

### Arab alienation

The Arab states refused in effect to deal further with Britain and France; their clients in Iraq and Jordan were finished. Thus, the venerable debates in London and Paris about managing an imperial heritage and dreams of appearing to be, as in 1956, anti-Nasser but pro-Egypt and pro-Arab, were ended. France, the driving force of Anglo-French error in the Suez crisis, reacted particularly negatively, indicting the UN, leaving NATO, deriding Britain as a tool of the United States, espousing Gaullism and vacating North Africa. The Middle East, as part of the less developed world, was confirmed as an area of Soviet-American competition. The trend had emerged in 1955, although Soviet-US cooperation was still an open issue at that time. It was strengthened by Suez, as Western folly provided the Soviet Union with fresh openings in the Arab world. In one sense, the Soviet Union made a serious error to break with Israel, but as least her policies could be made to seem straightforward. The contest was to win influence in the Arab states, with Egypt as the key and arms and economic aid as the tools. The Soviet Union took a seemingly commanding lead in the 1960s. The United States, in contrast, wrestled with several dilemmas: to force Israeli compliance with UN resolutions on the cease-fire in November 1956 and the withdrawal from Egyptian territory in 1957, and yet to make limited commitments to her, for example, on the Tiran Straits; to discover the parameters of a "balanced policy"; to decide when to guarantee Israel's security; to elevate a moderate Arab state in place of Egypt, with Saudi Arabia being Eisenhower's choice; to develop a sincere interest in the Palestine question; to construct credible policy initiatives; and to replace the Baghdad Pact while carrying her Western allies with her; and to accomplish those ends while pursuing more sharply defined US interests in the Middle East, under the now clear assumption that a Middle East crisis could escalate into a global war. It is not surprising that these predicaments have produced more Presidential doctrines than settlements, a sense that the United States is ill-equipped to lead, and a sustained debate over whether external intervention can ever be conducive to peace in the Middle East. Perhaps solutions must emerge from within the region itself.

### Creative salvage

The Suez crisis had little effect on the Commonwealth; fears of its collapse were, in retrospect, quite exaggerated. Pearson felt, however, that the UN could build on its undoubted successes in the Suez crisis, take the lead alongside the United States in settling Middle East problems, and secure a central role in the management of the international system, in a nuclear, anti-colonial age when the use of force was the fundamental problem. Eisenhower tended to agree — and pro-UN policies were certainly good politics. Britain, France and Israel dissented. The debate focused on several questions: would the powers strengthen the organization and use its procedures while not overburdening it by asking the UN to achieve the improbable; its rules of the game and powers of adaptation were not substitutes for normal diplomacy but could they at least be a complement and perhaps in certain cases decisive? Hammarskjöld's performance during the Suez crisis had been flawed but remarkable, and thus could the Secretary General be used in the future in ways that did not overburden him and undermine the prestige of his office? The Security Council was an imperfect instrument and had lost influence to the General Assembly, but what balance of power should be struck between them? Could the General Assembly serve the interests of the West as fully as it did those of the Afro-Asian states and the Soviet bloc, or was it merely "an institution for the organization of collective chaos" which one day would find its *raison d'être* in voting against Israel and the United States? Could the United States and the USSR combine to make the UN effective and would Britain and France cooperate or work actually to undermine the UN's influence? R.A. MacKay, from New York, at least saw Canada's challenge clearly:

Whether we like it or not our role in the Middle East crisis has come to be regarded as a stabilizing element and people here have come to regard Canada as a leading force in the important and difficult task facing the UN and the world in the Middle East.

With my genuflection to John Holmes, middle powers harbor such views before they become middle aged. □