

TOWARD A UNIFIED POLICY IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Remarks by  
Senator Hubert H. Humphrey  
for the  
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*Mr Laylin*  
*Mr Sherwood*  
*Mr Kaiser*

Speaking at the end of this conference, I am reminded of  
the little girl who went to the town library to learn a few facts  
about Penguins. The librarian handed her a big book dealing  
with everything from the diet to the mating habits of the  
Antarctic birds. After a few minutes, she returned the volume  
and said, "This book tells me more about Penguins than I care  
to know!"

↳ Addressing a group of experts on the Middle East in  
general, and Middle Eastern development in particular, I am  
in little danger of telling more than you care to know, but I may  
commit the even more grievous sin of telling you what you already  
know all too well. In order to avoid this pitfall, I am going  
to make only passing reference to economic development in the  
Middle East, and confine my remarks to the larger political and

strategic picture in this area so vital in the struggle between Communist tyranny and Western democracy. It goes without saying, of course, that the problems of the Middle East do not always lend themselves to reasonable analysis or calm discussion. Some of you may know the story which I heard for the first time last spring in Egypt:

{ "A scorpion, wishing to cross the Nile River and unable to swim, asked a passing frog for a ride.

{ "Certainly not," said the frog. "If I take you on my back you will sting me to death."

{ "No," said the scorpion, "for if I did you would drown and I should drown with you."

"True," agreed the frog. "Get on my back and here we go across."

But in the middle of the Nile the scorpion suddenly stung the frog.

"Why did you do that?" cried the unhappy frog.

"Now I shall sink and you will go down with me. You are not logical."

"True," gulped the sinking scorpion, "but this is the Middle East *you know*"

↳ We all know that up until ten years ago the United States had only a casual and peripheral interest in the Middle East and the Mediterranean world. ↳ This area was regarded as the special responsibility of the French and British. But the Soviet pressure in the Balkans in 1946 and 1947 changed all this. Great Britain informed us that she could no longer shore up Greece and Turkey. President Truman responded at once with his famous Truman Doctrine of economic and military aid to these two countries, to contain Soviet expansion.

↳ Almost, eleven years have passed since that historic decision. The Middle East today is menaced even more seriously, and more

subtly, by Soviet imperialism. In Egypt and Syria, Soviet economic and military aid has been followed by political penetration.

↳ And the end is not yet.

#### The Inadequacy of U.S. Policy

↳ In the Afro-Asian world last fall, the Sputniks boosted Soviet prestige, just as Little Rock was damaging our own. The deeper meaning of Soviet technological advances has not been lost on the less-developed areas of the Middle East. It is now clear that a so-called "backward" country can make great economic, industrial and scientific progress without having to pay the price of Western democracy's discussions and delays.

↳ Consider what this fact means to the political leaders of agrarian and feudal societies where the impoverished people have a much more lively interest in raising their living standards than in the as-yet theoretical aspects of democratic government.

↳ At the recent Asian-African Solidarity Conference in Cairo,

the U.S.S.R. scored another success. During this so-called "peoples" conference, the Soviet Union was hailed by many of the delegates as the standard bearer of national independence and the chief bulwark against "imperialism". The United States, on the other hand, was severely castigated for trying to buttress the "decadent imperialism" of France in North Africa and of Britain in Cyprus. The nearly 500 delegates, claiming to represent the peoples of more than forty Asian and African countries, rejected what is currently passing for American Middle East policy and rousingly endorsed instead the Soviet brand of "peaceful co-existence."

↳ We also took a beating on the economic aid question at the Cairo conference. The Soviet Union promised substantially increased economic aid in the form of trade agreements and long-term, low-interest loans. Soviet spokesmen insisted there would be no political strings attached. The United States aid program was criticized as a crudely disguised instrument of Western imperialism.

Of course, the Communists ran the show at Cairo, except for occasional efforts of delegates friendly to the West to soften the attack against us. We sat back biting our finger nails.

What we should have done was to beat the Communists at their own game, to call a conference of Asian and African nations ourselves to discuss the problems of economic development and international security. Why must we everlastingly permit the initiative to rest with Russia in these crucial areas in the Middle East, and South and Southeast Asia?

While displaying a lack of sensitive, let alone imaginative, diplomatic initiative, we have been over-anxious about the military security of the Middle East. In our preoccupation with the least likely contingency -- overt Soviet military aggression -- we have tended to throw up our hands over the problems of subversion, economic pressure, and other subtler forms of penetration. Most Middle Easterners feel that we have tried

to force their countries to stand up and be counted, to be allied in prematurely -- if not simply paper -- alliances with us.

Why is it that we cannot understand that the mood of nationalism in the Middle East today makes any political leader recoil from any relationship with a more powerful Western nation which smacks of subordination or even implies political inferiority?

As some of us warned publicly <sup>in</sup> ~~on~~ the Senate ~~floor in the~~ debate a year ago, the Eisenhower Doctrine has failed because it purported to deal with the least likely threat and failed to come to grips with the real political, psychological and economic problems of the area. Secretary Dulles' policies have sown the seeds of disruption and disunity, by implying that if a country is not for us in an explicit military sense, it must be against us politically and <sup>psychologically</sup> ~~morally~~.

Furthermore, in spite of our good beginning in the Truman Doctrine, our Government has never assumed the full responsibilities which the United States must assume if the countries of the Middle East are to remain free and independent. Our vaunted program of economic aid and technical assistance has been little more than a trickle. — *and then an uncertain and intermittent one.*

Actually, of course, our fragmented policy toward the Middle East reflects our fragmented understanding of the area.

We have not yet learned the centrally important fact which the Soviets have apparently learned, that the Middle East is not only a geographical area, but a strategic and economic unit.

The fate of the various countries in the Middle East is linked together -- the area as a whole is an interrelated region. We

in our desire to strengthen our alliances have been more interested in getting one or two or three Middle Eastern countries temporarily lined up with us than in developing a coordinated policy toward the Mediterranean world which would honor the legitimate interests there and serve the larger interests of international security.

*Syria  
Egypt -  
Jordan  
Palestine*

The Soviet policy is quite the opposite, at least on the surface. While we are saying, "Those who are not for us are against us," Soviet spokesmen are saying, "Those who are not against us are for us." A Soviet delegate at the recent Cairo conference set forth the Kremlin's new approach in these

telling words: LISTEN!

"We do not ask you to participate in any blocs, reshuffle your governments or change your domestic or foreign policy. We are ready to help you as brother helps brother, without any interest whatever, for we know from our own experience how difficult it is to get rid of need. Tell us what you need and we will help you and send, according to our economic capabilities, money needed in the form of loans or aid . . . to build for you institutions for industry, education and hospitals. . . . We do not ask you to join any blocs . . . our only condition is that there will be no strings attached."

Specious? Perhaps. Fraudulent? Very probably. Propaganda?

Of course. But how effective and how ironic!

Here in the mouth of a Kremlin puppet are the words, the ostensible motives, the humanitarian spirit which used to be our trademark. We know, of course, that this kind of trademark cannot long be the property of any one group or any one nation. These are the great words of compassion, of affirmation, which have long since become the property of humankind, even though we Americans introduced them first historically on the world's agenda.

The Soviet has been parrotting our principles and stealing our slogans. We have every right in the world to be suspicious of their motives in doing so. But this scarcely explains why we have become mute, inarticulate, and silent as though we have stopped believing in our own ideas.

*whatever happens to  
Tom Paine - Tom Jefferson,*

I have no hesitancy at all in saying what I am about to say: the speech which I have just quoted from the Soviet delegate in Cairo should have been made by an American. The

*and endorsed by our  
Government.*

fact that it was not, is one measure of our inadequacy to the task confronting us in the underdeveloped world.

Three Keys to Understanding the Middle East

*Private development vital*

Your conference has focused on economic development in the Middle East. This is a crucial issue and one which we have not begun to consider seriously enough on an official level. Yet I submit that it is impossible to separate ever this large subject from the context of the larger political and strategic elements in the Middle East picture.

My recent trip to that area as chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee Subcommittee on the Middle East has convinced me that most Americans, including some of our policy-makers, fail to see the larger picture. There are three keys to understanding this picture: (1) A genuine appreciation of the vital importance, strategically and politically, *of the m.d. east,* to the NATO area and the entire free world; (2) a recognition

that the Middle East must be seen as a unit and that we must have a unified policy toward the area; and (3) that our economic policy toward the Middle East must be judged in terms of its contribution to our over-all foreign policy objectives for the area.

Let us examine these points in somewhat greater details.

1. The Middle East is vital today because of a combination of factors -- its geography, its resources, and the far-reaching human changes that are taking place in this formerly quiescent area. It stands at the juncture of three continents, Europe, Asia and Africa. Under Soviet control, it could become the highway for the invasion of Western Europe from the south and the corridor of Communist entry into Africa.

Indeed, technological progress has now made it possible for the first time in man's history that <sup>a</sup>single power may organize and control the entire world island of Asia, Europe and Africa, if that power first dominates the Middle East. The success of

the Soviet campaign to win friends and influence people in the Middle East by aid programs, propoganda, and support for anti-western nationalism must be taken seriously. Yet the situation today is not encouraging. With one foot in Damascus and the other in Cairo, the Soviet Union is moving on in a variety of ways into Africa. Meanwhile the Baghdad Pact nations have been meeting to see what they can do about the problems which, in a sense, have already passed them by.

↳ This African situation is increasingly significant. The close alignment of Nasser's "positive neutralism" with Soviet designs has taken on new importance with the beginning of Nasser's drive for control and leadership of the African independence movement. ↳ Since the Asian-African peoples solidarity conference in Cairo the Voice of Africa has been exhorting Africans to drive the "white dogs of the oppressor countries of the West" from their lands.

It is interesting to note in this connection that a  
midget "Point Four" program of technical assistance in farming  
and housing is being prepared by the Israeli government directed  
toward the new, free nations of Africa. *our program.*

Of course, another factor in the mosaic of Middle East  
politics, is the undeniable importance of Middle Eastern oil  
to Western Europe and to NATO. Western Europe gets 70 percent  
of its oil from this area, amounting to one-fifth of its total  
energy requirements. Europe rests uneasily as long as there  
are unfriendly governments which can suddenly decide to cut  
off the oil coming through the Middle East pipelines or the  
Suez Canal. And what affects Western Europe affects the United  
States.

Hence, it remains a matter of greatest importance that  
the Suez Canal be respected as an international waterway and  
that Soviet Russia does not gain ~~back~~ a hold on the Middle East  
which enables it to disrupt Europe's economy by withholding oil.

① Pipeline ② Tankers — Nato Internal  
to help pay costs

These factors in the situation must be seen against an even more basic one, however -- the great social changes taking place in the Middle East today. The old colonial powers Britain and France have loosened or lost their hold on the area. New states have emerged and older countries are experiencing a new sense of freedom from foreign domination.

Iran challenged Britain over Abadan oil resources and succeeded. Nasser seized the Suez Canal, the last great symbol of waning British power in the Middle East. In spite of our historic anti-colonialism, we have permitted the Soviet Union to pose as the friend of freedom in the Middle East and allowed ourselves to be identified with Western "imperialism". Despite the blatant intervention of the U.S.S.R. in Hungary, the Kremlin continues to pose as the defender of national freedom. Such distortion is possible only because of the larger more personal memory of Western domination in the Middle East.

The risk of misunderstanding among millions of people  
 of the Middle East is great, but the risk of their being  
 sucked into Soviet vortex is also great. We cannot permit  
 this catastrophe to take place. Such a fate would not only  
 end their freedom, but it would imperil our own security.

Hence it is all the more important that we foster in word  
 and deed an image of the United States that is true to our  
highest ideals. The works of peace are the very heart and core  
 of our tradition and philosophy. Health care for the sick, food  
 for the hungry, jobs for the unemployed, homes and shelter for  
 the needy, opportunity for youth -- these are the concrete works  
 of peace we must execute and help toward fulfillment in the  
 have-not nations of the world.

A vigorous, peaceful, happy, productive world will arise  
from abundant health and hope. It can never flourish surrounded  
 by malnutrition, poverty, and despair. No amount of missiles  
 or moralizing will create peace as long as the bodies and minds  
 of men are sick.

Egypt  
 Wheat  
 Care  
 Medicine

Use  
 Unreserved  
 Voluntary  
 Agencies

U.N.

Food

↳ We have an opportunity to face up to the basic challenge of the coming years -- to do what comes naturally for us Americans, to recover generosity, humanitarianism, and compassion that in the past won for us the world's admiration and respect, and even turned our enemies into friends.

2. Let us examine for a minute the second point I mentioned.

Too often Americans look at the Middle East from a fragmented perspective that distorts the true significance of the problems there. Some people think of it almost exclusively in terms of the troublesome and deeply-moving dispute between Israel and her Arab neighbors.

↳ I do not mean to diminish the importance of that explosive controversy. Indeed, I think the United States must stop hemming and hawing, playing both sides of the street as though the right hand can be separated from the left, as though the various parties to the dispute can be kept indefinitely guessing as to what

American policy really is.

Some day we are going to have to announce in positive terms that in the Middle East as elsewhere we are interested in people. We are interested in independent nations. We intend to be friends both of Israel and the Arab States. We feel that we can be generous to both and we refuse to be forced into choices.

Meanwhile, it would be helpful if a few people started to say what indeed is the fact -- that many of the problems of the Middle East existed long before the State of Israel was established, and that they would continue to exist independent of the so-called "Palestine question". It is amazing how parochial some of us can get in looking at complicated problems.

Some people see the Middle East exclusively as it relates to the vicissitudes of the struggling, <sup>dynamic</sup> /young State of Israel.

Others look at it through the eyes of the Saudi Arabian court.

*Recruitment*

*Arab Refugees*

*Finland  
for 200,000  
refugees*

Others see the Middle East only as one more spot where Soviet Russian advances must be met with a stiff military upper lip, with little real understanding of the nature of the Soviet challenge or of the aspirations of the people among whom Soviet propaganda has been so effective. Still other people focus on the best administrative arrangements for an economic development program with little concern for political and psychological implication of such efforts. And there are those who look at the Middle East and can see nothing but the explosive and disruptive force of nationalism, personified by Gamal Nasser

None of these partial perspectives leads to full understanding.

*I repeat,*

We need a new policy, which recognizes the fundamental

unity of the Middle East, and which pays more attention to

politics and economics than to military strength. *Beneath the*

~~great number of disputes among the Middle Eastern states lies~~

~~a need and passion for unity.~~

The Baghdad Pact which was designed to build a "northern

tier" against Soviet expansion proved to be a source of disunity,

*Nationalism as here - lets hope it doesn't lead to communism*

*Nationalism may be a force against Communism*

*Emphasize  
its  
Pol + Econ  
Aspects*

I am not now suggesting that it be disbanded, although its usefulness even in the event of open hostilities remains as open to question as ever. The Baghdad Pact obviously has stirred up opposition from the southern neighbors, especially Egypt and Syria. By building up Iraq militarily, the U.S. seemed to be taking sides in the internal struggles of the area, lining up with Iraq and Saudi Arabia against Egypt. When we turned down Nasser's request for military aid, it was easy for him to accept Soviet offers in return for the cotton that was overflowing Egyptian warehouses.

Then the arms race was on. Egypt, Syria, and Yemen received Soviet weapons. The United States has sent arms to Turkey, Iraq, Iran, Jordan, Lebanon and Saudi Arabia. The Eisenhower Doctrine, the Syrian and Jordanian crises have further intensified the division in the Arab world.

Clearly our sensational ostentatious arms shipments to Jordan did not promote any easing of tensions.

*air Mail*

Italy

Except for Greece and Turkey, none of the Middle Eastern states has a military force that would be able to offer more than token resistance to an all-out Soviet invasion. The arms purchased by the Middle East States mainly serve the purpose of bolstering up the regimes currently in power. While this may not be a totally irrelevant purpose, it is by no means totally always a relevant one either. In any case, it has little to do with the strategic problem. It often commits us to the support of ~~disreputable~~ regimes that do not enjoy the loyalty either of the new middle class or of the mass of the populations.

When such regimes fall, it is not unlikely that American friendships with these countries may end.

Moreover, the present arms race not only takes money needed for economic development, but it fails to strengthen the military posture of the area as a whole. It is a source of tension rather than unity. Our military policy is sterile because

Need contacts with People & Pol leaders  
the Youth !!

Nasser's Popularity!

it is not accompanied by measures designed to cope with the underlying economic and political problems of the area. It may hold back the flood temporarily -- and more likely an internal rather than external flood -- but it will <sup>tend to</sup> make the <sub>1</sub> flood worse when it does come.

Frankly, most Middle East and Soviet area specialists whom I have consulted are convinced not only that there is little danger of an all-out Soviet nuclear attack, but that even a limited <sup>open</sup> Soviet attack utilizing conventional weapons is remote.

Yet our security policy in the Middle East continues to depend primarily on the nuclear deterrent strength of the Sixth Fleet stationed in the Mediterranean. The Soviets have so effectively penetrated the Middle East by their programs of aid, trade, and subversion that it would be the height of folly for them to consider resorting to military action to further their objectives in the area. At least for the near future, easier, subtler devices lie at hand.

The real military danger is local, limited wars between the Middle Eastern states themselves, and I don't mean simply a renewal of the Israeli-Arab fighting. This is the danger to which our military policy should be directed. Our interest lies in the peaceful development of the Middle East and not the military victory of any one state over its neighbors.

United States policy should therefore provide a scrupulously fair guarantee against the use of force to change Middle Eastern borders, based on the availability of adequate forces in the area and the clear determination to use them *is necessary*.

The more of them that can operate under U.N. auspices, the better. At the moment neither the U.N. nor we ourselves have the necessary power or the will to pursue such a policy.

What is needed is highly mobile conventional military strength, *again under U.N.* carefully deployed within striking distance of strategic points in the Middle East, but probably not in the territory of any

*Wallo*  
Middle Eastern state. Congress has asked for the implementation of resolutions on the U.N. Middle East Emergency Force. We are still waiting for such implementation.

Of course, as far as our own military capability is concerned, the budget which the President has just presented to Congress curtails even further our capacity to meet limited local aggression. Conventional aircraft are to be cut and there is no indication that any provision is to be made for air transports needed to carry units to the scenes of local hostilities. The budget reflects Mr. Dulles' doctrine of "massive retaliation," and fails to provide a balanced arsenal capable of dealing with "brush fires" without forcing them into nuclear dimensions.

Limited wars are better than a total war, but I think we should try to prevent even local military action. One step *in the right* direction would be an embargo on all arms to the Middle East, excluding Turkey. I have urged repeatedly that we take the lead in trying to negotiate such an agreement at the

United Nations. The Soviets have made noises indicating they are willing to accept an arms embargo in the Middle East, though they have hedged it with other requirements that may render it of little value. But we cannot tell where they really stand until we actually try to reach an agreement. Test them!

Would the Russians keep their word? I do not know, but I feel there is an excellent chance they would if they believed it was in their interest to do so. Such an agreement would be in a sense self-enforcing because any major violation of its terms would be clear to everyone. If we could combine an arms

embargo with continued support for the United Nations Emergency Force in the Middle East, I believe we will be able to reduce the level of tension there and give more of our attention to the long-range problems of economic development which meet directly the needs and interests of the peoples of the Middle East.

We must also approach the economic development of the Middle East on a regional basis because most of its economic problems are regional in character. My own tentative views are a matter of public record, subject to reconsideration as I study the reports of your panels.

You may know, however, that I have suggested that the best device to use would be a Middle East Development Agency, organized under the United Nations, with the support and participation of the Middle East countries themselves as well as other interested states.

I have advocated that we make a contribution to this Agency equal to our entire present military and economic assistance program in the Middle East and that we ask the Soviet Union to do the same. This could bring an end to the competition between the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. in the field of loans and grants. This area needs capital and plenty of it -- long-term loans from 25 to 40 years at interest rates of less than 3 percent.

The major features of such a Middle East Development Agency have been endorsed by such countries as Canada, Italy, Australia and Japan. However, the Administration in Washington still pursues the ineffective and go-it-alone Eisenhower Doctrine -- a doctrine which aids some, irritates others, and is of little or no assistance to the friendly State of Israel.

My report to the Foreign Relations Committee on my study trip to the Middle East last year outlines the development agency plan, and I will not go into the details of the proposal here. I would merely like to underline two points on this matter.

The first is that economic aid must be given on the basis of the needs and abilities of the area and not simply on the basis of which nations have aligned themselves politically with us. We must respect the neutrality of new-born or re-born nations. These new nations are proud and jealous of their independence. Their neutralism does not have to be pro-Communist.

The neutrals are fundamentally pro-themselves. I suggest that as long as neutrals remain free, as long as they work for themselves and build their own economies, they are barriers to Communist penetration, strengthening the forces of freedom in the world.

My second point is a corollary to the first -- we must team up with the Middle Eastern countries in making economic development a genuine partnership. We are uniting with them to achieve a common goal, not just for our own benefit. The economic development and well being of the area will help to insure the independence of the Middle Eastern nations against outside pressure. It itself would be an important contribution to regional stability and peace. Industrialization does not automatically lead to democracy, but history has demonstrated that democracy cannot take root and grow under conditions of stark poverty and congenital insecurity.

Private Investment!  
o Consultation with Private enterprise

In short, we need a vigorous, united approach to the Middle East in which economic aid is but one facet of a comprehensive foreign policy based upon the realities of world politics and the ideals that have motivated us as a nation.

↳ This is the challenge facing the United States today in the Middle East. Without any attempt at partisanship, I say quite frankly that the Administration has failed to meet the challenge. This is a failure of leadership, particularly leadership at the most crucial point, the Presidency. The President has given no indication of freeing himself from, or even being very alert to, the disastrous, irrelevant, and unrealistic policies pursued during the past five years in the Middle East. It is not that the country has repudiated the President's leadership in foreign policy. It is more devastating than that: there has been no leadership to repudiate!

When Presidential leadership is weak and faltering, Congress must help take up the slack. We in the Senate must urge the President, pressing him to formulate a national policy that is adequate to the danger and opportunities in the present Middle Eastern crisis. Congress stands between the people and the Executive Branch. It helps to interpret the will of the people to the President and it helps explain national policy to the people. Today, it must use this unique position in a truly responsible fashion. It must help the American people to articulate their feelings of frustrations with our Middle Eastern policy and prepare them to accept the requirements for a new ~~and~~ Middle Eastern policy.

Time is running out. Feeble steps, even if they are in the right direction, may be useless if the escalator of history is moving more rapidly in the other direction. But catastrophe is not inevitable. Nothing in history is inevitable

until after it has happened. With candor and reason, we  
can free ourselves from the grip of past mistakes.

With intelligence and foresight, we can formulate new  
and bolder policies.

With determined leadership, we can persevere to save  
not only ourselves, but the cause of freedom.

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