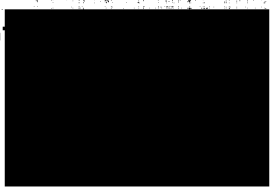


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# CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE GROUP INTELLIGENCE REPORT

52376

COUNTRY Syria

DATE: 25X1A6a

INFO. [REDACTED]

SUBJECT Fall of Jabri Cabinet:  
Formation of Mardas Ministry

DIST. 26 February 1949

25X1A6a

PAGES 2

ORIGIN [REDACTED]

SUPPLEMENT

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1. Former Prime Minister Sa'dallah Jabri's worsening relations with President Quwwatli, a subject of gossip since early last summer and common knowledge since the evacuation celebration, came to a head during the Damascus riots of mid-November 1946. 25X1X6
2. Jabri had not hesitated to express his condemnation of the weak and vacillating attitude adopted by President Quwwatli and most members of the government; the following sequence of events took place in November, ending in the change of government.
3. Upon entering a meeting of the makhtars (ward bosses) of Damascus, convoked by Quwwatli during the rioting, Prime Minister Jabri was openly rebuffed by the President. Jabri left the meeting, thereupon, and, changing his announced plans, took a plane for the Arab League meetings in Cairo. Upon arriving in that city, he retired to his hotel room, but later went to Alexandria, stating that he was gravely ill and unable to return to Damascus.
4. In the absence of the Prime Minister, President Quwwatli's personal henchmen in the government, together with the radical opposition in Parliament, determined upon a change of government and to install a Prime Minister who would be close to the President and acceptable to the opposition. It was only necessary to secure the cooperation of Khalid 'Asm, Minister of National Economy, and of Mikhail 'Iyan, Minister of Public Works.
5. 'Asm and Ilyan were persuaded to resign with the rest of the Cabinet, on the promise of the Premiership for 'Asm. However, it was intended, according to source, that 'Asm, once out of the Cabinet, should be shelved and Sabri 'Asali, Minister of the Interior, named as Prime Minister.
6. The government, accordingly, resigned without the prior knowledge of Prime Minister Jabri. The plot to install 'Asali, close friend of President Quwwatli, was, however, wrecked by a sudden personal feud between 'Asali and the President. It was reported to 'Asali that the President had criticized some of 'Asali's habits, such as drinking and gambling, at which 'Asali retorted with the implication that without him Quwwatli would not have been President.

This document is hereby regraded to CONFIDENTIAL in accordance with the letter of 13 October 1978 from the Director of Central Intelligence to the Archivist of the United States.

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7. President Quwwatli, thereupon, renounced the candidacy of 'Asali and urged Jabri to return and to re-form the government. Upon the latter's piqued refusal, Quwwatli summoned Jamil Mardas Bey, and Mardas, with much difficulty, succeeded in bringing together the present coalition of all interests, except 'Asali and the Khalid 'Asm group.

Comment of another, reliable, source:

Paragraphs 4 - 7 would seem to have been confirmed by the fact that the Mardas Government has the support (or, at least, the acquiescence) in Parliament of the former radical opposition, while the new opposition is formed by 'Asali and the Khalid 'Asm - Mikhail Ilyan group.

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