

# MIDDLE EAST UNREST

**E**GYPT'S so-called family quarrel is only one of several recent upsets among the Arab States—and they all dovetail most importantly into the present general pattern of world affairs. Syria's trouble last week could, I think, be regarded almost purely as a family affair. . . . It is in the other Arab States that the issues are not so simple. For here we see again the intrusion of the now familiar world struggle of east and west—Russia in the east, and Britain, United States and France in the west. Both east and west are well aware of the vitally important position which the Arab nations are occupying in this global manoeuvring; both know also that the Arab world is divided against itself at the present time regarding the nature and direction of future policy. Let us see what happened recently.

Turkey in the Middle East, and Pakistan in Asia, made a pact of friendship to advance their mutual interests of peace and security. Then Pakistan asked America for military aid—and this was promised. Now some people might ask: what has that to do with the Arab world, or the cold war between the east and the west? It might have borne only a remote relationship but for this fact: that Iraq, one of the most important of the Arab nations, has made it clear that, if she were asked, she too would seriously consider joining the Turkey-Pakistan pact. Furthermore, she would receive with sympathy and regard any messenger who came from the west bearing gifts of military aid.



SIR ALAN HERBERT, author and politician, is happiest when tilting at one or another of England's "established institutions." When, therefore, he tilts simultaneously at Chelsea's "artistic" set and the English "county" set, the onlooker is in for some fun. In "Tantivy Towers," a light opera by Herbert and Thomas Dunhill, to be broadcast soon, listeners will find plenty of wit and satirical humour, and, withal, a serious side not entirely obscured by the Chelsea man who shoots the fox to cheat the hounds. The opera will be broadcast first by 2YA, at 8.0 p.m. on Friday, March 26, and later from other YAs and YZs.

N.Z. LISTENER, MARCH 19, 1954.

Extracts from a recent commentary on the international news, broadcast from the Main National Stations of the NZBS

Iraq's move was a bad one for the Arab States, because it threatened to split wide open the whole structure of the Arab League—that is, the seven-nation Middle East group which has existed for some years and which holds the dream of solidarity for the Arabs against the non-Arab world. But Iraq's Prime Minister, Dr. Jamali, was quite frank about it. "The Arabs will have to arm themselves," he said. "Otherwise the Arab League's collective security pact will have no value. There are two sources of weapons in the world," he added, "either from Russia or from the West. Turkey and Pakistan have candidly chosen the West. We at present are buying arms and weapons from the West, and will continue to do so always."

Now that statement from Dr. Jamali about buying arms from the West refers to military aid which Iraq has been getting from Britain in exchange for air-field facilities. But, if Iraq requires further military assistance from the West, it is more than likely that the approach will be . . . to the United States. In such circumstances we can clearly see how these developments become of world-wide importance. Iraq, one of the greatest oil producers in the Middle East, is not only a vital link in the chain of Arab States, but it lies directly across the road which separates Russia in the north from the other Middle East oil-fields in the south.

Iraq herself is sharply aware of this position, and is naturally taking a realistic view of her own future. On the other hand, Egypt's annoyance at this development is quite understandable. She has her quarrel with Britain, and pride alone—apart from any more practical considerations—would make her discourage any military flirtations between Iraq and the West. Certainly if Iraq were to join the Turkey-Pakistan pact, it would greatly increase the significance of this agreement from a world standpoint, and it would almost assuredly influence some of her Middle East neighbours to do the same.

Is it any wonder, then, that Egypt can foresee the possibility of a new Middle East alignment with the West, which could cause a gradual but complete breakdown of Arab unity, with Egypt herself left out in the cold? Another factor which must tend to hasten some action for solidarity among the Arabs is the rapid progress made by the Jewish State of Israel—which is now unquestionably one of the most advanced and most efficiently conducted States in the whole of the Middle East. We cannot afford to disregard this important point—that the trend among the Middle East countries towards a defensive arrangement with the West does not necessarily mean closer relations between the Middle East and Great Britain. On the contrary, the Arab countries are tending to look rather to the other side of the Atlantic for aid—towards the nation which has the money and the material—the United States.

—L. J. CRONIN,  
March 6, 1954

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