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5 January 1956

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State Dept. review completed

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### 3. PARAGUAYAN POLITICAL TENSION INCREASES

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[redacted]

There are numerous indications of continued uncertainty in the Paraguayan politico-military situation, according to Ambassador Ageton in Asuncion.

Troops were confined to barracks over the holiday and chauffeurs assigned to foreign military missions have been recalled for Paraguayan army use.

The reported leader of the abortive army-police rebellion on 21 December, Epifanio Mendez Fleitas, Central Bank president and a leader of the ruling Colorado Party, has resumed energetic political activity. Moreover, the two military commanders involved in the conspiracy have been freed and no action has been taken against Police Chief Ortega, who was also involved. The selection of replacements for these men is a source of friction between the army and the Colorado Party.

Top Communist leaders, including Oscar Creydt and Obdulio Barthe, have reappeared in Asuncion, but the government is hesitant to take action against them at this time because of its distrust of Ortega's police. Ageton comments that the current political confusion offers the Communists an opportunity for advantageous political maneuvering.

Comment

President Stroessner's hesitancy in acting against the Mendez group probably reflects his uncertainty as to the extent of Mendez' support in the army.

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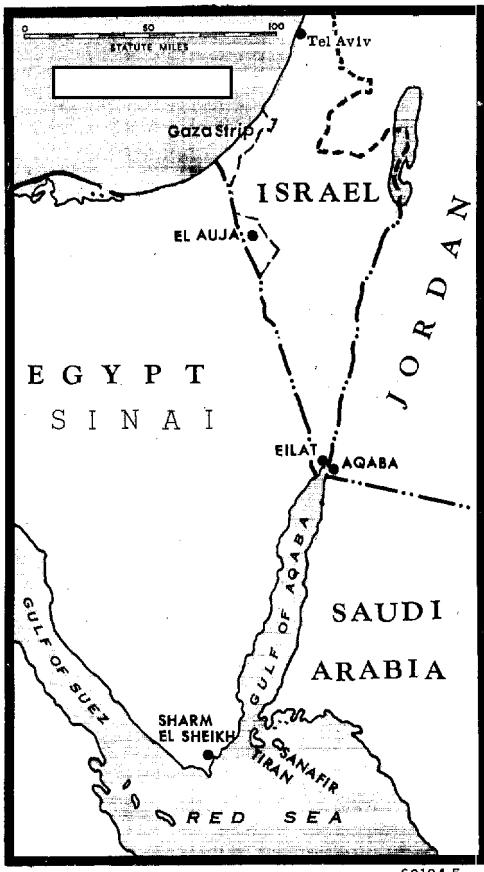
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THE ARAB-ISRAELI SITUATION  
(Information as of 1700, 4 January)

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No significant military activity has been reported.

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High Israeli officials in Tel Aviv have urgently requested American help in obtaining delivery of "at least" the 12 Mark IV Mystere jet planes which Israel has on order in France. According to the American embassy, the fear of Egyptian air superiority and the possibility that Egypt might bomb Israeli cities have brought "near panic".

in some quarters and Prime Minister Ben-Gurion is reportedly "extremely nervous and upset over it."

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Ambassador Lawson believes that the Israeli government has made a "sober reappraisal" of the raid at Lake Tiberias on 11-12 December and that similar raids are unlikely in the future. The British ambassador also believes that Israel is not at the moment contemplating aggressive action.

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