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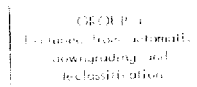
for the

SENIOR INTERDEPARTMENTAL GROUP

DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE

State Dept. review completed

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1. ISRAEL-SYRIA

The increasingly belligerent posture adopted by both Israel and Syria in the wake of the 15 August border clash may lead to further and more serious exchanges.

The latest incident, in which two Syrian MIGs were shot down, apparently began when an Israeli patrol boat fired on Syrian positions before running aground about 50 meters off the eastern shore of Lake Tiberias (Sea of Galilee). The Israelis, who claim the entire lake, had refrained from approaching closer than about 250 meters to shore since 1962. Following this incident, the Israeli chief of staff authorized "hot pursuit" in future air encounters.

In recent months Israel has adopted a harder line toward Syria regarding the activities of Fatah terrorists. On 14 July, in retaliation for a series of border incidents, Israeli planes destroyed equipment at the site of the Syrian water-diversion project in the area east of the lake.

Israeli troops had previously made reprisal raids against alleged Fatah bases in Jordan and Lebanon, whose governments oppose the terrorist operations. The 14 July incident was the first time that Fatah actions drew Israeli retaliation directly against Syria, whose government has long supported the terrorists by providing training facilities and a propaganda outlet.

Syrian authorities have now stated that Syria will no longer resort to the United Nations, but will strike inside Israel if there are further Israeli "provocations." There is also the danger that Syrian commanders on the border might permit, or even encourage, infiltrations into Israel in direct violation of orders from Damascus. The commanders might hope to exploit the subsequent exchange to satisfy their own ambitions in the unsettled Syrian political situation.

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2. SOUTH AFRICA

The Verwoerd government, buttressed by confidence in its economic and military strength and by its success in turning back recent external threats, seems to be adopting bolder tactics in foreign affairs.

[Redacted]

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Recent events in the Congo provide further evidence of the same tendency. There the Verwoerd government appears to be operating with a sophistication totally lacking in the defensive-minded Afrikaner regimes of the past. Pretoria may in fact have deliberately surfaced the recent coup plotting involving Tshombé and Belgian business interests. Verwoerd may thus have worked to preserve the position of Mobutu and to keep out of power a man who previously had been very close to the authorities in southern Africa. This instance suggests that South Africa may occasionally, in the interest of stability, support Africans termed "moderate" by the US.

[Redacted]

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[Redacted] Verwoerd has quite clearly taken Britain's measure over Rhodesia, and thus sees the US as the only country that might have both the means and the will to intervene forcefully in the region. [Redacted]

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4. DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

On 11 August President Balaguer called for a vaguely defined political truce that would include legislation banning certain political activities. Balaguer's move could alienate moderate leftist elements whose support he will need when he comes out with controversial military and economic reforms.

Balaguer has stressed that the proposed law will "permit and protect" both routine party activity and "merciless" censure of his government. He told US Ambassador Crimmins on 15 August that the law was aimed at curbing recent extreme-leftist agitation. Balaguer has reassured the public that he does not intend to return to Trujillo's "peace of the graveyard."

Despite Balaguer's assurances, the intent of the proposed law is not entirely clear. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] a major purpose is psychological, to deter the Dominican Revolutionary Party (PRD) from adopting a role of opposition for opposition's sake. Balaguer suspects that Bosch and radicals in the PRD are not the "constructive critics" they profess to be.

The reaction of the Dominican left to the proposal is mixed. Some moderate leaders of Bosch's party reportedly feel it to be "basically worthwhile" but in need of clarification. Bosch himself has asserted to US officials that Balaguer is out to destroy the PRD. Extremists characterize the proposal as dictatorial, and have challenged Balaguer to enforce it.

One danger is that the loose wording of the proposed law could be used by some police and military elements to justify heavy-handed throttling of the left. This in turn could lead to increased leftist attacks on the regime. [REDACTED]

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