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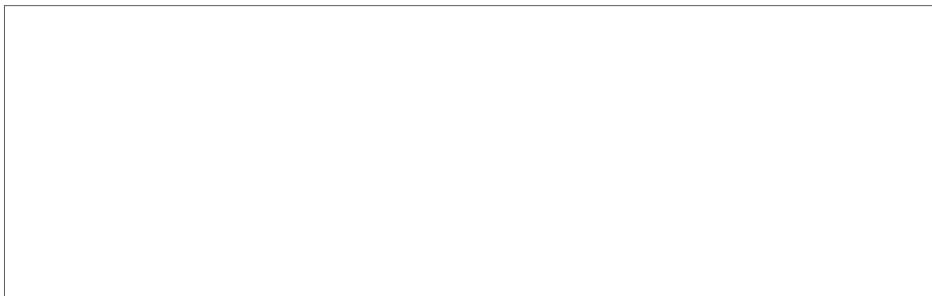
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1. CHILEAN LABOR CALLS GENERAL STRIKE

[Redacted]

Leaders of Chile's dominant labor confederation, CUTCH, have issued a call for a general strike, to start at midnight 8 January, in protest against a government bill to freeze wages and prices. The strike would affect some half-million workers. The bill, which passed the Chamber of Deputies last month, was approved by the Senate on 4 January by a vote of 20-19.

Comment

CUTCH reportedly is divided over tactics. One group favors a general strike of indefinite duration. Another group, including the Communists, favors a 48-hour general strike. The Communists, whose party is illegal, are opposed to an indefinite general strike because they fear they may be singled out for repressive action. There are indications that if a general strike of indefinite duration is called, they will try to break it even at the risk of splitting CUTCH.

Since the wave of strikes last July, the administration has adopted a much firmer position against leftist and CUTCH pressures. This new firmness was a big factor in the decision of the opposition United Conservative and Liberal Parties to support the wage-price bill.

[Redacted]

2. BURMESE PLANS FOR UTILIZING SOVIET ECONOMIC AID

A high Burmese planning official informed the American embassy in Rangoon on 29 December that Soviet economic and technical assistance to Burma will be concentrated on agricultural and irrigation projects. No Soviet help has yet been requested for industrial projects, since most planning in this sphere had been completed prior to Moscow's offer of assistance. Burma intends to turn to the USSR for the establishment of industrial enterprises only in cases where present plans do not produce results.

The Burmese official volunteered that Rangoon was satisfied with its American and UN economic advisers, and would not replace them with Soviet experts.

Comment A joint communiqué issued on the eve of the departure of Bulganin and Krushchev from Rangoon last month announced that in return for Burmese rice, the USSR would assist Burma in agricultural development, the construction of irrigation works, and the establishment of industrial enterprises.

In a desire to balance the participation of East and West in its development program, the Burmese government may wish to limit Soviet participation in the industrial phase of its ambitious development program. However, its continuing shortage of foreign exchange may lead it to turn to the USSR for help in the establishment of at least some factories. Burma is unable to sell all its rice in free-world markets, and its sales to the Orbit are resulting in the accumulation of sizable credits there. (Concurred in by ORR)

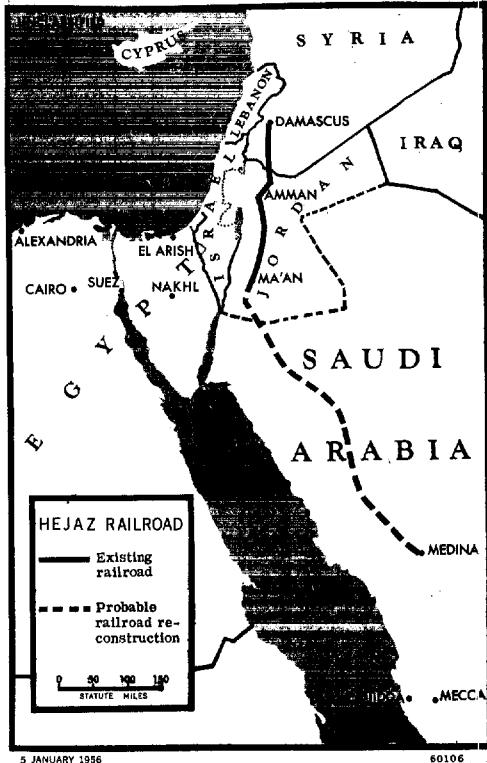
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3. KING SAUD APPROVES POLISH BID TO SURVEY RAILROAD PROJECT

Comment on:

King Saud has approved Poland's low bid for the survey of the Hejaz railroad reconstruction project [redacted]

According to a Warsaw radio broadcast of 30 December, the contract for this work was signed in Damascus on 28 December.



The successful Polish bid paves the way for Warsaw to win any subsequent contract for actual construction of the rail line from Maan to Medina and possibly contracts for other construction projects in the Near East. (Prepared by ORR)

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THE ARAB-ISRAELI SITUATION (Information as of 1700, 5 January)

The American military attaché in Tel Aviv reports that Israel has taken steps to increase its petroleum stocks by 250 percent by 1 March. According to the chairman of the principal organization for settling immigrants in Israel, Tel Aviv has decided to cut its investment in new immigrant housing in order to meet increased military expenditures.

Saudi Arabia has presented a formal request to purchase from the United States 25 F-86F jet fighters and six T-33 jet trainers.

the Soviet freighters Alexander Ushakov and Sukhona indicate that both were headed toward Egypt. These vessels passed Istanbul coming out of the Black Sea on 31 December and 2 January. Both declared cargoes of machinery for Albania. Similar bogus declarations were made by several of the Soviet freighters which previously carried military equipment to the port of Alexandria. The Ushakov delivered one such cargo, arriving at Alexandria on 4 or 5 December.

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