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## **"Only Firmness Can Stop Arab Flirting with Russia", a Newspaper Clipping from the Jerusalem Post, January 1957**

Published on 27 January 1957, this newspaper clipping from the Jerusalem Post contains an article titled, "Only Firmness Can Stop Arab Flirting with Russia", on the outcomes established by the Post correspondent, after he had completed a tour to 5 Arab countries, namely Egypt, Lebanon, Syria, Iraq and Jordan, on the relationship of the Arab countries with Russia, Britain and the United States of America and the Soviet aid they receive.

## Only Firmness Can Stop Arab Flirting with Russia

By HAL LEHRMAN

JERUSALEM.

THE Arab world is marching downhill with its eyes shut into the Soviet Union's arms — and Anglo-American attempts to detour the parade by cash and political concessions will merely grease the slope.

This correspondent has just completed an intensive two-month tour of five Arab states. On the spot investigations in Egypt, the Lebanon, Syria, Iraq and Jordan have convinced him that:

1. — The Arabs are enchanted with the scare which Egypt has pitched into the West by taking weapons (and technicians) from the Soviet bloc at fire-sale prices.
2. — They intend to make the scare pay off by extracting continuous aid and favours from the West — always under the threat of more Arab dickens with the East.
3. — They fall totally to see the perils of becoming more and more dependent on the Soviets as a lever for diplomatic blackmail.
4. — The United States and Britain, in turn, have failed totally so far to see the certainty of increased Soviet clout in the Middle East unless the West breaks up the Arab blackmail game.
5. — Already the Soviets have made bigger and more alarming progress in the Arab world than is generally known — thanks to the flabbiness of Western policy.
6. — There is still time to avoid disaster — but only by scrapping appeasement.
7. — And there is a sturdy hinge on which the West can finally swing around towards firmness: the State of Israel, whose mere presence as a superior military force next door to the Arabs can exert more effective restraint on them than all threats or blandishments by the West.

Top Egyptians have cockily assured me that they carry around in their pockets Soviet offers for more arms, agreeable trade pacts and big loans on easy terms. Pouring millions of American investment or taxpayer dollars into Egypt's High Aswan Dam and other Middle East projects won't buy Arab loyalty. They would only sluice down the drain after other large Western grants already lavished without the smallest purchase of Arab friendship to date.

Fresh aid might score only if wrapped up in stiff conditions which the Arabs could not evade fulfilling. But they are too intoxicated by the potential delights of their bargaining position to give such guarantees. Without them, Egypt is decidedly not worth a dam.

### Nasser the Hero

Prospects of making the Arabs reasonable by concessions have never been so dim as now, after Egypt Premier Gamal Abdul Nasser's sensational deal on Czech arms — and the West's inability to produce any retaliation more terrifying than a gnashing of teeth.

Nasser is a hero in the Middle East today because his brother Arabs see him as a David who tweaked the American Goliath's nose. The latest Eisenhower-Dulles proposal for saving the area from Moscow by "a contest in the field of economic development" is equivalent to offering the Arabs rich prizes for further nose-tweaking.

Even without big Soviet bribes, it suits the interests of various Arab regimes to follow policies identical with Moscow's.

In Morocco and Algeria, interviewing anti-French native resistance leaders in their homes, I noted that they listened with equal enthusiasm to incendiary official broadcasts from Egypt, Syria — and Communist Hungary.

In Cairo, I spent considerable time at No. 32 Abdelhak Sarwat Street — the main office of the North African Liberation Committee. The rent and expenses are paid by the Arab League. The Committee campaigns for war to the death against the French. It supports the guerillas now fighting in the Atlas, Kabylia and Aures mountains across enflamed North Africa. Its programme for native freedom — including freedom from American air bases — is entirely acceptable to the Kremlin.

In Amman, I watched crazed Jordanian mobs throw rocks at

Western-owned buildings; in Arab Jerusalem I saw them attack the French and Turkish Consulates and tear down the American consular flag. Among the riot leaders were some Communists, but only a few. The real instigators were Egyptian and Syrian agents — and Saudi Arabian money from royalties paid by American oil companies. Their successful objective: to keep Jordan from joining the Baghdad pact.

Consider, for example, how snugly the Soviets are already established in Syria without the free grant of a single ruble. In scarcely a year, their legation, now an embassy, has increased its office space fivefold. There are no less than three Soviet military attaches in Damascus. In rapid succession last October and November, Syria signed trade pacts with the Soviets, People's China, Poland and East Germany.

Though Bulgaria does practically no business with Syria, and tourism between them is nonexistent, the Bulgarians were allowed to set up a trade office and staff it with a dozen observers. It has quickly grown into a consulate and legation. The chief of Syrian Military Intelligence is a fellow-traveller; the chief of Syrian Army education is a Communist.

Private Lebanese citizens are making too much money by trading with both sides to work up great interest in politics.

Iraq is the sole Arab country "cooperating" with the West. She is accepting arms and financial assistance as a Baghdad pact signatory. Yet Premier Nuri Sa'id told me that the alliance can't become truly effective until other Arab countries join up. This can't happen, he said, until the Arabs' dispute with Israel is settled — on Arab terms. Meanwhile, he added, the Western guns he is getting for defence against Russia are at Arab disposal for a "Palestine solution." Thus Iraq, too, like all her Arab friends and relations, follows a line which means muddle in the vital Middle East — and contentment in Moscow.

I have yet to meet a single Western military expert in the area who has a good word for the fighting skill or spirit of any Arab army — or a responsible Arab soldier who has confidence in his own team's ability to lick Israel — even with the help of the formidable material from Czechoslovakia and Britain. The Arabs' respect for Israel prowess is so profound, in fact, that it comes down to plain abject fear.

The point may be reached, as the arms gap continues to widen, when the only brake on a desperate action by Israel will be the probability of Western intervention on the Arab side. If after that Israel becomes convinced that further delay will clearly mean her national suicide, she may even challenge the Powers and world opinion.

### Sternier Approach

Observers who are fed up with Arab unreliability — and their numbers are growing — think that the time has perhaps come to try a sterner and more daring approach: to puncture the Arabs' arrogance by putting their dread of Israel fighting superiority to work.

This would call for:

- Cancelling the Anglo-Franco-American guarantee of Arab-Israel frontiers.
- Notifying Moscow that any Soviet attempt to meddle in a purely local dispute would be a "hostile act."

Leaving the Arabs, shorn of outside protection, to settle their accounts with Israel face to face.

The wise money says that Russia will keep out, because she does not want a world war; that the terrified Egyptians would lead, the Arab stampede to a peace conference with Israel; that if not, a test on the battlefield would be short and decisive, with Israel finally winning a peace that, this time, the defeated Arabs will honour.

Such a programme, admittedly, has large and obvious risks. But, for the West, the alternatives of continuous surrender to the Arabs to keep them out of the Soviet embrace has dangers which are sure and terrible.

*The writer of this article appears to be a Jew. He is that Arab, and his opinion is written by his Jewish consciousness and that hate intensity he has no sense of justice. He wishes the West to defend the Arabs from all sides to fully split Israel and to go down fighting!! among all them.*

*Said the West and upon the short system of the Jews a pro-Jewish Council. There will be a Jewish state.*

*That victory is a sign of Communism and the Western elimination of the influence and interests, and providing a devastating war was just to please the Jews.*

MC  
22.1.56.

