

News Review
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ARAB-ISRAEL CONFLICT UPSTAGED

In the last several months, an often repeated truism of Middle East observers has been to the effect that the Arab-Israeli conflict can no longer be considered at the center of the area's crises. The usual supporting references are to the anti-Said revolt in Iraq and the now concluded civil war in Lebanon. These, of course, are crises that cannot be tracked to Israel by even the most roundabout routes. In fact, relations between the Arabs and Israelis have been quieter in the last few months than for any comparable period since Israel's creation. (See concluding news item.)

Truisms are frequently true. This one is even useful. Freed of his obsession with the Palestine conflict, the student of the area can examine realistically the basic cause of the area-wide disorder: unbridled nationalism. For the present this force seems to have been checked. With the possible exception of the Sudan, a lull has settled on the Middle East, soothing even the crisis-centers that since last spring so disturbed world stability.

In Lebanon a Christian-Moslem cabinet is now searching out a political compromise which can secure its independence against the re-emergence of Nasserism, although the price of this compromise may well be neutralism. The U.N. Observer team has just announced its imminent departure. In Iraq the internal fission set off by the July 14 revolt has resulted in the dismissal of the number two rebel, Colonel Abdul Arif, who was reported preparing a second revolt. The leader and new premier, Abdul Kassim, heavily engaged in consolidating his authority, has not yet dissolved the country's ties with the Baghdad Pact. Only with respect to the Sudan, the question still asked by everyone a week after the army take-over continues to be: is or isn't the new Khartoum government anti-Nasser?

A review of some other Middle East sectors indicates even more strikingly the upstaging of the Palestine problems -- and exposes, at the same time, the wide dispersal of new crisis-centers.

Jordan

In the Middle East the country most financially dependent on the United States is the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, to whose budget we are presently