

Precariousness of Middle East Peace Is Topic for Discussion

Recent Skirmishes Remind World of Unsettled Area

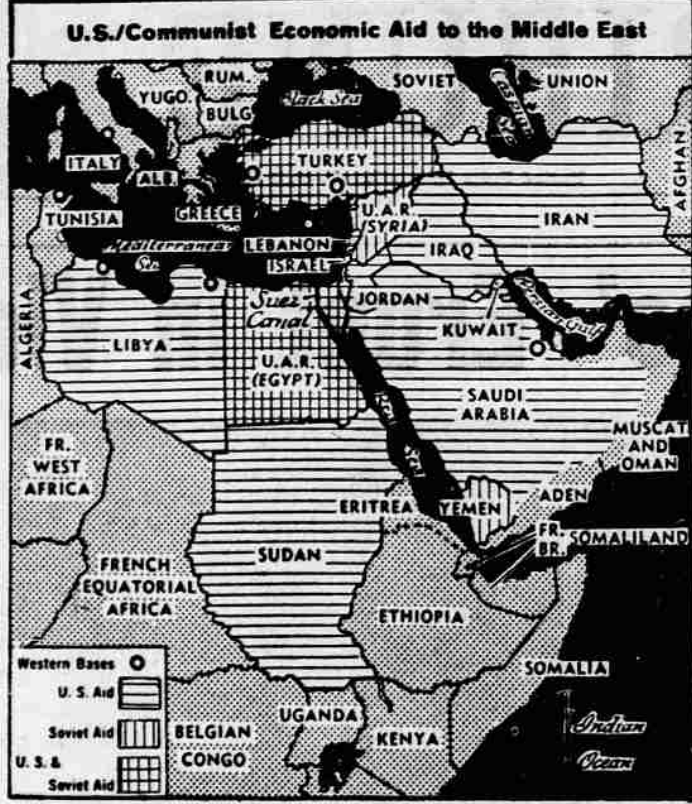
(Editor's note: This is another in a series of discussions in the Great Decisions 1958 program. Material is furnished by the Foreign Policy Association of New York City. Today's discussion is on the subject: "War or Peace in the Middle East?")

Recent Arab-Israeli military skirmishes — on Israel's border with the Syrian province of the United Arab Republic — remind the world of the precariousness of Middle Eastern peace.

War has, in fact, broken out twice in this region in the past 12 years. In mid-February of this year UN Secretary General Dag Hammarskjöld suggested that "deteriorating" conditions might justify Security Council intervention to prevent a third Middle Eastern conflict.

Military units of the UN Emergency Force have been stationed along Israel's border with Egypt — the other half of the United Arab Republic — since the Israeli invasion of the Sinai Peninsula in 1956. The UN presence is, however, largely symbolic.

If full-scale hostilities were to break out, either through aggression or through the ac-



cidental expansion of raids and skirmishes, existing UN forces would no doubt be helpless.

Peace Maintained
Arab-Israeli peace will be maintained, experts agree, only if the Arab and Israeli governments have the will to keep it — or, in the last resort, if the great powers intervene and enforce peace at the point of a gun.

The United States has made it clear, as recently as the summer of 1958, that it is willing to use its military power

to maintain a degree of balance and stability in the area. The yet-to-be-invoked "Eisenhower Doctrine" of early 1958, and the landing of U.S. troops in Lebanon in July of that year, were both designed to discourage international Communism or Communist inspired Arabism from subverting such relatively weak Arab states as Lebanon or Jordan.

Earlier U.S. policy statements, made jointly with Britain and France, suggest that the U.S. would similarly use its power to prevent an Arab conquest of Israel.

Intentions Less Clear
Soviet intentions are less clear. Generally, in recent years, the Soviet Union has sided with the Arab states in their disputes with Israel. Most authorities feel, on the other hand, that the Soviet Union would not, at this time, welcome another Arab-Israeli war.

Two reasons are advanced for this view. First, the Soviet Union probably gives a higher priority to its negotiations with the U.S. and its allies, particularly on such delicate questions as Berlin, Germany and disarmament.

War in the Middle East would only distract from a diplomacy of "peaceful co-existence." A Middle Eastern war which involved the great powers might disrupt the whole Communist timetable for East-West negotiations.

Second, an Arab-Israeli war might upset the Communist timetable for the Middle East. According to this view, the Soviet Union recognizes the instability of rival Arab regimes and would rather work with the existing power balance, however precarious, than risk a new power structure in which Communist influence might be reduced.

If these interpretations are sound — if both the Democratic and Communist powers prefer to see the Middle East at peace — then the question of peace or war rests primarily with the governments of Middle Eastern countries, Arab and Israeli.

Arab-Israeli Issues
The issues dividing Israel and its Arab neighbors are deep and emotion-laden. The brief 1948 war, in which Israel's armies won nationhood against enormous odds, has technically never ended. Only an armistice has been signed.

The Arab states have refused to accept UN resolutions which led to the establishment of an Israeli nation, and have rebuffed all subsequent attempts, by the UN and the great powers, to conclude a peace treaty recognizing Israel's sovereignty and territory.

It is Arab policy to boycott Israel diplomatically and economically. Ships bound to and from Israel are barred from the U.A.R.-controlled Suez Canal.

Regional development plans for joint use of the waters of the Jordan and other rivers have been frustrated by Arab

refusal to negotiate these questions with Israel, and by Israel's plans to go it alone in utilizing the Jordan waters. The problem of the Palestine Arab refugees (who fled what is now Israel during the 1948 hostilities) continues to fester as the two sides fail to find any mutually agreeable basis for negotiation.

Compensate Boycott
Israel has, in part, compensated for the Arab boycott. Since the 1956 Sinai war, Israel has had the use of the port and gulf of Aqaba, leading into the Red Sea, in addition to its original ports on the Mediterranean.

It has also developed trade and technical assistance relations with African and Asian nations, such as Ghana and Burma, and has growing access to foreign goods and capital needed for the development of the Israeli economy.

Peace, and time to build the nation as an integral part of the Middle Eastern economy, are apparently fundamental goals of Israeli policy.

Yet war is an ever-present threat. Persistent Egyptian border raids triggered Israel in 1956 into a major military campaign on the Sinai Peninsula. Skirmishes, such as recent clashes on the Syrian border, could again explode into major hostilities, some observers fear.

Equal Deep Interest
The Arab states, on the other hand, may have an equally deep interest in avoiding war, and for some of the same reasons. The fundamental needs of all the peoples of

the area can be met only with some acceleration of economic growth to provide food, jobs and better living standards for growing populations.

The United Arab Republic of Egypt and Syria is placing increased attention on internal economic development, and has begun to mend its diplomatic and economic relations with the Western democracies during the past year.

In doing so, the U.A.R. apparently hopes to reduce its heavy dependence on the Communist bloc for trade and aid, and to "normalize" its economic and political relations with the rest of the world.

Many observers thus feel that U.A.R. President Gamal Abdel Nasser also wants peace, and time to develop the linked economies of Egypt and Syria. According to this view, Nasser's economic growth goals take precedence over any ambitions he may have for expanding his Pan-Arab empire.

Similar Arguments
Similar arguments are advanced to show that other Arab leaders also need peace in order to meet the economic demands of their peoples — particularly in Lebanon, Jordan and Iraq.

Yet all this may be wishful thinking, says another school of thought. Economic development may be a widespread Middle Eastern goal, and peace may be a necessary condition for reaching this goal. But the bitter issues dividing Israel and the Arab states, and the sometimes equally bitter rivalries among such Arab leaders as Nasser and Kassim, are too explosive to be dismissed.

Even if no one is in a position of responsibility wants war, war can still come — by accident, miscalculation, mismanagement of an incident, or fear. And, experts warn, an Arab-Israeli war might well explode into something larger. One possibility is a sideline war among Arab states jockeying for spoils or territory. Another possibility is great power involvement, in an effort to protect Democratic or Communist "interests" in the region.

The whole world, according to this view, has vital stakes in preserving Middle Eastern peace, however precarious this peace may be. The alternatives are too dangerous.

Arab Rivalries
The chief Arab rivalry, according to most observers, is that between Nasser of Egypt and Kassim or Iraq. The 1958 Iraqi revolution, which brought Kassim to power, had several significant effects on the Middle East power balance.

First, Iraq withdrew from the Western-sponsored, anti-Communist military alliance, the Baghdad Pact (now Central Treaty Organization). Up to this point Iraq was the only Arab country with membership in the pact. Second, and as a possible corollary, Iraq turned to the Communist bloc for military and economic assistance, and allowed Iraqi Communists to operate above ground.

These developments represented a net gain for Communism and a net loss for democratic interests in the region. In addition, these developments represented a setback for Nasser's Pan-Arab goals.

Principal Symbol
Up to the point of the Iraqi revolution, Nasser was the principal symbol and spokesman for "Arab unity." He appeared to be making progress toward federation — or at least greatly increased cooperation — among some of the Arab states.

The unification of Egypt and Syria in the U.A.R. was one step in this direction. Yemen's "association" with the U.A.R. was another. A top level shift in the Saudi Arabian government brought that nation into closer harmony with Nasser's Pan-Arab policies.

During the summer of 1958, Nasser was intensifying propaganda pressures on Lebanon, Jordan and Iraq, and contributing to the instability of the governments in these countries.

Then came the Iraqi revolution. Kassim flatly rejected Nasser's invitation to join the U.A.R., turned to the Communist bloc for aid, and now steers an independent policy in Arab affairs. An important element of this policy is ridicule and hostility toward Nasser's Pan-Arabism.

Kassim, has, in fact, revived the old "fertile crescent" version of Pan-Arabism. This would be a federation of Arab peoples stretching from what is now the Syrian province of the U.A.R., along the valleys of the Tigris and Euphrates, to include Iraq.

Two Capitals
The goal of Pan-Arabism thus has two capitals, Cairo and Baghdad. The rest of the Arab world is now attempting to deal with the realities of this rivalry. Nor is the choice an easy one. To some Arab peoples the chief danger is the role that communism is or may be playing in the Kassim government.

(Recently Kassim has curtailed communist activity in Iraq.)

To others, such as Jordan's political leaders, the problem is how that country can preserve its identity midway between the Nasser-Kassim power centers.

In some respects Middle Eastern politics have grown more, not less, complex in the past two years; cold war rivalries create a whole new dimension; the explosiveness of some new issues is more, not less, dangerous. The unanswered question is whether or not this trend will eventually bring a greater restraint and maturity to the governments of the region.

Until this millennium arrives, many observers now

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agree, the great powers have an inescapable responsibility to buy time and enforce peace in the area — through cooperation, through direct pressures, or through the UN.

Furthermore, whatever the great powers do to reduce tensions, encourage Middle Eastern cooperation, and promote economic and social development in the area may be no more than a gamble on the uncertain future stability of the region. The justification for taking the gamble may be that, to fail to do so, is to court disaster for Middle Eastern peace, and perhaps for world peace.

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Benevolent Firms Believed Formed, Operated Illegally

The Portland Better Business Bureau feels 14 benevolent societies operating in Oregon were illegally organized and operated, according to Don McNeil, Medford Chamber of Commerce manager.

In July, 1959, as a result of complaints filed with various state offices, Attorney General Robert Y. Thornton commenced actions in the Marion county circuit court involving these benevolent societies, the bureau reported in its monthly bulletin to McNeil and other chamber managers.

Organizations listed were Benevolent Order of America, United America, Inc., Home State Benevolent association, Pioneer Pacific, Inc., Benevolent Order of Countrymen, The Countrymen Society, Inc., The Independent Countrymen, American Countrymen association, Inc., Oregon Benevolent Society, Inc., Western Benefit Society, Western Mutual Benefit association, Western States Service, Inc., Order of the Golden Cross, and The United Benevolent Society.

Receives Inquiries
The Medford Chamber of Commerce has received the most inquiries on the Benevolent Order of America, Benevolent Order of Countrymen, Oregon Benevolent Society, Inc., and Western Mutual Benefit association.

The Portland Better Business Bureau said the complaints alleged were that the organizations were not fraternal benefit societies, had no lodge or ritualistic system, violated the law which says no person shall be paid commissions, salary for obtaining members, fail to qualify under the insurance law, but claim to do so, corporate funds had been misused, multiple corporations had been formed to evade the \$300 insurance limit, irresponsible agents had been hired and great numbers of elderly people were being wrongfully deprived of limited means, and the insurance schemes offered were not sound and were outside of any governmental supervision needed for protection of the public.

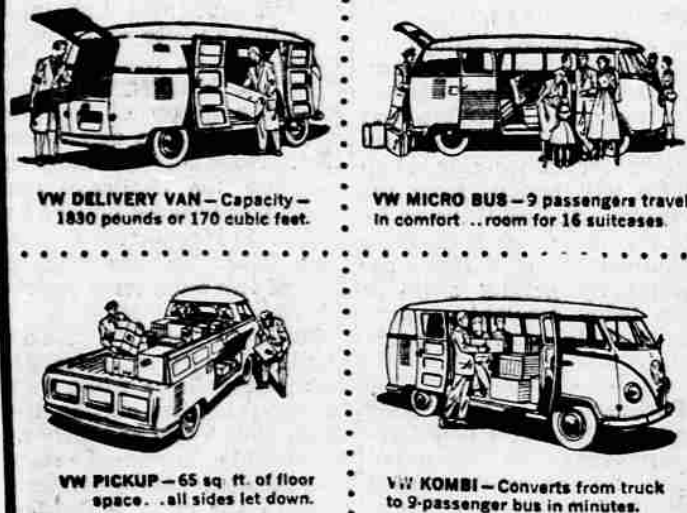
Richard Allen, Masonic building, Salem, has been appointed by the circuit court as a monitor to supervise the society activities, the attorney general reported.

Anyone having a dispute with these organizations should first try to settle his difficulty with the organization before taking it to the monitor, he said. Individuals may also take legal action on their own, but should try to settle the problem with the organization first, the attorney general suggested.

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