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INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY

For Week Ending  
15 December 1948

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NEAR EAST/AFRICA BRANCH  
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## NEAR EAST/AFRICA BRANCH

## INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY

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## GREECE

Guerrillas still energetic: Although neither the Greek Army nor the guerrillas have undertaken large scale operations under the present winter conditions, their efforts to search out each other's weaknesses and to maneuver for position continue. The most significant aspect of the present situation is that guerrilla logistics appear to be as satisfactory as ever. Supplies are being trucked into the Vitsi triangle from both Albania and Yugoslavia, and the Grammos area, laboriously cleared by the army last summer, is again serving as a supply link between Albania and central Greece. Recently captured guerrilla equipment has included 75mm Skoda artillery pieces.

The guerrillas have also shown energy in their propaganda operations. In the actual battle zone the guerrillas have begun to use artillery time fire to disseminate their leaflets, while from behind the front Markos radio broadcasts to the Greek Army are emphasizing conciliation and urging the formation of unit "reconciliation committees" which would act to stop the war. While the Greeks cannot believe that Markos honestly wishes a reconciliation with Athens, after the successful guerrilla performance at Grammos and Vitsi many of them must wonder if they were right a year ago in believing that Markos' "peace" efforts were prompted entirely by weakness.

## TURKEY

Turks risk Arab enmity in peace efforts: Turkey has demonstrated the seriousness of its desire for an Arab-Zionist settlement by its willingness to serve, at the risk of incurring Arab displeasure, on the UN's three-power Palestine Conciliation Commission. Already confronted with hostile powers along a considerable portion of their frontier, the Turks have necessarily placed great stress on maintaining good relations with their Arab neighbors; Turkey voted against the partition of Palestine last year and in its subsequent actions has been careful to avoid any steps which might provoke Arab hostility. At the same time, however, Turkey has been concerned about the deleterious effect the Palestine dispute has had on Near East stability and about the opportunities it has provided for Soviet agitation. During the past year the Turkish Government made several efforts to persuade the Arabs that their interest would be best served by a Palestine settlement, but kept matters on a friendly, informal basis. Now Turkey, along with the US and France, will have to take the blame for any acts of the Commission to which the Arabs object.

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## PALESTINE

Prospects of the Palestine Conciliation Commission: The newly established Palestine Conciliation Commission (to be composed of representatives from the US, France, and Turkey) has been instructed by the General Assembly to assist the Arabs and Jews to achieve a settlement of all outstanding problems between them. The General Assembly recommended no basis for settlement, but by deleting all mention of the Bernadotte Report, implicitly reaffirmed its 1947 Partition Resolution. In pursuing this objective, the Conciliation Commission will be confronted with almost all of the multiple difficulties faced in turn by last winter's Palestine Commission, last summer's Truce Commission, by Count Bernadotte, and by his successor, Dr. Bunche, the present Acting Mediator. Although the Provisional Government of Israel is anxious to negotiate a settlement, there is considerable doubt as to whom it will negotiate with. The Lebanese Government refuses to negotiate while Israeli troops occupy areas of southern Lebanon. The present political crisis in Syria was caused in part by the failure of the government's Palestine policy, and it is extremely unlikely that any new government will either desire or be permitted to negotiate with Israel. Iraq still maintains from 8,000 to 10,000 troops in central Palestine, and its government continues to advocate concerted action by the Arab states to oppose Zionism. The Iraqi Government does not dare bring home an army that has failed to defeat the Zionists; it is, therefore, difficult to imagine on what basis Iraq could negotiate with Israel. Egypt refuses to negotiate while Israeli troops continue to control the Negeb, occupy Beersheba, and hold as virtual prisoners an Egyptian brigade at Falluja.

There is little doubt that Abdullah of Transjordan would like to negotiate a broad settlement with Israel. A local armistice in Jerusalem between Israeli and Arab Legion officers is working smoothly, and Abdullah has been urged by the recent conference of Palestinian Arab notables at Jericho to proclaim himself joint ruler of Palestine and Transjordan. On the basis of these two developments agreement between Israel and Transjordan might appear to offer hope for a broad settlement in Palestine.

Other members of the Arab League, however, strongly oppose the Jericho resolution. The Kings of Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Yemen, Azzam Pasha (the Arab League secretary general), the influential council of Ulemas of Al-Azhar University at Cairo, and the Governments of Syria and Lebanon have expressed their disapproval. It is doubtful whether Abdullah will act until they have modified their opposition, notwithstanding the Transjordan Parliament's endorsement of the Jericho resolution. If he were to assume the Palestine crown and attempt to negotiate with Israel against the express wishes of other League members, he could accomplish little and his annexation of Arab Palestine would be little

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more than a "paper deal." His Arab Legion occupies the Old City of Jerusalem and a relatively small area bounded by Ramallah on the north and by Hebron on the south. He is therefore in no position to negotiate either the Negeb or the Galilee issue. Moreover, he is not likely to receive encouragement at this time from the UK, which is anxious to avoid responsibility for any development opposed by most of the Arab League and which realized that Abdullah's authority in Palestine would be greatly limited. Eventually, the other Arab states may decide that it would be to their best interests to withdraw and let Abdullah bear the onus of treating with the Israelis and the responsibility for subsequent developments in Palestine.

Thus the Conciliation Commission faces a difficult task in trying to bring Arabs and Jews together without having any basis for reaching a settlement and in view of the refusal of most of the Arab states to negotiate with Israel. In effect, it will probably revert to a truce commission. It may be able to extend the present Jerusalem armistice into a demilitarization agreement for the area, establish an effective armistice in the Negeb, and persuade the Israeli forces to withdraw from southern Lebanon. However, it will probably have to ignore the question of boundaries and the continued presence in Palestine of the Arab armies.

## EGYPT

Dissolution of Ikhwan: Prime Minister Nokrashy's action in dissolving the Ikhwan al-Muslimin, an organization 500,000 violently nationalist and fanatically religious Moslems, is expected to strengthen Nokrashy's hand in dealing with other political opposition. Since the organization has been driven underground and must therefore restrict its activities, Nokrashy should also have (at least for the time being) greater success in maintaining public order. The government's sudden action came after a police investigation of a Cairo bombing turned up the Ikhwan's detailed plans for further disturbances. The political aims of the plotters appear to have been the overthrow of the Nokrashy Government and possibly its replacement by a Faldist Cabinet which would presumably be more tolerant of the Ikhwan's activities. Dissolution of the Ikhwan in Egypt probably will not have any effect on branches of the organization in other Arab countries.

## SYRIA

Arslan may form government: There are indications that Emir Adel Arslan, President Qumathi's latest candidate for the Syrian Premiership, may succeed in forming a government. Arslan is politically experienced, intelligent, well educated, and intensely nationalistic; if he becomes Prime Minister, he will undoubtedly be a strong factor in establishing

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Syria's future orientation although President Quwatli will probably continue to determine basic policy. While Arslan's anti-foreign sentiments augur ill for Syrian cooperation with the Western powers, they should also lessen the possibility of a Syro-Soviet rapprochement. His consistent opposition to any form of compromise regarding Palestine and his advocacy of all-out measures against Israel may well increase the difficulties of reaching Arab-Jewish settlement.

## IRAN

Saed government squeaks through: After three weeks of debate on Prime Minister Saed's Cabinet and program, a bare majority of the Majlis finally gave Saed a vote of confidence. Both the press and the Majlis were friendly to Saed when he took office a little over a month ago, but they soon turned against him because of his choice of Cabinet ministers. The resignation of several of the more objectionable ministers evidently satisfied enough deputies to produce the present vote, in which only Abbas Eskandari, the leading leftist in the Majlis, actually opposed the government. However, the unwillingness of a number of important factions to give their support to Saed will probably force him into time-consuming efforts to placate them if he is to survive as Prime Minister. Many members of the Qavam group, largest in the Majlis, abstained, as did Minister of War Ahmedi's Unity faction, and a score of other deputies remained out of the chamber. Moreover, the Shah and the army apparently failed to give Saed the same backing rendered his predecessor, Hajir.

## INDIA-PAKISTAN

India's new C-in-C: The impending departure of General Sir Roy Bucher, the British officer now commanding the Indian Army, increases the possibility of open warfare between India and Pakistan. General Bucher, who is to relinquish the office of Commander-in-Chief on 15 January, has exerted a moderating influence on Indian military policy and with the cooperation of his British opposite number in Pakistan has kept to a minimum direct encounters between the Indian Army and Pakistan's regular troops in Kashmir. His successor, Lieutenant General K. M. Cariappa, gives the impression of being vain, temperamentally unstable, and lacking in sound military judgement; there is a danger that in attempting to give palatable military advice to the Indian Government he may fail to give due consideration to all of the military and political factors involved and that he may use his new position to seek the personal glory that a speedy termination of the Kashmir campaign would provide. The need for a prompt political

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solution of the Kashmir problem is particularly urgent at this time, not only because of General Cariappa's appointment, but also because the snow storms which are currently restricting military operations in Kashmir are expected to give way to clear weather by the beginning of the year. Even if India fails to start a clear-cut offensive operation, increased Indian pressure may result in a "preventive" offensive by an already nervous Pakistan.

NOTED IN BRIEF

While there are no significant strikes in progress in Greece, there is considerable labor unrest. The new Labor Minister has indicated that he will be less firm than his predecessor in defending the wage freeze. Meanwhile, it has been learned that government officials are receiving letters from soldiers at the front urging measures to protect their families against rising costs. . . . . A petition demanding independence for the large Kurdish minorities of Turkey, Iran, and Iraq has now been presented to the UN by members of the small group of organizations which have perennially agitated for an independent Kurdistan. The petition will probably be pigeonholed as coming from a non-official source unless the USSR, whose agents are assiduously attempting to stir up Kurdish unrest, decides to sponsor the petition in order to argue the existence of a Kurdish "problem."

. . . . . The first two predictions for the 25 January Israeli elections, from Goldmann in London and the Press Club in Tel Aviv, agree that Mapai will come out ahead. Estimates give Mapai approximately 30-36% of the votes, the orthodox religious parties 18-20%, socialist pro-Soviet Mapam 18%, Beigin's right-wing, anti-partition Freedom Party 10-15%, Communist 3-5%, and other 7%. . . . .

The recent religious installation of Archimandrite Leonides and Deputy Father Asaya in the Russian Orthodox Church at Ein Karim (near Jerusalem) extends the authority of the Moscow patriarchate to Palestine, where since World War I it has had no physical control. Since the establishment of Israel, however, the USSR has been conducting a quiet, steady campaign to win control over Russian Church property within Jewish-occupied territory, including Jerusalem. Soviet penetration of the Russian Orthodox Church in Palestine, aided by the tacit approval of the PGI as shown by the attendance of Israeli officials at the installation, has succeeded in forcing many Russian priests who oppose the Moscow archbishop to flee from Israeli-held areas, taking refuge in many cases in the Arab-held Old City of Jerusalem. . . . .

Former German General Von Schlavitz, who recently arrived in Damascus with four other German officers, has been appointed Commanding Officer of Armored and Artillery Battalions in Syria. There are now about 235 German officers (former SS men) serving in the Syrian Army. . . . .

. . . . . Riad Solh, the Lebanese Premier, has strongly urged US

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representatives in Paris against pushing Israel's application for UN membership this year. Riad Bey stated that, to do so, would jeopardize any chance the Conciliation Commission might have of negotiating a settlement of the Palestine issue. . . . . AMINCO (American Independent Oil Co.) is attempting to expand its oil interests. Already in possession of the Kuwait half interest of the Kuwait Neutral Zone and having obtained preferential rights to the offshore area of the Kuwait half, AMINCO is negotiating with Ibn Saud for the Saudi half interest in the Zone. Ibn Saud is delaying the negotiations, ostensibly because of the Palestine issue but actually, it is believed, in an attempt to gain better terms. . . . . The prospective allocation of southern Eritrea to Ethiopia by the UN creates a serious problem for the French Somaliland port of Djibouti, which is economically dependent on the monopoly it has traditionally held over Ethiopia's foreign commerce. The absorption of southern Eritrea would provide Ethiopia a seaport of its own, Massawa, and the French might be forced to establish a free port at Djibouti in order to retain enough of the Ethiopian trade (and lure enough of the Indian Ocean-Red Sea trade from the free port of Aden) to ward off stagnation.

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