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Possible Appointment of
Samir Rifai as Jordan's Next
Prime Minister

Secret ^{WVA-446}

Current

Amman

29 September 1953

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30 September 1953

NOSTRIL %

1. Prior to King Husayn's recent departure for Istanbul and Europe, he stated to Samir Rifai that Jordan is badly in need of a man strong enough to hold its faltering government together and hinted that Rifai might be the man to fill the bill. Rifai inferred from this that a tentative offer of the post of Prime Minister had been made.
2. Samir Rifai is widely regarded as one of the two Jordanian leaders capable of organizing and maintaining a strong and effective government (the other being Tawfiq Abul Huda, a recognized British favorite, presently not acceptable to the Jordanian public.) Rifai is competent, hard working, not violently anti-foreign, and possibly better disposed toward the Americans than toward the British. %%

Source Comments:

% Source obtained this information in a confidential conversation with Abbas Mirzih, a prominent Circassian leader and Government official concerning whom information has previously been submitted. Source states that Mirzih is a close friend of Samir Rifai and that he (Mirzih) hates the British.

%% NOSTRIL states that Subject once stated to him that "Point IV would make Jordan a paradise if it were not for British interference."

Sub-Source Comment:

NOSTRIL also reported that Mirzih made the statements paraphrased in the following paragraph. They are presented as a "Sub-Source Comment" because while they are quite probably Mirzih's honest opinions, they may not be in every respect true.

Queen Zain is a close friend of Jordan's current Prime Minister Fawzi Mulqi. It is anticipated that the Mulqi Government, a weak one, will fall shortly after the return of King Husayn and the opening of Parliament on or about 1 November 1953. The Queen represents Mulqi's main support at this point and she may make (over)

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NJA-446,1110 September 1953, Page 2

a determined effort to prevent the acceptance of his resignation. The Queen's ultimate strategy for insuring British compliance with her demands is to threaten to leave the country, telling the world at large that she was driven out by the British. Rifai was one of the individuals who helped establish Amir Naif as Regent immediately following the assassination of King Abdullah. British Ambassador Kirkbride begged Rifai to keep the position of Prime Minister and reform the Cabinet. Rifai refused because he did not wish to put himself in the position of being a tool of the British.

Source Comment: (The following interesting, if somewhat disjointed, analysis, is purely NOSTRIL's own, and is offered only for what it may be worth. NOSTRIL is, after all, in close touch with Said Mufti, Abbas Mirzih, and certain other prominent Jordanian politicians.)

NOSTRIL stated that the above report is not necessarily in conflict with his previous report to the effect that the King had offered the Premiership to Said Mufti. It is quite conceivable that the King made a specific point-blank offer to Mufti and at the same time made a tentative or exploratory offer to Rifai. NOSTRIL believes that Mufti will be given first chance at the position but reiterates that Mufti may well refuse it on the ground that he will have no connection with a Government which is to be in power during a period in which negotiations with Israel or the possibility thereof might be opened. If the British conclude that the country is in too weak a condition, because of its sinking economy and past maladministration, they may insist on Rifai as Prime Minister in order to bolster and stabilize the seat of authority.

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