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27 October 1955

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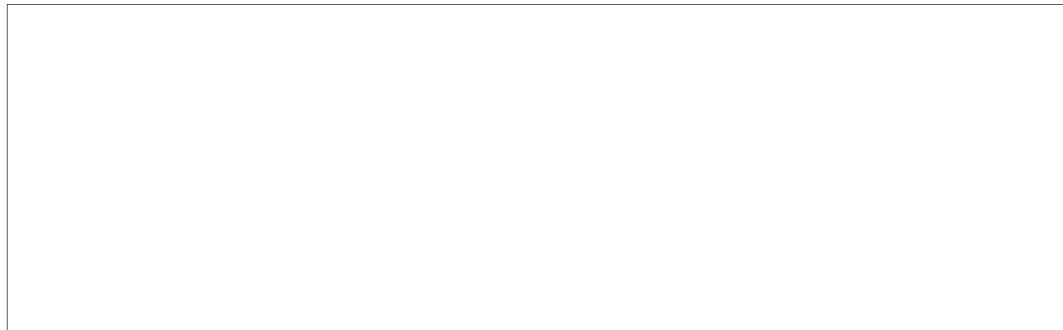
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CURRENT INTELLIGENCE BULLETINDOCUMENT NO. 48NO CHANGE IN CLASS. DECLASSIFIED

CLASS. CHANGED TO: TS S C

NEXT REVIEW DATE: 2010

AUTH: HR 70-2

DATE: 15 JAN 1980 REVIEWER A small rectangular box with a thin black border, used to redact sensitive information.**Office of Current Intelligence****CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY**~~TOP SECRET~~

Approved for Release: 2019/09/16 C03002339



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1. BRITAIN WANTS TO REOPEN CYPRUS TALKS WITH GREECE

[Redacted]

British foreign secretary Macmillan intends to notify the Greek foreign minister on 26 October that Britain wants to reopen discussions on the Cyprus situation. Britain would offer self-government now and a promise to consider self-determination later. The British aim at elections within the next year or so, and believe the anticipated strong Communist vote might help sober moderate Cypriots like Archbishop Makarios.

Macmillan said he had indications that Greece would like to have the Cyprus situation calm down. He mentioned the need for handling the situation carefully so as not to arouse the Turks.

Comment

A British promise to consider self-determination would be an advance over the position taken during the London conference but would fall short of Archbishop Makarios' subsequent request for a definite date for implementing the promise.

The new Greek government has been seeking a way out of the impasse on Cyprus and probably would welcome such a British overture as a basis for further discussion.

The Turks will probably react strongly to any consultation on the Cyprus situation which does not include Turkey.

2. COMMUNIST CHINA REASSERTS CLAIM TO MACAO

[Redacted]

Communist China's propaganda blast against Macao on 26 October marks the first occasion in some three years that the Chinese have taken a menacing line toward the Portuguese colony. However, it is unlikely that Peiping will compromise its present "peace" line by resorting to military action against Macao in the near future.

The Peiping broadcast declared that the Chinese people have the "right to demand" the return of Macao. While the broadcast did not include such a demand, it argued that Macao is China's "very own territory," so that a campaign to "liberate" Macao could be justified as a purely domestic question.

The Portuguese attitude toward Communist China has been conciliatory. Following the border clash in 1952, the Macao authorities apologized and paid a financial indemnity. On 21 October, the Portuguese on Macao again sought to mollify the Chinese by canceling the fourth centennial celebrations, to which the Peiping regime had taken exception.

The friendly discussions between the governor of Hong Kong and Premier Chou En-lai in Peiping earlier this month suggest that no propaganda campaign against Hong Kong is imminent.

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3. SOUTH VIETNAM REFERENDUM SEEN AS POSSIBLY REFLECTING VIET MINH WEAKNESS

The heavy voter participation and the orderly manner in which the 23 October referendum was carried out in South Vietnam may indicate that the

Viet Minh potential for creating political disorder in the south has been generally overestimated, according to the American embassy in Saigon.

There were no significant incidents during the voting and in most areas over 90 percent of those registered voted. The embassy doubts the Viet Minh would have willingly permitted such an impressive show of the government's strength to go unchallenged.

Comment

The Viet Minh strongly denounced the referendum from the time the plans for it were announced, asserting the Vietnamese people would be absent from the polls and the results would be arranged in Washington. With Diem's victory assured well in advance, the Viet Minh may have preferred not to put its strength to the test.

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4. INDONESIAN LEADER SEES SMALL PARLIAMENTARY PLURALITY FOR MASJUMI

[Redacted]

Chairman Natsir of the Masjumi Party has told an American embassy official in Djakarta that he expects his party will have a small plurality in the new parliament and that the main task will be to form a government coalition with the National Party and to exclude the Communists.

Natsir said the task would not be easy owing to accumulated bitterness in the National Party against the Masjumi, particularly his own wing of the party.

Comment

Although the National Party has maintained a slight numerical lead in the almost complete election returns, parliamentary seats are so allocated that the Masjumi's majority in areas other than Java may give it slightly more seats than the Nationalists.

The task of forming a cabinet will be complicated also by opposition to Natsir within his own party. The Nahdlatul Ulama, a conservative Moslem party which both the Nationalists and the Masjumi are eager to include in the next cabinet, is likewise opposed to Natsir.

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5. INDONESIA FAVORS ANOTHER AFRO-ASIAN CONFERENCE

The Indonesian ambassador in New Delhi told the press on 21 October that the time is ripe for a second Afro-Asian conference. The Indonesian foreign minister later told reporters in Djakarta that the ambassador's statement was in accord with the views of his government. Both made it clear, however, that Indonesia would not take the initiative in calling such a meeting.

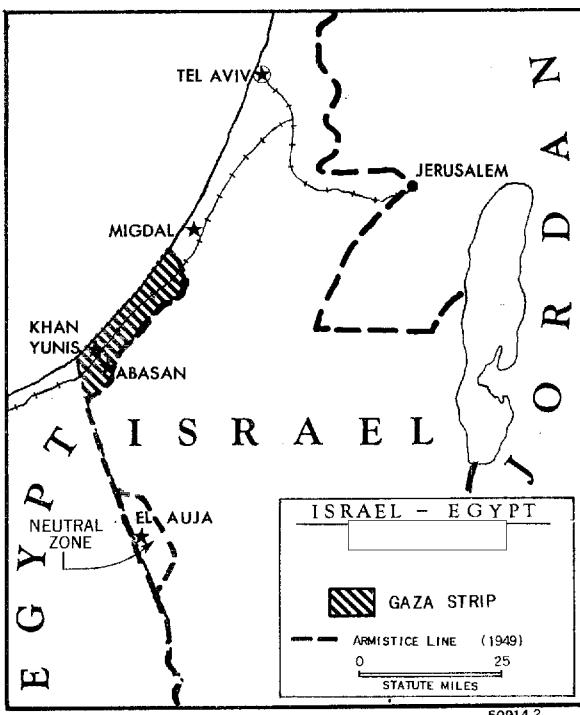
Comment

The final Bandung communiqué made the five Colombo powers responsible for calling any subsequent meetings. Of the Colombo powers, only Ceylon had previously indicated an interest in initiating steps leading to another conference. There have been several indications that Egypt is anxious to be host to an Afro-Asian conference in 1956.

6. ISRAEL EXPECTED TO MAKE RETALIATORY ATTACK ON EGYPT

The American army attaché in Tel Aviv believes the two Egyptian attacks on Israeli police posts in the El Auja demilitarized area on 26 October will result in Israeli retaliation.

He expects an Israeli attack to be supported by forces "sufficient for any eventuality."



Comment Retalia-tion has been a normal procedure in Israel's tough frontier policy. The Egyptian border activity may have re-sulted from local unco-ordinated decisions.

After several requests were made by the UN truce chief, Egypt and Israel withdrew reinforce-ments in the El Auja area

on 2 October. Cairo continues, however, to oppose the Israeli settlement in the demilitarized area, and Tel Aviv is protest-ing against the Egyptian troops stationed in a prohibited area near El Auja.

7. EL GLAOUI IN MOROCCO ANNOUNCES SUPPORT FOR FORMER SULTAN BEN YOUSSEF

The announcement by El Glaoui, Berber leader and pasha of Marrakech, that he favors the restoration of Ben Youssef to the Moroccan throne is a startling reversal of his stand against the former sultan. El Glaoui has been the chief Moroccan supporter of France and is considered to have been a main instigator of Ben Youssef's removal in August 1953.

El Glaoui's reversal of position apparently completes Moroccan unity on the dynastic issue, which should make the nationalists more unyielding toward the French and increase their unwillingness to co-operate in Premier Faure's program for a Moroccan government and to demand instead the reinstatement of Ben Youssef as sultan.

The Faure government, however, may be more anxious than ever for Ben Slimane's government to come into being as soon as possible. El Glaoui's turn-about gives Paris less leverage to accomplish this aim and probably strengthens the possibility of the early removal as resident general of Boyer de Latour, who has carried out Faure's Moroccan program reluctantly and only under pressure from Paris.