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**CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
OFFICE OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES**

2 August 1951

Memorandum for the Director of Central Intelligence

Subject: Implications of Abdullah's Assassination

The assassination of King Abdullah removes from the Near Eastern scene [redacted]

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[redacted] a leading Arab statesman who played a pivotal role in inter-Arab and Arab-Israeli relations.

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[redacted] inhibiting prospects of improving Arab-Israeli relations, his death can be expected to: (a) reduce Jordan's internal stability and British influence over Jordanian affairs; (b) revive dynastic rivalries among the Arab states; and (c) generally encourage Arab nationalists and dismay those Arab leaders who have attempted to steer a middle course between Arab nationalism and cooperation with the West.

The immediate effect of Abdullah's death has been to raise a constitutional issue as to his successor. Bitterly anti-British Prince Talal is the legal heir but is undergoing treatment in a Swiss [redacted] clinic. [redacted]

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[redacted] Prince Naif, Abdullah's second son, known to be amenable to British influence, has been named Regent; however,

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whether he is regent for Talal or for Talal's 15 year old son remains in doubt. [REDACTED]

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25X1 [REDACTED] Talal might return to Jordan to claim his throne, in which event British influence in the country would be undermined. Even if he does not return, there is a danger that a pro-Talal movement contesting the legality of Naif's regency will develop among Jordan's Palestinian Arabs, who are strongly nationalistic and anti-British and who constitute nearly two-thirds of the population. It is already widely rumored that Talal is 25X1 [REDACTED] prevented from returning to Jordan by Naif and the British. Such rumors might well undermine the loyalty to Naif of not only the Palestine Arabs but also the east Jordan beduin, from whom the Arab Legion is primarily recruited. Whether or not Talal returns, therefore, the British position in Jordan (which rests fundamentally on its control of the Arab Legion) will probably be seriously affected.

Abdullah's assassination will probably also revive a number of dynastic and territorial issues which perennially plague inter-Arab relations. The possibility that Feisal II of Iraq will succeed Abdullah has already been raised and has revived fears that such a move would be a prelude to the eventual formation of a Greater Syria including Jordan, Iraq, Syria, and possibly Lebanon. The Syrian Government has already indicated its fear of such a development, and Egypt and Saudi Arabia would certainly also oppose it. In addition, Saudi Arabia might consider this an appropriate time to reassert its claims to certain territory in southern and eastern Jordan, including the port of Aqaba. These dynastic issues will increase tension in inter-Arab relations, though none is likely to develop much beyond the talking stage.

The assassination of Abdullah, coming so soon after the assassination of Riad Solh of Lebanon, will undoubtedly have an intimidating effect on other Near Eastern leaders. Irrespective

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of the actual motives of Abdullah's assassins, it is widely accepted in the Near East that he was killed because he was a British puppet and attempted to make peace with Israel. He is not the first, and almost certainly will not be the last, leader to be killed because of his cosmopolitan approach to his country's problems. Razmara in Iran, Zaim and Barazi in Syria, and Nokrasky Pasha in Egypt were all assassinated for much the same reason. The recent assassinations will have a particularly depressing effect on those leaders who are currently negotiating various issues with the Western Powers:

- (a) They will place Prime Minister Nuri Said of Iraq in an especially exposed position. In spite of his unrivaled ability to avoid the snares and pitfalls of Arab politics and keep ultra-nationalist groups under control, he is widely known as a man who is willing to do business with the British. Moreover, the day before Abdullah was assassinated, Nuri concluded a revised agreement with the Iraq Petroleum Company (IPC) which, even though it will provide Iraq with greater benefits than any other oil-producing country in the Near East is receiving, will undoubtedly not satisfy Iraq's more rabid nationalists. The political atmosphere in Baghdad is tense and it is unlikely that Nuri will dare to submit the agreement for Majlis ratification for some time.
- (b) They will probably destroy any inclination the Egyptian Government might have had to reduce shipping restrictions in the Suez Canal and may reduce current Egyptian attempts to postpone a showdown with the British over defense negotiations.

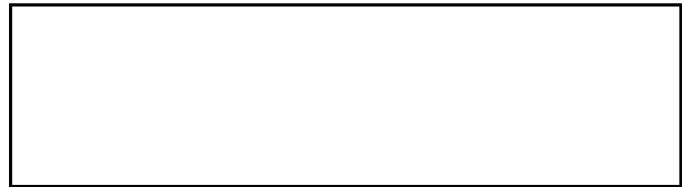
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- (c) They will reduce the possibility of successful Syrian-Israeli negotiations over the Huleh dispute and increase tension between Jordan and Israel over water rights and border incidents.
- (d) They may also influence Mossadeq and other Iranian leaders to some extent in negotiations with Mr. Harriman and the British.



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