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25 April 1957

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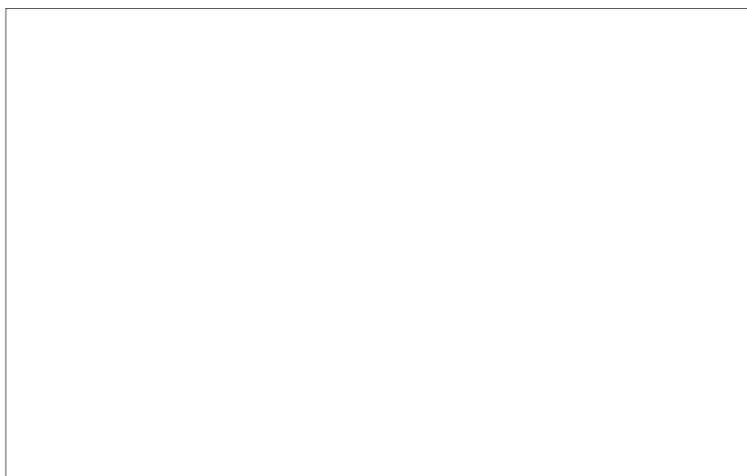
CURRENT INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN

DOCUMENT NO. 1
NO CHANGE IN CLASS.
 DECLASSIFIED
CLASS. CHANGED TO: TS S C
NEXT REVIEW DATE: 2009
AUTH: HR 79-2
DATE: 26 Dec 79 REVIEWER: [Redacted]

OFFICE OF CURRENT INTELLIGENCE CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

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1. DEVELOPMENTS IN JORDAN (As of 2200 24 April)

Comment on:

The reported resignation of Premier Khalidi's cabinet following demonstrations and strikes on 24 April, and King Hussain's readiness to proclaim martial law and suspend parliamentary government, mark the most critical point yet reached in the Jordanian crisis. Hussain reportedly plans to replace Khalidi with Samir Rifai, a close palace adviser. Jordan's strong anti-Western groups would regard appointment of Rifai as a deliberate challenge by the king, and the appointment would probably incite the "street" to further violence. At midnight on 24 April, according to Jerusalem radio, all police and security forces were placed under army command, and a curfew was proclaimed in Amman, Irbid, Jerusalem and Ramallah--possibly in anticipation of new demonstrations which have been called for 25 April.

This situation has been brought about by the determination of antimonarchical nationalist groups, together with Egypt and Syria, to press an all-out campaign against King Hussain. They apparently hope to develop a situation in which Hussain will be compelled to use force to maintain control--thus alienating him and his loyal Bedouin troops from the majority of Jordan's population.

The leftist-dominated National Guidance Committees in various towns in West Jordan, representing the National Socialist, Baath, National Bloc (Communist), and Arab

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Nationalist Parties, have denounced "Western imperialist intrigue" in Jordan, and demanded resignation of the Khalidi cabinet, reappointment of the Nabulsi cabinet, reinstatement of all nationalist army officers, ousting of the American ambassador and army attaché, and rejection of the American proposals for the Middle East.

The outbreaks on 24 April forced the king to move additional troops into Amman and to assemble 4,000 armed Bedouin tribesmen on the outskirts of the city.

[redacted] the king had distributed large quantities of arms to members of the militant right-wing Moslem Brotherhood, which has accused Egypt and Syria of plotting against King Hussain, and is prepared to support the king "in any disturbances which the people may cause!"

[redacted] weapons were being smuggled into Jordan from Syria, and that "approximately 100 fedayeen under orders of Syrian G-2 entered Jordan and dispersed throughout it." Cairo's decision to move forcefully against Hussain is indicated [redacted]

[redacted] Egyptian-directed fedayeen "sabotage organizations would be ready in five days by which time they will have been supplied with explosives." At least three groups were to operate in Jordan and another group was being prepared in Lebanon.

As the situation grew more serious in Jordan, the American army attaché in Tel Aviv on 24 April reported signs of limited mobilization in Israel. According to a press report, Israeli chief of staff Dayan cut short his vacation in Europe to return to Israel on 25 April. [redacted]

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2. SAUDIS CONCERNED BY ALLEGED EGYPTIAN ARMS SMUGGLING

[redacted] King Saud has asked Egyptian president Nasr to send two officers to Saudi Arabia to "discuss" the discovery by Saudi authorities in Riyadh on 18 April of a cache of weapons and explosives. They were in the possession of a Palestinian who said he had been given them by the first secretary of the Egyptian embassy in Jidda. Nasr's emissaries, his chief political adviser Ali Sabri and Anwar Sadat, head of the Islamic congress, are to arrive in Jidda on 25 April.

The weapons found consisted of a number of bombs, two machine guns, six pistols and ammunition. The Palestinian, who is said to have participated in the assassination of Jordan's King Abdullah in 1951, claimed his instructions were to take the weapons to Iraq.

Two Egyptian teachers reportedly were arrested in Riyadh, also on 18 April, for stating that the Jordanian and other monarchies eventually would disappear. Six other persons were arrested for distributing handbills demanding that the Saudi government reform. [redacted]

Comment

[redacted] Nasr is planning to retaliate for Saud's support of Jordan's King Hussain by fomenting trouble among Palestinian elements in Saudi Arabia.

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3. USSR THREATENS NEW RESTRICTIONS ON BERLIN TRAVEL

Continued Soviet interference with Western travel into Berlin may be reaching a new stage, in the opinion of the US embassy in Bonn. The Soviet deputy commandant in Berlin has presented Allied officials there with a demarche calling for new restrictions on Allied personnel traveling in Berlin by rail or

autobahn, effective 1 May. The proposed Soviet restrictions are designed to give the Russians, and possibly later the East Germans, substantial authority in deciding the categories of Allied personnel which would be permitted to travel to Berlin.

One of the new requirements is that travel orders must have German as well as Russian translations. This demand has caused the American embassy to believe that the USSR may be preparing to turn over to the East Germans authority over rail and autobahn checkpoints for Allied travel and responsibility for processing Allied travel documents. In reply to a question regarding the German translations, the Soviet official stated that it would be in the Western powers' interest to avoid difficulties with the German Democratic Republic.

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4. BULGANIN'S LETTER TO MACMILLAN

Comment on:

Bulganin's 20 April letter to Prime Minister Macmillan is intended to further Moscow's efforts to rehabilitate the "Geneva spirit" and is a major bid for an improvement of relations

with Great Britain. The letter implies that the Soviet leaders strongly favor a top-level meeting with the British or with all the Western leaders. Bulganin's insistence that disarmament is closely linked with European security suggests that Moscow may propose talks on both subjects at a high level.

The letter is friendly and reasonable in tone and is mainly a restatement of Soviet policy on the Middle East, European security and disarmament--especially the banning of nuclear tests. Bulganin again held out the prospect of increased trade and said the USSR might purchase as much as one billion pounds worth of goods from Great Britain over the next five years.

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5. FORMER GUATEMALAN PRESIDENT ARBENZ ATTEMPTING TO MOVE TO URUGUAY

Comment on:



The director of Uruguayan immigration has told the American embassy that higher authorities have decided to approve the entry of former Guatemalan president Jacobo Arbenz, who has applied for a residence permit. His return to the western hemisphere would provide the Communists and other anti-American elements in Latin America, who sympathized with Arbenz during the 1954 revolution in which his pro-Communist regime was overthrown, with a new rallying point for attacks on the United States. His admission to Uruguay would be a violation of the spirit of the anti-Communist resolution adopted at the Tenth Inter-American Conference in Caracas in March 1954.

Ambassador Patterson commented on 23 April that the Guatemalan minister in Uruguay shows a marked indifference to the troublemaking potentialities of Arbenz' residence in Uruguay and intends to take no action with the Uruguayan authorities unless instructed by his government. The ambassador believes that any formal United States approach to the Uruguayan government on this problem would undoubtedly be unproductive.

Arbenz, who now lives in Europe, has spent a year since 1954 in Soviet bloc countries, and two of his children are reportedly attending school in Moscow.

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6. LEFTIST CANDIDATE IN SYRIAN BY-ELECTION RECEIVING SOVIET FINANCIAL AID

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

The Communists and the Socialist Resurrection (Baath) Party are receiving financial support from the proceeds of the showings of Soviet films and the sale of

Soviet bloc material exhibited at the 1956 Damascus Fair, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] These funds reportedly are being used by Riad Malki, the Communist-Baathist candidate in the 4 May parliamentary by-election in Damascus.

[REDACTED] Colonel Sarraj, the head of Syrian army intelligence, is handing over large sums of money for Malki's campaign. [REDACTED]

Comment

Syrian prime minister Sabri al-Asali has told the American ambassador that much pressure is being exerted by a number of countries, including the USSR, in connection with the by-elections to fill the seats of the four rightist deputies who were convicted of having plotted with Iraq against Syria last year.

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