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## Elmo H. Hutchison, 54, Is Dead; Director of U.S. Mideast Group

Special to The New York Times.

CAIRO, June 25 — Elmo H. Hutchison, Middle East director of the American Friends of the Middle East, drowned yesterday while swimming in an inlet of the Red Sea in Saudi Arabia. He was 54 years old.

Mr. Hutchison lived here since 1956 when he took charge of the Cairo office of his organization. The American Friends of the Middle East is a privately sponsored American organization whose purpose is to improve relations between the United States and countries of this part of the world.

In recent years Mr. Hutchison visited Arab countries throughout the region and was widely known in all the capitals of the Arab world.

From 1943 to 1945 he was gunnery officer aboard the U.S.S. Warren and took part in the amphibious assaults on Kwajalein, Saipan, Guam, Peleliu, Leyte and Lingayen Gulf.

He came to the Middle East in 1951 as a military observer with the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization. This was the organization set up to maintain the truce between Israel and the Arab countries after the war of 1948.

In 1952 Mr. Hutchison was named head of the Israel-Jordan Mixed Armistice Commission.

During his chairmanship there were a series of incidents involving destruction of border villages and loss of many lives on both sides.

Mr. Hutchison gave his account of the Arab-Israeli conflict of those years in book titled "Violent Truce." In this book the author also took note of Soviet maneuvering in the Middle East and recommended solutions serving American interests and averting war.

He had gone to Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, on business earlier this week.

Mr. Hutchison is survived by his widow, Thelma, and a son, Guy.

### Protest by Israel

During Mr. Hutchison's chairmanship of the Israel-Jordan Mixed Armistice Commission, Israel withdrew for seven months in 1954 in protest of his refusal to join in a vote condemning Jordan for the Scorpion Pass massacre in which 11 bus passengers were murdered on March 17, 1954.

Mr. Hutchison ruled there was insufficient evidence to condemn Jordan. In a report the next year he indicated that the crime might have been committed by dispossessed Negev Bedouins turned bandit.