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CENTRAL

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BULLETIN



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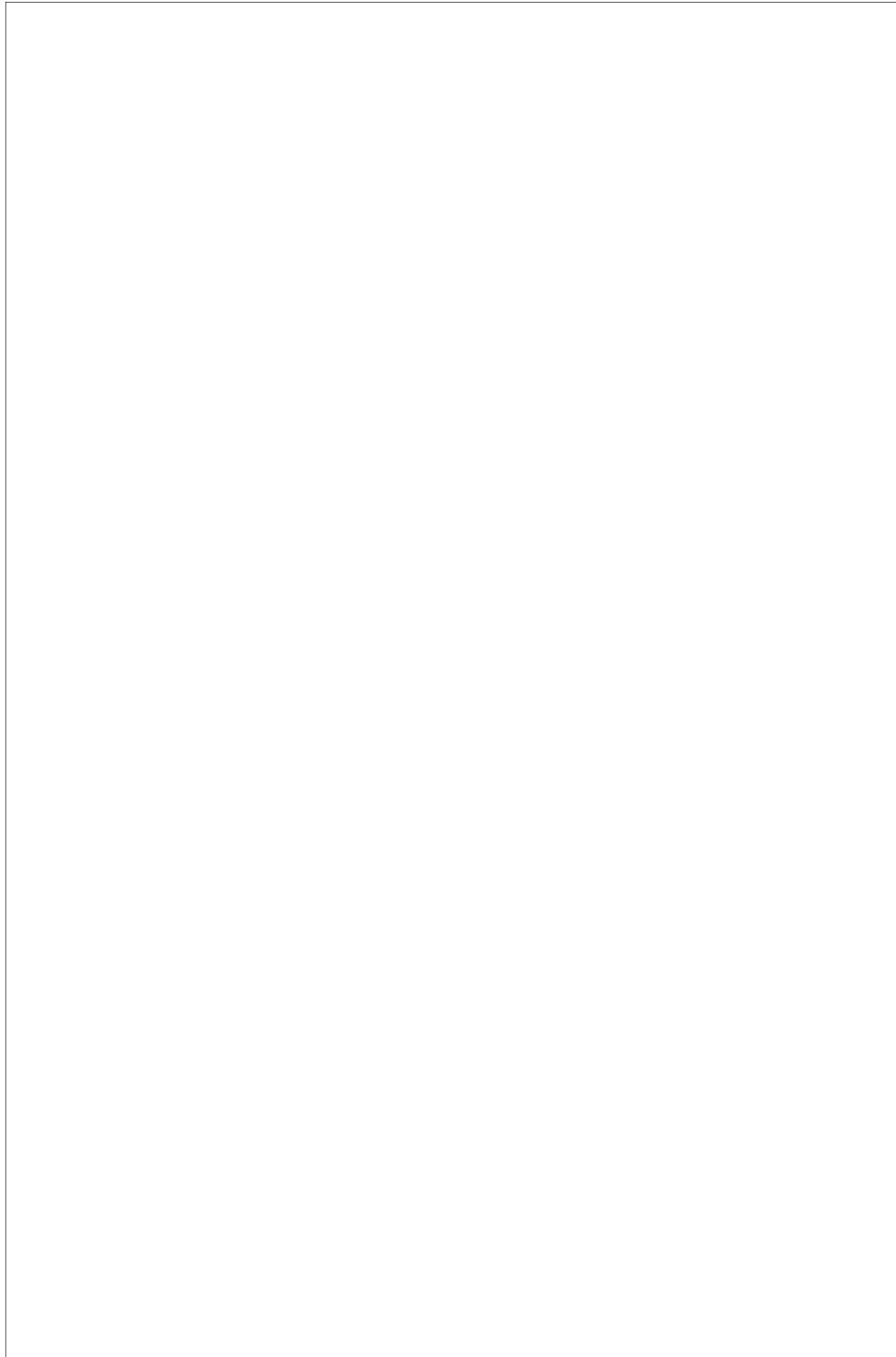
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23 JULY 1958

**I. THE COMMUNIST BLOC**

Soviet spokesmen in free-world capitals pressing line that Western action against Iraq would lead to military countermoves. No significant changes in Soviet military posture.

Bumper crop, possibly largest yet, indicated by Soviet harvest prospects.

East German regime denounces validity of German occupation agreements.

Soviet delegation at Geneva makes tactical concession on collecting nuclear debris.

**II. ASIA-AFRICA**

Middle East - Lebanese parliamentary meeting to elect new president postponed to 31 July; cabinet gives Chamoun "full powers" to deal with Shihab and disaffected officers, but President appears reluctant to test his control. Husayn reported depressed over outlook for Jordan.

Iraqis give UAR access to Baghdad Pact documents.



⑥ Sudan - Prime Minister Khalil sees his control deteriorating; Nasir stepping up subversive action.

⑦ British clamp unprecedented security controls on Cyprus.

⑧ Moroccan Premier Balafrej unofficially hints at demanding US withdrawal from all bases except Port Lyautey.

⑨ Anti-Communist group in Laos considering government by royal decree if new cabinet does not contain "new faces."

**III. THE WEST**

⑩ Extensive British troop movements under way with primary attention to Persian Gulf area.

⑪ El Salvador and Guatemala will be most troublesome stops for Dr. Milton Eisenhower.

⑫ Venezuela - Junta's rivalry with defense minister could lead to coup.

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**TOP SECRET****CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN**

23 July 58

**DAILY BRIEF***SIRAB***I. THE COMMUNIST BLOC**

Soviet reaction to the Middle Eastern crisis: Political moves: At least eight free-world capitals now are targets in an operation started by Moscow, immediately following the landing of United States marines in Lebanon, in an effort to limit Western intervention in the Middle East. Bloc spokesmen are privately pressing the line that a military move against Iraq by the United States or Britain, either alone or in concert with Turkey, Iran, or Jordan, would provoke immediate military counteraction.

Military moves: While the USSR has placed some of its forces in positions of readiness, the Soviet Union has not taken many of the measures which would be considered necessary to prepare for aggressive action in the Middle East or elsewhere.

(Page 1)

Soviet harvest prospects: Remarks by Soviet leaders and reports from US Embassy officials indicate that the USSR will have a bumper harvest this fall--possibly the largest in Soviet history. This would facilitate Soviet grain exports to nonbloc countries and to the East European satellites, where harvest prospects in some areas thus far are only average.

(Page 3)

Berlin: The East German statement on the release of the nine Americans held since 7 June claims that agreements on which the occupation of Germany were based no longer have any validity for the German Democratic Republic (GDR). This may presage further harassment of Allied access to Berlin. The Communists assert that the release agreement took

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full account of the existence of the GDR as a sovereign state.

*No*

Geneva technical talks: The Soviet delegation made a concession in the Geneva technical talks by agreeing to recommend that limited aircraft operations on prearranged routes be used for the collection of nuclear debris as part of any test limitation agreement. The USSR appears intent on getting agreement in principle to a minimal inspection system without spelling out the details of its operation. It thereby hopes to increase pressure on the United States and Britain to halt tests but to make it difficult for the West to insist on more extensive inspection measures.   (Page 4)

## II. ASIA-AFRICA

*NB*

\*The Middle East (Information as of 0100 EDT 23 July): Convening of the Lebanese Parliament for a presidential election has been postponed to 31 July in hopes of obtaining a compromise and a quorum. The cabinet has voted President Chamoun "full powers" to deal as he sees fit with the army commander, General Shihab, and with "disloyal" general staff officers, but Chamoun, reporting that Shihab has refused to take action against any officers, now intimates that he will not move against army recalcitrance unless assured of US military support. In Jordan, King Husayn is reported in a fit of depression over the UAR's propaganda campaign against him and his inability to remedy the situation in Iraq. Israel, intensifying its requests for Western arms aid and military coordination, is apparently resuming a close military relationship with France. Turkey is increasing its armored strength on the Syrian border, and military movements continue in Syria and Egypt.   The regime in Iraq has apparently given the UAR access to Baghdad Pact documents. Yemen is planning uprisings and sabotage in Britain's Eastern Aden Protectorate, and has discussed with Cairo possible Egyptian use of Yemeni airfields against British positions in the event of hostilities.  

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Sudan: Prime Minister Khalil recognizes that his position is deteriorating. Information indicates that Egypt is making a strong drive to buy the allegiance of Sudanese politicians and to subvert Sudanese Army elements. Khalil will need to move quickly if he is to carry out his own plans to maintain control. [redacted] (Page 8)

\*Cyprus: All-out retaliation by EOKA can be expected to follow the imposition on 22 July of a 48-hour, island-wide curfew, widespread arrests, and the reintroduction of emergency regulations--the latest British attempt to end the recent intercommunal bloodshed. London has firmly rejected Ankara's repeated offers to send Turkish troops to Cyprus to protect Turkish Cypriots. Greek Premier Karamanlis, under attack by the press for his pro-Western stand regarding Lebanon, demands immediate US intervention to solve the Cyprus dispute. [redacted] (Page 9)

*OK*

Morocco: Negotiations for the withdrawal of French troops are now at a standstill. Popular agitation against the presence of foreign troops in Morocco reached a new high with American-British troop landings in the Middle East. Premier Balafrej has unofficially intimated that his government will demand the withdrawal of American personnel from the four United States Air Force bases in Morocco, but not from the naval base at Port Lyautey. [redacted] (Page 11)

*OK*

Laos: With the resignation of the Souvanna Phouma government, young anti-Communist leaders are making a strong bid for key ministries in a new cabinet. If the assembly refuses to invest an effective government of "new faces," the young anti-Communists plan to call on the crown prince to impose a cabinet by royal decree. The commanding general of the Laotian Army has firmly endorsed such a resolution. [redacted]

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## III. THE WEST

Britain: Actual and planned redeployment of British land, sea, and air forces, still referred to as "precautionary measures," have assumed nearly a world-wide scale. Having sent troops to Jordan and Libya to protect the regimes against anticipated UAR-inspired coups, Britain's main attention is now focused on forestalling disturbances throughout the Persian Gulf, particularly in order to safeguard the vital Kuwait oil supply. Movements of naval and ground units from the Far East and further military movements on the Arabian Peninsula are designed to support this operation as well as to provide evacuation facilities if repercussions from the Middle East spread. [ ] (Page 13)

*OK*  
*OK*

Central America: The most difficult portion of Dr. Milton Eisenhower's current Central American trip is likely to be in El Salvador and Guatemala. In the former country, where he is to arrive on 27 July, Communists are exploiting long-smoldering student grievances which may culminate in disturbances coinciding with the visit. Guatemala, where Dr. Eisenhower arrives on 30 July, continues to be the biggest danger spot, even though the atmosphere in that country on the surface appears to have improved. [ ] (Page 15)

*NO*  
~~OK~~

\*Venezuela: Conflict between junta President Larrazabal and Defense Minister Castro Leon is causing a split in the armed forces and may result in the violent overthrow of the present regime. Castro Leon is seeking strong antileftist action, while Larrazabal is appealing to the populace to keep him in power. [ ] (Page 16)

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## I. THE COMMUNIST BLOC

### Soviet Military Reaction to Middle East Developments

The USSR has placed some forces such as Northern Fleet submarines and the Black Sea Fleet in positions of readiness. Operational units of the Black Sea Fleet are disposed in three groups in the northwestern, South Crimean, and southeastern areas of the Black Sea.

A US naval aircraft contacted a possible submarine south of Iceland on 21 July, indicating that the USSR may have established submarine barrier patrols across the sea approaches to the Murmansk area.

An exercise of normal proportions is under way in the Far East Fleet. A joint exercise in the Baltic which involved East German, Polish, and Soviet naval units appears to have terminated on 21 July.

Soviet cargo ships and tankers are maintaining their scheduled runs to Syria and Egypt, and a Soviet cruise ship will make its usual call at Beirut this week.

Soviet Long Range Air Force and air defense activities continue to be generally normal. One small group of jet medium bombers is en route from the Southern Maritime District in the Far East to Anadyr on the Chukotsk Peninsula.

Maneuver activities along the Turkish and Iranian borders continue. There are reports from Turkey that Soviet troops

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were moving into Bulgaria from Rumania by train on 19-20 July. It is possible that small Soviet units have been moved in by transport aircraft, but there have been no signs of any ground movement across Rumania, from where Soviet Army units recently completed a withdrawal to the USSR.

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### Soviet Harvest Prospects

Favorable weather has prevailed this year in most of the USSR's new lands and the traditional farm areas. Khrushchev, in his 17 June report on agricultural procurement to the central committee, indicated that prospects were good for most crops, and a Gosplan official recently told the American delegation of agricultural economists that the grain harvest will exceed that of 1956, the best growing year thus far. The American Embassy comments it has become increasingly apparent in recent weeks that if the favorable weather continues, a record crop will be harvested this year.

In 1956 harvest losses due to inadequate transportation and storage facilities were high in the new lands. These facilities, especially for storage, have been substantially expanded since that time, and losses this year should be considerably reduced.

A bumper grain harvest this year would enable the USSR to increase its exports to nonbloc countries and to increase its aid to the European satellites, especially the southern ones, where small-grain harvest prospects are only average. It would also aid the drive to catch up with the United States in meat and milk production.

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## USSR Makes Concession at Geneva Technical Talks

The Soviet delegates to the Geneva technical talks have reversed their stand against the use of aircraft in sampling nuclear debris. In addition to accepting such flights over oceans, they agreed that flights over the USSR and the United States would facilitate checking on alerts resulting from other detection techniques. They stipulated, however, that flights over land should be carried out only along prearranged routes by planes of the country being overflown, with observers on board from the United States, the USSR, and other participants in the control system.

This concession on a major point of disagreement is in line with the Soviet effort to appear reasonable at Geneva and to lay the groundwork for a wide measure of agreement in order to undercut Western insistence on more extensive measures and to increase pressure on the United States and Britain to halt tests.

At a recent informal dinner meeting, Soviet scientists at Geneva emphasized that an elaborate inspection system capable of detecting tests with a high degree of probability was unnecessary since no country would conduct tests if there were significant likelihood of detection. They suggested that a minimal inspection system could be expanded later when more highly developed detection techniques were perfected. The Soviet delegates gave the impression that they wanted agreement on the outline of an inspection system initially with little discussion of its details, an approach that could exaggerate the amount of agreement reached.

The Geneva conference will soon turn from effectiveness of detection techniques to the scope of an actual control system itself, at which time Moscow will have to indicate more clearly how extensive a control system it will accept. [redacted]

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## II. ASIA-AFRICA

### The Middle East (Information as of 0100 EDT 23 July)

**Lebanon:** The convening of the Lebanese Parliament to elect President Chamoun's successor has been postponed to 31 July, according to Speaker of Parliament Usayran. Usayran probably delayed the parliamentary meeting because of fears that a quorum could not be attained, as well as in the hope that the opposing factions can settle upon an acceptable compromise candidate by the end of July. President Chamoun, who has reiterated his determination to finish his term, says he might announce his intention to resign in order to force the election of a successor.

The Lebanese cabinet met on 22 July and gave Chamoun "full powers" to act any way he sees fit with regard to General Shihab and the general staff, [redacted] [redacted] When Chamoun met with Shihab on 21 July, the general stated that he would dismiss no officers. Chamoun has now intimated that he would take no further action against "disloyal" officers unless American troops were willing to cooperate in the removal operation.

The cabinet voted on 22 July to declare the UAR ambassador persona non grata and to order him to leave within 48 hours. This move, while long overdue, will result in an increase of invective against the Chamoun regime by both the rebels and the UAR. The cabinet has decided not to recognize the new Iraqi Government. The Iraqi chargé d'affaires has attempted to pressure the Lebanese Government into recognition by presenting his credentials.

Rebel forces for the most part have been inactive, but Kamal Jumblatt's Druze tribesmen have moved northward toward the Beirut-Damascus highway, possibly in order to infiltrate into Beirut for terrorist and sabotage operations. Nasir on 20 July ordered the resumption of subversive actions in Lebanon and Jordan, [redacted]

Jordan: [redacted]

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The prestige of the King and his government is seriously endangered by the presence of British troops, and invidious comparisons are being made with the period of the British mandate following World War I. A symptom of Husayn's desperation and of the possibility that he might seek a compromise with the UAR is the recent offer to Fawzi al-Mulki, an Egyptian sympathizer, of the post of court minister. Al-Mulki refused the post, reportedly because he believes that he has a reasonable chance to head a new government.

Israel: The Israelis are making renewed requests for arms aid from Western governments, and probably are seeking to re-establish a close military relationship with France. The Israeli minister in Paris has said that Foreign Minister Meir will visit Paris next week. The Chilean minister in Tel Aviv told Santiago [redacted] that he knew confidentially that "there is already an agreement between the Israeli and French governments for France to land troops in Israel" in case the situation in the Middle East gets worse. While Israeli-French relations have long been close, this is the first indication of definite coordination of military plans in the present crisis.

Iraq: Baghdad's new leaders continue to profess friendship for the US and are increasing their pressure for recognition, pointing out that at least 16 governments have already extended it. One argument being used is that the Communist bloc has shown its friendliness and, if American recognition is not given, public pressure might push the new regime "toward Communism," which it opposes. Officials have intimated that US support of Lebanon and Jordan borders on "unfriendly behavior."

The regime is making strenuous efforts to enforce a ban on inflammatory banners and placards in what may be an attempt to fend off charges that the new Iraq is anti-Western, as well as to prevent the Communists and Baathists from seizing leadership of the new nationalist movement.

Egyptian press reports state that "secret documents about the conspiracies of the Baghdad Pact" will soon be revealed by

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the Iraqi revolutionary regime.

Defensive military preparations are continuing in Iraq, and the airfields at Basra and Mosul are reported to be mined and obstructed.

The Iraqi Kingdom's UN representative has been recalled to Baghdad and has been threatened "with murder" by the new regime's supporters in New York. He is refraining from attending any UN meetings.

Yemen: Yemeni authorities plan to promote further rebellion, sabotage, and subversion in Britain's Aden protectorates, partly in an effort to block implementation of the British-backed plan for a federation of protectorate states. According to press reports, the Imam, who has abandoned his proposed trip to Italy for medical treatment, has proclaimed a general mobilization of the tribes in Yemen. British troops in Aden are being reinforced,

UAR Commander in Chief General Hakim Amir told the Imam that "we have discussed everything with the Russian air chief, and one of the points he discussed was the question of Yemeni airfields."

UAR: Defensive preparations are continuing in the Syrian and Egyptian regions of the UAR. In northern Syria military movements and civil defense preparations are proceeding and the population is subdued and frightened, a sharp contrast to the bravado prevalent during last year's "Turkish crisis." The authorities are keeping a tight rein on anti-Western public demonstrations. In the Egyptian region some national guard units have been called up and troop movements, possibly in the direction of Suez, have been observed. Antiaircraft guns have been emplaced at a number of airfields and troops have dug in near the coast.

A desire for peace is the dominant theme of Egyptian propaganda media, which urge the acceptance of the Soviet summit

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proposal. Nasir's much-hearalded 23 July speech was largely devoted to an appeal for understnading of his policy of "positive neutrality" and the desire of the Arabs to be left "to themselves." Nasir declared his support for a summit conference. Cheering the "victory" in Iraq, Nasir gave his blessing to further revolts in Lebanon and Jordan and specifically mentioned the anti-Husayn towns on the west bank in Jordan. He castigated King Husayn for being a traitor to his people and assured his listeners that British and American "aggression" against Jordan and Lebanon would "go." Nasir closed with the declaration that "Arab nationalism is not hostile to anyone."

**Turkey:** Turkey is increasing its armored strength opposite the Syrian border by the movement, scheduled to be completed in early August, of the Second Armored Brigade from the Sea of Marmora area to Diyarbakir. Already deployed opposite the Syrian border are the Fifth Armored Brigade, located near the Mediterranean, and the partly mechanized 14th Cavalry Division, which has arrived in its new location in the central and eastern parts of the border area.

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### Sudan Approaches Political Crisis

A crisis in the Sudanese political situation appears to be fast approaching, with reports of planned coups received from several sources. Prime Minister Khalil will apparently have to undertake immediately his own previously reported plan for establishing a "temporary" dictatorial regime, backed by the army, if he hopes to forestall the possibility of similar attempts by elements not under his control.

A Nasir-backed plan to overthrow the government, using the Sudanese Army in support of pro-Egyptian former Prime Minister Ismail al-Azhari, is scheduled "within two weeks,"

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viduals in the army fear that certain officers who are not considered pro-Egyptian but who are dissatisfied with what they consider to be "old-fashioned and unfair" leadership may take matters into their own hands. Army morale is reported generally low.

Khalil, who appears to be losing control over members of his own Umma party as well as his coalition partners in the government, said on 20 July that he had expelled an Egyptian diplomat on 18 July for complicity in a plot to assassinate him and other members of the Umma. Khalil said that the diplomat was directing the plot in cooperation with the Egyptian military attaché, who is now in Cairo and not expected to return. One of Khalil's principal problems is finding sufficient funds to compete with the Egyptians in bribing Umma party members.

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### The Cyprus Situation

British authorities on Cyprus on 22 July confined virtually all residents to their homes for 48 hours and imposed a total communications blackout. These latest moves, involving the stiffest security measures taken since the initiation of EOKA's campaign of violence in 1955, were combined with a roundup of all suspected terrorists. Some 3,500 were reported arrested in the opening hours of the drive. The police apparently intend to detain and screen all Cypriots under 30. Reports reaching Beirut indicate that most of the political detainees recently released as part of a liberalization program have been rearrested, and that laws granting the government such emergency powers as detention without trial have been reinvoked.

Apparently both Greek and Turkish Cypriots are being arrested, but the British have indicated that their main targets are the Greek Cypriots of the EOKA underground. While EOKA may be severely crippled by the drive, the organization can be expected to launch unrestricted retaliatory action against the British.

The British apparently made their move in anticipation of a major EOKA attack against Turkish Cypriots, and also possibly in answer to warnings from Ankara that British failure to protect Turkish Cypriots could lead to the dispatch of Turkish troops to the island. London has rejected Ankara's repeated offers to send troops, and recent exchanges on this subject between Turkish officials and members of the British Embassy in Ankara have been described as "extremely acrimonious." The Turkish press, meanwhile, has also begun to mention the subject.

Athens can be expected to denounce vehemently the new British security moves, and will probably consider them a further indication of a pro-Turkish bias in London. Premier Karamanlis has repeated his urgent request that the United States intervene immediately to resolve the Cyprus dispute,

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[redacted]

warning that failure to do so could lead to the fall of his government and a neutralist policy for Greece. While Karamanlis' may be overly pessimistic, his relatively firm stand in support of the Western position in the Middle East, despite general criticism in Athens of recent Western moves in that area, and his failure to advance Greek desires for a Cyprus settlement will make his position increasingly difficult.

[redacted] , [redacted]

[redacted]

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**Moroccan-French Negotiations Stalled By Rise  
In Nationalist Agitation**

Negotiations for the withdrawal of French troops from Morocco appear to be at a standstill in view of the stiffened position recently adopted by the Moroccan Government. Rabat has not, however, rejected the French proposals of 12 July in which Paris asked to retain four military training bases. Popular agitation which by 14 July had been marshaled by the left-wing faction within the Istiqlal party against any compromise by the moderate Balafrej government has intensified since Anglo-American forces landed in the Middle East last week. The French Embassy in Rabat is pessimistic over the possibility that an agreement can be reached.

Prime Minister Balafrej intimated to a news correspondent on 21 July that Morocco will ask that American forces pull out of the four American Air Force bases operated jointly with the French in Morocco because "France did not ask to keep any" of them. He implied, however, that US naval air units might be permitted to remain at Port Lyautey base, which France asked to retain. Balafrej may have attempted to fore-stall anti-American disorders by this statement.

During the past week, the Moroccan press has stepped up demands for American--as well as French and Spanish--evacuation. Although the Moroccan under secretary for foreign affairs refrained on 17 July from commenting on American use of the Moroccan bases in support of Middle East operations, he stressed the importance--in view of the state of Moroccan public opinion--of avoiding press reports linking the bases with Middle East developments. [redacted]

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Laotian Army Backing Plan to Establish Strong  
Anti-Communist Government

The resignation of the Souvanna Phouma government will probably open a sharp political struggle between young anti-Communist leaders who are pressing for a new cabinet headed by Souvanna but dominated by young technicians and the familiar, largely discredited conservative politicians of former governments. The younger element, organized in the Committee for the Defense of the National Interest and enjoying the support of the influential crown prince and top-level army officers, is convinced that the political and security situation has deteriorated to a point where Laos cannot afford another venal and ineffective government.

In the likely event that the assembly refuses to invest a government dominated by nonparliamentarians, the committee plans to call on the crown prince to close the assembly and impose a government by royal decree.

The commanding general of the Laotian Army is playing an active role in the formulation of these plans, and he has stated that the army will back such a development. The role of the army would be limited to maintaining order and crushing any antigovernment moves by the Communist-dominated Neo Lao Hak Zat. [redacted]

[redacted]

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### III. THE WEST

#### British Military Movements

The gradual but steady concentration of British forces in the Mediterranean, Arabian peninsula, and Indian Ocean areas appears designed to enable Britain to retain control throughout the Persian Gulf area and particularly to safeguard the vital Kuwait oil supply, as well as to participate in any possible joint action in the Middle East. Elements of the strategic reserve being sent to Cyprus from Britain include the Third Infantry Division headquarters, which will make available a general officer and staff for eventual command of British troops in Jordan if required. Two infantry brigades are also available on Cyprus for use elsewhere.

The British marine commando unit now in Libya may be replaced by an infantry battalion which arrived at Malta on 20 July from Gibraltar. The commandos would probably return to Malta to join another such unit reported en route from Britain on an aircraft carrier. Sixteen light bombers were recently transferred from Cyprus to El Adem airfield near Tobruk, and one squadron of medium bombers in Britain is on 24-hour alert for a move either to Malta or to El Adem. All other medium-bomber squadrons in the United Kingdom are being brought to maximum combat readiness.

In view of coolness in Kuwait toward the British, the Political Agent has advised against stationing a frigate there at present, and the British will probably not occupy the oil installations against the wishes of the Kuwaiti authorities unless trouble makes a quick move mandatory. If a quick airdrop is indicated, a paratroop battalion is available on Cyprus. In the event of overflight problems, infantry units would have to be sent by sea from Bahrein. The Ruler of Bahrein, in contrast to Kuwait, has agreed to receive British reinforcements and requested that London make a public statement of support. Reinforcements sent to Aden and Bahrein from the East African central reserve have reduced the Kenya garrison to colonial troops, but an infantry battalion sailing from Singapore on 23 July will be directed either to Kenya or to Aden.

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A destroyer en route to Bahrain will augment the usual patrol vessels in the Persian Gulf. Two auxiliary ships left Singapore on the 18th to provide specific logistic support, including aircraft armament and parts, for the carrier at Aden. Other naval units at Aden, one light cruiser and one destroyer, will be joined by three escort vessels on 25 July.

Naval movements in the Far East, including the recall of a cruiser from Australia to Singapore, are designed to provide evacuation facilities if repercussions from the Middle East spread there.

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**Disturbances May Occur During Dr. Eisenhower's Visits  
In El Salvador and Guatemala**

The relatively friendly reception thus far accorded Dr. Milton Eisenhower may be marred by anti-US demonstrations in El Salvador and Guatemala, the last countries on his itinerary. He is scheduled to arrive in El Salvador on 27 July and in Guatemala, for a two-day visit, on 30 July.

In El Salvador, long-smoldering student grievances against the government may result this week in a planned one-day student strike followed by demonstrations in the main square of the capital. Communists, who have infiltrated the student groups, are capable of timing further student demonstrations to coincide with the Eisenhower visit and could convert them into anti-US manifestations. Demonstrations could reach the point where Salvadoran police and army would have to use force to restore order.

In Guatemala, the Communists plan to use student, labor, and other groups they influence or control for anti-US demonstrations during the visit and are believed producing numerous anti-US handbills for the occasion. They are preparing, however, to disclaim responsibility for any violence that may occur. There are rumors that rightist groups, including agents of Dominican dictator Trujillo, plan to provoke disturbances during the Eisenhower visit to discredit further the weak and inept President Ydigoras. On the surface, stability appears improved in Guatemala, but Ydigoras has been increasingly concerned over reports of plotting against his regime by both rightists and extreme leftists and has considered declaring a state of siege in the near future to facilitate the deportation of his leading opponents.

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**Revolution Threatens in Venezuela (Information as of 0100  
EDT 23 July)**

Conflict between junta President Larrazabal and Defense Minister Castro Leon is splitting the Venezuelan armed forces and threatening the stability of the junta government. The navy, the national guard, and some elements of the army are said to be backing Larrazabal, while the air force and other army elements support Castro Leon. A high government official stated on 22 July that the key air force base at Maracay is controlled by an officer who is not taking orders from the junta.

Castro Leon seeks repressive action against the Communists and the leftist but non-Communist Democratic Action, Venezuela's largest political party. Larrazabal wants to dismiss Castro and has apparently called on the political parties, labor groups, and Communist-led students to rally to the junta's defense.

Civilian groups are bitterly opposed to most leaders of the army and the air force and are likely to resist a coup with violence. They are said to have sizable quantities of arms and Molotov cocktails. The forces opposing the junta are probably capable, however, of taking over the government, but may back down should they be faced with overwhelming popular support for Larrazabal.

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