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REC-538

Subject: [redacted] Report No: [redacted]
of [redacted] [redacted]
[redacted] [redacted]
[redacted] [redacted]
Place Acquired: Cairo, Egypt Date of Information: 1-1-1948
Date Acquired: 23 August 1948
Evaluation: Para 1, 4 Date of Report: 28 August 1948
Para 2, 3
Source: [redacted] (Para 1, 4)
(Para 2, 3)

1. On 1 August 1948, the Cairo police in a series of quick and widespread raids, seized large stores of arms and munitions early in the forenoon and storage spaces of buildings occupied by Grand Mufti Sa'ad Abd al-HAMID and his retainers. The buildings were located in the district of Cairo. So large were the quantities of explosives involved that it took from four to five days to transfer them to government storage.

2. The seizures were in line with a policy adopted several months ago of confiscating supplies of arms and munitions in the possession of private individuals and groups. The extent to which use of explosives for terrorist purposes could endanger individual life and threaten public order itself was dramatically illustrated during the last six months by such varied events as the bombing of the house of Grand leader Mustafa al-NAHIS; the accidental detonation within Edwan al-Hussein meeting place of explosive stored therein; the bombing of the Jewish-owned apartment stores Cleural and Oreo. (Although the latter was officially attributed to a land mine dropped by an unseen, unheard Jewish plane travelling at an estimated speed of 180 miles per hour at an estimated altitude of 6000 feet (1800), foreign observers generally, and Egyptians when speaking candidly, attributed the explosion to a bomb placed in position by persons unknown or at least thus far unpublished. The wave of savage and frequently mortal attacks by mobs upon Jews and others thought to be Jews, following the Cleural bombing, while emotionally satisfying to the mobsters, was diplomatically embarrassing to the Egyptian Government.)

3. It had been easy during the latter part of the war, and during the months thereafter, to acquire sizeable quantities of abandoned munitions from the Western desert. Political and actionist groups were known to be acquiring such arms. As public security in Palestine deteriorated during the early months of 1948, a miscellany of private groups in Egypt began almost openly to amass stores of arms for the ostensible purpose of rendering assistance to the combatant Arabs of Palestine.

4. That arms so acquired might ultimately be used against the regime in Egypt or at least in a manner detrimental to public order, was appreciated by the government. A series of ministerial decrees and orders were issued imposing penalties for the unlicensed possession of certain types of firearms and

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explosives. It is now reported that a military proclamation will soon be issued, making the unlicensed possession of explosives a felony, rather than a misdemeanor. Persons accused of violating the proclamation will be tried before military courts.

((Cairo Note: Although the press generally carried stories of the discovery of arms and munitions, only Al-Nasr of 11 August is known to have stated that the stores were found on premises occupied by the Grand Mufti. British security sources have informed Breakwater that they also have received information that the raids were made upon houses of the Mufti, B-2))).

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