THE EGYPTIAN MOB
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is our business. We cannot wash our hands of it.

In the best of circumstances there is now going to be much bitterness, some violence and a continued use of force to hold the Suez Canal area. No comfort can be taken from what has happened in Iran and Egypt and what the French have provoked in Tunisia. This is no time for Pollyannas—nor is it a time for Cassandras. The situation is thoroughly bad, and it can only be made better by some cool thinking and some quick, courageous actions.

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This is no time for recriminations. When anything happens as serious as the Egyptian conflict, law-abiding citizens there and everywhere have a clear duty. The fires that burned in Cairo's rioting, the fires that blaze all through the Middle East, threatening to destroy the freedom and security of the area, must be quenched. When fires rage, the community always and everywhere gathers to put them out—all except the arsonists.

How can we put out this particular fire? There is no easy answer. The first requirement is obviously to restore and maintain order. Beyond that the problems are threefold—to create internal stability in Egypt, to protect the Suez Canal zone and to resolve the conflict between Middle Eastern nationalism and the security of the Western world. The first two are short-range problems and the third is one of the great and fundamental challenges of our age.

So far as Egypt is concerned, one must hope that King Farouk will at last exercise his constitutional authority and bring back some integrity and statesmanship to his Government. His replacement of Nahas Pasha by Aly Maher Pasha points in this direction. This is the greatest opportunity of the King's reign and it will be tragic if he misses it. Premier Nahas Pasha put Egypt into an impossible situation when, to divert attention from the corruption and inefficiency of his Government and the inequities of Egypt's social structure, he tried to abrogate the treaties with Britain unilaterally and illegally. In so doing he called up the destructive forces of nationalism and religious fanaticism. In other words, he appealed to the mob—which has now given him a dusty answer.

On the Suez Canal it might help Egyptians to keep one basic fact in mind: whatever happens, the Canal zone must be preserved for the West. The British are holding it alone today simply because they are the only ones with the legal right to do so. The obvious solution is an international one, linked to the United Nations Charter. Under the proposed Middle East Command, Egypt's sovereign rights will be fully safeguarded while at the same time it is recognized that the importance of the Suez Canal makes it an international responsibility. The formula and the method can be adapted to suit Egypt's rights, but it is in this supranational area that a solution must be found. The United Nations might be used if it were possible to do so through the General Assembly, where Russia's veto would not block action. Otherwise the answer could only be a regional one in which—and on this we may as well resign ourselves—the United States will have to play an important role, perhaps the decisive role.

The major dilemma is such a terrible one because it contains two contrasting necessities, neither of which can be given up. The force of nationalism in the Middle East is irresistible, but the strategic importance of the area is so great as to force the Western Powers to remain immovable. Heaven only knows how little we Americans want to take up another burden of this sort, to add another commitment to those we have, to make another sacrifice to this ideological Moloch that our era has cast up in such monstrous form. But one thing we must keep clearly in our minds. If we are to remain a world Power, if we are to save the world for freedom, we must accept the responsibilities of our power. What is happening in Egypt

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