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Front Page    Edit Page    Other Page

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IT'S LIKE THIS . . .

By ROBERT W. AKERS

AGAIN the President of the United States has been caught flatfooted and unwarned when a world crisis struck.

The Middle East explosion is one more failure of the American intelligence system in a 15-year series which began when the bombs came thundering down on Pearl Harbor.

In 1944 it was the Rattle of the Bulge that took American forces in Europe completely by surprise.

In June of 1950 it was the Red military thrust into South Korea.

A few months later it was Gen. MacArthur's assurance to President Truman that his intelligence reports showed the Chinese WOULD NOT enter the Korean War if MacArthur were permitted to drive clear to the Yalu River.

THESE are major examples of American intelligence failing to call the turn on events of vital importance to the nation. There also have been lesser ones.

This past week President Eisenhower made it clear he had had no forewarning of the elaborate scheme by which Britain, France and Israel arranged to open war on Egypt. The surprise to our State Department was so complete as to be humiliating.

There IS an agency which is supposed to keep the President, the State Department and the Defense Department informed of what goes on the world. It is surrounded by as much secrecy as the cloak-and-dagger police of any old-style European regime. Even the congressmen who appropriate the millions for its operation don't know how the money is spent. It is free from detailed questioning or investigation and it is headed by Allen Dulles, brother of the Secretary of State.

GRANTED that figuring what any nation plans to do next is a tough assignment. Still, a record of inability to forewarn as consistent as the one set up by our various intelligence arms since 1940 is disconcerting, to put it mildly.

What if an attack plan had been aimed at the United States, instead of Egypt?

It was a courteous gesture on President Eisenhower's part, making the official intelligence reports available to Adlai Stevenson during the campaign—but it begins to look as though a newspaper subscription would have provided more information.

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