

NEAR EAST/SOUTH BRANCH  
OFFICE OF REPORTS AND ESTIMATES  
CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

WORKING PAPER

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NEAR EAST/AFRICA BRANCH

INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY

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For Week Ending  
31 August 1949

GENERAL

Future bloodshed in Levant? The conspiratorial ferment aroused by Syria's two coups d'etat during the past six months is still strong and is threatening not only the stability of various Arab governments but also the lives of several Arab leaders. A number of Syrian Army officers, who were at one time members of the Syrian Popular Party and who were directly involved in the liquidation of President Zaim and Prime Minister Barazi last month, have now joined with remnants of the Lebanese branch of the Syrian Popular Party (whose leader, Anton Saadeh, was recently executed by the Lebanese Government) in a plot to assassinate the President, Prime Minister, and other high officials of the Lebanese Government. However, these same Syrian officers, to whom the present Syrian Government is indebted for its position, are themselves in danger of being assassinated by relatives and tribal followers of Zaim and Barazi. Thus it is possible that blood-feuding will invade the highest political realms in both Syria and Lebanon and disrupt indefinitely the political stability of both countries.

GREECE

Grammos results: The success which Greek National Forces are having in driving the guerrillas out of the Grammos salient, following a similar operation in the Vitsi area in mid-August and lesser governmental gains along the Yugoslav border and in the Beles area, represents a severe setback to the rebels. The end of organized guerrilla activity is not yet necessarily in sight; in Albania alone, perhaps as many as 12,000 guerrillas are available for recommitment, and the guerrilla command is still capable of infiltrating them across the Greek border in units as large as 1,000 or more to supplement the destructive efforts of the guerrilla bands in central Greece, whose strength has remained relatively unchanged since early summer in the absence of government troops needed for the major border offensives. Nevertheless, in losing the Vitsi and Grammos areas the guerrillas have not only been deprived of their two major fortified positions in Greece but have also lost control of the territory best suited for the infiltration of supplies and personnel into central Greece. Provided that the Greek Army can strike a proper balance between

efforts to control the Albanian frontier and anti-guerrilla operations in the interior, its prospects for effecting a steady attrition of the guerrilla movement during the coming months are relatively good.

Under present circumstances, the guerrillas and their Soviet sponsors may well decide against an attempt to resume large-scale military operations in the immediate future. There are already some indications that the Soviet bloc may become slightly more circumspect in providing support to the movement; both the Tirana radio and Moscow have just quoted an Albanian order to intern armed Greeks--"monarcho-fascists and democrats alike"--on Albanian soil, and while no special preparations have been made for a resumption of the peace offensive at the impending General Assembly session, Moscow has alluded to coming elections in Greece as if more nearly normal times might soon return to the country. It would be difficult for the Kremlin to go so far as to agree to end the fighting in Greece, in view of the grave loss of prestige it would sustain unless the Greek Communist Party were unexpectedly offered some major concession, such as the right to participate in the next elections. The guerrilla command may therefore make some propaganda gestures toward peace and then settle on a program of minor sabotage and terrorist activity, meanwhile husbanding the bulk of its strength until next spring, in the hope that new major efforts might then be justified by termination of the Tito affair and an absolute or relative decline in the Greek Army's present strength advantage.

#### TURKEY

More furore on elections: Now that Turkish opposition parties have wrested the draft of a new electoral law from the present administration, they are beginning to realize that there is a wide gulf between a fair election law and fair elections when the party in power has long been entrenched at every governmental level. Changes of sharp practice in electoral matters are now being bandied about on all sides. Both government and opposition papers are claiming illegal interference with Council elections in Yalvaç. Democratic Party meetings have just been held throughout Turkey in sorrowful recollection of the government party's unlawful acts during the 1946 elections. The secretary of the Independent Democrats' has pointed out that the new electoral bill, by providing for final approval of election returns by the Grand National Assembly, runs directly opposite to the promise of judicial control over the accuracy of returns. In spite of denial by the Minister of the Interior, rumors persist that the Governor of Istanbul, who apparently insisted on trying to enforce honest elections in 1946 in the area under his jurisdiction, will be shifted to another post.

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IRAN

Two new border incidents: Following a period of comparative quiet two incidents of possible significance have occurred on the Irano-Soviet frontier. Four members of the Iranian Army, who reportedly crossed the border on 25 July in response to a Soviet invitation, are apparently being held as hostages against the release of three Soviet Army personnel who escaped to Iran in mid-July. Moreover, the abduction of eleven soldiers during the armed attack on 20 August, against an Iranian post in the disputed Atrek River area east of the Caspian Sea, may have been designed to increase the number of hostages. The Minister of War has indicated that the Iranian Government, which has officially protested the recent incidents, might refer the matter to the UN (which would probably not be done until Iran has exhausted all diplomatic means of obtaining the release of the captives). Regardless of the outcome, it is unlikely that Iran will be coerced by the Soviets into repatriating the Soviet Army escapees.

NOTED IN BRIEF

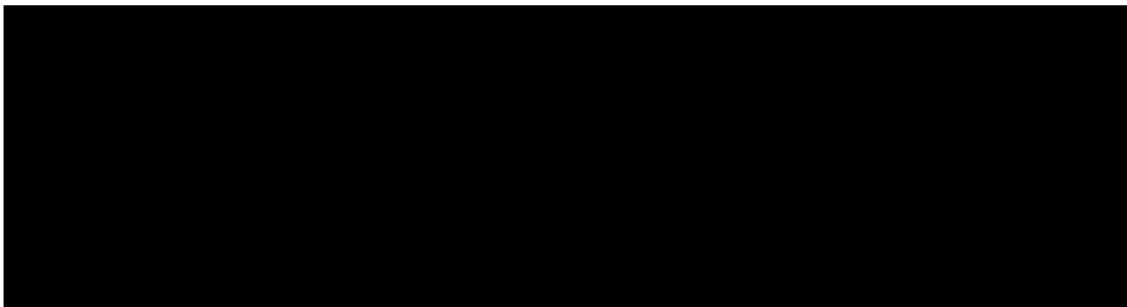
Turkish doubts of the sincerity of the new Syrian Government's protestations of friendship, which appear to be responsible for the reported sudden return from Damascus of General Orbay and his mission to the Syrian Army, have been stimulated by Syria's cancellation of an agreement to send 100,000 tons of wheat to Turkey, on the ground that the harvest was too poor to provide the tonnage for Turkey.

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The Turkish opposition paper Zafer reports dissatisfaction among farmers over the government's method of selling ECA tractors to them. Although the government does not have to pay for the tractors before 1956, it has stipulated that installment purchases (specially arranged through the Agricultural Bank) must be paid up by 1952 or 1953. In the minds of some farmers and opposition party members this adds up to an under-cover form of domestic loan.

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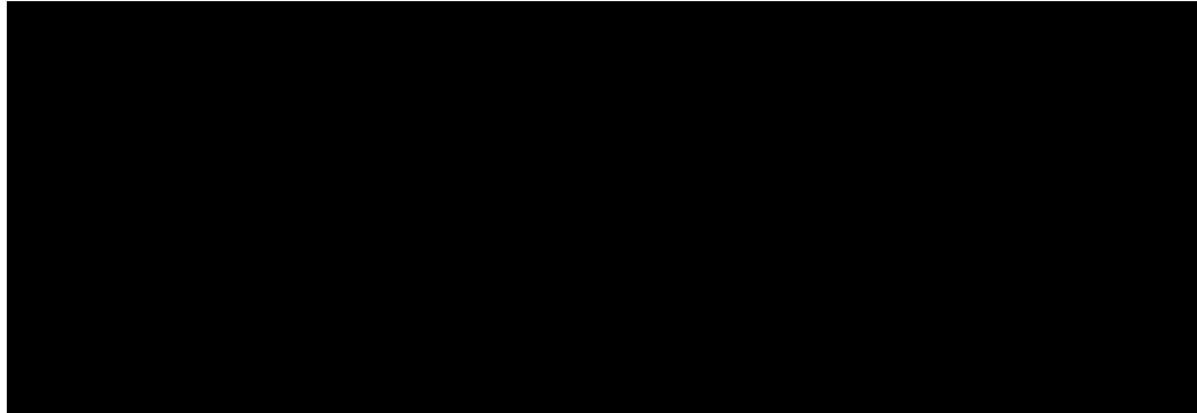
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Increased immigration to Israel may result from Poland's promise to follow the lead of Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, and Yugoslavia in allowing almost unrestricted emigration of Jewish refugees. If the Polish Government carries out its promise, only Rumania and Hungary (the two eastern European nations with the largest Jewish populations) will be left to continue the rigid restriction of Jewish emigration, a policy formerly in force throughout the satellite countries.

\* \* \*

A new Egyptian cabinet consisting entirely of independents may take over the government in Egypt before the autumn parliamentary elections if current interparty friction with Premier Sirry's coalition cabinet should increase. The Saadists--and, to a less extent, the Liberal-Constitutionalists--are apparently seriously concerned that the Wafd, Egypt's major party, may either extend its prestige in the present government or in some way influence the handling of the elections to Wafdist advantage. If the new officials whom the Premier is expected to bring into the government soon are generally pro-Wafdist rather than neutral, or if the Wafd proves successful, for instance, in setting up election districts to its own political advantage, then the Saadists and the Liberal-Constitutionalists might easily bolt the cabinet. In such an event, King Farouk would probably call upon Prime Minister Sirry Pasha again to form a neutral cabinet, this time composed of independents alone, until the election results are finally obtained.

\* \* \*

The first attempt at Arab refugee resettlement is now taking place in the Jordan Valley near Jericho under the guidance of Musa Alami, head of the London Arab office and leading Arab intellectual. King Abdullah of

Jordan has approved rent-free use of state lands, and the first wells have been dug for the mud-hut villages where 3,000 refugees are expected to be housed. If all goes well, houses and land will be ready for the refugees in a year's time. Musa Alami is using money originally donated by Iraq for the Arab Office, but exchange currency to buy US equipment is needed as well; the services of irrigation and agriculture experts will also be required. Although this project is small in scope, it may act as a useful guide to those who in the future will be faced with the responsibility for resettling the 800,000 refugees.

\* \* \*

Iranian Foreign Minister Hekmat may postpone or cancel his projected trip to the US in view of his failure to obtain prior assurance that he will get US aid for his country. While Prime Minister Saed, who thought Iran's foreign affairs could be handled more satisfactorily if Hekmat were out of the country for a while, would probably be disappointed by such a development, the Iranian Ambassador, who thinks that Hekmat's presence in Washington could in no way help the Iranian cause, would be delighted. In any case the dilemma in which Hekmat has been placed will tend to make him more difficult to deal with whether in Tehran or in Washington.

\* \* \*

The chiefs of three major tribes of northwestern Iran, the Jalali, Shikkak and Harki, have reportedly agreed to an invasion defense plan calling for the concentration of their estimated 50,000 riflemen in Jalali territory near the Soviet border, from which they would conduct a delaying action southward to the Ruvandiz gorge area in Iraq. While the Shikkak and Harki, who are generally hostile to the Soviets, would probably attempt to execute this plan if the occasion arose, it is doubtful whether the co-operation of the Jalali, [REDACTED] could be depended upon.

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Recent changes in key Seven Year Plan personnel, made with the consent of the Shah, presage a more vigorous prosecution of the plan and a greater likelihood that US advisers (Overseas Consultants Incorporated) will be employed in its execution.

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