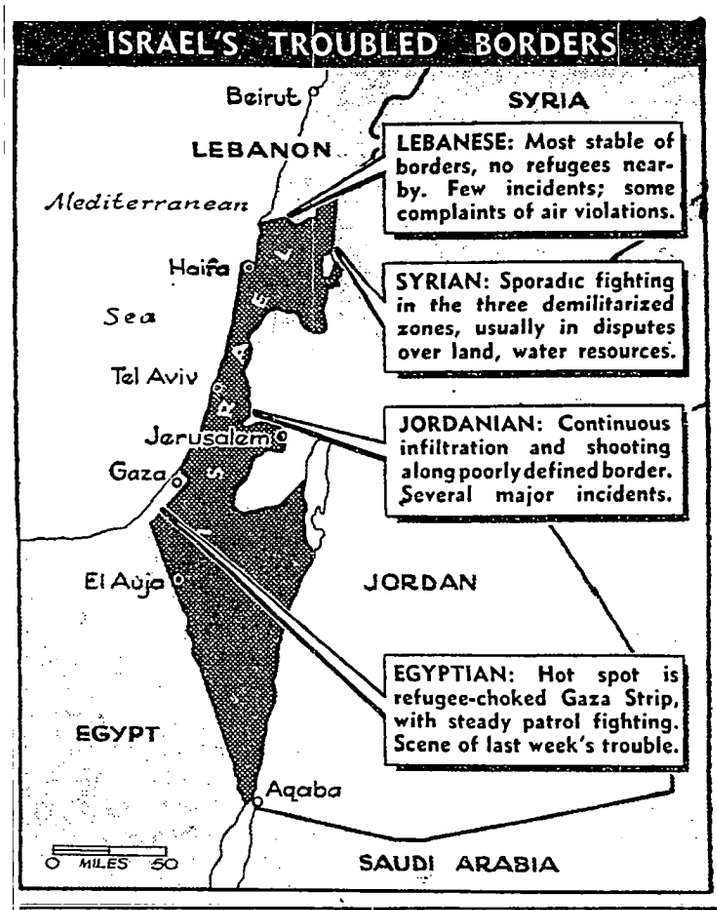
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By ROBERT C. DOTYSpecial to The New York Times.
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pg. E4

ISRAEL-EGYPT CRISIS: VIEWS OF BOTH SIDES



EGYPT FEARS A TRAP

By ROBERT C. DOTY

Special to The New York Times.

GAZA, Palestine, March 5—The dangerous game of raid and reprisal, attack and ambush between Arabs and Israeli reached a new peak of deadliness in this Egyptian-administered strip of Palestine this week.

The raid and ensuing disorders in the Gaza Strip presented the Government of Premier Gamal Abdel Nasser in Cairo with difficult domestic and foreign problems.

Colonel Nasser's Government rests on the support of the Army. Within its ranks there was undoubtedly being generated strong pressure for retaliatory action to wipe out the affront to Egyptian arms implicit in the success of the Israeli attack.

Colonel Nasser and the ruling military junta also obviously feared the effects of the incident on general public opinion. They recalled, no doubt, that it was a report of the killing of a force of Egyptian auxiliary policemen by the British Army in the Canal Zone that touched off the riots and burning of Cairo on Jan. 26, 1951.

Mid-East Repercussion

Colonel Nasser is aware also that public opinion in other Arab states is awaiting Egyptian reaction to the Israeli slap in the face. Ever since mid-January, when Iraq announced her intent to sign the pact for a defensive alliance with Turkey, Egypt has been engaged in a major diplomatic effort to persuade the other Arab League members that both political and military safety lay in another direction, in alliance with Egypt.

The relatively small number of troops Egypt is permitted to maintain in the Gaza Strip by the terms of the armistice agreement are spread too thin to prevent such raids. The effect of the Israeli attack created an impression — probably unjustified—of Egyptian weakness.

All these factors and Colonel Nasser's first public statement on events—asserting that Egypt would no longer rely on the United Nations to deter Israeli aggression but would meet "force with force"—seemed to increase the likelihood of a renewal of full-scale hostilities.

However willing Colonel Nasser might be to ignore the United Nations in the matter, neither he nor the Israeli leaders could afford to flout the Tripartite Declaration of Britain, France and the United States guaranteeing the status quo on the Arab-Israeli borders. In theory, at least, the three powers would intervene to check aggression by either side. Some Government officials fear an Israeli attempt to trap Egypt into reprisals that could be made to seem outright aggression.

Egypt's Wariness

A second consideration dictating caution on the part of Egypt is the fact that war would bring to a halt Egyptian efforts to rehabilitate the economy with the help of grants-in-aid and loans from the United States and the International Bank.

A third deterrent to an aggressive policy in Cairo is the tenuous position of the Egyptian Army in the Gaza Strip. It dangles on the end of a long trans-desert supply line and with twenty miles of flank exposed to Israeli attack.

For these reasons, Egyptian leaders are expected to conclude they have everything to lose and nothing to gain by war.

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