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9 January 1961



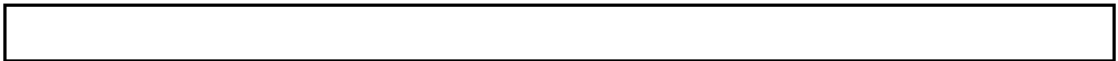
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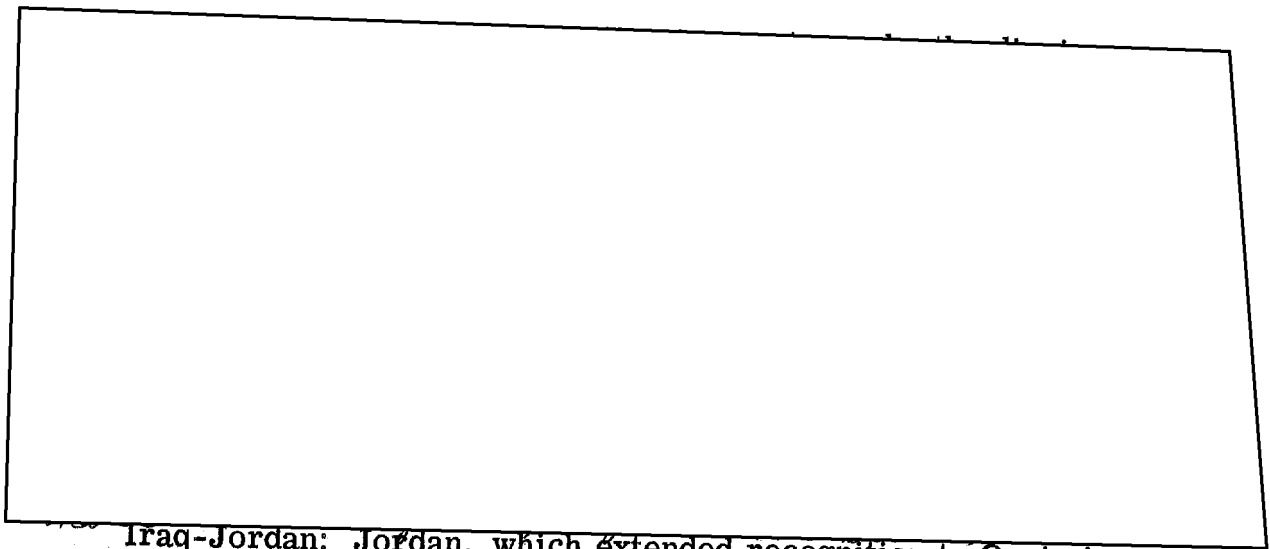
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State Dept. review completed

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Iraq-Jordan: Jordan, which extended recognition to Qasim's Iraqi regime in October 1960, is now seeking financial assistance from Iraq, according to diplomatic circles in Baghdad. Qasim is reported to be favorably disposed toward the request but has not yet made a final decision. Financial aid to Jordan probably would arouse considerable opposition among the Iraqis, many of whom disapprove of the re-establishment of Iraqi-Jordanian relations because they view it as aligning Iraq and Jordan against the UAR. OK

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III. THE WEST

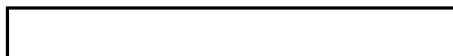
Belgium: The Socialist-led strikes which have crippled much of Belgium for almost three weeks appear to be gradually receding and now remain concentrated largely in the Walloon areas of the south and the port of Antwerp. There is growing concern on all sides over the revival of old antagonisms between linguistic and economic groups engendered by the strikes which threaten to become more acute as the strike action is prolonged. Negotiations are continuing for a compromise, but Prime Minister Eysken's Social Christian - Liberal government has given no indication OK

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that it intends to agree to Socialist demands to withdraw its controversial austerity program. The lower chamber of parliament reconvenes on 10 January to resume debate on the measure. [redacted]

LATE ITEM

*France-Algeria: De Gaulle is expected to consider the referendum vote as a mandate to accelerate his search for an early solution of the Algerian problem. Three-fourths of the voters in metropolitan France voted their approval; in Algeria, many Moslems abstained from the balloting, but incomplete tallies indicate that a clear majority of the voters had approved. De Gaulle may soon make another offer to the rebels in terms less rigid than before, perhaps waiving his previous insistence that a negotiated cease-fire precede political discussions. Although rightist opposition leader Jacques Soustelle has warned that the European settlers in Algeria will regard the vote in France as "abandonment," the key to any successful settler opposition to defy De Gaulle or to delay his next move remains the attitude of the army.

OK

[redacted] The army has maintained discipline thus far, but its morale is reported to have sagged as a result of De Gaulle's recent swift policy moves.)

Algerian rebel leaders are to meet in Tunis tomorrow to consider their next moves in light of the referendum. / [redacted]

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Jordan Seeking Financial Aid From Iraq

Iraqi Prime Minister Qasim is favorably disposed toward a Jordanian request for financial assistance, according to information from the Lebanese ambassador in Baghdad who until recently handled Jordanian affairs there. The amount and terms of the aid sought were not disclosed. Qasim reportedly has not made a final decision on the matter.

Iraqi aid to Jordan probably would arouse considerable opposition among many Iraqis who are displeased over the rapprochement with Jordan, which they view as aligning Iraq against the UAR. Qasim, however, may consider that benevolence toward Jordan would enhance his prestige as an impartial Arab leader amid apparently rising pan-Arab sentiment in Iraq. A progovernment Baghdad newspaper has referred to possible efforts by the Iraqi Government to eliminate differences between the UAR and Jordan.

The Jordanian Government is preoccupied with the UAR's threat to its security and with its perennial financial problems. The Jordanians apparently hope Qasim will be helpful in both of these situations. King Husayn's regime swallowed its outrage over the murder of Husayn's Hashemite relatives in the Iraqi revolution of 1958 and recognized Qasim's regime in October 1960. Since then gradual progress has been made in re-establishing relations between the two countries. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

Belgian Strike Situation

The three-week-old Socialist-led strikes which have crippled much of Belgium appear to be gradually receding and now remain concentrated largely in the Walloon areas of the south and the port of Antwerp. An early end to the work stoppages in the "red belt" of the industrial south is not expected, however, because of the 7 January vote by the Socialist-controlled General Federation of Belgian Workers to continue the strikes.

Prime Minister Eyskens' Social Christian - Liberal government remains determined to proceed with parliamentary considerations of its controversial austerity program--the omnibus bill--and the lower chamber will reconvene on 10 January to resume debate on the measure. Eyskens has indicated he is prepared to return the bill to committee with certain conciliatory amendments after its debate in the chamber, but he has refused to agree to Socialist demands to withdraw the bill. He has the support of the powerful Roman Catholic trade union federation which has refused to support the strikes.

Efforts to mediate the strikes are continuing, but there has been little basis for negotiation because of the refusal of both sides to retreat from their basic positions. In this stalemated situation the Belgian press is mentioning increasingly the possibility of new elections this spring after the austerity legislation is passed or a reorganization of the government.

The prolonged strikes have also served to revive antagonisms between linguistic and economic groups and created breaches which may be difficult to heal. On 3 January, Walloon Socialist deputies, meeting without their Flemish and Brussels colleagues, for the first time in the party's history adopted a resolution implying support for an autonomous French-speaking Walloon area within a federal state. The Walloon representatives maintain that the steadily deteriorating economic situation in southern Belgium is attributable to government policies which favor the Flemish-speaking north.

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