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7 January 1956

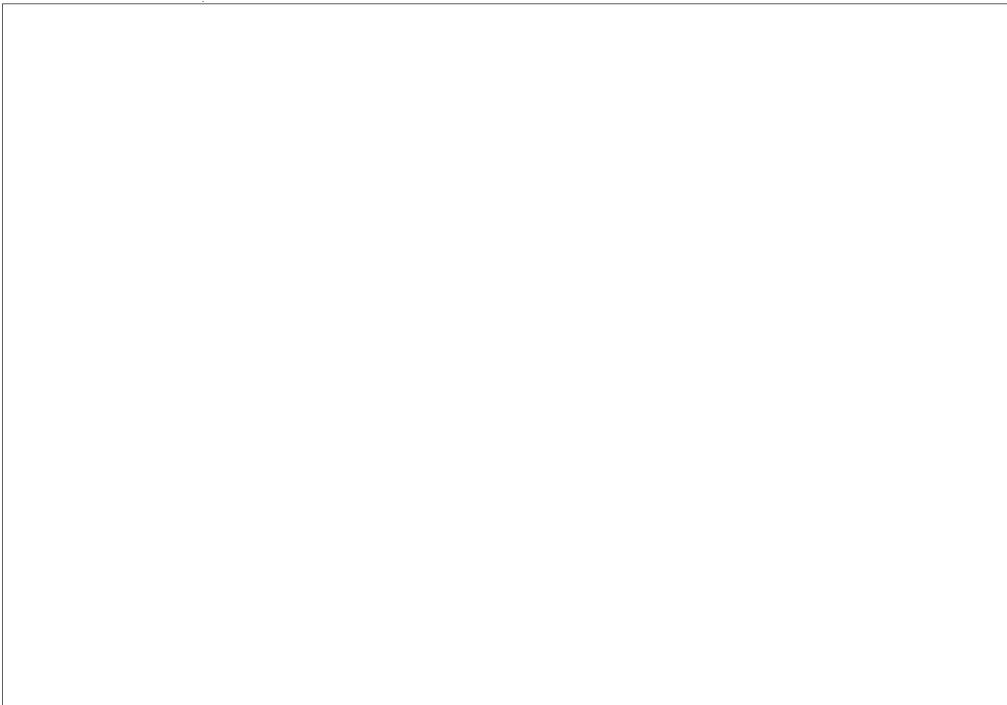
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Copy No. 103

CURRENT INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN

DOCUMENT NO. 45
NO CHANGE IN CLASS.
 DECLASSIFIED
CLASS. CHANGED TO: TS S C
NEXT REVIEW DATE: 2010
AUTH: HR 70-2
DATE: 1 JAN 1980 REVIEWER:

OFFICE OF CURRENT INTELLIGENCE CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

~~TOP SECRET~~

Approved for Release: 2019/10/21 C03020478



Approved for Release: 2019/10/21 C03020478

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1. CYPRUS TALKS TO BE RESUMED

Greek foreign minister Theotokis says Archbishop Makarios and Governor Harding have agreed to resume talks on the Cyprus question, [redacted]

[redacted] Theotokis says Harding has agreed to "free discussions," but the foreign minister is not optimistic, since he doubts Britain's readiness to make an acceptable settlement.

[redacted] Harding has reported from Cyprus that the security situation will not permit prolonged discussions. [redacted]

Comment

Despite Theotokis' understanding that there will be "free discussions," they are likely to be based on the British formula and will probably break up over its implicit recognition of Turkey's interest in the future status of Cyprus. Turkey remains adamant in its opposition to any concession toward self-determination. Ankara has recently repeated its demand that any British plan for self-government provide equal representation for the island's Greek and Turkish communities.

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2. REMOVAL OF SYRIAN CHIEF OF STAFF REPORTED IMMINENT

Syrian chief of staff Shuqayr will be removed shortly.

Dissatisfaction within the officer ranks is making his position untenable and there is danger that he may be assassinated.

The embassy comments that Shuqayr's future would appear to depend on whether and how strongly conservative elements in Syria rally to his support. It feels that his dismissal would remove the last real obstacle to the assumption of full control over the army by anti-Western elements and might lead to leftist control over the government.

Comment Shuqayr has previously exhibited considerable political agility and has long maneuvered successfully between the various conflicting elements struggling for control in Syria. [redacted] conservative elements in Syria, with Iraqi support, may be preparing for a showdown.

Shuqayr has been under increasing pressure to obtain arms from the Soviet bloc and to avoid any agreement with the West. Syrian humiliation over the Israeli raid at Tiberias is apparently being used against Shuqayr as a means of obtaining either his removal or his compliance with leftist demands.

3. NEW CRISIS THREATENS IN JORDAN

Comment on:

The 4 January supreme court decision that King Hussain's 19 December dissolution of the Jordan parliament was illegal has infuriated Jordanian elements hostile to the Baghdad pact, which had hoped to dominate a newly elected parliament. The consulate general in Jerusalem expects renewed rioting.

The governmental problem remains unresolved, with rumors that the caretaker cabinet may resign. The authority and prestige of the throne have declined and the British position has been severely damaged. Egypt's prestige has risen sharply and it is unlikely that any Jordanian decisions in the near future involving Israel or Middle East problems will be taken without the approval of Cairo.

4. VIET MINH PROPOSES TRADE RELATIONS WITH EGYPT

Comment Earlier reports have suggested Viet
 Minh efforts to establish diplomatic re-
 lations with Egypt. This proposal is in keeping with the
 continuing Viet Minh and Orbit campaign to gain political
 influence among neutralist Afro-Asian powers by the exten-
 sion of economic relations.

The Viet Minh needs cotton to restore
its textile industry to full production. A substantial amount
of the cotton utilized by the industry in North Vietnam prior
to the Communist takeover was supplied under American aid
programs. (Prepared jointly with ORR)

THE ARAB-ISRAELI SITUATION
 (Information as of 1700, 6 January)

There was brief exchange of fire between [redacted]
 Egyptian and Israeli patrols in the El Auja region on 6 January
 and Israel claims that Egyptian forces also ambushed an Israeli
 weapons carrier in this area. According to an Israeli spokes-
 man, two Egyptian jets violated the Israeli airspace over Eilat on
 the Gulf of Aqaba on 5 January. (Press) [redacted]

[redacted] Syria would not sign a
 reimbursable military aid agreement with the United States.
 Syria considers the prices for the military items under consid-
 eration exorbitant and believes the items are available elsewhere
 at much lower prices. While the Syrians may merely be attempt-
 ing to bargain. [redacted]

[redacted] Syria may be about to finalize an arms
 contract with Czechoslovakia. [redacted])

Three Soviet freighters arrived at the Egyp-
 tian port of Alexandria from Soviet Black Sea ports between 1 and
 5 January and have reportedly been unloading military equipment
 in a heavily guarded security area. Two of them are the Smela
 and the Admiral Ushakov. Both previously delivered arms car-
 goes to Alexandria. The third is probably the Sukhona, which
 passed Istanbul on 2 January. All three declared a cargo of
 machinery for Albania. [redacted]

The Egyptian naval training vessel Mharussa
 reportedly left Alexandria on 26 December 1955 carrying 360 of-
 ficers of the Egyptian army, navy and air force. The officers
 are allegedly on their way to Eastern Europe, where they will un-
 dergo specific periods of training--six months, one year, and two
 years--in their specialties. This report is unconfirmed, but
 other evidence indicates that some Egyptian pilots have already
 received training in Czechoslovakia and that plans have also been
 made for the training of Egyptian army and navy personnel in
 Eastern Europe. [redacted]