On Breaking Relations...
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The United States clearly has no desire to break diplomatic relations with the Arab countries, and can only regret that eight nations have already severed diplomatic links with Washington and that possibly more will follow.

The fact that even Lebanon has joined the list of those rupturing relations with the United States shows the intensity of the pressure on the smaller and weaker countries in the area. Lebanon is a half-Christian nation, heavily dependent on tourism and international trade and finance. It can be taken as certain that the hearts of its leaders are not in this Egyptian game.

The Egyptian leader, as a matter of fact, seems to have invented a formula to have his cake and eat it. When he broke relations with Britain and West Germany some time ago, he arranged for both countries to keep staffs in Egypt who theoretically formed trade or consular missions. Ambassadors went home, but a species of diplomatic representation remained on both sides.

The frustration and bitterness of the Arab countries in this moment of defeat are understandable, but this does not make the severence of diplomatic relations with the United States either logical or sensible. When peace is restored and tempers have cooled, relations between the United States and the Arab countries surely can go back to normal. In expressing its "regrets," the Johnson Administration was indicating a readiness to start up again. The world is dangerous enough as it is without cutting off one of the essentials for peace and civilization: diplomacy.

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