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NEAR EAST/AFRICA BRANCH

INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY

For Week Ending
11 August 1948

Vol. III No. 31

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GREECE

The Greek Army, having compressed the 7,000 guerrillas in the Grammos area against the Albanian frontier, is now poised for the final push of its eight-week-old offensive. Guerrilla organization has not yet collapsed in the face of mounting rebel casualties, as is indicated by the fact that the double envelopment which the Greek Army has just completed failed to result in the wholesale capture of prisoners or materiel. The Markos forces are expected to fight desperately to defend their remaining foothold on Greek soil. Nevertheless, although the guerrillas benefit by inner lines of communication and shortened supply routes, the weight of manpower which the Greek Army can now bring to bear along a greatly shortened battle front should finally prove decisive. The Albanian frontier now constitutes the only certain escape route for the guerrillas, although by accepting them Albania would be violating international law and a specific injunction of the UN General Assembly. It is probable that the UN Special Committee on the Balkans will warn Albania to that effect, so that if guerrilla forces driven over the border were later to reappear in Greece, Albanian responsibility would be more clearly established.

TURKEY

Protracted maneuvers to replace the aging Maximos as Oecumenical Patriarch of the Greek Orthodox Church appears finally to be succeeding. For more than a year a large number of the Metropolitans within the Holy Synod has attempted to force Maximos from the Patriarchate, which represents titular leadership over Greek Orthodox congregations throughout the world. The anti-Maximos Metropolitans have addressed frequent letters to the Greek Government on the subject and have repeatedly called for convocation of the full Synod to compel his resignation. Every time their plans were made known to Maximos, however, the old man reacted violently, and twice he had to be dissuaded from actually dissolving the Synod. In the past Maximos has been aided by the Greek Ambassador to Turkey, who on occasion berated the conspirators and advised them to request forgiveness of the Patriarch. It now appears that even the Greek Ambassador no longer hopes to delay the Patriarch's resignation, and its submission is expected to take place in the next few days.

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The most likely victor in the patriarchal elections which will follow within two or three weeks of Maximos' resignation remains Athenagoras, the Metropolitan of North and South America. The Greek Government has long considered Athenagoras the most desirable successor to Maximos, and within the last week the Turkish Government has indicated that it has no objections to him. Both governments feel that Maximos has been incapable of dealing with recent Soviet efforts to use the Church as a political instrument. With the powerful support of these two governments, Athenagoras is virtually assured of obtaining the Patriarchate. One remaining practical difficulty, however, is the fact that the Patriarch must be a Turkish citizen. Turkey is reluctant to confer citizenship on Athenagoras until the preliminary arrangement for his election are completed.

PALESTINE

Israel's growing consciousness of its military strength may lead to the resumption of the Palestine war in the near future. The Jews have expanded their territorial claims and appear prepared to back up these claims with armed force, even in defiance of the UN. The PGI (Provisional Government of Israel) demands not only the territory allocated to the Jews by the UN partition recommendation but also the purely Arab areas which the Jewish forces have conquered. Moreover, the PGI has failed to cooperate with UN Mediator Bernadotte, particularly as regards to the demilitarization of Jerusalem, and is reportedly working out plans with Jewish extremist forces to capture the whole city. The Arabs, although professing bitterness over the "imposed" truce, do not show any strong or united inclination to resume fighting, and some leaders (like Abdullah) have expressed the hope that a compromise with the Jews might be worked out. They will, however, despite their military weakness, attempt to defend the areas they now occupy, particularly the Old City of Jerusalem. Although their certain defeat and probable expulsion from Palestine would temporarily solve the Palestine issue, such a "solution" would raise other issues in the Middle East of far greater potential danger to world peace and US security.

ARAB STATES

The minority stand taken by Syria and Iraq in the Arab League, in which they opposed acceptance of the current UN cease-fire order for Palestine, is apparently drawing these two countries closer together. Reports from both Baghdad and Damascus indicate that several meetings between representatives of these countries have already taken place, with additional visits

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scheduled for the near future. The Iraqi Propaganda Chief has spoken of Syrian hopes for "closer Syro-Iraqi relations based on military and political union." Damascus newspapers also hint at the possibilities of a military alliance. The suggestion of political union is interesting. At first glance the idea of a Greater Syria without King Abdullah of Transjordan bears some resemblance to a performance of "Hamlet" without the Prince. It must be remembered, however, that one of the greatest stumblingblocks in the furtherance of the Greater Syria plan has been Syrian distrust of Abdullah himself. If this factor is removed, or at least pushed far into the background, it may well happen that a realization of their common political and economic interests will bring about a significant strengthening of Syro-Iraqi ties.

INDIA-PAKISTAN

The dispute over Hyderabad's accession to India appears to have reached the breaking point. The Nizam has made conciliatory gestures, but he is apparently controlled by extremist elements in his own government which are determined not to accede to India. Moreover, certain leaders have responded to Indian threats with the assertion that Hyderabad's army is fully prepared to fight. Indian Army units have already occupied two villages in Hyderabad, and the Indian Minister for Home Affairs has recommended that British nationals be evacuated from the state immediately. Unless the Nizam accepts a peaceful accession, it is likely that India will settle the dispute by force. Such action on the part of India would probably be followed by intensified communal discord and a consequent widening of the breach between India and Pakistan.

In Kashmir, military action has been reduced to patrol activity. Although neither Indian nor Pakistan forces have withdrawn from their positions, both governments will probably postpone further action until the UN Kashmir Commission has published the details of its cease-fire proposal.

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