

*The Address—Mr. Harkness*

It is of no use for people to say, as many have said, that Britain should have taken this whole matter to the United Nations. She took it to the United Nations innumerable times. I saw in a newspaper yesterday, whether or not it is true I do not know, that this Middle Eastern question had been raised 200 times in the last five or six months. In any event, whether or not that is true, it has certainly been raised time after time and nothing was done about it. The situation was deteriorating all the time. Now it is not good enough for the majority of the nations, and particularly it is not good enough for a country which by its strength and size must be the leader of the free western world, the United States, to say that the strict letter of the United Nations charter has been broken and therefore we must condemn this action; we must take punitive measures, because that is what they amount to.

When you are fighting a battle of any kind—and there is no doubt there is a battle going on between the western powers and Russia and her allies—the main thing is to win the battle. You may lose a hill here or a trench there, but you should not focus your attention on one small phase of the matter but should keep the over-all picture in mind and try to arrange things so your basic strength is conserved. So far as I can see this has not been done.

I have some hope that the action which was taken by the British and French in the Middle East will be the means of revivifying and putting some teeth into the United Nations. The provision of a police force is, I think, all to the good. I hope the police force will be successful. God knows, up to the present time the United Nations has had no effective means of enforcing any decision it may have made, except for that period during the Korean war. If a general war in the Middle East is to be prevented, so far as I can see there has to be a police force which is effective, and certainly that is not the kind of police force which is envisaged at the present time.

The headline in tonight's newspaper reads, "Syrian Crisis Mounts". This whole area is in an extremely explosive state, and unless decisive action is taken, or there are threats of action, particularly by the United States, the whole situation is going to blow up. When that happens, of course, anything might happen. A third world war might be upon us before we know it. Therefore I think this is not the time to be splitting hairs over

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whether a certain regulation or the general covenant of the United Nations was broken or was not broken. The thing to do is to try and take some action to prevent a third world war developing, and I think such a war is threatening. In other words, what the United Nations must do, I think what the NATO countries as a whole must do—and I would hope that the NATO countries and the countries of the Baghdad pact would all act together in this thing—is to take some steps for a permanent settlement in the Middle East.

So far nothing has been done about a permanent settlement in the Middle East. The festering sore which has existed there for the last seven or eight years has not been touched. As far as the United Nations is concerned there have been no proposals there to try to make a permanent settlement, to get any permanent agreement between the Arab nations on the one side and Israel on the other as to what the borders will be, to get any recognition of those borders or any definite solution to the numerous problems which exist there. The police force will not do it, no matter how strong the police force may be; but the police force, if it is strong enough, might prevent any further war developing, if it is got in there rapidly.

But the only way in which you will get a sufficient police force in there now is to have it supplied by the larger nations which have forces in being and are willing to put them in. I do not think you can get anything like sufficient numbers of troops in there, sufficiently well organized, on short notice by the method which is being followed of getting 50 troops from Colombia, 150 from Norway, and so on. I am not condemning that. It is all very well, but it is not sufficient for the purpose of a police force only as between the Israeli and Egyptian powers alone, let alone to look after the whole situation in the Middle East.

This extremely ominous Russian build-up of arms in Syria and in other parts of the Middle East is such as to make it quite clear that Russia and her satellites—and remember, they are members of the United Nations and therefore you cannot expect the United Nations by anything like any sort of unanimous or semi-unanimous vote to take any real measure to stop this sort of thing—are building up arms to such serious proportions that it is apparent to almost everyone that Russia is going to cause a general blow-up there if she can possibly do so. The whole situation there is extremely unstable, as was stated in this article. The action which has been taken so far by the United Nations has really served to save Nasser from military defeat