

October 15, 1954

NEEDED: A REAPPRAISAL OF OUR NEAR EAST POLICY

The problem of Near East security, we believe, needs to be reexamined. We are prompted to offer our observations because of the critical nature of the area for the defense of the Free World. America is deeply involved -- and necessarily so -- in this vital section of the globe, and the future of the various peoples there hinges on the success of our policy in bringing them stability, economic and social progress, and peace. These are commendable goals. Yet the gravely deteriorating situation between the Arab states and Israel implies that something has gone wrong with our approach to the conflict and suggests that a reappraisal is urgently necessary.

In our view, the new crisis in the Near East stems not from the goals we have set for ourselves, but from the means employed to reach these ends and from some of the assumptions which have prompted our choosing these means.

A basic assumption appears to have been that the Arab states, feeling aggrieved and insecure, would become more inclined to cooperate with the West and even reach an accord with Israel, if they alone were elected to receive arms. The reaction of the Arab leaders to this special treatment has not been a growing desire for peace, but rather a feeling that America has now given tacit approval to their determination not to meet with the representatives of Israel; that they are free to work more vigorously for Israel's destruction. As a direct consequence, the psychological setting for a destructive arms race has been created, and fear and suspicion of attack mount on both sides.

It is our measured conviction -- a view held, we believe, by the great majority of informed leaders in the United States -- that a Near East at peace must at least be concomitant with the establishment of any Near East defense arrangement. Without peace the nations of this underdeveloped region can have no stability or health. Nor can they summon either the will or the strength to oppose external aggression.