

This danger was in all our minds during those fateful days last autumn. It may have lessened since then but it still exists. Whether it was increased or decreased by the intervention of the United Nations in its effort to bring about an end to the military action of Israel, and later that of the United Kingdom and France, against Egypt is something over which men can and will differ for a long time. I happen to think myself, and I say this in no dogmatic manner, that action by the United Nations at that time may have prevented a bitter, unrelenting and destructive division, or worse, between the Arab, and most of the Asian world on the one hand, and the West on the other; and that in these turbulent waters the communists would have found and exploited an ideal fishing ground with unhappy and perhaps tragic results. The strains and stresses of this conflict on the Commonwealth association because of the pro-Arab feelings of its Asian members would also have been great, perhaps insupportable.

While the fighting in Egypt may have ceased, I have no illusions about the continuing threat to general peace coming from Israeli-Arab hatred and hostility and the instability and insecurity of the whole Middle East area. Nevertheless, I repeat that in my view the situation would have become worse by now if the United Nations had not intervened.

That intervention, however, is far from having been completed. The United Nations has stopped the fighting. It has brought about the withdrawal of foreign forces from Egypt, though not, in the case of Israel, through the kind of clear and specific arrangements which we favoured but were not able to secure. But the United Nations or its Members have not yet done much about the situation which brought about military intervention in the first place. Until they do, there is no reason to be satisfied or to come to any final and approving conclusions about our work in New York.

The question, then, whether the United Nations should or should not have intervened last October is one that historians will argue about for years. The question whether Canada should or should not have joined the United Kingdom and France in opposing such intervention is one which does not have to await reference to the historians for an argument. It has already been widely debated and perhaps we will be hearing a good deal about it in the noisy weeks ahead.

So far as the United Nations is concerned, once military action had been taken by Israel - and later by the United Kingdom and France - no matter whether we supported or regretted that action, its intervention was inevitable. Surely with Arab and Asian members feeling as they did, and with Russia gleefully seizing an opportunity to cause trouble - and take our minds off her own brutal aggression in Hungary - it was obvious that the United Nations would be brought into the situation; first via the Security Council and, when the veto made action by that body impossible, via the General Assembly under the "Uniting for Peace" Resolution. Indeed, if the United Nations had not intervened it