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REPORT TO THE PEOPLE

by CONGRESSWOMAN

FLORENCE P. DWYER



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~~There are some who interpret the lack of mail and the absence of much Congressional debate on the Middle Eastern crisis as indicating the American people are either unaware of the danger or are trying to forget it.~~

I cannot accept either explanation. On the contrary, my experience both here and at home convinces me that the people and their representatives are fully aware of the difficulties surrounding us. They are so aware, in fact, that they recognize that ill-informed, partisan debate will contribute nothing at this time to a constructive resolution of the crisis.

The uncertainties of the Middle East are still the governing factors, and so it's a time for fact-finding, for careful negotiation, for maneuvering into a position where our influence can be most effective in finding a solution we can live with.

It is still, that is, time for restraint.

In our effort to understand what is happening in the Middle East, we have had a particularly good opportunity here to be kept informed. Each afternoon, Under-secretary of State Herter or Assistant Secretary Macomber conduct briefing sessions in the Foreign Affairs Committee for Congressmen interested in keeping abreast of developments. The sessions are, of course, secret ones. The Department officials review the day's happenings and answer any questions.

Unvarnished truth

I have attended several of these meetings and have been greatly impressed at the frankness and candor with which the unvarnished truth of the Middle East situation has been set forth. No attempt has been made to cover up unpleasant facts, or to do anything but show exactly how the Administration is approaching its difficult task, day by day.

It has been, to me, a remarkable example of Executive-Legislative cooperation in the most crucial area of Government today. Each session has reflected the give-and-take spirit, with State Department officials listening to the views of Congressmen and Congressmen considering the Administration position as it develops each day--without a trace of partisan conflict.

It's an ill wind-- as the old saying goes-- that doesn't blow someone some good. And one of the long-term benefits of the Middle East crisis may well turn out to be general recognition of the urgent need for a permanent United Nations Police Force.

The General Federation of Women's Clubs has once more taken the lead in this respect. In a statement issued here last week, the Federation's president urged establishment of a U.N. force "without further delay," and she recalled that this has been Federation policy ever since 1948.

In adopting and holding to this position, the G.F.W.C. has demonstrated the deep and very practical interest women are taking in world affairs. It is surely fitting that this is so, since women have more and more come to recognize that they can exercise great influence for good in the world and, consequently, have an obligation to do so.

The quality of the Federation's contribution has always been high, but its position that the U.N. needs sufficient military power to act as a deterrent against aggression and to move into a danger area whenever an emergency arises, reflects unusual awareness of the realities of world politics.

Broad agreement

The Senate just last week re-inforced its earlier resolution favoring creation of a U.N. police force by defeating on a roll-call vote an effort to undo this sound move. The vote of 66 to 14 is indicative of the broad agreement that this is a necessary next step in the fight to strengthen the United Nations as an effective tool in preserving international peace.

It remained for the new and tiny nation of Ghana, however, to do something practical toward this goal. Its Government announced last week, while its Prime Minister, Kwame Nkrumah was in the United States, that it would contribute one-third of its small army to a U.N. police force in the Middle East.

Another visiting Prime Minister also had an offer to make toward settlement of the crisis. Amintore Fanfani, Prime Minister of Italy, told the House last week that he came to Washington not to ask for help but to repay the assistance his country had received from the United States. In generous terms, he told us how greatly Italy appreciated American aid after World War II and how much it had contributed toward the revitalization of Italian political and economic life.

He explained that he had come to help mediate the conflict because Italy understood the Middle East and its good offices would be accepted there. He has subsequently proposed a three-point program whereby (1) the major world powers would agree not to exert pressure on Middle Eastern countries; (2) Middle East Governments would pledge non-interference in each others' affairs; and (3) a major economic effort would be made, through the United Nations, to raise the living standards of the Middle East on a no-strings-attached basis.

Greatly respected

The Italian Prime Minister is a small but dynamic man, and his long experience as practical politician and university professor has won him great respect throughout the world. His plan will be carefully considered, and considered-- I trust-- in the very spirit in which he told us it was offered:

"The frank exchange of opinion will re-invigorate our mutual collaboration. And this will continue to be the cornerstone of that edifice of civilization to which we are dedicated, in the service of our peoples, for peace in the world in the observance of that justice which God requires of men."

It has been said that crisis brings out the best in men. Here is certainly a case in point.