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INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY

For Week Ending
28 December 1948

Vol. III No. 50

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GREECE

Concentrated guerrilla attacks: The strong guerrilla attack on Kardhissa, a provincial capital in Thessaly, cost the guerrillas heavy casualties but demonstrated once again both the Greek Army's failure to make proper use of intelligence and planning and the guerrillas' skillful employment of available men and weapons. The guerrillas have recently reorganized along divisional lines, and the Kardhissa operation appears to have been the first real test of the reorganization. They presumably have the capability of isolating and inflicting similar punishment on other towns in the plains, but whether they can continue to take such heavy casualties is problematical. Nevertheless, other spectacular attacks will probably be made before the end of the year to celebrate the first anniversary of the "free" government, which was formed last Christmas. In addition to more concentrated attacks by the guerrillas, increased sabotage is expected in the cities, where (to the great concern of party leaders) the militant Communist effort has lagged behind that in the mountains. Rebel saboteurs are now reported to be infiltrating the cities to bolster the local organizations in carrying out assassinations and other terroristic acts.

TURKEY

Soviet warships through the Straits: Turkish-Soviet relations will be confronted with a new source of strain in mid-January, when the old battleship GUILIO CESARE and three smaller vessels in the first contingent of Italian warships awarded to the USSR as reparations--were scheduled to begin movement to Soviet Black Sea ports by way of the Straits. The Turks are naturally most reluctant to have substantial additions to the Soviet Black Sea fleet come through Turkish territorial waters, and although they are not likely to offer forcible resistance to the movement of the ex-Italian vessels they will probably look out for any legitimate device which could be used to deny them passage. Should transit be attempted under the Italian flag, the Turks would certainly protest vigorously on the basis of the provisions of the Montreux Convention of 1936 which severely limit peacetime passage of warships flying the flags of countries not bordering the Black Sea. Even if the ex-Italian ships are delivered under the Soviet flag, the Turks will probably insist on meticulous observance of the Montreux rules, although they are not likely to go so far as to invoke Articles 20 and 21. These articles permit

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Turkey, on declaring itself to be under imminent threat of war, to exercise full control over the passage of any warships through the Straits, subject to overruling by a majority of the Montreux signatories and by a two-thirds majority of the now-defunct Council of the League of Nations.

SYRIA

Syrian Cabinet finally formed: After two weeks' effort and several failures, Syria at last has a government. The composition of the new Cabinet is as follows: Prime Minister Ahalid Azm, Foreign Affairs; Defense; Muhsin Barazi, Public Instruction; Adel Asmeh, Interior; Ahmed Rifai, Justice, Health, Social Affairs; Mohammed Ayish, Agriculture; Hassan Jabbara, Finance; Hunein Sehnaoui, National Economy; Majd al-Din Jabiri, Public Works.

The main impression given by the group is that the old guard is still in the saddle. The Populists, the reform party, are not represented. Several of the new cabinet have been in previous governments, e.g. Azm, Barazi, Jabbara. There are some new faces, it is true, but none that give cause for optimism regarding a more enlightened and liberal policy. Sehnaoui, for example, is an extremely wealthy industrialist with wide business interests; it would be naive to think that as Minister of National Economy he is prepared to support social legislation which might adversely affect his enterprises.

The life of Azm's government should be directly proportional to its success in coping with Syria's manifold internal difficulties. If it proves incapable of dealing with the present financial, economic, and political tangle, public resentment, supported by the Populists, will inevitably force its resignation.

IRAQ

Iraqi Government may resign: Indications are increasing that the present Iraqi Government, headed by Kuzahim Pachachi, feels that it has reached the end of the road. One report states that Pachachi already has made one request to resign, but that the Regent refused his permission. It is likely that the Prime Minister's next offer to quit will be accepted, since the present political and economic disruption of the country make it improbable that he can retain public confidence.

As usual, bazaar rumors regarding his possible successor are already circulating. Among those mentioned have been Ali Jawdat, Omar Nadhmi, Nuri Said, and (mirabile dictu) Salah Jabr. There is the very definite likelihood, however, that Iraq may experience the same difficulties that Syria is now going through in its attempt to form a stable cabinet. Certainly the groundswell of popular unrest in the Arab world threatens to

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disrupt the pattern of rule by old-line professional politicians. The progressive military, economic, and diplomatic deterioration of the country will unquestionably make it awkward for them to maintain the thesis that the salvation of Iraq lies in their retention of control.

Sentiment for a rapprochement with the UK may be growing. The mention of Nuri Said and Saleh Jabr, both of whom were active in the unpopular Portsmouth Treaty negotiations, suggests that Iraq may regret having dropped the UK as pilot particularly in view of the stormy times that lie ahead.

IRAN

Foreign Office shakeup: The replacement of Nouri Esfandari by Ali Hekmat as Iran's Foreign Minister should do much to smooth the course of Iranian-US relations. Under Esfandari, who appeared to be a masterful procrastinator and unfriendly to the US, the Foreign Office repeatedly presented the US Embassy with irritating and inexplicable delays, even on matters which had agreed upon at the top level. Esfandari himself, as head of Iran's UN delegation, failed to present the Security Council with data on recent Soviet-Iranian relations, although both the Shah and the Prime Minister had assented to US recommendations to that effect. The US has still to receive official permission to open a consulate at Meshed, although the issue was raised in February 1948 and Iran's consent given tentatively some time ago. Negotiations over renewal of the US Military Mission Agreement have now dragged on past the formal deadline for submission of proposed revisions, 21 December, although previously the Shah, the Chief of Staff, and the War Minister had informally agreed to renewal of the agreement without substantial changes. Hekmat has the reputation of being friendly to the US. Moreover he has replaced the under secretary of foreign affairs, and several other career officials generally considered to be biased against the US.

INDIA-PAKISTAN

Inter-dominion conference: The successful outcome of the inter-dominion conference at New Delhi which ended on 14 December indicates that the Kashmir dispute constitutes at present the only real barrier to cooperation between India and Pakistan. While the two dominions have kept alive the possibility of drastic developments regarding Kashmir by the mutual suspicion and lack of frankness which both have continued to manifest on the subject, their representatives at the New Delhi conference, confining themselves to a number of miscellaneous secondary issues, succeeded in removing various points of friction between the two dominions and were

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able to report a "substantial measure of agreement" on the financial, economic, and refugee problems they tackled. In Kashmir active military operations are currently being held up because of snow, and India has persistently denied reports that it plans to launch a new offensive. Meanwhile, the UN Kashmir Commission has sent one of its members to New Delhi and Karachi to explain to the two governments its latest set of formal recommendations. India and Pakistan are reported to be somewhat more receptive to the Commission's latest proposals than to previous ones, but there is still no assurance that either government will accept them.

NOTED IN BRIEF

The efforts to improve Anglo-Egyptian relations recently made by the King and other high Egyptian officials have been invalidated at least temporarily by a statement to the Senate by Prime Minister Nokrashy, reiterating the government's intention not to resume treaty negotiations with the UK until British troops are completely evacuated from Egyptian territory. The increasing political activity in Israel which has been going on in preparation for the general elections on 25 January has been marked principally by the struggle between MAPAI, the moderate socialist labor party of Premier Ben-Gurion, and MAPAM, its extreme socialist and more pro-Soviet rival. The combined list of the all-Hebrew Communist Party and of the Arab-Jewish Israeli Communist Party is not expected to win more than three percent of the total vote. The Communists attempted to get MAPAM to draw up a joint slate with them but were firmly turned down on the ground that they were more Communist than they were Zionist. Jewish emigration from Poland and Rumania to Palestine is now completely under the control of the two governments, which have ordered the closing of Jewish Agency offices in their countries. Current British efforts to open a consular office at Tel Aviv (in addition to the present office at Haifa) furnish concrete evidence that the UK is seeking a way to improve its relations with Israel even though it has no present intention of recognizing the Provisional Government of Israel. Syria's continued failure to ratify its proposed agreement with the Trans-Arabian Pipeline Company has forced company officials to consider more seriously the idea of having an Egyptian rather than a Lebanese terminus—a possibility previously raised primarily as a bluff to goad Syria into action. Preliminary surveys indicate that the use of an Egyptian terminus would have many advantages but would increase the construction cost by perhaps \$60 million. Construction of the line from the Arabian end is continuing, since considerable mileage can be added before a decision regarding the terminus will be necessary. The civil disobedience movement of the militantly Hindu organization, RSSS (Rashtriya Swyam Sevak Sangh), indicates that the group remains capable of becoming a serious threat to the Indian National Congress Party, even though it was outlawed at the time of Gandhi's death. At least 7,000 RSSS members were arrested as a result of the civil disobedience campaign.

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