

ISRAEL INVADES EGYPT.

After weeks of stalemate, the Suez crisis bursts dramatically into the news again. For Israel has invaded Egypt, Britain and France have declared the Canal in danger; and British and French troops are on the move. Background to these startling events is the running sore of the Israel-Egypt frontier, which has been a theatre of sporadic warfare ever since the Israeli State came into being. For many years, even the village schools in the frontier settlements have known that at any moment, death may be looking over their shoulder.

Israeli patrols have been permanently on the watch for any move from the Egyptian side; for Israel's Arab neighbours have never been reconciled to her existence. Every few weeks, the farmers daily round has been interrupted by sudden clashes for which neither side has been without blame.

Meanwhile in Egypt, the steadily growing power of the regime which overthrew Farouk has been evident to the world. The Western nations, thinking of the Suez Canal, watched uneasily; Egypt turned Eastwards for her supplies of arms, and Russia's foreign minister Shepilov found Nasser a ready customer.

But with every man and woman trained, Israel's strength too, was growing; and the danger of a major flare-up increased. The frontier raids continued; sooner or later, the explosion must come.

At last, without warning, Israel strikes. General Moshe Dayan, one-eyed commander-in-chief, orders the tanks into action. Israeli forces sweep across the frontier into the Egyptian desert, while premier Ben Gurion declares general mobilisation. Within hours, the leading Israeli columns are driving towards the Canal. Britain and France react at once with an ultimatum - "stop the fighting, or we march in". Israel accepts if Egypt will; but Egypt flatly refuses. The world waits, tensely, to see whether the British flag will fly once more over Suez.