

001786

EXCERPTS FROM REMARKS  
THE HONORABLE HUBERT H. HUMPHREY  
UNITED JEWISH APPEAL  
DES MOINES, IOWA  
APRIL 8, 1970

Americans and the Soviet Union must define their area of self-interest in the Middle East.

As a matter of primary importance, the United States should undertake efforts to bring about face-to-face negotiations between the parties in the Arab-Israeli conflict including efforts under the auspices of the United Nations.

I further recommend that the United States ask the Soviet Union, Great Britain and France to join in an international appeal for a complete cease-fire, thereby reaffirming their commitment to support the United Nations Cease-fire Resolution.

We must reduce the risk of confrontation between ourselves and the Russians. It is an explosive danger spot. . . a major threat to peace.

The realities of that troubled region are that --

-- Both the Soviets and ourselves have major interests in this historic and vital area.

-- The continued presence of the Soviet Fleet in the Mediterranean could lead to a confrontation with our naval power.

-- The hostility of the Arab states towards Israel, and the continuing arms race, constantly poses the danger of renewed full scale war.

-- The Soviet Union has contributed to this danger by its rapid and sustained delivery of sophisticated arms to the Arab states. Similarly, the recent French sale of advanced aircraft to Libya has compounded that danger.

-- There is the awesome possibility that one or more of the countries in the region will acquire their own nuclear weapons.

If current events continue to drift and tensions increase, the Middle East can become the most likely area of the world to spark nuclear confrontation.

The Soviet Union has been playing a risky game in the Middle East -- risky for them -- risky for us -- and risky for all mankind.

We can only dissuade the Soviets from their dangerous course if we choose the path of patient work for peace.

We can meet the challenge of economic development. . . to help the Middle Eastern nations develop jointly their great wealth of resources. . . for the use of all mankind.

We can work to make the Mediterranean -- not a sea of conflict -- but a sea of friendship.

We can act -- pursuing our mutual commitment to non-proliferation of nuclear weapons -- to keep such weapons out of the region.

We can try to prevent the recurrence of local wars through the United Nations and other means; and we can seek to resolve the causes of these wars.

These avenues are our best -- and only -- choice.

The search for peace depends on our convincing the Soviets to turn their efforts in the Middle East to peaceful development. . . economic development. Our interests in the stability of the region are parallel. Its volatility. . . and the danger that we could be brought into nuclear confrontation by a Middle East war. . . demand that we work together to preserve the peace.

I would urge a conference of the principal weapon suppliers to the region -- the Soviet Union, France, the United Kingdom and ourselves -- not to propound an ultimate solution for the parties to conflict -- but rather to establish a Regional Development Authority.

All countries interested in the Mediterranean and Middle East should be invited to participate. Resources now going into weaponry should be diverted to a capital fund for development.

As Pope Paul has said, "Development is the new name for peace."

Neither the security of Israel nor that of any Arab state would be jeopardized by this approach.

The United States should make every effort to reduce the flow of arms into the area and press for Middle East Arms limitation arrangements.

However, pending such an arrangement, the United States must remain prepared to correct or prevent an arms imbalance which might either threaten Israel's existence or contribute to a resumption of major hostilities.

Although Israel must not be made insecure by any failure on our part -- there is a painful lesson to be learned -- arms beget arms.

We cannot hope for peace. . . permanent peace. . . unless there are comprehensive agreements among the major suppliers of arms to the area -- and by the recipient countries themselves.

This arms race must not go unchecked -- for the sake of the people of the region. . . for the sake of all of us.

We cannot expect sudden success. . . an overnight end to conflict, but we can hope that quiet counsel. . . patient effort. . . will lead these countries along the path of peace.

###



# Minnesota Historical Society

Copyright in this digital version belongs to the Minnesota Historical Society and its content may not be copied without the copyright holder's express written permission. Users may print, download, link to, or email content, however, for individual use.

To request permission for commercial or educational use, please contact the Minnesota Historical Society.



[www.mnhs.org](http://www.mnhs.org)