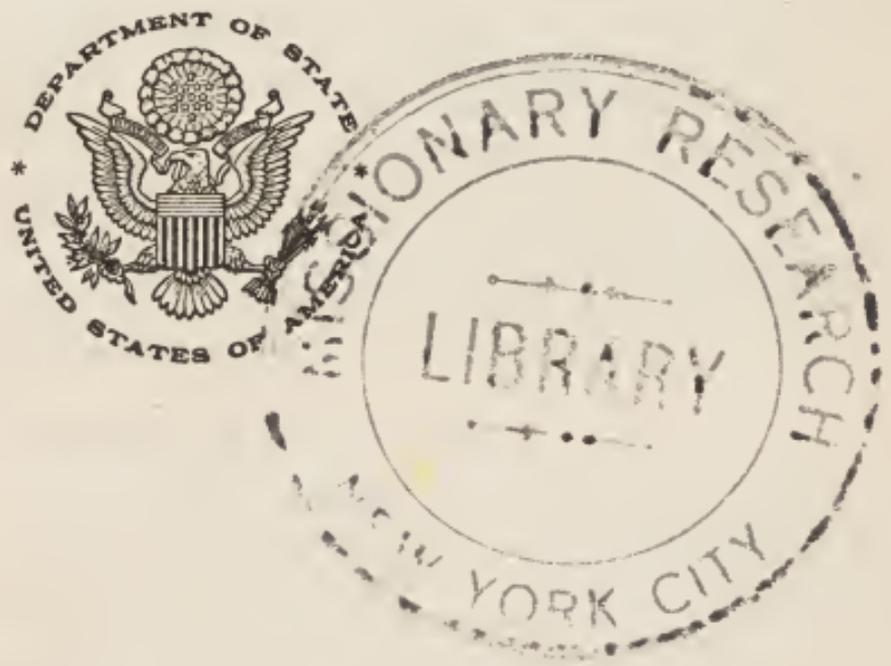


P3m
Near East

1845
JUL 21 1953

Dulles

Report on the Near East



ADDRESS BY
THE SECRETARY OF STATE
JUNE 1, 1953

*This address by John Foster Dulles
was broadcast to the Nation over
combined radio and television
networks on June 1, 1953.*

DEPARTMENT OF STATE PUBLICATION 5088

Near and Middle Eastern Series 12

Released June 1953

Division of Publications

Office of Public Affairs

Report on the Near East

About 3 weeks ago, the Director for Mutual Security, Mr. Harold Stassen, and I and our associates set out, at President Eisenhower's request, on a trip to 12 countries which lie in between the Mediterranean in Europe and China in Asia. I shall give you our country-by-country impressions and then our general conclusions.

First, let me say that everywhere we were well received. This was encouraging, for several of the countries feel that the United States policies have, in recent years, been harmful and even antagonistic to them. The Communists have vigorously exploited this feeling. They staged some hostile demonstrations. But these were inconsequential. The governments received us with warm hospitality, and as we drove through the streets, the people usually greeted us with friendly smiles and applause. The political leaders talked intimately with us, and we gained new friendships and new understanding which will stand us in good stead for the future. Also in each capital I spoke to all of the United States Foreign Service personnel. They are a fine body of men and women of whom we can be proud.

The Importance of the Area

It is high time that the United States Government paid more attention to the Near East and South Asia, which, until our trip, no United States Secretary of State has ever visited. Our postwar attention has been primarily given to Western Europe. That area was and is very important, but not all-important.

It came as a surprising shock when the 450 million Chinese people, whom we had counted as friends, fell under Communist domination. There could be equally dangerous developments in the Near East and South Asia. The situation calls for urgent concern.

The area we visited contains about one-fourth of the world's population. It represents about one-half of the people of the world who are still free of Communist domination.

The Near East possesses great strategic importance as the bridge between Europe, Asia, and Africa. The present masters of the Kremlin, following the lead of past military conquerors, covet this position. In 1940 Soviet leaders specified, in secret negotiations with the Nazis, that Soviet "territorial aspirations center . . . in the direction of the Indian Ocean and . . . the Persian Gulf."

This area contains important resources vital to our welfare—oil, manganese, chrome, mica, and other minerals. About 60 percent of the proven oil reserves of the world are in the Near East.

Most important of all, the Near East is the source of three great religions—the Jewish, the Christian, and the Moslem—which have for centuries exerted an immense influence throughout the world. Surely we cannot ignore the fate of the peoples who have first perceived and then passed on to us the great spiritual truths from which our own society derives its inner strength.

Egypt and the Suez Base

Our first stop was in Egypt. There we had 3 days in which to get acquainted with General Naguib, who heads the Government. He is a popular hero, and I could readily see why. He and his associates are determined to provide Egypt with a vigorous government which will truly serve the people. Also, they seek to end the stationing of British troops and exercise of British authority at the Suez base.

Before we arrived in Egypt, a very tense situation had developed between the British and the Egyptian Governments. Conversations looking to an orderly withdrawal of British troops had been suspended, and there was danger that hostilities would break out.

We discussed the situation with General Naguib. The heart of the trouble is not so much the presence of British troops, for both sides agreed that they should be withdrawn, but the subsequent authority over and management of this gigantic base, its airstrips, and its depots of supplies. Experienced administrative and technical personnel is needed to keep the base in operating efficiency and the provision of this personnel causes difficulty. The matter has an importance which goes beyond Egypt, for the base serves all Near Eastern and indeed Western security.

I am convinced that there is nothing irreconcilable between this international concern and Egyptian sovereignty. We asked, with some success, that there be further time to find a peaceful solution. The United States is prepared to assist in any desired way.

Egypt stands at the threshold of what can be a great new future. If this Suez problem can be satisfactorily solved, I am confident that Egypt can find the means to develop its land and lift up its people and add a new bright chapter to a glorious past.

Israel, Jerusalem, and Refugees

Next we went to Israel. We were impressed by the vision and supporting energy with which the people are building their new nation. Inspired by a great faith, they are now doing an impressive work of creation. They face hard internal problems, which I believe they can solve. Furthermore, the Prime Minister, Ben Gurion, and other Israeli officials asserted convincingly their desire to live at peace with their Arab neighbors.

Jerusalem is divided into armed camps split between Israel and the Arab nation of Jordan. The atmosphere is heavy with hate. As I gazed on the Mount of Olives, I felt anew that Jerusalem is, above all, the holy place of the Christian, Moslem, and Jewish faiths. This has been repeatedly emphasized by the United Nations. This does not necessarily exclude some political status in Jerusalem for Israel and Jordan. But the world religious community has claims in Jerusalem which take precedence over the political claims of any particular nation.

Closely huddled around Israel are most of the over 800,000 Arab refugees, who fled from Palestine as the Israeli took over. They mostly exist in makeshift camps, with few facilities either for health, work, or recreation. Within these camps the inmates rot away, spiritually and physically. Even the Grim Reaper offers no solution, for as the older die, infants are born to inherit their parents' bitter fate.

Some of these refugees could be settled in the area presently controlled by Israel. Most, however, could more readily be integrated into the lives of the neighboring Arab countries. This, however, awaits on irrigation projects, which will permit more soil to be cultivated.

Throughout the area the cry is for water for irrigation. United Nations contributions and other funds are available to help refugees, and Mr. Stassen and I came back with the impression that they can well be spent in large part on a coordinated use of the rivers which run through the Arab countries and Israel.

Jordan

Irrigation needs became most vivid as we motored from Jerusalem to Amman, the capital of Jordan. The road goes through the Dead Sea area, a scene of desolation with no sign of life other than the tens of thousands of refugees who survive precariously on the parched land largely by aid of United Nations doles. Later on, as we flew north, we observed the waters of the Yarmak River, which could perhaps be diverted so as to return some of this vast desert valley into fertile land.

At Amman we dined with the charming and able new King Husein and his Government. They are preoccupied with the problem of refugees and of relations with Israel. The inflow of refugees has almost doubled the population, and the long armistice line with Israel gives rise to frequent and dangerous shooting episodes.

Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, and Saudi Arabia

From Jordan we went to Syria. There we were impressed by General Shishakli. He is eager to develop the resources of his country, which are substantial. Thus, the living standards of the Syrian people could be raised. This would, in turn, enable them to receive more refugees into a land which relatively is sparsely populated.

From Damascus, the capital of Syria, we motored to Beirut, the capital of Lebanon. The road took us over a mountain range, with refreshing snow in sharp contrast to the heat of the desert plains.

You will recall that Beirut is the home of the American University, which has educated many of the Arab leaders of today. President Chamoun of Lebanon talked to us of his high hopes for his country and pointed to the role it might play, representing uniquely a meeting of East and West.

Leaving Lebanon for Iraq, we flew over the Tigris and Euphrates Valleys. This was the site of the Garden of Eden. Under its new ruler, King Faisal—who visited the United States last

summer—the Government of Iraq is beginning to develop these valleys and restore their former productivity. The revenues from the oil production are being largely directed to this and other construction purposes. Iraq can be, and desires to be, the granary for much of this part of the world.

In Saudi Arabia we were received by King Ibn Saud, one of the great Near Eastern figures of this century, conspicuous in his dignity and singleness of purpose. He is a good friend of the United States, as he has shown by deeds. Our policy will be to reciprocate this friendship. In Saudi Arabia Americans and Arabs are working together in good fellowship in the vast oil fields of the country. It is a good relationship.

India and Pakistan

We left the Arab area to go first to India and then to Pakistan. These two nations, although independent for less than 6 years, already play an influential part in world affairs.

In India I met again with Mr. Nehru, one of the great leaders of our time. We had long conversations together in the intimacy of his home. His calm demeanor and lofty idealism impressed me. We reviewed together the international problems which concern both our countries, including the problem of a Korean armistice and the threat to Southeast Asia. We did not always agree, but we did clear up some misunderstandings and, I felt, gained respect for the integrity of our respective purposes. India is now supporting the armistice position of the United Nations Command in Korea.

Mr. Stassen and I also obtained a clearer view of the Government of India's 5-year program to improve the welfare of the Indian people.

India is the world's largest self-governing nation. It has about 2,000 miles of common boundary with Communist China. There is occurring between these two countries a competition as to whether ways of freedom or police-state methods can achieve better social progress. This competition affects directly 800 million people in these 2 countries. In the long run, the outcome will affect all of humanity, including ourselves. Our interest fully justifies continuing, on a modest scale, some technical assistance and external resources to permit India to go on with its 5-year plan.

Pakistan is the largest of the Moslem nations and occupies a high position in the Moslem world. The strong spiritual faith and martial spirit of the people make them a dependable bulwark against communism.

The new Prime Minister, Mohammed Ali, whom we recently knew as Ambassador to Washington, energetically leads the new Government. We met with a feeling of warm friendship on the part of the people of Pakistan toward the United States.

A grave and immediate problem is the shortage of wheat. Without large imports, widespread famine conditions will ensue. Last year we helped India in a similar emergency. I believe that prompt United States wheat assistance to Pakistan is essential.

It is not possible to think about United States aid without also thinking that these countries cannot afford to waste their efforts in quarreling with each other and diverting their strength for possible use against each other.

That thought applies to the dispute between India and Pakistan about Kashmir. It is my impression from my conversations with the Prime Ministers of India and Pakistan that this controversy can be settled. Surely it needs to be settled. We tried, tactfully but firmly, to make clear that the United States, as a friend of both countries, hopes for an accord which would make more fruitful such economic aid as we render.

Iran

It was not practical to include Iran in our schedule. However, we arranged that our Ambassador to Iran should meet us in Pakistan. Iran is now preoccupied with its oil dispute with Great Britain. But still the people and the Government do not want this quarrel to expose them to Communist subversion. They have not forgotten the Soviet occupation of 1941-1946.

The United States will avoid any unwanted interference in the oil dispute. But we can usefully continue technical aid and assistance to this agricultural nation of Iran and in that way perhaps help prevent an economic collapse which would play into the hands of predatory forces.

Turkey, Greece, and Libya

After Pakistan, we went to Turkey and Greece. These two countries have clearly demonstrated

their intent to stand steadfast against Communist aggression and subversion. Despite their heavy commitments to NATO, both countries have contributed valiantly to the United Nations efforts in Korea.

We, in turn, plan to continue to help Greece and Turkey to grow stronger. They are valiant in spirit and hold a strategic position in Europe and Asia which enables them to help us. While in Greece I dined with the King and Queen and passed on to this charming couple President Eisenhower's invitation that they visit us this fall.

Our last stop before returning to the United States was Libya, the newest member of the family of nations. This country is located at a key spot on the North African coast on the Mediterranean. It has recently become an independent nation by action of the United Nations. Libya is cooperating with the United States and the United Kingdom in strengthening its own defenses and those of the Mediterranean area.

Let me turn now to conclusions.

1. *Colonialism.* Most of the peoples of the Near East and South Asia are deeply concerned about political independence for themselves and others. They are suspicious of the colonial powers. The United States too is suspect because, it is reasoned, our NATO alliance with France and Britain requires us to try to preserve or restore the old colonial interests of our allies.

I am convinced that United States policy has become unnecessarily ambiguous in this matter. The leaders of the countries I visited fully recognize that it would be a disaster if there were any break between the United States and Great Britain and France. They don't want this to happen. However, without breaking from the framework of Western unity, we can pursue our traditional dedication to political liberty. In reality, the Western powers can gain, rather than lose, from an orderly development of self government.

I emphasize, however, the word "orderly." Let none forget that the Kremlin uses extreme nationalism to bait the trap by which it seeks to capture the dependent peoples.

2. *Living Standards.* The peoples of the Near East and Asia demand better standards of living, and the day is past when their aspirations can be ignored. The task is one primarily for the governments and the peoples themselves. In some cases they can use their available resources, such

as oil revenues, to better advantage. There are, however, ways in which the United States can usefully help, not with masses of money but by contributing advanced technical knowledge about transport, communication, fertilization, and use of water for irrigation. Mr. Stassen and I feel that money wisely spent for this area under the mutual security program will give the American people a good return in terms of better understanding and cooperation.

3. *Arab Good Will.* The United States should seek to allay the deep resentment against it that has resulted from the creation of Israel. In the past we had good relations with the Arab peoples. American educational institutions had built up a feeling of good will, and also American businessmen had won a good reputation in this area. There was mutual confidence to mutual advantage.

Today the Arab peoples are afraid that the United States will back the new State of Israel in aggressive expansion. They are more fearful of Zionism than of communism, and they fear lest the United States become the backer of expansionist Zionism.

On the other hand, the Israeli fear that ultimately the Arabs may try to push them into the sea.

In an effort to calm these contradictory fears the United States joined with Britain and France in a Declaration of May 25, 1950, which stated that "the three Governments, should they find that any of these states (of the Near East) was preparing to violate frontiers or armistice lines, would, consistently with their obligations as members of the United Nations, immediately take action, both within and outside the United Nations, to prevent such violation." That Declaration when made did not reassure the Arabs. It must be made clear that the present U.S. administration stands fully behind that Declaration. We cannot afford to be distrusted by millions who could be sturdy friends of freedom. They must not further swell the ranks of Communist dictators.

The leaders in Israel themselves agreed with us that United States policies should be impartial so as to win not only the respect and regard of the Israeli but also of the Arab peoples. We shall seek such policies.

4. *Peace Between Israel and the Arab Nations.* There is need for peace in the Near East. Today there is an uneasy military armistice between

Israel and the Arab States, while economic warfare is being conducted by the Arab States, in retaliation for alleged Israeli encroachments. The area is enfeebled by fear and by wasteful measures which are inspired by fear and hate.

Israel should become part of the Near East community and cease to look upon itself, or be looked upon by others, as alien to this community. This is possible. To achieve it will require concessions on the part of both sides. But the gains to both will far outweigh the concessions required to win those gains.

The parties concerned have the primary responsibility of bringing peace to the area. But the United States will not hesitate by every appropriate means to use its influence to promote a step-by-step reduction of tension in the area and the conclusion of ultimate peace.

5. *Middle East Defense Organization.* A Middle East Defense Organization is a future rather than an immediate possibility. Many of the Arab League countries are so engrossed with their quarrels with Israel or with Great Britain or France that they pay little heed to the menace of Soviet communism. However, there is more concern where the Soviet Union is near. In general, the northern tier of nations shows awareness of the danger.

There is a vague desire to have a collective security system. But no such system can be imposed from without. It should be designed and grow from within out of a sense of common destiny and common danger.

While awaiting the formal creation of a security association, the United States can usefully help strengthen the interrelated defense of those countries which want strength, not as against each other or the West, but to resist the common threat to all free peoples.

6. *Friendly Understanding.* In conclusion, let me recall that the primary purpose of our trip was to show friendliness and to develop understanding. These peoples we visited are proud peoples who have a great tradition and, I believe, a great future. We in the United States are better off if we respect and honor them, and learn the thoughts and aspirations which move them. It profits nothing merely to be critical of others.

President Eisenhower's administration plans to make friendship—not faultfinding—the basis of its foreign policy. President Eisenhower brought

with him from Europe an unprecedented measure of understanding and personal friendships. Before he was inaugurated, he went to Korea. Twice since inauguration, Mr. Stassen and I have been to Europe. Now we have been to the Near East and South Asia. Later this month, the President's brother, Dr. Milton Eisenhower, and Assistant Secretary of State Cabot will go to South America.

Thus your Government is establishing the world-wide relationships and gathering the information which will enable us better to serve you, the American people.