

Vol. IV
11

~~SECRET~~

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

Return to CIA Library

WORKING PAPER

NOTICE: This document is a working paper, NOT an official CIA issuance, and has not necessarily been coordinated with other ORE producing components. It represents current thinking by one group of specialists in CIA, and is designed for use by others engaged on similar or overlapping studies. The opinions expressed herein may be revised before final and official publication. It is intended solely for the information of the addressee and not for further dissemination.

Document No.
NO CHANGE in Class. ☐
☒ DECLASSIFIED
Class. CHANGED TO: TS
Auth: DDA Memo, 4 Apr 77
DDA REG. 77/1763
Date: 6 MAR 1978 By: 011

Copy for *Library*

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

NEAR EAST/AFRICA BRANCH

INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY

Vol. IV No. 11

For Week Ending
23 March 1949

GENERAL

Possible uprisings: According to a number of reports recently received from the Near East, serious uprisings are planned in the area for the latter part of March and will involve simultaneous Kurdish revolts in Syria, Iraq, and Turkey. These reports, which cite details of time and place, indicate that Communist agitators are actively urging the Kurds to resort to violence and that the uprisings will be supported by the sabotage of military installations in Turkey, as well as the assassination of leading Arab government figures and possibly western representatives. Four mysterious explosions have recently taken place in Turkey, suggesting that at least the sabotage phase of the purported scheme was being put into effect and that, in view of the rarity of sabotage in Turkey, premeditation and careful organization had been brought into play. Nevertheless, although Kurdish uprisings are always a distinct possibility * and Communist exploitation of their traditional unrest to be expected, there is no evidence to suggest that either the Kurds or the Arab and Turkish Communists are receiving substantial military assistance from the USSR or that the Soviets are planning any overt action on their behalf in the near future.

If the predicted uprisings occur, they will be generally unsuccessful in all three countries. The effects on each country, however, will vary. In Turkey, there is not the remotest possibility of a serious threat to the government. Communist activity in Turkey is almost non-existent, the Kurds there are less discontented, and the security services are more than adequate. In Iraq, disorders might spread rapidly and some changes in the government might result. The situation might be further complicated by the attempted return of the Barzani Kurds who fled to the USSR in 1947. Communist strength in Iraq has been seriously weakened by recent government action, however, and Iraqi troops now being returned from Palestine could prevent a successful revolution. In Syria, it is possible that the outbreak of disturbances might touch off a counter-revolt

* See ORE 71-48, The Kurdish Minority Problem.

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

2.

by ultra-nationalist elements under the leadership of Colonel Zaim, Chief of Staff of the Syrian Army. Zaim is reportedly planning such a move, which, if it took place, would probably be a quasi-legal seizure of power in which the present Constitution and President would be retained. Whether or not Zaim assumes power, however, Communist and Kurdish forces in Syria are too weak to make a successful bid for control of the government.

Recent unconfirmed reports indicate that the USSR is also showing a renewed interest in the Kurds of Iran, although no direct connection with the supposedly imminent outbreaks elsewhere has as yet been indicated. According to the Iranian reports, propaganda supporting Kurdish nationalist aspirations is being directed at the inhabitants of both the northern and the southern sector of Iranian "Kurdistan," and there are also indications that elements of the Lur and Assyrian minorities are cooperating with Kurdish dissidents in Azerbaijan. The USSR's propaganda is concurrently accusing the US of inciting a Kurdish rebellion, however, possibly in an attempt to divert suspicion from Soviet activities in the field.

GREECE

The position of the guerrillas: The degree to which the Tito-Cominform quarrel will detract from Greek guerrilla efforts has not yet become clear. Although Yugoslavia has apparently continued to deal on a friendly basis with guerrillas near the Greek-Yugoslav frontier as regards refuge and passage of personnel, it has probably not been able or willing to send the Greek guerrillas appreciable amounts of materiel; the routes formerly used for transshipment of supplies via Albania are presumably closed at the Yugoslav-Albanian frontier, and the Yugoslavs are probably also very wary of a pro-Cominform trend among the Greek guerrillas. Guerrilla radio activities have apparently been shifted from Yugoslavia to Cominform territory, perhaps Rumania--though whether at Cominform instigation is not clear--and Bulgaria has if anything, intensified its support of the guerrillas, no doubt hoping to wean them away from Tito.





The military prospects of the guerrillas have meanwhile undergone a steady though unspectacular decline. Guerrilla strength is now estimated to have fallen just below the 20,000 level, and the recently announced

~~SECRET~~

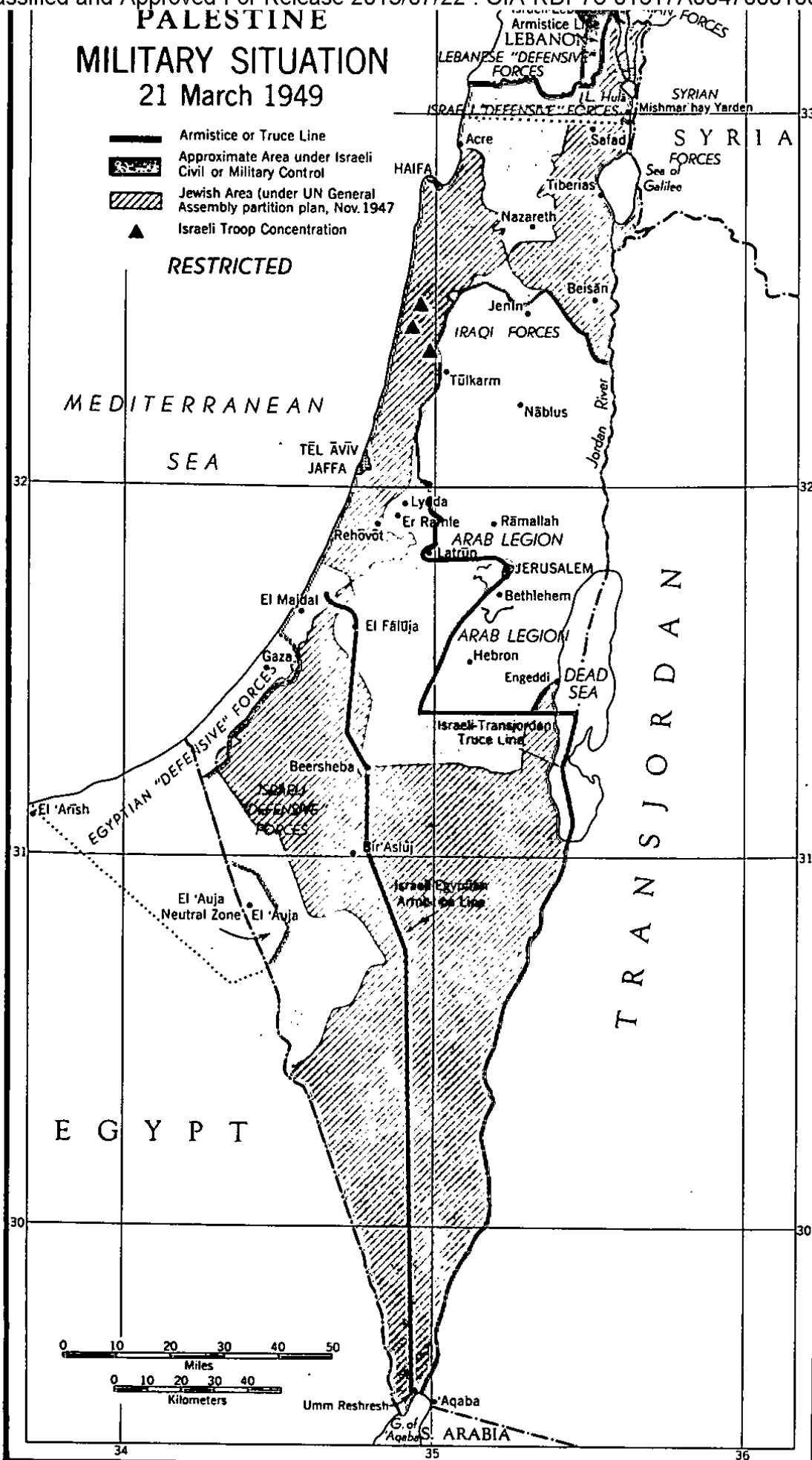
PALESTINE

MILITARY SITUATION

21 March 1949

-  Armistice or Truce Line
-  Approximate Area under Israeli Civil or Military Control
-  Jewish Area (under UN General Assembly partition plan, Nov. 1947)
-  Israeli Troop Concentration

RESTRICTED



~~SECRET~~

3.

campaign for recruiting 5,000 saboteurs and snipers to work in towns and villages is a far cry from the 1948 drive, which had the official goal of raising guerrilla fighting strength to 40,000. Anti-guerrilla operations in the Peloponnesus are nearing an end, and the Greek Army is employing aggressive search-and-pursuit tactics in the mountains of central Greece and at points in east-central Macedonia. At this stage, the Albanian frontier zone between Vitsi and Mount Grammos appears to be the most vital area in guerrilla calculations, and their next heavy efforts may come in the adjacent areas of western Macedonia or in nearby Epirus. Such efforts might be made in an attempt to counteract somewhat the effect of the current nationwide "Work and Victory Week" program, which was recently organized by the Greek Government to lead up to Greece's traditional Independence Day celebration 25 March.

PALESTINE

Military situation: Most of the military moves of the week appear designed to influence the negotiations between Israel and Transjordan, which have continued to drag despite the conclusion of an Israeli-Lebanese armistice agreement and Syria's announcement that it is now willing to negotiate with the Jews. In the critical north-central sector, where Iraqi troops are expected to be replaced by smaller Arab Legion detachments, the Israelis are continuing their troop buildup, thus prolonging the threat of a new attack in that area. The Israelis have asserted that they will not countenance Transjordan's assumption of responsibility for the present Iraqi sector unless the present lines are changed to give Israel control of the north-south coastal railroad and of the Arab-held portion of a main road from the coast to eastern Galilee. To consolidate their position in the southern Negeb, the Israelis have reportedly been reinforcing their garrison at Umm Reshresh on the Gulf of Aqaba, strengthening their hold on the potash works at the southern end of the Dead Sea, and establishing a series of camps along the main road leading southward from Beersheba. They have also undertaken a minor offensive, driving four miles north of the truce line to occupy the town of Engeddi on the western shore of the Dead Sea, and have reportedly again sent patrols into Transjordan at Gharandal. The British, as a countermove, have reinforced their garrison at Aqaba. This move has evoked an Israeli protest to the U N Secretariat and to the members of the Security Council.

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

4.

IRAN

The closing of the consulates: The USSR's recent decision to close its numerous consular establishments in Iran, meanwhile calling upon Iran to close its lone consulate at Baku, has been officially explained as resulting from Iran's hostile attitude toward the Soviet Union and has thus contributed to the deterioration of Soviet-Iranian relations. Nevertheless, the USSR's action is enigmatic. While the Iranian Consulate at Baku has been of comparatively slight value to Iran, because of the restrictions placed on its activities, the 11 consulates which the USSR has maintained in Iran (in addition to the consular office of its Tehran embassy) have functioned as nerve centers for Soviet subversive activity and would presumably be more valuable than ever to the USSR now that the pro-Soviet Tudeh Party has been outlawed. Iran itself recognized the danger they represented by proposing to the USSR last August that consulates be maintained on a basis of strict reciprocity. The USSR has sedulously ignored this proposal, and its present action apparently is a gesture of displeasure comparable to the Soviet withdrawal of its consulates from the US in 1948. The USSR probably estimates that its numerous commercial and cultural agencies, its embassy at Tehran, and the satellite diplomatic posts will provide an ample network for directing pro-Soviet activities in Iran. In addition, the withdrawal of the Soviet consulates will deprive Iran of one ground for formal complaint against the USSR.

NOTED IN BRIEF

With the announcement by the Greek Labor Confederation on 14 March of preparations for a general strike, long-festering wage difficulties are coming to a head. Further improvement in the Greek military outlook will inevitably bring other major economic problems of Greece to the fore.

*

*

*

The unexpected death of Kenan Oner, a founder and one of the leaders of the small opposition Nation Party, removes from the Turkish political scene one of the most outspoken critics of the government. The Nation Party will most assuredly not disappear, however. Under Hikmet Bayur, its real leader, it is likely to continue to demand reforms in language considerably less moderate than that employed by the more

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

5.

popular opposition Democrats. Prolongation of the existing stress and strain in the Turkish economy could lead to wider support for the Nation Party, whose policies in internal affairs are generally the least conservative of any group now represented in the National Assembly.

* * *

Egypt and the UK, in considering the proposed Nile Development scheme, are concerned about the position of Ethiopia, which is extremely anxious to participate in the discussions although it has not yet been approached on the subject. Since the Blue Nile and the neighboring Atbara River, which together supply more than half of the Nile waters, both rise in Ethiopia, Ethiopia's cooperation in the plan is essential.

* * *

The police chiefs of Syria, Iraq, Lebanon, and Egypt have reportedly reached "complete accord" on the question of combatting communism within their own countries and on a system to control the movements of Soviet agents across their borders. There are indications, however, that obstacles may still arise in implementing this program.

* * *

US legislation for Arab refugee relief, providing an immediate allocation of \$8 million and an eventual total of \$16 million, awaits only the President's signature. However, Secretary General Lie of the UN has pointed out that there will be insufficient funds to sustain the minimum program recommended by the General Assembly even with the \$8 million US advance taken into account. Lie's statement, made 17 March, indicated that the refugee fund then totalled \$14,285,241. Meanwhile, the number of refugees continues to increase; the Arab Legion-held town of Hebron is being confronted with a new influx from El Faluja and Beit Jibrin, which was transferred to Israeli control under the terms of the Egyptian-Israeli armistice.

* * *

Despite reports that the British refinery staff has returned to Haifa, a resumption of refining activities in the near future is improbable. Iraqi thinking has not yet progressed to the point where political leaders are willing to permit the resumption of oil flow to the refinery, although

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

6.

there are hints that the proposal to pump crude to Haifa for export only might be acceptable to them.

* * *

Israeli plans for resuming potash production at the southern end of the Dead Sea were announced this week at Tel Aviv. Since development of the potash industry figures strongly in Jewish plans for turning the Negeb into farmland, the Israeli Government is also keenly interested in regaining possession of the potash region at the north end of the Dead Sea which Transjordan currently controls.

* * *

The closing down of the American Joint Distribution Committee Office in Bucharest and the Rumanian detention of Israeli citizens brings to light the increasing difficulties encountered by the Israeli Government, as well as Zionists groups generally, in enabling Jews within the satellite countries to emigrate to Israel.

~~SECRET~~