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1. HEAVY SHIPMENTS OF SOVIET ARMS ARRIVING IN SYRIA

[Redacted]

At least four shiploads of Soviet bloc arms have arrived in Syria since the end of December. At this rate of delivery, essentially all of the Soviet arms contracted for in November 1956 (\$25,000, -000 worth) will be delivered during the first quarter of 1957.

[Redacted] the military storage areas of the port are filled with ammunition crates, artillery and some military vehicles. An American official at Aleppo observed one convoy from Latakia consisting of 115 trucks, some of which were transporting multiple-barreled antiaircraft guns.

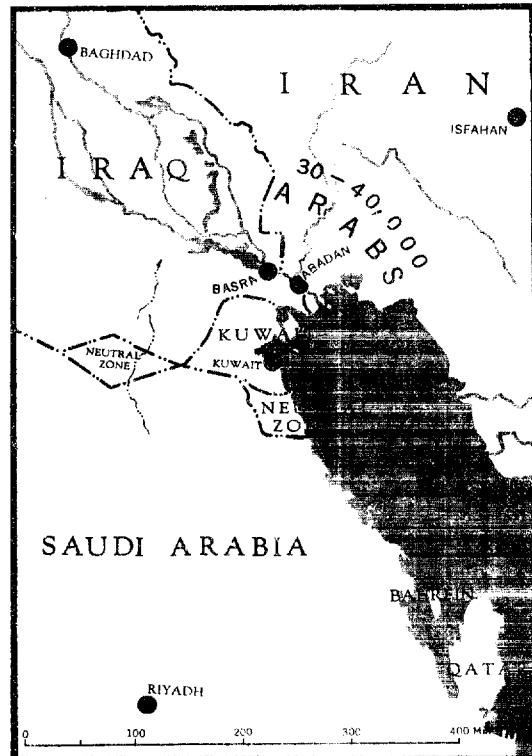
Although the Syrians are urging rapid delivery of materiel, the crated MIG-17 aircraft which arrived in Latakia on 13 December apparently remained in the port area until mid-January, when they were moved to Hama airfield. Syria's desire to accelerate arms deliveries may indicate preparation to oppose any Israeli diversion of the Jordan River in the spring. [Redacted]

2. ARAB TRIBES IN IRAN REPORTEDLY BEING ARMED

The Iranian chief of staff notified army headquarters in southern Iran on 16 January that arms were being smuggled from Bahrein and Kuwait to the Arab tribes in Iran "for political aims related to the Arab League." The chief of staff emphasized the "vital importance" of the ports and oil installations in the area and ordered strict surveillance to be maintained.

Comment

The smuggling of arms to Arab tribes in Iran, under Arab League auspices, would suggest that Nasr may plan to expand harassment of Western oil operations. Smuggling of arms from Kuwait and Bahrein would be merely an extension of Egyptian covert channels to these areas. Security precautions in the oil areas are believed to be good, but isolated acts of sabotage, especially of the pipelines between the oil fields and the Abadan refinery, would be possible.



3. SITUATION IN INDONESIA

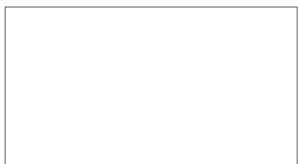
President Sukarno's announcement of his plans for an "advisory council" apparently has brought a reassessment of attitudes among the political parties remaining in the Indonesian government. The realization that the council, under Sukarno's leadership, would decrease the influence of the parties is reported

to have had a restraining effect on some political leaders who had been considering an early withdrawal from the coalition cabinet. The Nahdlatul Ulama party in particular, whose support is necessary for the Ali regime's survival, is said to believe that the cabinet's preservation provides the best means of forestalling the early implementation of Sukarno's plans.

Meanwhile, army chief of staff Nasution reportedly is going to Central Sumatra, for talks with dissident army commanders Simbolon and Hussein. Nasution is believed generally willing to support Sukarno but probably hesitates to do so publicly until he has restored his authority over the military in Sumatra. Since army support is essential to the success of Sukarno's plan, Sukarno probably will wait for at least a semblance of army unity before pushing ahead with his plans for a "council."

4. JAPANESE SOCIALISTS DROP MODERATE LEADERSHIP

Comment on:



The Japanese Socialist Party, which holds approximately one third of the seats in both houses of parliament, at its national convention on 17-19 January turned further to the left. Two moderate leaders were replaced by extreme leftists and the leftists gained a majority on the Central Executive Committee.

The party approved a statement which included a justification--but not full approval--for the Soviet intervention in Hungary, referred to American "oppression" on Okinawa, and called for abrogation of US-Japan security arrangements, recognition of Communist China, and repudiation of Nationalist China.

The left wing, with strong labor union support, is attempting to create a "labor class party," and the convention brought on an open clash with the rightists, who desire to expand the party's popular base among farmers and small businessmen.



5. FRENCH CHARGE IN LAOS UNSYMPATHETIC TO US-UK POLICY THERE

Comment on:

The British ambassador in Vientiane has concluded,

[redacted] that the French cannot be counted on to support US-UK efforts to block the entry of Pathet Lao officials into the Laotian cabinet. The American ambassador comments that Soulie has advised Paris not to oppose the formation of a coalition government but to support the Laotian government's 28 December agreement with the Pathet Lao.

The French may feel that by avoiding close identification with US-UK policy they will be in a position to increase their influence in a unified Laos.