Middle East Tensions

The Middle East is the cradle of civilization. It is composed of states in the general area of the eastern Mediterranean and southwestern Asia. The majority of these states are Arab and most of them came into existence after the First World War.

The government of Greece supports Enosis. The Turkish government opposes it. Attempts to solve the problem of the future of the island have so far proved unsuccessful.

The Suez Canal Crisis

The Egyptian government nationalized the Suez Canal Company on July 26, 1956.

President Nasser asserted that profits from the operation of the canal would be used to finance the construction of the Aswan Dam, for which offers of financial assistance from the United States, United Kingdom and the International Bank had just been withdrawn.

The UN Security Council adopted six principles as a basis for settling the dispute. However, on October 29, the Israeli army invaded Egypt, and Britain and France landed paratroopers in the Canal Zone on November 4-6. The United Nations after approving resolutions calling for the withdrawal of Israeli, British and French forces, established a UN Emergency Force to supervise a truce between the belligerents.

Turkey

Turkey is about half the size of Greece and its population numbers nearly 23 million. The capital is Ankara and the country has been an independent republic since 1922. Though geographically part of the Middle East, Turkey is normally regarded as a European and not a Middle East Power. One part of Turkey is in Europe but the larger part, which is known as Anatolia, is in Asia.

In 1952 Turkey became a full partner in NATO and in 1953 Turkey signed the Balkan Alliance with Greece and Yugoslavia.

The President of Turkey is Celal Bayar.

The Suez situation has been of concern to the Turks as has the Cyprus issue, because of the 100,000 Turkish Cypriots who live on the island.

In the Canal crisis Turkey worked for the preservation of the Baghdad Pact and was instrumental in preventing the expulsion of the United Kingdom from the Pact in November.

The Arab League

The member states of the Arab League are Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Sudan and Yemen. This League was formed in 1945 to re-establish and re-organize the Arab community which had preserved itself as an ethnic group for 400 years while part of the Ottoman empire.

The Baghdad Pact

The Baghdad Pact is a defense treaty signed by the United Kingdom, Turkey, Iraq, Iran and Pakistan in 1955. Iraq's accession to the Baghdad Pact caused unfriendly repercussions in the USBE and in Egypt. Jordan did not sign the Baghdad Pact.

Representatives of the Baghdad Pact nations met at Baghdad, the capital of Iraq, in November, 1955, a permanent council and a military committee of chiefs of staff.

CURRENT AFFAIRS MAP — MARCH 1957

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