

NEAR EAST/AFRICA BRANCH  
OFFICE OF REPORTS AND ESTIMATES  
CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

WORKING PAPER

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NEAR EAST/AFRICA BRANCH

Vol. IV No. 26

INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY

For Week Ending  
6 July 1949

GREECE

Guerrilla prospects: Although Greek guerrilla capabilities continue to decline slowly--rebel strength within Greece is now below 18,000 for the first time since October 1947--the Communist leadership apparently hopes to be able to prolong its campaign indefinitely. The guerrillas are currently making strenuous efforts not only to evade further losses in central Greece, where their strength has now been reduced by two thirds to a total of less than 1,400, but also to effect a compensatory bolstering of their forces in the Vitsi-Grammos sectors on the Albanian frontier, where their recent losses have been relatively light. Guerrilla leaders have recently been harping on the necessity of maintaining a strong defense, notably in the Vitsi area, possibly with the idea that by holding on to a strip of territory and by blunting any new anti-guerrilla operations they would create a better atmosphere for the new Communist appeasement gestures which are likely to be forthcoming in conjunction with the fall session of the UN General Assembly. Although the somewhat diminished guerrilla forces have suffered in quality because of the increased proportion of women, boys and girls, and somewhat dubious minority elements now present in their combat units, the high command is evidently counting on the improved stock of heavy weapons it now possesses in the Albanian frontier sector to bolster guerrilla combat effectiveness.

These efforts to tighten up the guerrilla defenses are likely to be successful for some time to come. The numerous small bands of guerrillas remaining in central Greece will probably pose a considerable security problem for a matter of months, particularly if sizable numbers of the Greek National Forces are transferred to other operational areas as planned; these guerrillas will undoubtedly attempt to regain some of their strength through small-scale local recruiting and possibly through some reinfiltration from the north. In the more critical northern reaches of Greece, organized guerrilla forces can be expected to maintain themselves against the Greek National Forces at least through the fall of 1949--if necessary, taking refuge across the border--provided that the Soviets continue to foster active support for

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the guerrillas from Albania and, to a lesser extent, Bulgaria. Guerrilla capabilities are unlikely to be affected materially by Tito's probable willingness to halt all aid to the guerrillas in return for economic concessions to the West, since the limited potential usefulness of Yugoslav bases is being currently reduced even further by the Greek Army's new offensive in the Kaimaktchalan border area.

#### TURKEY

Accounts of political crisis exaggerated: Reports in the US press about the current political crisis in Turkey, which refer to "hints of revolution," are exaggerated. It is undeniable that leaders of the opposition Democratic Party strongly resent the government's failure to provide assurance that there will be no tampering with ballots by the government party and its supporters at the general elections, due to be held next year. Furthermore, despite their stout denials, opposition spokesmen have certainly hinted that any repetition of the illegal practices in the last national elections would be followed by strong (but unspecified) action by citizens who felt cheated of their voting rights. At the moment, however, all this is in the talking stage. There is no suggestion of "action" before the elections, which may conceivably take place before July 1950 but are unlikely to occur much before that date.

For the present, action is likely to be confined to the lusty hurling of epithet, on the part of both government and opposition. Celal Bayar, leader of the Democrats, will do his utmost to keep his less evenly tempered followers under control. He can be expected to persuade most of them that illegal action, or even the threat of illegal action, could easily bring about legitimate governmental retaliation which might swiftly wipe out all the Democratic gains of the past three years.

The government itself is no less anxious to avoid the necessity of the use of force to quell disturbances. It could easily lead to the imprisonment of Democrats, a development which the government doubtless knows could be played straight or in distorted fashion by Turkey's enemies for its bad propaganda effects in the US and other western democratic states.

Better outlook for capital and labor: Both capital and labor may be headed for rather happier days in Turkey. The general attitude of the government toward both in the past was shown in a recent statement by the Minister of Labor, who indicated his view that the government so

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carefully watches over the interests of both employers and employees that neither lockouts nor strikes are necessary. Despite this attitude on the part of the administration, however, conditions of industrial laborers have improved somewhat in recent years, and there are signs that private investors also may gradually be less harshly treated by a government which, in the past, has tended to crush them out of existence. Business in etatist Turkey for the past quarter century has been overwhelmingly collectivist. Spokesmen for all three of the political groups represented in the National Assembly are now beginning to assert that the time has come for a redefinition and, presumably, a delimitation of the role of etatism in the Turkish economy. At the same time, both the government and the principal opposition party are sure to appeal to labor for support in the forthcoming elections and to offer tempting morsels of vote-catching bait in the shape of proposed legislation to improve working conditions. Whatever is promised, however, the process of ameliorating working conditions will be slow, and much slower still will be the transfer of whatever economic activity is removed from direct government operation and placed in control of private investors in circumstances wherein they may compete with one another, rather than with their own powerful and discriminatory government.

#### NOTED IN BRIEF

There is a likelihood of real hardship in Turkey within the next year because of low yields from this year's grain harvests and sharply decreased governmental stocks of cereals. The government will probably find it very difficult to obtain sufficient stocks to supply the more hard-hit areas. Producers, aware of the situation, are already withholding sales. Even more dismaying, perhaps, must be the government's probable realization that Turkey, which might have been able to export bread and other grains this year, may well have to seek imports of fairly substantial quantities of wheat.

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Reports from various sources continue to indicate that Haifa may be replacing Beirut as the center of Communist activity in the Middle East. Although the Israeli Foreign Office, in denying these reports, maintains that Khalid Baghdash, Secretary General of the Syrian Communist Party, is somewhere underground in Syria, on 26 May he reportedly held a special meeting in Haifa, attended by representatives of the Communist Parties of Israel, Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon.

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The new Syrian Cabinet formed 27 June by Muhsin Barazi promises to be as responsive as was its predecessor to the will of President (and Field Marshal) Zaim, who has decreed that the chief of cabinet will be solely responsible to him. Barazi, who heads the foreign and interior ministries as well as being prime minister, was prominent in both the Mardam and Azm governments, suggesting that he may have been selected to lend continuity to the political scene, but he will probably be able to exercise only a moderate restraining influence on Zaim. Most of the other cabinet members are holdovers from the old cabinet headed by Zaim himself; the only exceptions are Abdullah Atfi, who takes over Zaim's former responsibilities as Minister of Defense, and Amir Mustapha al-Shihabi, who succeeds the Christian Arab Kurani as Minister of Justice.

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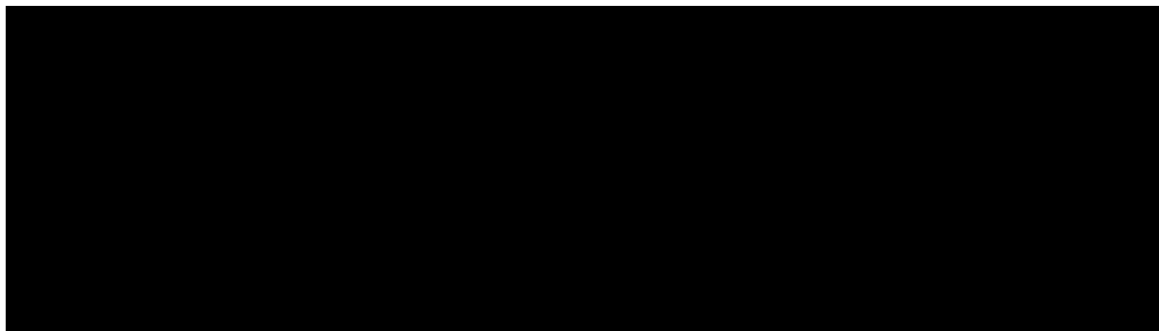
The Russian Orthodox Church in Palestine has recently ranged itself alongside certain elements of the Greek Orthodox Church in Jerusalem in opposing internationalization of the city, in a move which may presage the adoption of a parallel position by the USSR. Cooperation between these two groups may well be encouraged by the Israelis, since it serves to counter the Vatican campaign for internationalization.

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French colonial authorities, having recently centralized responsibility for the defense of Madagascar, Reunion, and French Somaliland under the High Commissioner for Madagascar, may now seek to co-ordinate their Indian Ocean defense plans with those of the British. The High Commissioner's diplomatic advisor will reportedly visit London as well as Paris during his current mission to Europe.

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