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NEAR EAST/AFRICA DIVISION

Vol. V No. 14

INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY

For Week Ending
12 April 1950

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NEAR EAST/AFRICA INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY

GREECE

Tito remains cool: The chances for an early improvement of Yugoslav-Greek relations, specifically with regard to re-opening the Salonika-Belgrade rail line, have been sharply reduced by post-election developments in Greece. Tito's recent statement that he was prepared to cooperate with a Plastiras Government under certain conditions obviously does not apply to the present Venizelos Cabinet, which the Yugoslav press has severely attacked for its dependence on rightist support. Although Tito would be cautious in any event about developing closer relations with Greece, he undoubtedly feels it politically unwise to modify his present cool, critical attitude toward Greece unless some government free of "monarcho-fascist" influence emerges. With the formation of such a government, Tito would probably feel justified in resuming at least limited economic ties with Greece.

TURKEY

Where the parties stand: An examination of the platforms of Turkey's major parties indicates fairly clearly that the country's domestic and foreign policies will continue without startling changes even if the opposition Democratic Party (which has recently suffered from internal dissension) does unexpectedly succeed in upsetting the ruling People's Republican Party at the national elections four weeks hence. Turkey's present foreign policies have not only the wholehearted support of the Democrats but also the backing of the Nation Party, the only other party which has even an outside chance of winning many seats, if any at all. In the domestic field, opposition denunciation of the government for allegedly unconstitutional and high-handed actions in violation of civil liberties has recently become noticeably more moderate in tone, doubtless because the government has taken such criticism to heart and put into effect a number of the reforms demanded by Turkey's newly-formed opposition parties. While both the major parties claim to champion the cause of individual enterprise in economic affairs, it is manifest that state capitalism will be retained in Turkey whichever wins. Probably the Democrats would go somewhat farther and faster than the PRP in giving Turkish private capital a limited chance to become productive and nationally beneficial. DP leader Bayar has suggested that an atmosphere be created which will prove helpful to private enterprise, check allegedly extravagant governmental operation of the etatist system, and correct

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the abuses of what he regards as an irresponsible and inefficient bureaucracy. In rebuttal, government spokesmen point to the great promise of national economic rehabilitation now discernible under ECA-supported programs, for which the PRP understandably claims all the credit it can, and counter-charge that the DP speaks in generalities and has nothing specific to offer. Insofar as one issue is concerned--labor--the accusation is unjust: the DP firmly demands that labor be given the right to strike, as against the equally positive government view that, under beneficent PRP leadership and in view of Turkey's proximity to a large and menacing neighbor, to grant labor the right to strike now would be both unnecessary and dangerous.

Both parties appear to feel some legitimate apprehension lest Moslem religious sentiment be used by the somewhat inchoate and immoderate Nation Party as bait to catch votes. Nation Party spokesmen might well accuse the PRP of not going far enough in its recent relaxation of rigid state control over religion in a laicized nation and thus pick up votes among the faithful, notably in provinces near the southern border. Such appeals to the electorate will have to be carefully worded, however, if NP speakers wish to avoid the long arms of stern Turkish law.

Controversy concerning the use or suppression of violence has not died down, particularly since President Inönü is making it a major theme of his election speeches. Inönü's warnings against violence have evoked promises by Bayar, at least, that the Democrats will be law-abiding. In the last analysis, however, much will depend upon how carefully local officials--particularly those who favor the government party--resist any temptation they may have to tamper with the ballots. Although the Turk has been accustomed to being pushed around (provided it is done by duly constituted authorities in what he accepts as a proper and customary manner) he has now been told by both the government and opposition that mishandling of his electoral privileges this time would be most improper. If it happens, he will object most strenuously.

If Bayar wins: Since there is a possibility that the opposition Democratic Party may win the forthcoming national elections--although all US observers so far have reported that the government party will almost certainly stay in power--the question arises as to how well the Democrats could conduct the nation's affairs. The answer, based largely upon the record of the

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party's top leaders, is that they are probably capable of doing a good job, although doubtless they would make mistakes and would have considerable difficulty at first in finding efficient men for all the major and minor posts that would have to be filled. Celal Bayar, the Democratic leader, is a former Prime Minister, one of Turkey's outstanding administrators, and, incidentally, one of the very few former prominent politicians in Turkey who was once a member of parliament under the defunct imperial Ottoman regime still active in political affairs. As a cabinet minister in the early days of the Republic, and as the first head of one of the most powerful state-owned "banks," Bayar played an outstanding role in the creation of the Turkish system of state capitalism-- which some observers very mistakenly appear to believe he now intends to destroy. Fuat Köprülü, a potential Democratic foreign minister (or even prime minister if Bayar should prefer the presidency), is one of Turkey's leading figures in the fields of literature and history and a member of the Ottoman Empire's most famous family of statesmen. Adnan Menderes, who would probably get the principal economic post in the government, is a wealthy landowner from Western Anatolia who has been his party's chief spokesman on financial and economic matters in the National Assembly for the past four years. Another prospective cabinet member is Refik Koraltan, the fourth of the quadrumvirate of deputies who founded the Democratic Party, while the veteran Refik Ince, who has become prominent in the party although not at present a member of the Assembly, might possibly be given the post of Minister of Justice, one he held during the nationalist struggle for independence before the proclamation in 1923 of the Turkish Republic. What would happen if the Democrats won and if Bayar chose to be prime minister rather than president is more difficult to predict. One possibility is that the presidency might be offered to Ali Fuat Cebesoy, who was one of the founders of the republic, has held cabinet rank, and has presided over the National Assembly. Cebesoy, although not a member of the Democratic Party, recently resigned from the government party and, if a high enough position were offered him, might presumably be coaxed into accepting it. Cebesoy's occupancy of the top-ranking position would be in keeping with Turkey's military tradition, inasmuch as he is a retired army general with a brilliant record of military leadership in World War I and in the War of Independence.

IRAN

The Mansur Cabinet: Just what the Mansur Government will accomplish is problematical. The recently formed cabinet consists mostly of seasoned veterans of Iran's political

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merry-go-round chosen primarily for proved political ability, although they are, with few exceptions, men of good reputation. A balance to Prime Minister Mansur's opportunism may well be provided by Foreign Minister Hosein Ala, especially in Irano-Soviet relations. Ala is the outstanding member of the new cabinet. As ambassador in Washington, he worked diligently to strengthen Iran's relations with the West, and he may be expected to demand full authority in the conduct of Iran's foreign relations. The Prime Minister himself has executive ability, but he has a reputation for corruptness and is not likely to institute reforms necessary for permanent economic and social betterment. Unless the Shah, who is apparently entirely responsible for Mansur's appointment, presses Mansur to act, the government may fall into a state of political inertia, as previous governments have done. Moreover, since Mansur is a "Shah's man," the Shah's own prestige, which has been declining as economic deterioration continues, will suffer further if he permits the Mansur Government to flounder.

NOTED IN BRIEF

The death of Marshal Fevzi Cakmak is particularly unfortunate from the viewpoint of the Nation Party, which has thus been deprived in the middle of the election campaign of the great prestige of having Turkey's respected and only Marshal as its nominal leader. Unless some other national figure can be persuaded to accept the post, Hikmet Bayur (founder and real leader of the party) is likely to take over the party's titular leadership himself.

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The ending of the strike at the Tripoli refinery of the Iraq Petroleum Company (IPC) was accomplished on 3 April. The strike was touched off by a report that 1,000 of the 4,000 workers were to be discharged. Moreover, the IPC union members objected strongly to the employment of Palestinian Arab refugees and British personnel formerly connected with the Haifa refinery. The Lebanese and Palestinian workers have apparently resolved their difficulties, but Arab employees remain aligned against the 400 British workers. Although the IPC union is non-Communist and the strikers do not appear to have been influenced by Communist labor groups, agitation against the British, particularly in the oil industry, is in keeping with the local Communist line. Lebanese Communists may be expected to exploit this xenophobic tendency and increasing unemployment.

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The transfer of the administration of Somalia (formerly Italian Somaliland) from the UK to Italy took place without incident on 1 April. Little friction is expected to develop between the new administration and the native population; the Italians will probably make every effort to conduct a model administration and to improve the lot of the Somalis, and even the explosive Somali Youth League has adopted a "wait and see" policy toward the administration. Nevertheless, the unsettled border between Ethiopia and Somalia is a potential source of danger in view of conflicting Italian, Ethiopian, and Somali interests in the area.

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Former Iranian Prime Minister Qavam, despite his age and ill health, appears determined to re-enter the Iranian political arena. For some months Qavam has allegedly been conniving with Tudeh Party members in Paris, and he recently sent a letter to the Shah strongly challenging any attempt on the part of the latter to obtain veto power over parliament. Should Qavam, who still has a considerable following in Iran, be permitted to return to Tehran, he may well attempt to regain political control of the country by opportunistically soliciting the support of Tudeh as he did in 1946. His return to Tehran, which the Shah will probably endeavor to prevent, might produce a serious political crisis in Iran.

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The successful outcome of the Nehru-Liaquat Ali Khan talks gives rise to the hope of a general improvement in Indo-Pakistan relations. The accord reached apparently applies only to the minority problem in East and West Bengal, Assam, and Tripura, and not to the whole of both countries as the Pakistanis would undoubtedly have preferred because of the steady flow of refugees into western Pakistan from Uttar Pradesh and other nearby areas. It is in the states mentioned by the accord, however, that the communal situation had become most critical, and honest implementation by both governments will greatly reduce the likelihood of developments which could result in warfare. The success of the two leaders in reaching a mutually satisfactory agreement on so tense a subject can in itself be expected to encourage negotiations on other matters of serious dispute.

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An agreement between Indian and Pakistani jute interests has been reported which would make 800,000 bales of Pakistani jute available to India, with Pakistan receiving jute goods and other items in return. These reports would seem to indicate that commercial interests in the two countries, rather than the governments, are taking the initiative in an effort to break the trade stalemate existing between India and Pakistan since devaluation of the Indian rupee. Any agreement of this kind must have the sanction of the respective governments, and it is possible that the recent talks between the Prime Ministers may have laid the groundwork for favorable official consideration of the proposals initiated by the jute trade. If a jute agreement is reached, it could be the forerunner of agreements among other trade associations and the means of ending the trade impasse which has had such serious effects on the economy of both countries.

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