

British and the Russians to maintain a supply line there so that the Soviet Union could get supplies from the West by this route; which was one of the essential routes of communication between ourselves and Russia.

But, instead of being able to withdraw as we would have liked to do, and leave things to the British, you'll recall that President Roosevelt never really thought of the Middle East as a sphere of American interest; he was inclined to leave things to the British. When someone brought him a Middle Eastern problem he would say, "Why aren't the British handling that? Why bring it to me?" This attitude changed entirely in the events of 1946 and '47 when we saw Stalin pushing into this area, through Greece, through Turkey, through Iran, definitely making an attempt to take over those countries and establish satellite countries in the Middle East as he was already doing in Eastern Europe.

And when the British decided they could no longer hold the line in Greece and Turkey in 1947, we made the decision - the critical decision then - to step in and carry the bulk of the load of protecting the Middle East against the expansionist policy of the Soviet Union. And in a sense, we've been in that role ever since.

Now, in the years which have followed, certain changes have taken place in strategic concepts, and geography sometimes is changed by military technology. And perhaps we shouldn't call the Middle East the same kind of strategic area as we did in the old days when we considered it as an area to be contended in the kind of World War that was fought in World War I and World War II. The advent of nuclear weapons, delivery