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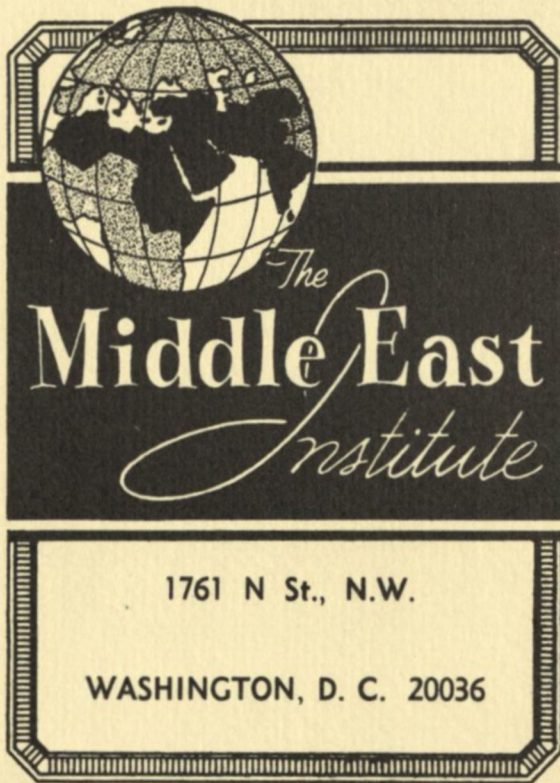
Role of the UNITED STATES in the Middle East

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February 14, 1947

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ROLE OF THE UNITED STATES IN THE MIDDLE EAST
CONFERENCE ON MIDDLE EAST AFFAIRS
DR. HALFORD L. HOSKINS

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School of Advanced International Studies
1906 Florida Ave., N.W.
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ROLE OF THE UNITED STATES IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Chairman: Dr. Halford L. Hoskins
Speaker; Professor E. A. Speiser

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saw your name in Joshua. You are probably the Joshua who
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The subject which we continue to be concerned with this
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ROLE OF THE UNITED STATES IN THE MIDDLE EAST

DR. HALFORD L. HOSKINS: It shouldn't be at all necessary, and perhaps it isn't, but in view of the fact that during the last half dozen years there have been several instances of mistaken identity quite possibly I should introduce myself before I introduce the speaker of the evening.

In view of the fact that there are two men by the name of Hoskins who have had the good or ill fortune to have first names very similar, there has been some misconception as to which Hoskins is functioning at any given time.

We, both of us, here in Washington during the late war had our mail mixed on some occasions. Perhaps I can, by referring to an incident that is said to have happened in the State of Tennessee not so long ago where one of the local countrymen was up before a town judge for a little misapplication of skill, and the judge looked at him and said, "Let's see your name is Joshua. You are probably the Joshua that made the sun stand still." "No, sir. I am the Joshua that made the moonshine." I would just like to point out that I am not the Colonel.

The subject which we continue to be concerned with this evening was one really introduced this afternoon. It has to do more specifically in some ways with the role of the United States in what we of the Middle East Institute are bound to call the Middle East but which our speaker says he still

prefers to call the Near East.

At any rate I think we know pretty well what area we are concerned with and we are certainly concerned with what the United States has to do there.

Obviously, as far as the production of oil in the Middle East has references to our economy and perhaps our national security, we have essential interests there. To what extent that is, perhaps we will know still better as the evening proceeds.

Obviously, from this afternoon's discussion some of those subjects, economically at least: I think we have essential interests in the Middle East anyway. Even if it weren't for oil we ought to be and probably will find ourselves having to be quite concerned with circumstances and conditions in the countries that make up that area.

At this time there is only one organized nation in the world with which in any extensive way I suppose, we find ourselves in competition. And, while I wouldn't want to be even suspected of harboring jingoistic thoughts, in all events we have to be a bit watchful with regard to what is done by this particular organized entity.

For a good long time passed that nation has been kept by Great Britain more or less confined. That continuing influence and power, as everyone knows, is pretty rapidly dis-

appearing, pretty rapidly being relinquished. It probably becomes our job whether we like it or not in some measure to replace that.

I would suggest then, that we are concerning ourselves, in dealing with the subject of the evening, with what to all intents and purposes is a new United States frontier.

I would be delighted on some other occasion to be able to develop that theme a bit. I would not care to do so just now because perhaps it will be further developed in a few moments anyway; but it was with this thought in mind that we proceeded to do certain areas within the purview of the Middle East Institute when we came to set that up some months ago with the thought it might be again at the gates and extend to the mouth of the Ganges.

Our speaker this evening is very thoroughly acquainted with a considerable part of the East, of the area which I have just very generally defined. He has been in a good many of the countries of the Middle East on numerous occasions. He has participated in not less than five expeditions of an archaeological nature, I believe, in some of those countries. He is acquainted with a good many of the languages which are spoken in the Middle East at the present and some of them used and spoken there in the past.

What makes him particularly logical as our speaker this audience is that for my Washington size of my wife

this book. It was a kind of ransom to be allowed to get evening above and beyond the fact that he knows the Middle East as he knows the United States, is the fact that he has

recently written a book called the United States and The

Near East, a copy of which I fortunately possess although

I received it only this morning and have not had a chance

to carefully examine the table of contents. The one who writes the book, of course, is always in a position to have

to defend himself and I suspect that is what Professor

Speiser feels that he may need to do this evening.

I might add to what I just said the fact that during the war, Dr. Speiser was for two years, Chief of the Division of Research and Analysis, that branch of the Office of Strategic Services, here in the Government, just for the Near East, and he is Professor of Semitics at the University of Pennsylvania and Director of The American School of Oriental Research in Bagdad.

He has written many other things aside from this volume

but this is the one we are principally concerned with at

the moment.

I am very happy to present to you Dr. Ephraim Speiser.

DR. SPEISER: Thank you, Dr. Hoskins.

Ladies and gentlemen, as has just been intimated, the

reason for my appearance before this very distinguished

audience is that for my Washington sins I had to write

this book. It was a kind of ransom to be allowed to get to be presented, facts for the most part known to everybody that have to be ordered, there may be a difference in emphasis and your comeback is that you can all call us for it wasn't one that I welcomed. I did not welcome it and for a very long time I had considerable hesitancy and considerable trouble in getting down to putting over some order, thoughts on an area which can't quite make up its mind whether it is the Middle East or the Near East.

I knew perfectly well when this task was suggested that it wasn't one that I welcomed. I did not welcome it and for a very long time I had considerable hesitancy and considerable trouble in getting down to putting over some order, thoughts on an area which can't quite make up its mind whether it is the Middle East or the Near East.

When I was questioned by some good friends about the reasons for my hesitancy I finally said, if the book ever gets done it may well happen that the Government would refuse to allow me to go back to that area, refuse me a passport. If that hurdle were overcome, the British might not give me a visa, if they should the chances were overwhelmingly against my being able to land in any Arabian land, and if I were lucky to get by all these obstacles and get into Palestine the Zionists might have something to say about that.

Well, I am here and I would like to get back to Philadelphia which means I ought to temper my remarks. Seriously, there isn't much danger in that. In a short time one can only touch on so extensive a subject and on the most broadest outline.

There will, however, be points of view that have

to be presented, facts for the most part known to everybody that have to be ordered, there may be a difference in emphasis and your comeback is that you can all call me for any understatement or misstatement, or information, or for any question of justification that you may find necessary. I sincerely hope that you will do so.

In discussing the question of the role of the United States in the Near East, it may be well to present it in three parts.

Our role depends on our interests, our interests have to be cultivated by means of a policy and finally our policy has to be implemented through personnel.

I would like to take what time I have to develop briefly each of these three points.

As for our interests in the area - until the end of the First World War they could be described as thoroughly negligible.

In the early 1820's there began a concerted missionary activity. In 1838 we had the beginning of some archaeological interests. Both of these, the missionary and archaeological led to very welcome educational developments, notably to the foundation of the Syrian Protestant College which developed into the celebrated American University in Beirut.

You have all had examples of that. President Roosevelt declared early that Saudi Arabia was vital to our National

There was also added later on a humanitarian interest, In 1944, there were protracted negotiations for an oil and all along there was a small amount of commercial inter- agreement discussed at some length this afternoon. And, est; but all of these items added together still amounted finally in 1945, in February 1945, President Roosevelt went to very little.

Our interests in the area began to pick up at the end of the First World War. As was indicated this evening, we first, as Mr. Murray pointed out, we first had occasion to make a determined protest against the decisions of France

and Britain, or against attempts of France and Britain, to keep our oil interests out of Iraq contrary to the agree- ment that as an ally we were entitled to equal treatment

in a mandated territory, economic treatment in a mandated area that yielded us slightly less than one quarter, 23.75% interest in a Turkish controlling company and subsequently the Iraq Petroleum Company, ITC.

In the next decade, the thirties, our interest was pri- marily in oil and concessions were obtained in succession. First, in Saudi Arabia, Bahrein and finally Kuwait; and yet none of these interests could be described as having a truly national character or national force.

Then, after this country entered the Second World War our interests in the Near East suddenly sprang into promi- nence of an unprecedented kind.

You have all had examples of that. President Roosevelt declared early that Saudi Arabia was vital to our National

interests. ~~Back as recorded history, there was always in-~~

In 1944, there were protracted negotiations for an oil agreement, discussed at some length this afternoon. And, ~~the~~ finally in 1945, in February 1945, President Roosevelt went out of his way to meet with Arab rulers in Egyptian waters.

How important that step must have seemed to him is made clear by the fact that happened barely two months before his death and it must have been a strain too. Then there was Yalta. ~~to side overlooking toward the very same area.~~

In short there was a full blown United States National interest for the first time in that area. But, what was it? What is it? ~~geographical and cultural given added weight~~

In order to answer we must analyze it very briefly. It may be necessary to ask ourselves first what in general are the foreign interests in the area, regardless of origin; and to do that I may have to go back for a minute or so into the past. ~~when the question was asked so it was asked today -~~

Mr. Thornburg, this afternoon, went back five thousand years ago to foreign documents. I am sorry he isn't here I would question him about the date.

I will go back briefly though not nearly as far in order to point out the bearing of background on present day interests. ~~question of oil. There must have been another signate;~~

~~before there was the Suez Canal.~~

~~Britain and Russia began their rivalry which is still very~~

As far back as recorded history, there was always interest of an international character in that area. We don't have to look at it from within but merely to cite the names of some of the conquerors and world conquerors who ultimately found their way into the area and some of them whom died there is enough.

Alexander the Great did it. Pompeii did it. And, later on in the Middle Ages we have a conqueror from the opposite side gravitating toward the very same area.

It isn't difficult to understand. We all know it, all heard about a tricontinental bridge, center of world interests both geographical and cultural given added weight with the spread of Islam. But that interest continued even after the Near East lost its position as the geographic and cultural center.

Witness Napoleon.

Now, when the question was asked as it was asked today - isn't oil the most important item of foreign interests in the area. I think it is answered automatically by this very demonstration.

All of these conquests, all of these excursions, invasions and attempted invasions were undertaken before there was a question of oil. There must have been another magnet; before there was the Suez Canal.

Britain and Russia began their rivalry which is still very

strong, in fact stronger than ever over the Near East, at about the same time as Napoleon, before there was any Suez Canal or oil.

I think it is worthwhile to bring this out to restore a certain balance. I think that was restored this afternoon when Murray and Thornburg spoke of the political complications which surrounded any oil venture in the area.

If it isn't oil alone, what is it? We don't have to before this audience go into the strategic importance of the area except perhaps to stress the fact the control of the Near East means control of an intercontinental position; that as long as we have purely European powers fighting for European objectives largely on European soil the Near East may not have had a central position but if it is a question to pour out from one continent into another or to prevent another power from so doing, then, the control of the Near East today is more essential than ever.

It is so first, because of that strategic position and in no small measure because of the added attractions or drawbacks from one standpoint but certain attractions in a political sense of communications and oil.

The old center of gravity becomes today a much more important global center of gravity. And, perhaps it may again be worth pointing out a fact that is not as well known anyway that world power today is balanced among states which have

The stock was obviously oil as was shown by our gradual interests in more than one continent. That is certainly true of Britain, it is true of Russia and it is certainly true of the United States.

Now, when it comes to a global center, you find it in the Near East because of that combination of interests - location, communications and oil.

Now, which of these factors means most to the three major powers primarily concerned. I think that will not be seriously challenged as far as Great Britain is concerned, the factor of strategic position comes first. As far as Russia is involved, the question was asked this afternoon by Mr. Wright and answered by Mr. Thornburg that the question of oil is surely secondary, that the primary concern of Russia insofar as one can judge Russia's policy, is either to have that control herself or to prevent another power from gaining it. And, surely if you take into account the

fact that she was asking for a place in Suakin on the Red Sea far from Iran. They certainly point to the assertion oil may play a positive or negative factor, in either case it cannot be the primary factor.

How about our interest there? The strategic factor cannot be preeminent. It cannot be location or position there cannot mean as much to the United States as it does to Russia and obviously means to Britain.

The stock was obviously oil as was shown by our gradual development in the thirties, and as we heard this afternoon. We also heard this afternoon that oil may involve us, does involve us in many other complications - political, economic, etc.

In order to be an oil power one must be also a power in a political sense in that area as well. And then, there is the added factor of air communications.

It was Mr. James Landis, I believe, who pointed out not so long ago that no year round air communications can be maintained profitably and securely without the help bases in the Near East.

Yet, there would seem to be one factor which transcends by far the other three mentioned so far - position, communications, and oil and that is the question of world peace and security because of the very factors that have been mentioned here.

There are the three big powers, the Big Three who all have interests, varied in degree but all vital in that self same area. I don't believe that there is anyother part of the globe where the same can be said of the same Three Powers.

There may be some question, or perhaps there isn't any, that as far as relations between Russia and Britain are concerned at least short range relations her common boundaries in Europe mean more than those in the Near East.

As far as we are concerned the problem in the Pacific which confronts Russia and ourselves may be of more vital immediate interest than our interests in the Persian Gulf Area etc.

But there is surely no other place where the interests of all three major powers at one and the same time converge and clash as they do in the Near East and that being so Peace can be cemented or the seeds of another world war sown in that area of the greatest number of common conflicts.

So, if we are to have any say as to whether it shall be peace or war we cannot be denied a chance around the table in discussion around an area that decision is likely to be made. It is equivalent to a seat on the world's geostrategic exchange and that would seem to be the most important far reaching world concern that we must have and maintain in that area.

What then of the policy that is required to cultivate and tend that truly staggering interest? Since policy cannot or isn't likely to precede interest but usually lags behind then one cannot have expected a definite over all policy towards the Near East in this country and such complaints on the score are often heard and may not be justified.

The only question is whether we are doing anything today of a constructive nature to involve the sort of policy that will do the necessary work. There are here certainly many gentlemen who are far more, far better entitled to talk about

policy than I am but if I may be allowed to make a few suggestions and some prerequisites which seem to me vital in this connection, I would say there are three such points.

One is that our policy should be regional instead of fragmentive, another that it should be realistic and a third that it should be independent.

Now let us look very briefly at each of these three points. Because of the fact that the Near East has been plagued both by geography and history and has had the longest reported history known to man it has also become the salve of tradition.

I do not say this in any ambiguous sense. It has become more integrated than other regions of comparable diversity of languages and peoples. Moreover Islam put the finishing touches on that integration.

In short you cannot tell successfully with any one local Near Eastern Country unless you consider all the others. You cannot deal with Saudi Arabia or Levant or Palestine or Egypt without taking careful notice of what the eventual policy will do to the rest nor can you attempt an economic policy without a concurrent political policy, policy with regard to the Political questions.

That may seem obvious and perhaps isn't worth dwelling on but the fact is we have not as a rule for very good reasons had such a global policy. We have been used to dealing with these countries piecemeal and in this respect tradition in our

case persists.

A little more complicated, difficult and unquestionably controversial is the second prerequisite that our policy should be realistic. To say that by itself is to say no more than what Coolidge said about sin - he was against it. We are for a realistic policy but when we come to consider what is a realistic policy I am sure there will be many counsels and many differences of opinion.

I suppose we will all agree that the realistic policy of the United States and the Near East must look to a prosperous democratic policy in the Near East. We have said so in many instances and there is no question we firmly believe it.

There is however the danger that these terms may be somewhat in the nature of a Sacred Cow, once we have said it we assume that it is so.

Now, are the various countries in the Near East today democratic, independent, prosperous? I suppose because we want that answer, because we are interested in that answer emotionally and should be interested in that answer also from the standpoint of national welfare, I think they are interconnected we would say they are democratic, they are independent and prosperity is just around the corner.

But in any analysis would that be an honest answer? To be sure, after four centuries our Turkish tyranny or Turkish neglect - at least it was a tremendous task our countries the new

Arab States had to face and it would be expecting to much of any of them to have reached at least in institutions to practice, the degree of them that has been maintained elsewhere. But is that progress being made? No, we cannot refer to the Saudi Arabian as democracies, they are not.

If we want to give them names, we might call them benevolent tyrannies, historically and without any malice. But are there more advanced Arab countries, more western countries, those longer under western influence, truly democratic?

From all accounts that is far from the truth. We know of the degree of Sinophobia that has developed, we know of the fact that developments are not as encouraging as we would like them to be.

There are very good reasons for it but the main thing is that unless those countries are truly democratic and independent and prosperous a very important element of balance in that area will be missing.

It is in our interests that they should be as strong as it is in them to be and it is therefore in our interests that we should instead of taking the wish for the deed, do what we can to bring about true democracy insofar as the need for that exists in that area and to independence.

I think we have been for perhaps very laudable reasons responsible for a setback in that progress and it would be also true to say that rival foreign interests have not helped those

countries to reach that goal. The same may be said of the question of whether they are truly independent. We know perfectly well and we can understand why the social structure is antiquated, the economy is outmoded, the leadership is largely lacking and if it is in the national interests and perhaps in the world's interests too since peace is maybe upset in that area of age old conflicts to have them progress to the utmost of their capacities, then the policy of not looking at it realistically may not be the wisest policy that we can sponsor.

The question of the prosperity of the Near East is so intimately bound up with first, economic pressures about which we heard, and to what the general development, that it does not have to be touched on here any further.

What of our third prerequisite, for an international United States policy in that area. Once again, just as we can understand the lack of a national policy up to very recently, we must take it for granted that our policy, our evolving policy in the area must for a long time be in partial dependence on those countries that have been there longer, have cultivated that field more energetically than we have.

Once again then it is a question of whether we are doing anything to reverse that trend rather than getting back what we have reaped. That our policy in many instances today cannot be and is not independent, I think, goes without saying.

There have been very many gratifying instances of individual action in this or that area. Iran is one for instance. Lebanon is another but for instance - for the most part we are tied up with British policy.

They have been there for a very long time. They have excellent personnel. They know this war and what is more they, like other European Colonial Powers have had reason to cultivate the personnel, develop the personnel which is necessary to implement such a policy.

However, do we really fully realize the degree of dependence on British policy we must put up with for the time being and will have to except for some time to come? This of course brings up the extremely touching but very difficult question the chairman brought up in his introductory remarks.

Today a question of a balance between the three major powers with the local states as a possible added element of balance if sanity prevails. The alternative is the continuation of British Rivalry to an explosive point.

Today that rivalry dominates the developments in the region as it never dominated in the past. If, for a very good reason we leave it to the British it isn't quite so simple but the point cannot be developed sufficiently here to decide for us in ever so many instances what the decision should be.

What we will have is just two way rivalry with a prac-

tical certainty of eventual conflict. That certainty is taken for granted all too often today.

Now, when speaking of our dependence on British policy and it has been shown in many instances to mention one controversial one, Palestine. There have been others. When you speak of that you have to be extremely careful to make it perfectly clear that a desire for an independent policy, independent of Britain, does not mean in any way approval of Russian Policy.

It is simply a question of doing something after our own full decision and that is the only thing to do. It is perfectly all right to follow Britain if the decision is taken with full account of all the circumstances but to have such a decision imposed reduces us to two way rivalry again.

To mention Palestine too, means a point some of you would like to have developed later but to mention that as an instance the report of Anglo-American Commission of Inquiry was shelved. These are mild words. And another report that Morrison Report substituted without entering into permits or drawbacks of the report.

What it amounted to, we had to underwrite British Policy and pay the bill for it. If we decided to do so for other larger considerations, well and good. But to have that done because someone had been there ahead of us and knows more about

it is an extremely dangerous thing in this extremely critical situation to repeat whether or not we have occasion in any number of instances to side with Britain after careful weighing of all the factors it would still be a three way rivalry with a chance for the small powers.

If it remains a two way rivalry the small powers would enjoy the dividends from living on borrowed time. Dividends from such a cut throat rivalry - actually there would be legal hope for them and where there is little hope for the small powers it is a question of whether ultimate conflict can long be postponed.

One final point and that is the question of personnel to take care of these very grave issues. As we say this afternoon, our interests in the Near East increased many times in the short space of the last few years over what it was in the thirties and certainly what it had been up to the end of the first world war.

Has the personnel required to conduct the Near East affairs increased proportionately? Certainly not. What can be done to achieve that goal? What kind of personnel do we need both in quantities and quality?

We found out during the war how badly handicapped we were and yet since that time very little improvement by and large can be registered. The instance of this institute, the very fact of this conference is a start, is an indication of a good start

but it is only a start.

We must realize that one doesn't acquire a general familiarity with Near Eastern things. In ones early studies the way one does it in connection with France or Britain, Germany or other better known European Countries. It is a matter of lifetime study. You cannot with the best will in the world import someone who had been working on a totally different area in Asia and expect him to cover anyone of the countries of the Near East.

This is not the kind of work where interchangeable skills are possible nor can we as sometimes had to be done during the war and is being done today I wouldn't know, place a person in a P-4 job, a desk work where the ultimate authority on a given area must reside and asks of him little more than what is appropriately assigned to a CAF-1 or 2 namely cutting up of encyclopedia articles and putting them together the way a CAF-2 could do much better. It is a job for the P-8 in a very real sense of the word.

Unless we set our sights very high and increase the quantity enormously we shall be handicapped. It is a question one doesn't have to be jingoistic to think of it in terms of rivalry.

The British have an excellent group of experts in this field. If we are to have argument for argument in the most

honorableness we have to have also equable knowledge, a balance of power and that is what we are after as an alternative to standing by for suicide, a balance of power has to be balanced on valance of knowledge and ultimately it is cooperate quest for truth.

It is the kind of work we need not be ashamed of, but are we doing it? I don't think, Mr. Chairman, with all respect to the work done in your institute and we understand it as a start and we hope it can be developed along lines of greater competence, of being able to add, I don't think the work that has been done so far in Washington or in Princeton or in Pennsylvania or in anyother place in this country is anything to inspire our confidence in the future in this respect.

The Near East is always mentioned in connection with civilization. It has had a great deal to do with the civilization we have had it contributed the first two thousand years of civilization known to the world. We are heirs of it in more ways than we realize. When we lood at the watch, write a letter, sing hymns, give names to our children use any number of symbols, we are using Near Eastern material.

It is doubtful today whether the Near East is in a position to add to the civilization that it headed - helped initially - but it may be in a position to help preserve it by offering the testing ground, by combination, by presenting on its soil the

There are, of course cultural and historical reasons for it.

problems and conflicts which in a would made indivisible but in a nation not yet united are problems and conflicts of the world as a whole. It may also afford a way to find a solution for a design for the New World. We certainly hope that it will. If it does then an entirely new meaning may be added to the very old concept "Light comes from the Orient".

MR. CHAIRMAN: Dr. Speiser has certainly given us a very meaty talk. As he said in his early remarks he would welcome questions or perhaps counterpropositions from members of this group. I suspect there may be quite a number before we proceed to still another part of the program later this evening.

Q I wonder whether Dr. Speiser would be kind enough to tell us to what extent the policy or rather a cognizance of solidarity is developing among the peoples of the Near East?

DR. SPEISER: It is a question almost as broad as the one which Mr. Wright asked this afternoon of Mr. Thornburg, but by and large it would seem to me the question in the Near East today is whether the forces which make for division are stronger than the forces which make for a union. Both are operative and one could analyze them at some length.

As long as there is a common problem or common enemy from without whether it is in the form of what is regarded as foreign imperialism from any source or cynicism solidarity appears to be greater than the division.

There are, of course cultural and historical reasons for it.

the one question that one has to ask is whether that solidarity will outlive the forces without. And it is a question on which I, for one, cannot offer a confident answer, they seem to be progressing that way if the policy of fragmentation splitting them up into small states prevails then solidarity will be fortified.

If the east and west manage to live in some fashion in peace in the Near East then the Near East may develop in the way that is necessary for the kind of democracy and independence which we hope for but cannot in all candor declare as present today.

Q Perhaps one might ask Dr. Speiser to elaborate a little on his reference to the tendencies which he noticed towards democracy in the Near Eastern Area in the early part of this century. If you could explain what those tendencies were and what steps the United States could take as one country as encouraging or regenerating those tendencies.

DR. SPEISER: All the questions seem to be running in the same vein.

I wouldn't say that the tendency for democracy goes back to the nineteenth century, I believe, and I think it can be demonstrated that the Near East knew a beginning of democracy long before its expression.

It is an old concept which was lost by the wayside in part in the course of time. What we have to ask ourselves first is whether our concept of democracy is the one that is best suited to the Near East or whether the struggle between tradition and Westernization could not be resolved by a sort of democracy which is more natural to local genius.

For the present however, it would seem that until such - each individual government is much stronger than it is today, until the social structure has been equalized, and until leadership has arisen shadow will still masquerade for substance.

Q I would like to change the subject of the question a little bit by asking you whether you don't think that a legitimate criticism of our point of view as presented this evening would lie along this line.

You have in the picture of the power pattern which you have given of the Near East left with us, at least left with me the impression of Great Britain operating in that area as a full fledged great power now. It may be that you didn't have the intention of doing so and that I have misunderstood you. But my own impression is that so far as far as rivalry between Great Britain and Russia in the area is concerned, that is practically speaking non existent because Great Britain does not command the means to maintain a rivalry with the Soviet Union in that area unless Great Britain is very fully aided, I shan't say supported.

Put it differently. Unless Great Britain and us together, or the United States with the aid of Great Britain carry on the competition which you have sketched with the Soviet Union. Is that a fair observation to make or would you like to disagree with me?

DR. SPEISER: It would be a very fair observation if the intent of my remarks had been what you took it to be and what unquestionably my remarks lent themselves to being.

There hasn't been enough time to develop each of these points and I am delighted you give me the opportunity to develop this particular one a little further.

I will have to disagree with you in turn on the question, if I understand you, on the question of importance to Britain of the Near East and her desire to maintain her position there.

I think all we need do is look at some of the British action to be reassured on this point before we go a little further. For one, Mr. Bevin's speech of, I don't know the exact date, the one in which he referred to the throat of the British Empire. It was a very impressive speech and it undoubtedly referred to the one vulnerable point where the breath of the British Empire could be choked off most readily.

The other point in British action on Trans-Jordan. There is no reason why Trans Jordan should ever have been

kept away from other Arab states, but it was. At this late date to tell the - to elevate Trans Jordan into a kingdom rather than allow it to take the more natural course of union with some other part of the Near East is plainly an attempt to hang on to such influence as Britain has had there by means of a treaty instead of allowing the area as a mandated territory to come under the supervision of the United Nations and thus let Russia have a look in.

It is clearly directed, not perhaps against Russia specifically but towards accepting such position Britain has.

Now, the other point and that is one that must be made. That is pointing these things out does not mean that a tremendous amount of sympathy on our part cannot be felt for Britain's plight and it is our ability of Britain's maintaining herself as a world power.

I think world security lies in the position of several balanced powers instead of two way rivalry. As for Russia's action, the difference is in one case in the case of Britain we have paternalism, in the case of Russia an especially Azerbaijan we have a cynical disregard of commitments but the one is replied to the other and the spiral gets worse and worse.

Now, our presence there and for reasons of enlightened self interests while inevitably would lead us in the majority of instances to side with Britain, it would yet give

that added check of a society rather than a pair plus the assurance which removal after that backyard rivalry might give for the small nations.

Now, I don't know whether I have answered your point directly or whether there are only tangential contacts between your question and my answer.

Q. Just as I misunderstood Dr. Speiser, he misunderstood me. I haven't the slightest doubt of the British intention to hold on to the position which Britain has had in the Near East as far as it is physically possible. What I was really driving at more particularly was that it seems to me that we in this country are thinking under the influence of momentum from the past.

We still think of Great Britain as of being a much greater force in terms of its ability to deliver in a crisis than is the fact. I think that we underestimate the extent to which Great Britain has been weakened that tends to lead us along the line of maintaining our traditional rivalry of thinking in terms of our competition with Great Britain and I perhaps wrongfully thought I saw that tendency in your remarks. Whereas, as far as the Near East is concerned I had been wholeheartedly in agreement with your point of view, our own self enlightenment in as far as this be maintained in the part of the world with which we can do business.

I think the future of the world lies along lines such as that but as for the capacity of Britain to do a great deal in maintaining it within the sphere of activity in which we can operate, I am very doubtful. The power of Britain is greatly, very greatly weakened and that the loss of the resources and communication of the Near East would be completely and utterly disastrous to Great Britain to a degree which we in this country tend not to realize and therefore we tend again to accept somewhat our quarrels, small frictions with the British as- at the expense of larger aims which is necessary to both powers. I beg your pardon for making so long a speech.

Q. I have thought about many of these things as we all have. I have been pretty well convinced that one world is the only way out. We are going to have a very destructive struggle if we don't aim pretty seriously at a united world and the balance of power is not in that direction as Britain has practiced it for something like four hundred years. It used to be the continent of Europe, it is now transferred to the whole world.

Britain has opposed any nation that tends to become very strong. Britain's position has been to take the side of the weaker and make a balance of power and about ten times it has led to war in which the side Britain was on was the weaker, the weaker side triumphed.

Now, if we go ahead and build ourselves up very strongly, spend ten or twelve billion a year and collect more atomic bombs and prepare for more poisonous warfare, and if in the Near East we get control of the oil, we defend the trade routes, we take over from Britain's weakening hand with apparent full cooperation of England for the time and then if we train these people you want, train them, the school goes on, we get some extremely skillful diplomats - we are going to be much stronger than Russia and in that case where will England side in the war that comes?

DR. SPEISER: Perhaps I will explain very briefly what I meant by balance of power. A balance of power in the Near East would be a balance of those powers that happen to be there, the five foreign powers most directly concerned plus the local states.

The presence of such a balance with us, not as a mediator between two rivals, but as a third party equally concerned, I think would convey an assurance over a larger area, the same will and ability to agree on a common denominator would exist.

In other words, the - it might lead to ultimately what you have in mind.

Q. I am wondering if the pattern of economic development of oil doesn't almost preclude the development of democracy. Here you have the largest factor in the income of these

countries and the preponderant factor in creation of foreign exchange which goes into the hands of the states. The forces in this country, the independent oil man here can uphold the right of individuals as opposed to the states.

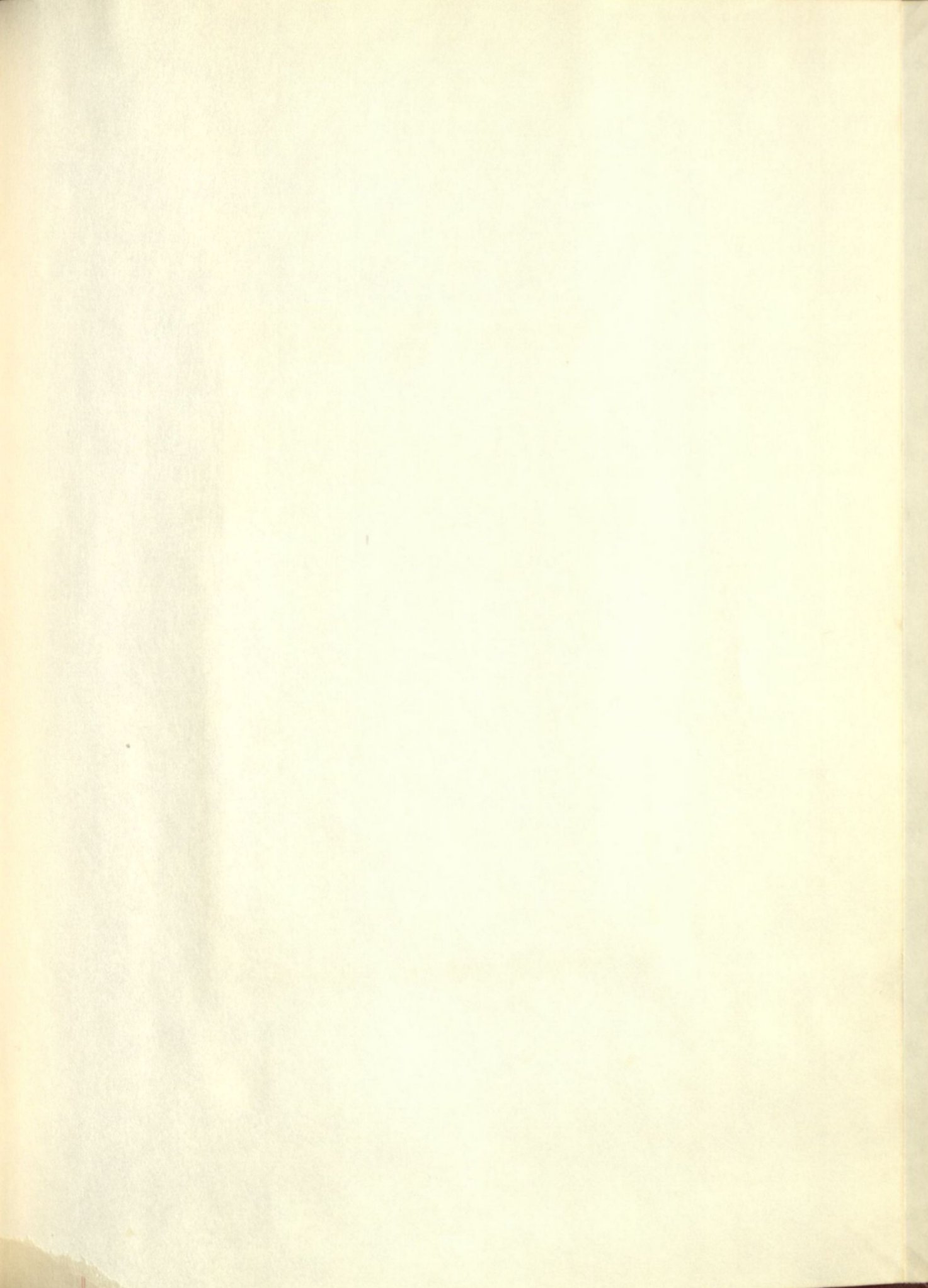
DR. SPEISER: I don't know but what that calls for a prediction of what might happen. But the very developments that you have indicated could first lead to greater education to the presence of a larger number of public spirited citizens in every sense of the term and with that a more equitable distribution of power could be expected more readily than it can be expected today.

The need for a large public interest in these matters, instead of what actually amounts to an ambivalent oligarchy is the first need; all economic powers in the hands of the minor group running the state.

CHAIRMAN: Well Good Friends from the scope of the topic which has just been presented and discussed and the character of this audience, we are embarrassed with talent considering what we have yet on the program for this evening.

And, as much as I regret to bring this part of the discussion to a close, I suspect that we must do so and I wish to extend your thanks and mine to the speaker for giving us so much to think of and I think I can assure him that some of his remarks were taken very much to heart.

(Whereupon the discussion was ended at 9:45 p.m.)



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