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SOUTH ASIA

1. French company formed to drill for oil in Afghanistan:

A new French company has been formed to drill for oil in Afghanistan just south of the Soviet frontier. The Societe Nationale des Petroles du Languedoc Mediterraneen, which is reportedly about to sign a contract with the Afghan Government, has the controlling interest.

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The American Embassy in Paris has been reliably informed that the Societe Nationale is 67 percent owned by the French Government and that the new company was established to hide the government's control of operations in Afghanistan.

Comment: The USSR is extremely sensitive to foreign activity in Afghanistan, especially near the Soviet border, and has already lodged a protest with Kabul over foreign participation in Afghan oil drilling operations.

Soviet discovery that the French firm is government-controlled would afford the USSR a new opportunity for vigorous protests, which could affect adversely all non-Soviet foreign activities in Afghanistan.

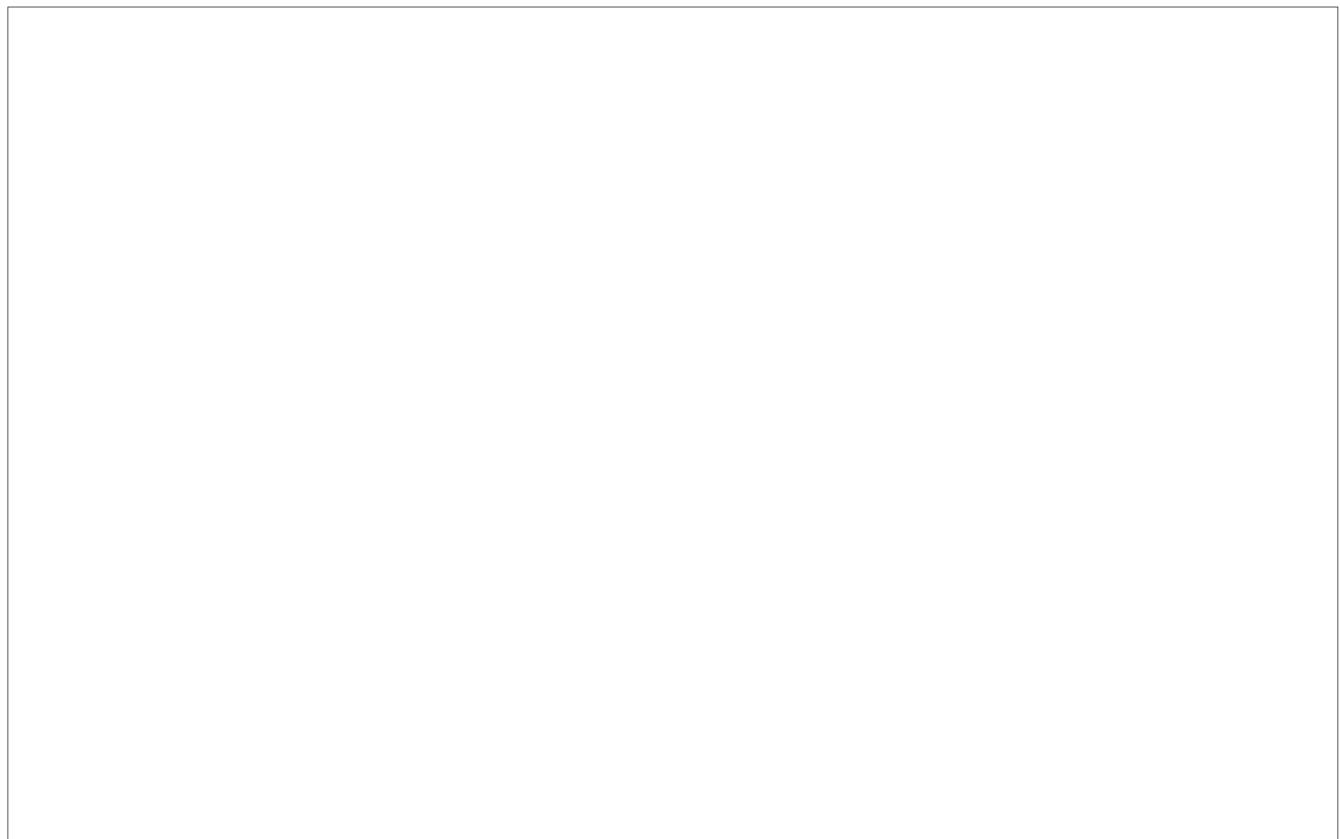
NEAR EAST - AFRICA

2. Mossadeq refuses to use force against Tudeh demonstrators:

Minister of Court Ala has told Ambassador Henderson that he had tried to persuade Mossadeq to give the police more powers to suppress Tudeh demonstrators. Mossadeq refused and insisted that the Tudeh could not be controlled by force, but only by economic and social reforms. He suggested that it would be easier to maintain order if the national anthem were not played and if the Shah's picture were not publicly displayed because the Tudeh used them as excuses for demonstrations.

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Comment: Mossadeq's attitude is consistent with his declared belief in the right of free speech. His attempt to avoid conflict, however, will probably be considered a victory by the Tudeh. 50X1



4. President Khouri expects Lebanese Government to fall soon:



President Khouri of Lebanon has told American Minister Minor that he expects Premier Solh's government to fall during the special session of parliament called for 28 August. 50X1

The President envisages a new government headed by Sahib Salaam, composed of capable men not in the present cabinet, but excluding members of the parliamentary opposition.

Comment: Salaam is a successful Moslem businessman who is reported to have political ambitions.

The special session of parliament will be asked to grant the government extraordinary authority to enact reforms by decree. The government-sponsored program, which does not include either tax or land reforms, is an attempt to pacify increasing opposition to the Khouri regime. President Khouri has previously indicated that he is willing to sacrifice Premier Solh in his efforts to maintain his position.

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WESTERN EUROPE

6. East Germans seen attempting to control Protestant Church:

The East German Government reportedly proposes to substitute a single Protestant Evangelical seminary for the present six theological faculties in various universities.

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American officials in Berlin see this as a move to confront the Protestant Church with obstacles similar to those now faced by the Catholics. The government would then be able to reduce the number of students, isolate them socially, and more effectively control their curricula and activities.

Comment: These moves contrast notably with the attitude of the East Germans earlier this year, when attempts were made to exploit the church in East and West Germany as a means of organizing West German opinion against the European Defense Community.

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