Israelis thought that his hands would be tied because of the impending election and the importance of the Jewish vote. Eisenhower, however, made clear that he would not let domestic political considerations determine his foreign policy."⁴⁰

Eisenhower's choices appeared fairly clear cut. He could officially announce his support for Israel and our WWII allies, Great Britain and France. Or, he could choose to do nothing and remain politically safe and hopefully win the 1956 election. Instead, he displayed firm international leadership and unwavering domestic political courage with the ultimate outcome of world peace. He went to the U.N. and announced that the United States intended to uphold the conditions of the Tripartite Declaration which said we would give our support to the victim of any aggression in the Mid-East.

"We cannot be bound by our traditional alliances, but must instead face the question how to make good on our pledge [in the Tripartite Declaration]."⁴¹

"For the first time the Anglo-French position was branded by the United States as potentially aggressive; implicitly, therefore, Eisenhower rejected their claim that Egypt had become an aggressor by grabbing the canal."⁴²

The implication of Eisenhower's decision on the world stage was staggering. He had taken a position and put the country's reputation on the line. He had said in effect that our nation would not allow any form of aggression in the Middle East to occur regardless of the nations taking the action. By aligning the United States with Egypt against our traditional British, French, and Israeli allies, he had demonstrated to the USSR that we would not stand for any intervention in the region regardless

of past political, diplomatic, or military alliances. Also, the positive effect of his decision on the smaller Third World Nations was amazing.

"At 11:45 A.M., Lodge phoned Eisenhower to tell him that 'never has there been such a tremendous acclaim for the President's policy. Absolutely spectacular!'... The small nations of the world could hardly believe that the United States would support a Third World country, especially Egypt, in a struggle with colonial powers that were America's two staunchest allies, or that the United States would support Arabs against Israeli aggression."⁴³

Eisenhower had demonstrated to all nations of the World Community that the United States was not an international power of the old colony-seeking order. Also, we considered and respected the importance of national sovereignty for all nations, international world powers, as well as Third World nations. The conflict soon came to a peaceful end. Eisenhower had courageously committed American prestige and demonstrated our national resolve to maintain world peace.

Conclusion

Dwight D. Eisenhower was not perfect. He had professional failings and personal weaknesses. However, one cannot dispute the impact he had on world events starting in the dark days of World War II in 1942, continuing in Europe with the formation of NATO - one of the most successful and enduring international alliances in history, and ending in 1961 after he led the nation as President for eight peaceful and economically productive years. He could think quickly and independently while also listening to wise counsel. He could make major military, political, and policy decisions with little fanfare. He was able to build international coalitions and lead political parties based upon a proven record of trust and unquestioned commitment. Most importantly, Dwight Eisenhower had a deep and enduring sense of moral courage that never failed to guide him.

End Notes

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³Dwight D. Eisenhower, Crusade in Europe (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1952), 222.

⁴John S. D. Eisenhower, Allies (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1982), 443.

⁵Stephen E. Ambrose, Eisenhower - Soldier, General of the Army, President - Elect, 1890-1952 (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1983), 289.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Johns Hopkins Press, The Papers of Dwight D. Eisenhower, The War Years: IV (Baltimore and London, 1970), 2091.

⁸Sir Michael Carver, The War Lords (Boston, Toronto: Little, Brown and Company, 1976), 531.

⁹Dwight D. Eisenhower, Letters to Mamie (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1978), 531

¹⁰Sir Michael Carver, The War Lords (Boston, Toronto: Little, Brown and Company, 1976), 527.

¹¹Doubleday and Company, Inc., In Review, Pictures I've Kept, A Concise Pictorial "Autobiography" Dwight D. Eisenhower (Garden City, New York, 1969), 527.

¹²Setven Metz, Eisenhower as Strategist (Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania: U.S. Army War College, 1993), 57.

¹³Ibid., 60.

¹⁴Doubleday and Company, Inc., In Review, Pictures I've Kept, A Concise Pictorial "Autobiography" Dwight D. Eisenhower (Garden City, New York, 1969), 111/112.

¹⁵Stephen E. Ambrose, Eisenhower - Soldier, General of the Army, President - Elect, 1890-1952 (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1983), 496.

¹⁶Johns Hopkins Press, The Papers of Dwight D. Eisenhower,

NATO and the Campaign of 1952: XII (Baltimore and London, 1989), 79.

¹⁷Ibid., 167.

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¹⁹Doubleday and Company, Inc., In Review, Pictures I've Kept, A Concise Pictorial "Autobiography" Dwight D. Eisenhower (Garden City, New York, 1969), 112.

²⁰Robert H. Ferrell, The Eisenhower Diaries (New York and London: W.W. Norton & Company, 1981), 196.

²¹John A. Reed, Jr., Germany and NATO (Fort Lesley J. McNair, Washington, DC: National Defense University Press, 1987), 36/37.

²²Stephen E. Ambrose, Eisenhower - Soldier, General of the Army, President - Elect, 1890-1952 (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1983), 497.

²³Ibid., 509.

²⁴Ibid., 508.

²⁵Lord Lionel Ismay, NATO - The First Five Years (Paris, 1954), 33.

²⁶Stephen E. Ambrose, Eisenhower - Soldier, General of the Army, President - Elect, 1890-1952 (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1983), 526.

²⁷Cabell Phillips, The Truman Presidency (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1966), 267.

²⁸Keith A. Dunn and Stephen J. Flanagan, eds, NATO in the Fifth Decade (National Defense University Press, Fort Lesley J. McNair, Washington, DC, 1990), xv.

²⁹NATO Office of Information and Press, NATO Handbook (Brussels, 1995), 25.

³⁰Dwight D. Eisenhower, Waging Peace (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1965), 23.

³¹Ibid., 24.

³²Ibid.

³³Ibid., 28.

³⁴Chester J. Pach Jr., The Presidency of Dwight D. Eisenhower (University Press of Kansas, 1991), 128.

³⁵Stephen E. Ambrose, Eisenhower, The President (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1976), 330.

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³⁷Robert Griffith, ed, Ike's Letters to a Friend (University Press of Kansas, 1984), 165.

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