

THE SYRIAN SITUATION

I. Current Situation

- A. Shishakli overthrown by army and politicians. *Now in Saudi Arabian Legation in Beirut, Lebanon*
- B. New regime has proclaimed intention to select civilian president. Army officers in background.
1. Mentioned as possible president - 77-year-old Hashim al Atasi, who was president 1937-39, 1949-51. Selected as rallying point for military and civilian malcontents.
 2. Leading military figure appears to be Captain Mustafa Hamdani, chief of intelligence. Probably supported by other younger officers and present chief of staff.

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II. Immediate prospects in Syria

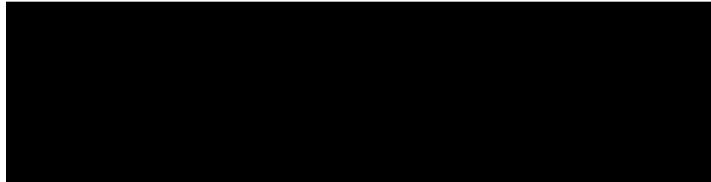
- A. Uneasy alliance of military and civilian
- B. Initially emphasis likely to be on restoration of constitutional life abolished 5 years ago. *12. Political leaders arrested in Jan 54 now freed*
 - 1. Notorious divisions among Syrian politicians likely to renew civilian wrangling that brought military to the fore in 1949.
 - 2. This prospect enhances opportunities for such active social revolutionists as Akram Hawrani.
- C. Meanwhile, military likely to insist on civilian rule which protects army's preeminent position in national affairs.
- D. Military leaders will be engaged in struggle for power within army.

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- E. Outlook for Syrian internal stability not bright. Internal dissension invites traditional meddling by other Arab neighbors, particularly Iraq.

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III. Implication for United States

- A. Syria in immediate future will be too preoccupied to concern itself with foreign issues.
- B. No progress on economic aid agreement, refugee resettlement and Johnston plan.
- C. Syria for time being will faithfully follow Arab League, will not commit itself on East-West issue. No indication that new leaders anti-Western.

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