

*Editorial*

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GENERAL

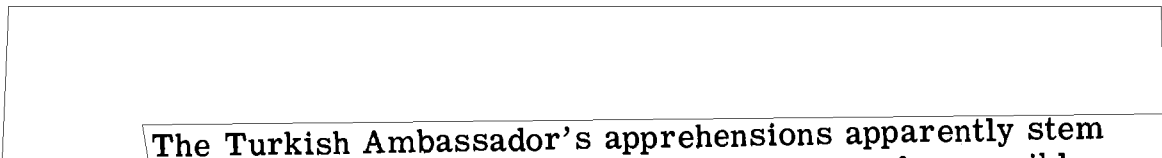
1. Turkish Ambassador fears USSR may raise Straits question:



Turkish Ambassador Goker in Moscow has informed US Ambassador Kirk that he believes the Soviets may raise the question of the Dardanelles and the Montreux Convention at the proposed Council of Foreign Ministers meeting. Goker stated that the USSR had made no approaches to Turkey concerning the Straits since 1946. However, he regarded the Soviet note of mid-February protesting the alleged Turkish shelling of a Soviet tanker as a possible initial move to reopen the issue. To date the Turkish Government has not replied to the protest. The Turkish Ambassador considers that complete silence of the Soviet press on the incident indicates a Soviet desire to utilize the incident for diplomatic purposes rather than immediate propaganda.

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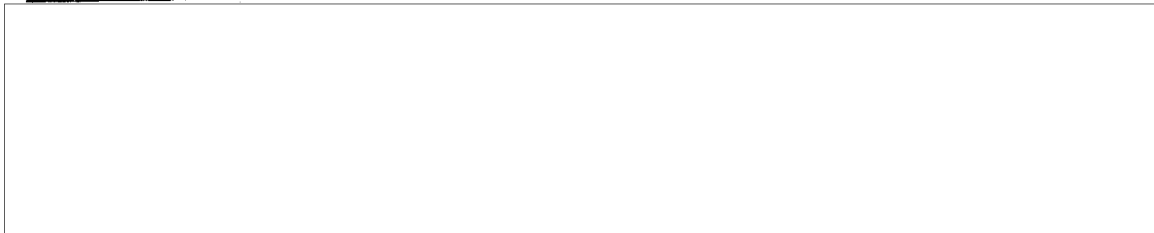


The Turkish Ambassador's apprehensions apparently stem from the fact that the Montreux Convention comes up for possible revision this year. It is noteworthy, however, that to date only the Western powers have sought to broaden the agenda of a Council of Foreign Ministers. Soviet propaganda silence with respect to the Pamir incident may not be unusually significant, since the Soviets frequently treat explosive incidents with caution.

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FAR EAST

2. Disease continues problem in North Korea:



*FAR EAST*

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Comment: Typhus, typhoid and smallpox are reported to have reached near-epidemic proportions among Communist troops in Korea, and there are indications that severe measures have been taken to prevent the further spread of disease among troops and civilians.

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3.3(h)(2)

NEAR EAST

3. British military planning alternative for Suez base:

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According to US Embassy Cairo, a new plan of the British Chiefs of Staff for the future defense of the Suez Canal Zone includes the following features: (a) a phased evacuation of the Suez Canal zone, beginning immediately and to be completed by 1956, with "civilian" technicians replacing the military specialists; (b) the leasing by the UK of the Suez base after 1956, with administrative control in British hands but with Egyptian "participation" and with the Egyptians responsible for policing the base; and (c) the possible creation of a "temporary" base in Israel. The British Embassy in Cairo has sharply criticized certain details in this plan, and believes that to sell the Egyptians on any "joint defense" arrangement for the area, the UK must first demonstrate faith in Egyptian military capabilities by resuming the suspended arms shipments.

✓ EGYPT  
UK

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Comment: This is the first specific evidence that the British military has accepted the Foreign Office's thesis that the main body of British troops will have to be located outside the Canal Zone. Both the military and the Foreign Office seem convinced that British forces must have access to the Canal Zone itself in time of war.

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WESTERN EUROPE

4. French want voice in Spain's defense role:



A French Foreign Office official has indicated to US Embassy officials in London that the French Government "wished to be able to convince themselves" of the military necessity of including Spain in the West's defense effort. He implied that this could be done only if the French assist from the beginning in determining how Spain can participate.

✓ SPAIN  
✓ FRANCE  
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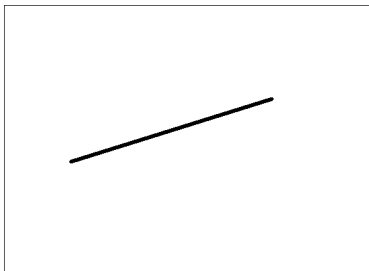
if the US is interested primarily in Spain's military facilities, a bilateral relationship between the US and Spain may offer the best solution. However, if the emphasis is on the use of Spain's manpower, then the inclusion of Spain in NATO will be necessary--a step that would entail great difficulties, particularly in Britain and France.

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Comment: This is a plausible report of the French Government's current attitude and possibly reflects its sincere desire to avert later political difficulties in France over the handling of the Spanish question. Last summer Foreign Minister Schuman stated that the admission of Spain to NATO was the only way to solve the question of the strategic utilization of that country.

LATIN AMERICA

5. Split in Venezuelan Government rumored:



Strong rumors of a split in the top level of the Venezuelan Government have resulted from an alleged protest, if not an ultimatum, to the governing Junta by the reactionary Grupo Urilante, which includes leading army officers and high government officials headed by Junta Secretary Miguel Moreno. This

✓ Venezuela  
3.3(h)(2)

group reportedly objects strongly to provisions of the draft electoral

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law, to the prospects of early elections, and especially to the recent action of the Labor Ministry permitting the negotiation of a labor contract for petroleum workers by a committee including leaders of dissolved radical elements. Reports indicate that some compromise has been reached, but the situation will probably remain delicate. Meanwhile, a former president of Costa Rica has stated that a revolution in Venezuela is planned for some time this month.

Comment: A split in the army, which the reported protest of the Grupo Urilante may well represent, would provide the essential condition for a revolutionary attempt by Accion Democratica. However, the current internal dissension, which appears to involve a continuation of the reported disagreement between Moreno and Provisional President Suarez Flamerich, can probably be settled through the intervention of Junta member and Defense Minister Perez Jimenez, who has the support of the Grupo Urilante and who was chiefly responsible for the appointment of Suarez as Provisional President.

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