

Gaza Strip and Gulf of Aqaba Described by United Press Man

Editor's Note: The two striking points in the Middle East crisis are the Gulf of Aqaba and the Gaza Strip. The following descriptive dispatches were written by a U.P. correspondent who has been stationed in that area for a good part of the past 10 years.

By PETER WEBB
United Press Correspondent

The Gaza Strip is a finger of land seven miles wide and 30 miles long on the eastern shore of the Mediterranean. It is the Biblical land where Samson brought down the temple of the Philistines.

It is so poor that no sensible real estate investor would touch it. Yet today in its huts and hovels live some 270,000 Palestinian refugees and from 60,000 to 70,000 other Arabs born there.

Its other agricultural exports last year totaled less than a big garden farm in New Jersey. Yet its only income is from farming.

Police Patrol Villages
This is the territory over which Israel seems ready to defy the world. Today Israeli police in British-style khaki uniforms with blue-peaked caps patrol the villages enforcing a dusk to dawn curfew.

Why is Gaza so important to Israel? You only have to go back a few months.

Last fall Israel's border farmers drove their tractors with rifles propped beside them and harvested their crops with sub-machine guns slung around their shoulders. They manned watchtowers, strung barbed wire. They waited for the sniper's bullet on the dusty white roads. The families took to underground, concrete shelters built on farms when mortar bombs began to fall.

Daily Raids
And they anticipated almost daily the raids of the Fedayeen, the Arab suicide commandos from Gaza who continued the 1948 war which has never officially ended between Egypt and Israel.

When Israel invaded Egypt last October, its forces seized Gaza.

For almost 10 years the Gaza strip has been a place of misery. Arab refugees fled there when the new state of Israel was created. They were cared for by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) which managed to keep them on a bare survival diet of around 1,500 calories daily.

Only a quarter of the Gaza strip is cultivated. It is nowhere self-sufficient and it is doubtful whether it ever could be. Actually Israeli officials are unhappy over the prospect of permanent occupation of Gaza which would only add an economic burden to the Jewish state.

On the tip of the Sinai peninsula

is a desolate, windswept area of sand dunes, desert cactus and gun emplacements. Its name is Sharm El-Sheikh.

Its importance is that the guns of Sharm El-Sheikh can forbid the entry of ships into the Gulf of Aqaba as effectively as can those of Gibraltar command the western end of the Mediterranean.

Up until last October, its sole role under Egyptian control was to deny access into the gulf to Israeli shipping. Israeli vessels also had been forbidden passage through the Suez canal.

Two Narrow Streams
The Gulf of Aqaba is 100 miles long and, for most of its length, it is 12 to 17 miles wide. But at the Red sea entrance, the islands of Tiran and Senafir split it into two narrow streams. The only usable channel is the three-mile wide stretch between Tiran and Sharm El-Sheikh.

Today the guns have been spiked, and Israeli troops have taken over the Egyptian positions.

Even ships of other nations have occasionally been fired on and regulations issued by the Egyptian War Ministry in Sep-

tember, 1955, stated that all ships entering the gulf should obtain permission 72 hours in advance.

Total Blockade
The effect was to impose a total blockade on all shipping intending to travel to Israeli's southern port of Eliath at the head of the gulf.

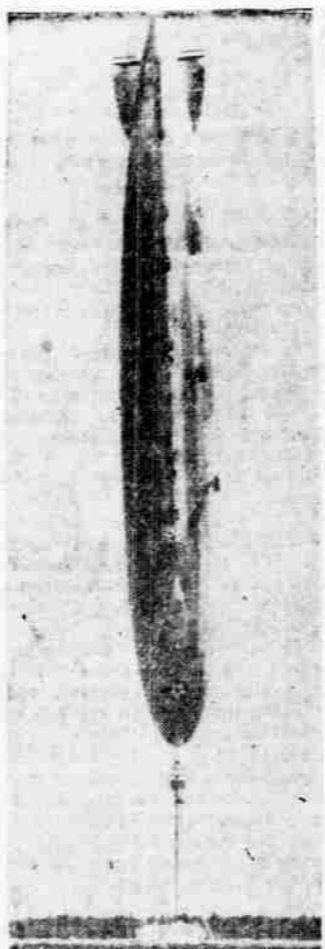
Eliath is a new town, dating from 1949, but since the Israeli attack broke the bottleneck, its port facilities already have been enlarged. The road between Eliath and Beersheba has been asphalted and there are plans to extend the Haifa-Beersheba railway to the gulf.

The Israelis have also started to lay an eight-inch oil pipeline from Eliath to Beersheba and negotiations are underway with the French for another 31-inch pipeline which could transport 18 million tons of oil annually from the gulf to the Mediterranean coast, bypassing the Suez.

This would cut sharply into Egypt's revenues from tankers passing through the canal. It provides yet one more reason why Egypt demands Israel's withdrawal from Sharm El-Sheikh.



IN A HURRY—Grouped around Mrs. Clayton J. Fortin of Kankakee, Ill. are her five children, all born to her within a two-year period. They are shown together for the first time since the birth of the youngest twins four weeks ago. The children are one-year-old Lu Ann (left), twins Christine and Carol (on mom's lap) and two-year-old twins Jeff and Mike.



BLOW ME DOWN—Published for first time, photo shows U. S. Navy dirigible Los Angeles standing on her nose at mooring tower at Lakehurst, N. J. The 700-foot craft was upended by turbulent breeze in 1926. Photo was uncovered by John Toland while researching for newly published book "Ships in the Sky." Only damage was small holes in her nose from falling objects. Twenty-five crewmen were inside at the time.

Trike-Riding Boy Eludes Searchers

Portland — (U.P.) — A 3½-year old boy gave police a bad time here yesterday for a couple of hours when he jumped on his tricycle and eluded a search for nearly two hours.

Little David Draper, the son of Mr. and Mrs. Frank Draper Jr., of Oregon City, was staying at the home of his grandparents near here.

About 10:30 a.m. yesterday he decided to go for a ride. That was the last he was seen until police finally spotted him two hours later at SE Foster rd., and 103rd ave., about 100 blocks away.

At police headquarters while waiting for his father to come for him, young David gave his name as Davy Crockett and continued to pedal his tricycle expertly around police headquarters.

David's father finally arrived at police headquarters to claim the boy and the tricycle.

Asia's population ratio averages 77 persons per square mile.

Back Stairs: Burying Old Traditions

By MERRIMAN SMITH
United Press White House Writer

Washington — (U.P.) — Backstairs at the White House: President Eisenhower is burying some ancient traditions this late winter and spring in by-passing dinners normally given in his honor by various organizations of Washington reporters and photographers.

He declined, for example, to attend the Gridiron Club dinner last Saturday night.

He also has informed the radio and television correspondents that he won't be able to attend their banquet March 23. He'll be in Bermuda then conferring with British Minister Harold Macmillan.

Mr. Eisenhower is the first President in many years who did not join the National Press Club. He and Mrs. Eisenhower also dropped the custom started by the late Franklin D. Roosevelt and his wife of including in the White House social schedule a reception for reporters, photographers and their wives.

The Gridiron Club, an organization of 50 Washington newspapermen, is 72 years old. Presidents have been attending the club's glittering dinners for years.

The Gridiron show is an acid whizzer. Members take great delight in writing and staging skits that have burned more than one leading Washington figure to an indignant crisp. Presidents included. But the aim is adult entertainment, and most everybody goes home feeling that it was a pretty funny and interesting evening.

The President has a quite obvious reason for being unable to attend the radio and television dinner; he'll be in Bermuda on important state business. But why turn down the Gridiron Club?

Nothing has been said publicly, but the explanation given by the White House staff is the President's heavy schedule. He

does have a heavy schedule this season, with an unusually large number of foreign visitors, but there was no evidence of a strongly conflicting engagement last Saturday night.

The President also tries to avoid too many late evenings. He has been bothered for weeks by a nagging cough, a condition which certainly would not improve in a smoke filled banquet hall. Also, most of the banquets are stag affairs, and Mr. Eisenhower is not too keen about going to parties at night without his wife.

Close associates of the Pres-

ident vow there is nothing anti-reporter or anti-photographer in his current plans.

Other Presidents have felt that the list of banquets by all types of organizations was getting out of hand. Mr. Truman one year found himself committed to over 20 such affairs in Washington. Banquets began to bore F.D.R. and he used every excuse to duck them. But he was faithful in his attendance at the White House correspondents' dinner. He liked their variety show of professional entertainment which, in pre-television days, he rarely had other opportunities to watch.

TOO MUCH LIFE
Hollywood — (U.P.) — Vampire, the glamour ghost who will be driven from San Francisco airport in a hearse Thursday to attend the opening of two horror movies, doesn't die. Elvis Presley. My kind of man is someone like Boris Karloff, she said.

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Quotes From the News

By UNITED PRESS
Omaha, Neb.—Former President Truman on the Republican administration's Middle East policy:
"We cannot hide behind the skirts of the United Nations, or duck the responsibility of our own for the settlement of the conflicts in the Middle East."

Washington—French Premier Guy Mollet calling for free use of the Suez canal:
"We cannot accept the idea of coming back to the status quo."

Rockford, Ill.—Rear Adm. George J. Dufek, head of the U.S. Navy's Antarctic task force, on completion of this year's phase of "Operation Deepfreeze":
"We have accomplished all of our missions 100 per cent. It's the best news from the bottom of the world."

New York—Zsa Zsa Gabor, when asked her mother's age, after the latter's third marriage:
"I believe Mama's 54, but please make her 49."

Oklahoma City—Samuel David Hawkins, 23, turncoat former GI, on his journey home:
"I slept most all the way."

Accra, Gold Coast—Vice President Richard M. Nixon on spotting thousands of Africans pushing against a fence to see him:
"Well, well, look at this."

Washington—Rep. Albert Rains (D-Ala.) chairman of a House Banking subcommittee, on an FHA proposal to cut the down payments on houses:
"I do not think this will be sufficient to rejuvenate the home-building industry."

EAST EVANS CREEK-MEADOWS Club Meeting Planned

By MRS. NELLIE BERGMAN
East Evans Creek-Meadows—It has been announced that a meeting of the Friendly Neighbors club of the East Evans creek area will be held at the home of Mrs. Wilma Hunt on Wednesday, March 13.

The next 4-H club meeting will be at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Jess Terry.

Don Terry attended naval reserve meeting in Grants Pass last Tuesday, then went on to Portland and Jewell, Ore., then to Battleground, La Center, and Longview, Wash. He attended a reception for his cousin in Aberdeen, Wash., and returned Monday.

Mr. and Mrs. Paul Mattison spent several days in Dunsuir, Calif., attending to business and calling on old friends.

Mr. and Mrs. Chuck Terry spent the week end at the Jess Terry home.

Tuesday night Bible study is

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