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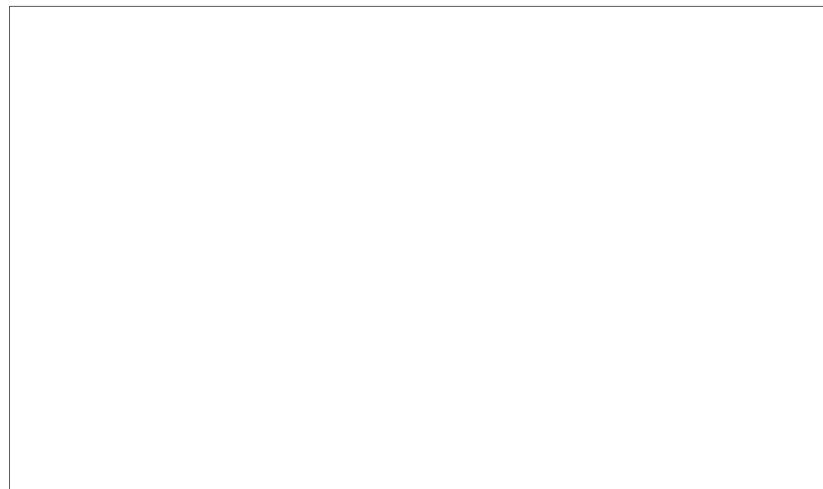
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1. ARAB JOINT COMMAND DESIRES TO AVOID MAJOR CLASH WITH ISRAEL

[redacted] The military position of Egyptian and Syrian forces is such that any clash leading to general hostilities with Israel should be avoided before the end of 1957, [redacted]

[redacted] Cairo added, however, that this position would be reconsidered in the light of the prevailing political and military situation "if circumstances develop in such a way that an armed clash with Israel is necessary to prevent her from attempting the project!"

Comment

The "project" refers to Israeli irrigation and power development schemes which have been planned along the Jordan River between Syria and Israel. In some areas, notably between Lake Hula and Lake Tiberias, completion of the Israeli development projects will require excavation and other work in the demilitarized zone along the river. The most favorable season for this work is now at hand. Syria warned last spring that it would fire on Israeli workmen if projects were undertaken in the demilitarized zone. [redacted] this year Damascus warned Cairo that Israel might begin work in the demilitarized zone to provoke the Syrian army into conflict.

Cairo has previously urged Syria to refrain from becoming involved militarily with Israel in view of its limited military capabilities. [redacted]

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2. ISRAELI MOVES ON PASSAGE OF TIRAN STRAIT AND SUEZ CANAL

Comment on:

According to CINCNELM, Lloyds has reported that the Israeli motor ship Atlit, which has been scheduled as the first Israeli-flag merchant vessel to go through the Strait of Tiran to Eilat since the Israeli evacuation of Sinai, left Durban on 18 May for Lourenco Marques. On the basis of this report, it is estimated that the Atlit will not arrive at Eilat until between 7 and 17 June.

Press reports alleging that the Atlit had left Djibouti and even had already passed the Tiran Strait are probably part of an Israeli-inspired psychological warfare campaign to provoke Egypt and Saudi Arabia into actions or statements which would give Israel a diplomatic advantage on this issue.

The Israelis apparently are pursuing a similar tactic on the Suez Canal issue. The American embassy in Paris has reported that an Israeli embassy official there briefed selected correspondents on 20 May to the effect that a canal test is imminent. He did not specify whether the test would be made by an Israeli ship or an another vessel carrying Israeli cargo. Israeli officials had assured the United States last week that such press reports are "premature," and that Israel had no present plans for a test.

The chief of the Israeli naval force told the American naval attaché in Tel Aviv on 20 May that he expected no military conflict with the Arabs over the canal or the strait question at this time. The Israeli officer said he believed Nasr had given the Saudis responsibility for defending the Tiran Strait, and that Nasr will use the Saudis as a scapegoat on this issue.

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3. ISRAEL MAY REGISTER PROTEST WITH UN SECURITY COUNCIL OVER NEW INCIDENT IN NEGEV

The Israeli Foreign Ministry informed the American embassy that Israel would probably protest to the UN Security Council concerning three ambushes which occurred on the Beersheba-Eilat road in the southern Negev Desert on 20 May. One Israeli was killed and three were injured. The ministry reiterated that its present policy is to call such incidents to the attention of the Security Council in view of what it asserts is the ineffectiveness of the Truce Supervisory Organization.

Comment

The projected Israeli protest is probably planned as a counter to the Syrian protest now before the Security Council concerning the possible military significance of a bridge the Israelis are building at Lake Hula.

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4. IRAQI PRIME MINISTER OUTLINES FUTURE IRAQI-SAUDI MOVES

[Redacted] [Redacted]

Iraq's Prime Minister Nuri Said informed the American ambassador in Baghdad on 20 May that King Saud had suggested during their recent talks that a declaration

[Redacted]

by Moslem members of the Baghdad pact to the effect that it is not aimed at any Arab country would considerably ease Saudi Arabia's position in respect to the pact. Saud added that an opportune time for such a declaration would be a Moslem conference he intends to convene in the near future. Saud has asked Syrian president Quwatli to describe the conference to Nasr and to urge Nasr to apologize for recent Egyptian intrigues in Saudi Arabia. Saud wants it made plain to Nasr that unless he first apologizes, Egypt will not be invited to attend.

When queried by the ambassador regarding Iraqi plans for financial help to Jordan, Nuri replied that Saud has exerted considerable pressure for Iraqi assistance to Jordan. Nuri stated that Iraq is making available between the equivalent of \$2,800,000 and \$4,200,000 "for economic purposes," primarily for the superphosphate and potash industries.

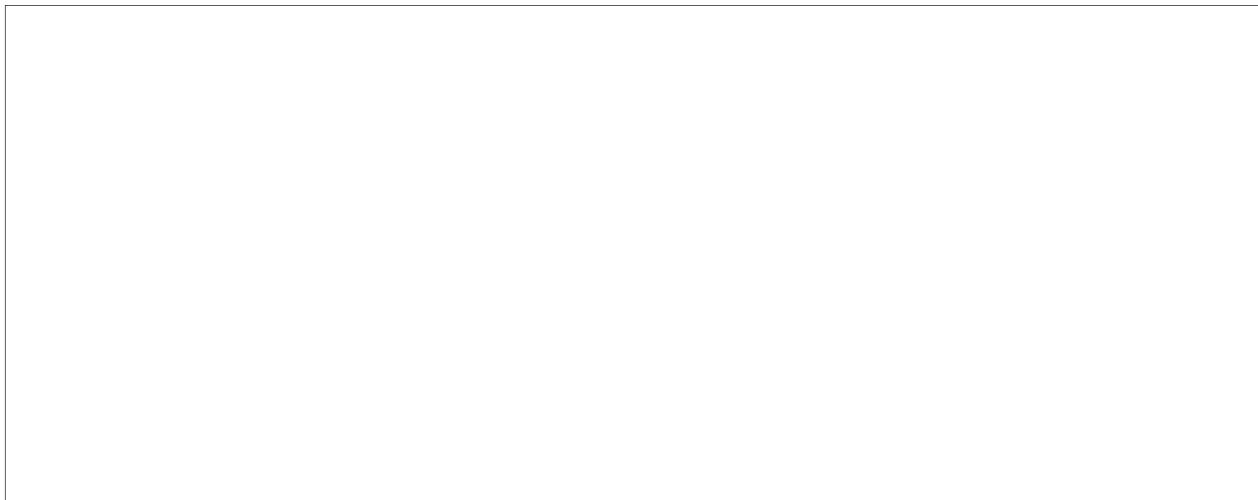
Comment It has been reported earlier that Saud intends to call a Moslem conference which will put Nasr in the minority, if he attends, or isolate him if he refuses an invitation.

Saud reportedly has already paid at least half and possibly all of his annual share, amounting to \$14,000,000, of the Jordanian subsidy under the terms of the Arab solidarity agreement. Since Egypt and Syria have not paid their share, approximating \$19,750,000, Jordan is in need of funds to pay current government expenses. However, Iraq has been committed for some time to invest in the Jordanian potash industry and any such payments at this time will not relieve the Jordanian budget situation.

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**5. FRENCH APPARENTLY FAVOR COALITION
GOVERNMENT IN LAOS**



Comment

The French apparently are setting the stage for Souvanna Phouma's "new" plan for breaking the deadlock with the Pathet Lao which reportedly continues to offer the Pathets participation in a coalition government. As in the past, they apparently are prepared to sacrifice Western unity in the hope of increasing their influence in Laotian affairs through support of pro-French Souvanna Phouma.

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