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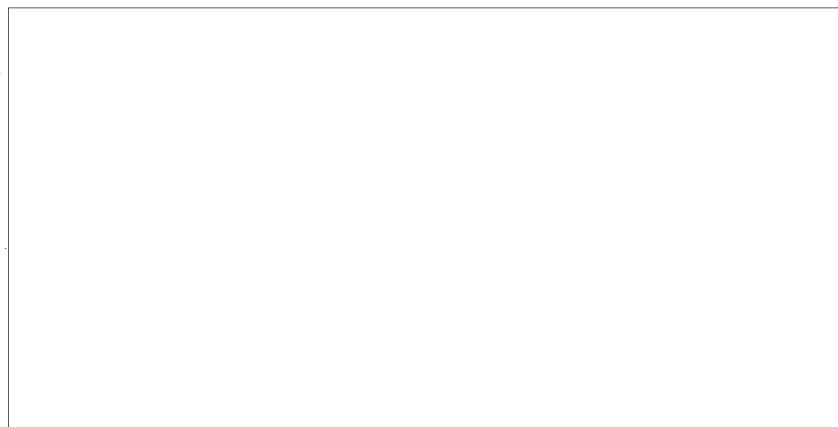
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CONTENTS

UR AB


- no 1. LATEST SOVIET NUCLEAR TEST [redacted]
(page 3).
- no 2. KING SAUD REFUSED TO VISIT EGYPT EN ROUTE TO
SYRIA [redacted] (page 4).
- no 3. LIBYA REQUESTS RENEGOTIATION OF US BASE RIGHTS
[redacted] (page 5).
- no 4. SOVIET BLOC MERCHANT SHIPPING TO SYRIA INCREAS-
ING [redacted] (page 6).
- ok 5. PROVISIONAL THAI GOVERNMENT FORMED [redacted]
(page 7).

1. LATEST SOVIET NUCLEAR TEST

[redacted] a Soviet nuclear explosion occurred at 0900 GMT on 24 September in the vicinity of Novaya Zemlya. [redacted]

[redacted] TASS announced on 23 September that atomic and hydrogen warheads had been exploded in various weapons in uninhabited areas and at great altitudes in conformance with the combat training plans of the Soviet army and navy. [redacted]

Comment

These tests bring to 11 the number of Soviet nuclear experiments detected this year. The 24 September test is the second in the Novaya Zemlya area this month and may be associated with the extensive Soviet air-sea maneuvers taking place in the vicinity of Novaya Zemlya. A Soviet announcement on 2 September stated that these exercises were to involve the use of various types of modern weapons.

2. KING SAUD REFUSED TO VISIT EGYPT EN ROUTE
TO SYRIA

King Saud, [redacted]

[redacted] in-formed Saudi Royal Councilor Yusuf Yasin that it was "not reasonable to expect us to pass through Egypt because

of insinuations in the press and broadcasts and in the speech of the President, which have been largely responsible for our maintaining silence regarding our attitude." The King said such a visit would be interpreted as an effort on his part to please the Egyptians, "whereas it is their duty to please me." Saud said, however, that his "pan-Arab policy," his agreements with Egypt, and his sympathies would not change under any circumstances.

Comment

Saud apparently was commenting on an Egyptian approach, but he instructed Yasin to convey his reply to the Egyptians only if they persisted. Saud's refusal to visit Egypt probably will further irritate Nasir, who reportedly was angered by the fact that Saud did not call at Cairo on his way to West Germany. Saud is scheduled to arrive in Damascus on 25 September.

3. LIBYA REQUESTS RENEGOTIATION OF US BASE RIGHTS

The Libyan under secretary of finance has informed the director of the United States Operations Mission in Tripoli that the prime minister proposes to open discussions soon regarding renegotiation of the military base agreement with the United States. The Libyan official said that Libyan leaders are dissatisfied with the American aid program and claimed that "informal" offers of aid had been made by the USSR. He added that the publicity which the USSR is giving to its offers places the Libyan government in a "delicate position."

Comment The Libyan-American agreement of 1954 under which Wheelus air force base is operated is to extend to 1971. The United States is obligated to pay a total of \$40,000,000 to the Libyan government during this 17-year period. Total US aid to Libya from 1954 through 1957 has been about \$61,000,000.

The British financial adviser to the Libyan government, who reportedly is resigning under fire, has said the Libyan government intends to terminate the base agreement. It seems more likely, however, that the Libyans have chosen this time as opportune to try to extract additional American aid.

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**4. SOVIET BLOC MERCHANT SHIPPING TO
SYRIA INCREASING**

Comment on:

A review of bloc merchant shipping activity shows that thus far this year at least 61 Soviet and satellite freighters have made deliveries to Latakia compared with 45 in all of 1956. Many of the 1957 shipments have involved military materiel.

A new \$8,000,000 harbor installation in Latakia provides a more secure area for Soviet arms deliveries and, except for bulk petroleum products, frees Syria from dependence on the Lebanese port of Beirut for deepwater facilities to handle its maritime commerce.

Soviet technicians are studying petroleum storage facilities at Latakia and may recommend the installation of sea lines to permit the offloading of bulk petroleum products.

Under new Syrian trade agreements with the USSR, East Germany, Poland, Rumania, and Communist China, the number of bloc ships calling at Latakia can be expected to continue to increase.

5. PROVISIONAL THAI GOVERNMENT FORMED

Comment on:

The extent of Field Marshal Sarit's present dominance is indicated by the composition of Thailand's new provisional cabinet announced on 23 September. Although Sarit holds no position in the government, in keeping with his public pose as a "simple soldier" who is not interested in politics, 15 of the 29 portfolios are held by his military subordinates. Chief among these are his two closest followers, Generals Thanom and Prapat, who have the key posts of defense and interior respectively. The other portfolios are about evenly divided among nonpolitical careerists, royalists, and members of the Unionist party, organized last June with Sarit's backing.

Of the civilians in the cabinet, the most prominent are Prince Wan, whose retention as foreign minister gives added emphasis to the new regime's claim that Thailand's foreign policy is unchanged, and Premier Pote Sarasin. Pote was also named finance minister, probably as a precaution against anticipated charges during the impending election campaign that the army group overthrew the Phibun regime merely to gain additional opportunities for graft.

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