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SECURITY INFORMATION

11 December 1953

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~~TOP SECRET~~**GENERAL****1.**

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FAR EAST**2. Rhee apparently determined to sabotage political conference:**

Ambassador Briggs believes that President Rhee has made up his mind to sabotage a Korean political conference unless the United

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States assures him it will resume the fighting if the conference fails to achieve withdrawal of the Chinese Communists from Korea after 90 days. Rhee implied, however, that he might settle for a promise of logistic and materiel support if the United States were unwilling to fight.

Briggs believes Rhee is motivated by a deep-rooted suspicion of attempts to secure unification through negotiations, a belief that the Communists have no intention of relinquishing North Korea, and concern over increasing Chinese influence there. Rhee apparently believes that the talks would merely give the Chinese time to consolidate in North Korea.

Comment: On his return on 29 November from talks with Chinese leaders in Taipei, Rhee repudiated an agreement made three days before to invite nonvoting observers to the conference.

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SOUTHEAST ASIA

4. Dejean sees no cause for concern over Viet Minh peace feeler:

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Commissioner General Dejean told Ambassador Heath in Saigon on 9 December that there is no reason for concern over the clamor

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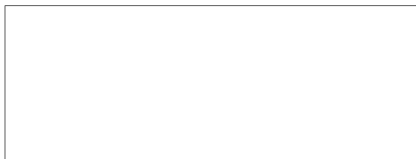
in Paris for truce negotiations with the Viet Minh. Dejean said that at a ministerial meeting in Paris, no one challenged his view that an armistice is impossible except on terms which would allow the Communists to take over Vietnam. He added that in view of this fact, any future French government, even one headed by Pierre Mendes-France, would have to continue the fight on the basis of the Navarre plan.

Comment: Despite French desires to end the Indochina war, the government is unwilling to follow up Ho's "offer" at least until the results of the Navarre plan become evident and until the possibility of five-power talks has been explored.

The Mendes-France program, as outlined to an American embassy official in Paris on 17 June, would not be incompatible with continued prosecution of the war.

NEAR EAST - AFRICA

5. Egypt believed preparing campaign to spread neutralism among Arab states:



The Iraqi ambassador in Cairo believes that Egypt requested the postponement of an Arab League meeting until 9 January in order to prepare a campaign to pressure the Arab states into a neutralist position. He told Ambassador Caffery of his concern over the present neutralist trend in Egypt's foreign policy.

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Caffery in reporting this also notes that the Egyptian press hints at possible recognition of Communist China and Albania.

Comment: Egypt will push its neutralism, which has grown since mid-November and was particularly publicized on the eve of the Bermuda conference, if it becomes convinced that there is no hope for an Anglo-Egyptian settlement on the Suez issue.

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6. Eden feels further concessions to Egypt impossible:



Foreign Secretary Eden during the Bermuda conference stated that for domestic political reasons Britain can make no further concessions to Egypt on the Suez issue. He said that some compromise might be possible regarding future availability of the base, but not over the issue of uniforms for British technicians.

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Eden also said that early extension of American financial aid to Egypt would be "extremely serious" in its effect on Anglo-American relations.

Comment: Eden was referring to his difficulties with the group of about 35 Conservative "rebels" in Parliament whose leader has stated that the Churchill government is doomed if it yields on the uniform issue.

7. Political crisis again threatens Libya:



American minister Villard reported on 9 December that Prime Minister Muntasser left Benghazi on the eve of the opening of Parliament after King Idriss failed to grant a written commitment that he would reduce "palace meddling" in politics. Villard commented that Muntasser's departure has left the federal government in complete confusion, but that Parliament is expected to open as scheduled on 10 December without the prime minister.

Comment: Muntasser's sudden departure from Benghazi suggests that relations between King Idriss and his prime minister have again reached a critical stage.

WESTERN EUROPE

8. Adenauer marks time on Saar settlement:



According to information reaching American officials in Bonn, Chancellor Adenauer "meekly" accepted the majority view of his cabinet on

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8 December that no significant concessions should be made to France on the Saar until the results of the prospective four-power conference are known and the French position on EDC is clarified. One top Bonn government official has stated that Adenauer cannot afford unpopular Saar concessions until he has concrete assurance on French EDC ratification.

Comment: German willingness to negotiate on Europeanization of the Saar has always been premised on the assumption that European integration, and thus EDC, would succeed.

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