

## MIDEAST: DAWN OR SUNSET?

The Middle Eastern crisis, which will again come before the U. N. General Assembly tomorrow, involves specifically a rock or two at the mouth of the Gulf of Aqaba and a narrow strip of sand running along the coast of the Mediterranean from the Sinai peninsula. The rock is not of much value and neither is the sand. They are symbols of a struggle for power in which more than the obvious contestants are involved and which sometimes seems to be a battle between the twentieth century and some preceding century, such as the fifteenth or the twelfth.

The General Assembly will be discussing a report of Secretary General Hammarskjöld dealing with Israel's retention of the Aqaba positions and the Gaza Strip. The questions immediately involved are delicate but ephemeral. If the Israelis pull out, who will come in? If the Egyptians come in, will they act in accordance with the law of nations, including the Charter of the United Nations, or will they attempt to revert to the status they held before the Israelis pushed them out? If the U. N. police come in, will they be subject to the whims of Colonel Nasser to stay when he says they may stay or to go when he says they must go? If the Egyptians don't like what happens, will they be assisted in their protests by Russian "volunteers"? And if Russian "volunteers" are tossed in by the hand of Moscow, what will the United States do?

These are the problems and the questions. They arise, however, not wholly out of human sin or folly but out of a situation whose roots are deep in history. The Middle East has always had its geographical importance because of location. The oil which has been found to underlie the Arabian peninsula was there, of course, during all historic time, but now the welfare of Western Europe depends upon it and its estimated reserves are about two-thirds the total for the world.

Add to these facts of physical geography a confusion of races and some admixture of religions, in a region which by a loose definition is perhaps a sixth larger than the United States, with a population of about two-thirds that of the United States, with many of its peoples still sick and ignorant and the greater part of its land unfarmable—add this all up and trouble doesn't have to be invented or contrived.

It is a great temptation, to which the Arab states and some of their friends have succumbed, to ascribe trouble in the Middle East to the introduction of the State of Israel. But we may suppose that the State of Israel is there not so much because Theodor Herzl and others conceived it and worked toward it as because the drift of history made it inevitable. If it was Dr. Herzl who conceived the idea some sixty years and more ago, it was Hitler who stimulated it, and the destruction of the Turkish Empire, followed by the weakening of the British and French domination, that made it possible.

At any rate the State of Israel, recognized as such by President Truman within a few hours of its proclamation, admitted to the United Nations a year later and carrying a population of nearly two million persons, is a fact. It cannot be wiped out by any moral or physical force now in sight. This being the case, some way by which Israel and its Arab neighbors can get along in peace must be worked out.

This is the task with which the U. N. General Assembly is now concerned. It is also one with which the United States under the Eisenhower Doctrine must be concerned. The State of Israel, whether or not as a result of a stipulated bargain, must be secure inside its frontiers. It must, like the rest of the world, enjoy equal rights of navigation in the Suez Canal and the Gulf of Aqaba and it must not be treated by

its Arab neighbors as though a state of war was still continuing. In return the Israelis, individually or as a government, must prove their willingness to keep within the law.

The Eisenhower Doctrine has two divisions. The first is a determination on our part to prevent international communism from conquering any part of the Middle East by force. The second is our willingness and ability to give economic aid to those countries in the Middle East which ask for it and can profitably use it. We must hope Congress will not hesitate to add the weight of an early and positive majority to support the doctrine and advance a Mideastern solution.

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