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19 August 1956



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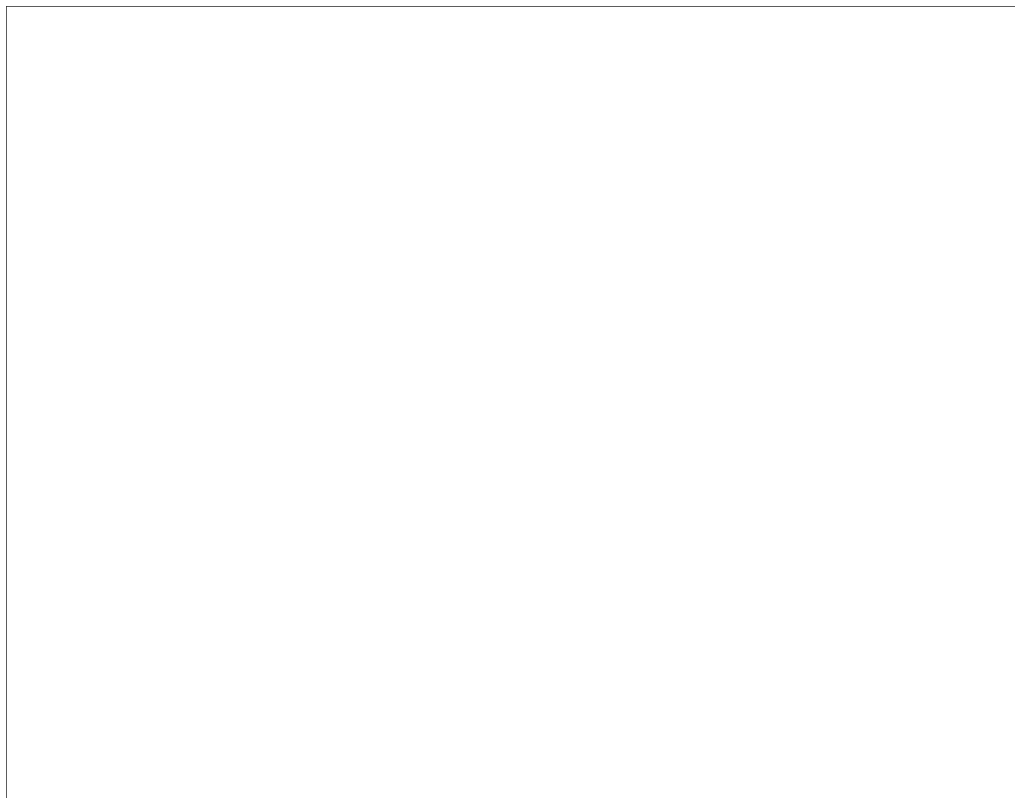
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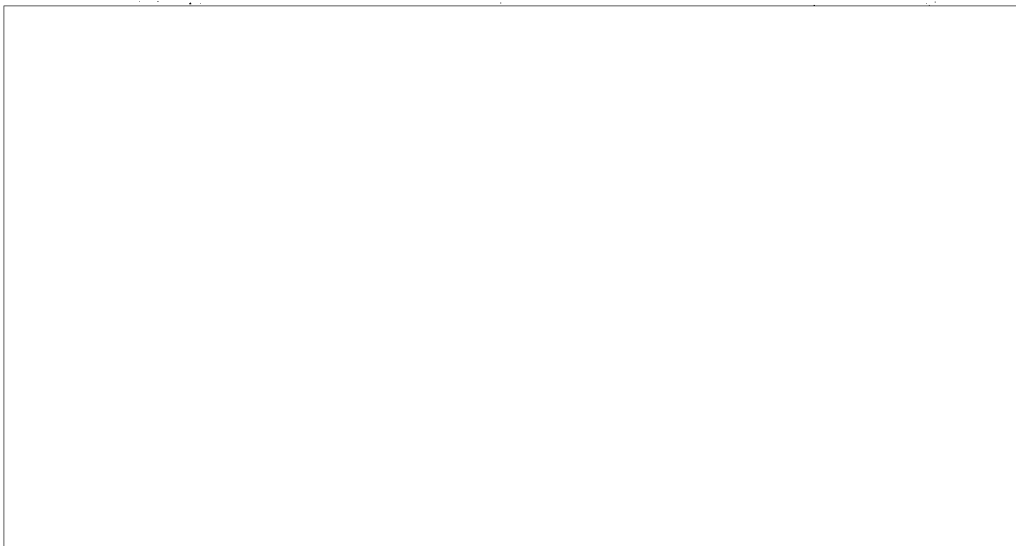
# CURRENT INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN

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## OFFICE OF CURRENT INTELLIGENCE CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY



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**C O N T E N T S**

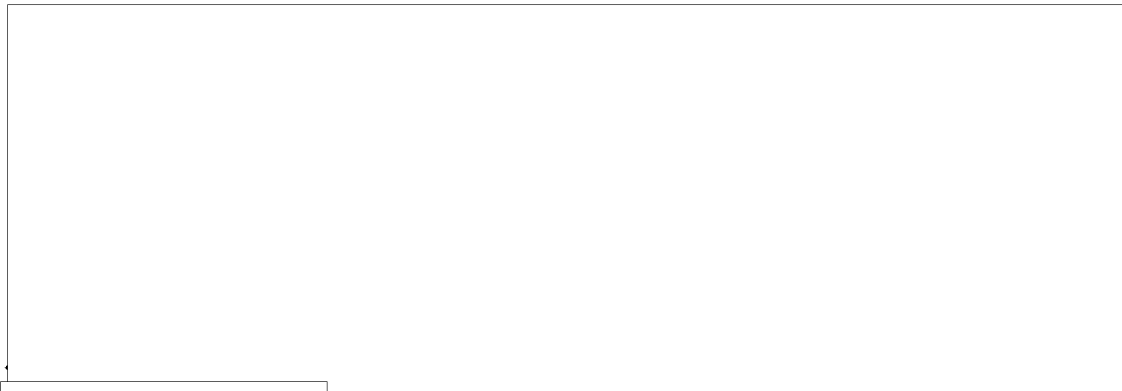
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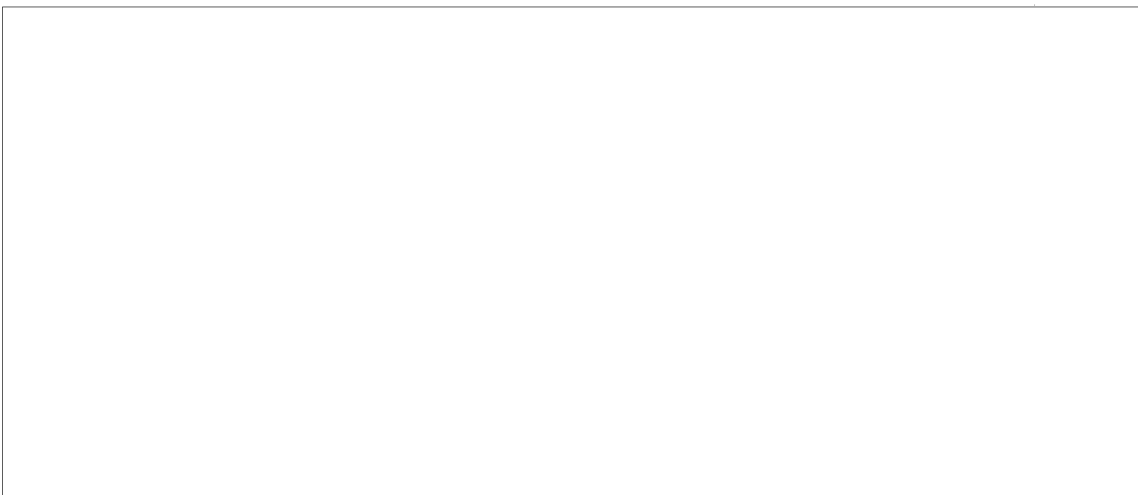
**THE ARAB-ISRAELI SITUATION**  
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**1. ARAB REPORTS ON SOVIET VIEWS OF  
LONDON CONFERENCE**

Comment on:

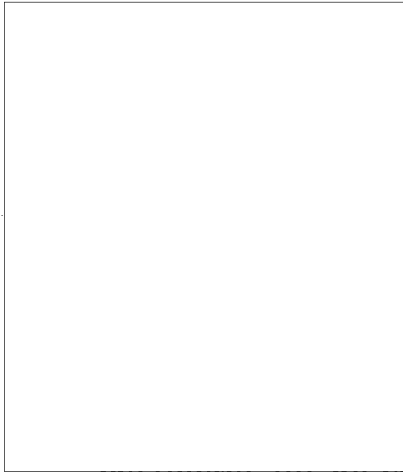


Shepilov's formal support of Egypt's 12 August proposal for an enlarged Suez conference indicates that Moscow, at such a conference, would support a limited form of "international supervision" for the canal if it met the conditions of the Egyptian proposal. Moscow apparently looks to the conclusion of an international agreement which would include a pledge by Egypt to continue the operation of the canal in keeping with the provisions of the 1888 Convention, and which would be deposited with the United Nations.



**2. BLOC TECHNICIANS REPORTED ASSISTING EGYPTIAN DEFENSE PREPARATIONS**

Comment on:



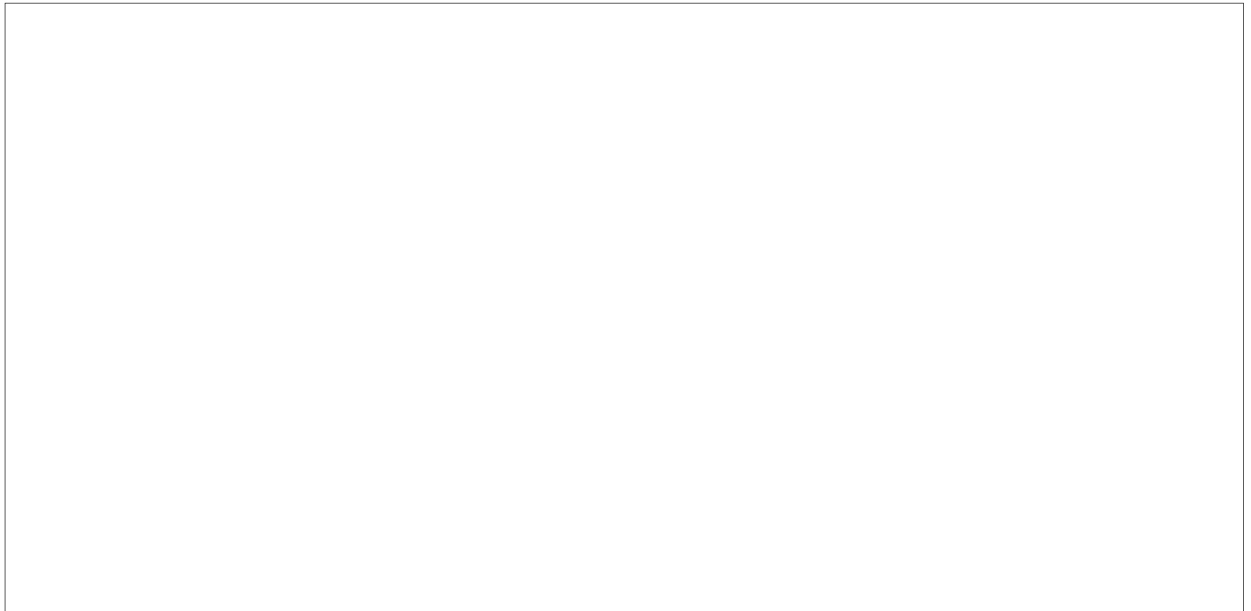
Soviet and Czech technicians have directed the placement of anti-aircraft guns for defense of Cairo, Alexandria and the Canal Zone, [redacted]

Such assistance would be in line with assurances given [redacted] of limited, indirect aid in the Suez crisis.

Other Egyptian defense preparations include the virtual completion of the defense perimeter for an estimated brigade-size unit centering on the main road junction west of Cairo. Regular army troops have taken over from the national guard and reserve troops. The piers of the Nile River bridge leading from Cairo to this perimeter have been prepared for demolition. Another defense position is under preparation east of Cairo in the vicinity of Almaza airfield and the international airport.

[redacted] Egyptian forces in the Canal Zone include units equal to possibly one and a half infantry divisions, plus a tank battalion, large paramilitary reserve forces and permanent coastal defense. [redacted] the emphasis thus far has been on improvising the defense of the Canal Zone and the delta from the military resources existing there, plus mobilization of a paramilitary reserve. Significant redeployment from the Israeli front is not believed to have occurred. [redacted]

**3. KING SAUD THREATENS TO RESUME PRESSURE ON  
BRITISH OVER BURAIMI**



**Comment**

Saud probably feels that chances for a compromise favorable to him on Buraimi are improved by Britain's preoccupation with the Suez issue. On 10 August, Saud requested Washington to advise London that it must recognize the right of the Saudis in Buraimi. Saud's desire to attempt to exploit British difficulties may have been increased by a report from his representative in Lebanon that Britain had recently sent arms and explosives into Saudi Arabia to promote unrest.

#### 4. ARAB MINORITY OPPOSITION TO NASR

Charles Malik, former Lebanese ambassador to Washington, expressed opposition to Nasr's tactics in a conversation with the American counselor of embassy in Beirut on 14 August. Malik insisted that Nasr does not represent all Arabs and must not be permitted to succeed. There were, he said, both

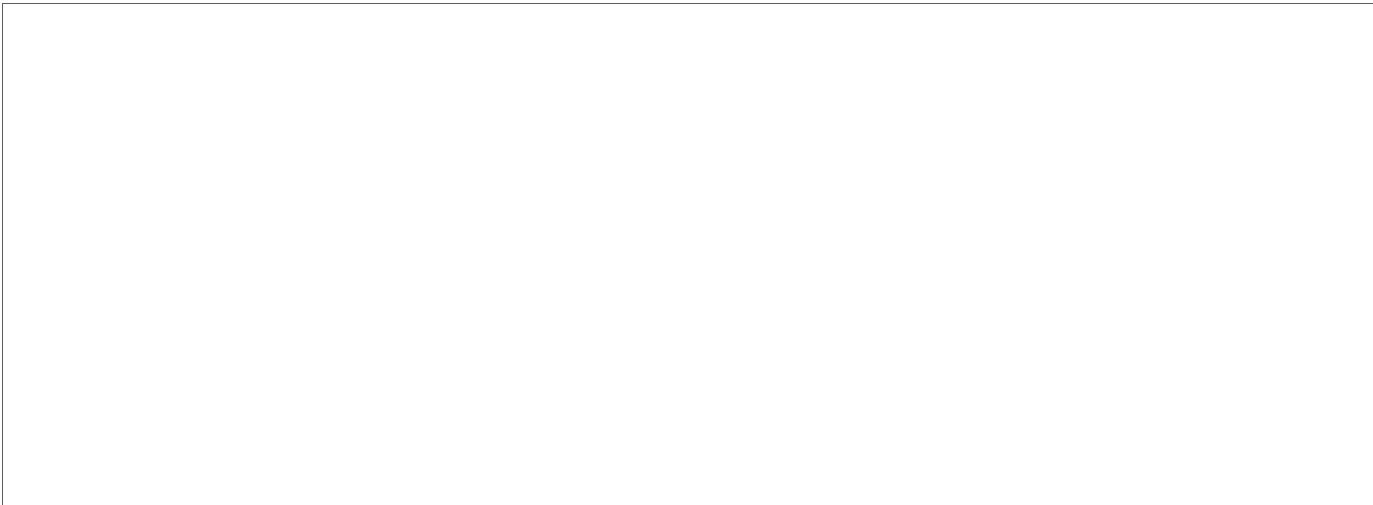
pro-western and anti-Western Arabs and the West should not be deluded by the seeming unanimity of the current Arab clamor in favor of Nasr.

In Damascus, Kikran Jirajian, an Armenian member of the Syrian parliament, voiced similar opinions to an American embassy officer. He said Nasr was leading the Arabs to ruin and made a plea for Western solidarity. Syrians as a whole, he maintained, do not wish union with Egypt.

#### Comment

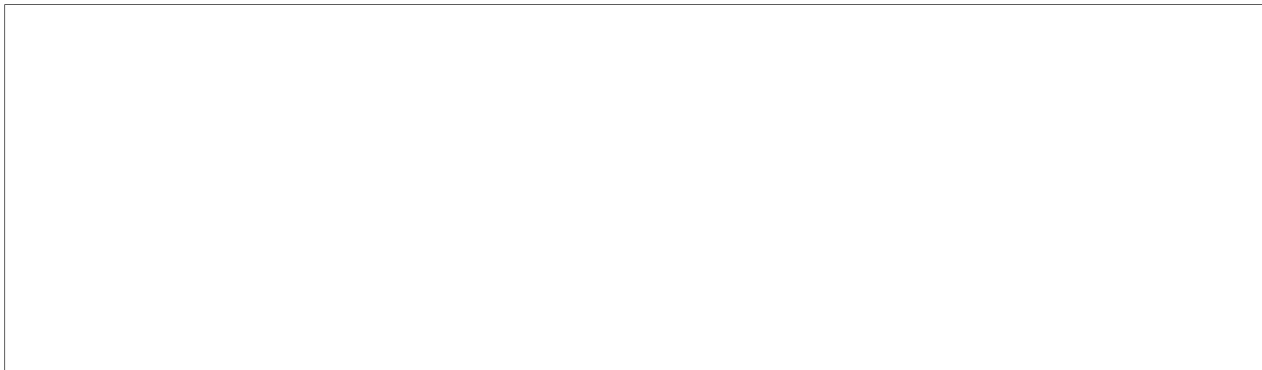
Malik as a Christian and Jirajian as an Armenian have expressed sentiments which are probably shared by some independent elements throughout the Arab world. These elements lack leadership, and may be expected to remain acquiescent while anti-Westernism dominates the scene. The mass of the population, inspired by Arab nationalism, is strongly behind Nasr.

**5. EGYPTIAN-JORDANIAN MILITARY PLANNING INDICATED**



Comment

[redacted] increasing Egyptian-Jordanian military co-operation. Although Jordan is not a member of the Egyptian-Syrian-Saudi military alliance, recent Syrian-Jordanian agreements have resulted in the formation of a joint operations staff which reportedly would function under the over-all direction of the Arab joint command in Cairo.



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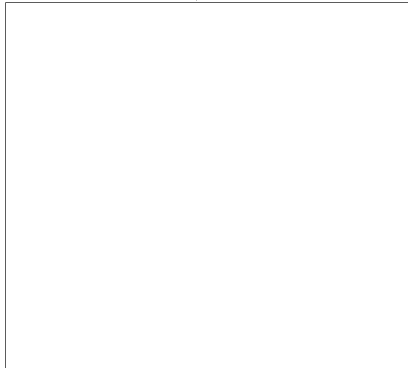
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## 6. GROWING POLITICAL TENSION IN HONDURAS



US chargé d'affaires Pool, following a 17 August visit with the chief of state, does not believe Lozano, who suffered a stroke on 11 August, is physically capable of providing the strong government now needed by the country. The decree under which Lozano has been ruling makes no provision for a transfer of power.

Members of the Honduran army's new Defense Co-ordinating Command proposed to Colonel Caraccioli, chief of the air force, on 14 August that they assume control of the government, according to [redacted] the American army attaché. Caraccioli reportedly had not given his answer by 16 August, but did discuss the problem with former president Galvez, strongly urging him to take control himself.

The army is in an excellent position to assume power, but Galvez, who is now head of the supreme court, would give the regime at least some semblance of legality if he headed it and he would probably have the support of most key officers.

Foreign Minister Mendoza had told Pool on 17 August that General Abraham Williams, unsuccessful presidential candidate in 1954, is considering a desperate attempt to seize the presidency and is spreading a story that Lozano is leaving the country on 21 August.

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## 7. POSSIBLE COUP IN COLOMBIA

Comment on:

[redacted] Rumors that the president of Colombia's "Government of the Armed Forces" will be replaced soon by a military junta continue to circulate in Bogota [redacted]

[redacted] Some earlier rumors had indicated President Rojas would merely be asked to share power with other military figures, [redacted] state Rojas will be removed. General Gabriel Paris, minister of war, Admiral Ruben Piedrahita, minister of public works, and either Army Commander Munoz or Armed Forces Commander Duarte Blum have been reported as prospective junta members.

Although the numerous opposition forces are relatively disorganized and there is no evidence of widespread military support for a coup, high Colombian military officials reportedly refused to deny or explain revolutionary rumors circulating in early August. Rojas, who took power with great popular acclaim in a quickly organized bloodless coup in June 1953, has progressively antagonized important elements such as the powerful Catholic Church, the two major political parties, many business groups, and the largest labor union. [redacted] there is a growing popular belief that his days as president are numbered.

Any junta replacing him at this time would probably be friendly to the United States.

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**THE ARAB-ISRAELI SITUATION**  
(Information as of 1700, 19 August)

A Jordanian army spokesman said an Israeli soldier was killed in a border clash when an Israeli patrol penetrated about 100 yards inside Jordan in the Tulkarm area. (Press)

The UN secretary general has sent his second message in two days to the Arab and Israeli governments urging precautions against cease-fire violations in unusually strong terms. At Hammarskjold's request the UN truce organization is preparing a report on recent border incidents for presentation to the Security Council.

The recent outbreak in Gaza is receiving wide coverage in Egypt, second only to the Suez issue. Egyptian press sources believe that Israel is attempting to take advantage of the Suez crisis, but Cairo radio broadcasts in Hebrew charged "foreign elements" were trying to create new trouble between Israel and the Arab states and hinted that the British might be involved. (Press)

The American army attaché in Tel Aviv reports that the Israeli radio blames Egypt for the bus ambush on 16 August. According to the American embassy in Tel Aviv, the recent incidents suggest that Fedayeen terrorists are operating from the Jordanian side of the Negev desert and that similar groups are laying mines inside Israel from the Egyptian side of the desert. The embassy reports that Tel Aviv still appears to be reluctant to resume retaliatory action but that the government may be forced to take some action owing to the increasing number of casualties.

The former Syrian chief of staff told the American army attaché in Beirut on 14 August that Lebanese commanding general Chehab was "reaching the end of the rope" over the failure of the West to supply military equipment and that Chehab might be forced to purchase Czech arms despite his desire to avoid any Soviet bloc arms deal.