

in the area have come to an end. The region is more vulnerable than most to Soviet action for the reasons I have outlined above, and unlike South-East Asia, it is geographically exposed to direct Soviet pressure and threats.

9. None of this would be of such urgent importance if it were not for the fact that the Middle East occupies a strategic situation, and for the purpose of this study I include French North Africa. If this area were to turn against the West, even if it did not go Communist, it would be a fatal economic, political and military blow to the Western alliance. The oil supplies and revenues alone are of vital importance to the United Kingdom and Western Europe. Communist influence well established in Egypt or other parts of the Middle East would be able to infiltrate with ease west into North Africa, south into the Sudan and equatorial Africa, and east into the Indian subcontinent. The strategic value of this part of the world, I need not labour. It depends not only on its importance for communications, but also as a springboard against the vulnerable southern part of Russia, and in particular the areas of largest concentration of non-Russians — the Caucasus and Central Asia.

10. All of these factors I have mentioned above (and there are many more) are clearly interlocking, and the result is one of the most complicated, yet urgent problems in international relations.

#### *The Canadian Interest*

11. Our general interest is simply that the world today makes it impossible to disassociate ourselves effectively from the problems of any area. If war should break out in the Middle East between Israel and Egypt, say, we are just as likely to be involved as we were in Korea and Indo-China. It is also in our interest to try to contain Soviet expansion wherever possible, and to create conditions which will make communism impossible.

12. We also have a certain moral involvement because Canada played a leading role in solving the Palestine problem and helping the United Nations to set up the State of Israel. We cannot now wash our hands of the problem. Nor, for internal political reasons, could we permit the destruction of Israel, even if we did not believe objectively in our moral obligation towards Israel. This moral obligation does not mean blind support of Israel against the Arabs. It simply means that we ought to help, either inside or outside the United Nations, to reach a solution of a problem which we, together with the other United Nations members, recognized as an international responsibility in 1947.

#### *The Arab-Israeli Dispute*

13. While I said earlier that the Israeli-Arab dispute was simply a manifestation in an aggravated form of the wider problem of the Middle East, nevertheless it must be removed or modified before we can seriously tackle the more general question. Up to now the Big Three have proved incapable of solving the problem. They have been unwilling to use sufficient pressure on either side to achieve a permanent settlement. This policy of trying simply to prevent a general conflagration without forcing a solution cannot continue indefinitely since it is more likely than not to provoke a debacle. It has furthermore failed signally to win the sympathy of the Arabs for the West.

14. Now that the Russians have demonstrated their support for the Arabs, the temptation becomes even greater not to do anything which would further alienate the Arab states. It is very easy to reason that the Israelis have no alternative but to seek the support of the West, and that we need therefore think only in terms of preventing the Arabs from going over to the Soviet bloc. But there is a limit to the direction we should travel on this road, apart from its basic immorality. I think it would be disastrous to give the impression that this is Western policy, and indeed I doubt if our interests would be served by sacrificing some of