

39. Editorial Note

At the 375th Meeting of the National Security Council on August 7, Director of Central Intelligence Dulles gave his regular briefing on "Significant Developments Affecting U.S. Security." Included in this briefing was the following review of the Middle East:

"Mr. Dulles reported that the Lebanese rebels were pushing toward a victory involving withdrawal of U.S. forces and the exile of the President-elect. Guerrilla activity, but no serious fighting, was taking place. Chamoun still intended to serve out his term, but might change his mind in exchange for an important post abroad. General Chehab appeared relaxed, and was not pressing for withdrawal of U.S. forces.

"The situation in Jordan had not improved, Mr. Dulles reported. Syria had closed its frontier, cutting Jordan off from land contact with the outside world, a development which could have serious effects in the future. At present, the supply situation was somewhat easier—although POL remained close—because Israel had relaxed its opposition to overflights. The financial situation in Jordan was so bad that the money-changers would take dollars only at a discount. There was growing talk in Jordan that the King should abdicate. The British took a grim view of the situation, and believed that Jordan's fate would be decided in the next thirty days.

"Mr. Dulles said the new Iraqi leaders were nervous over the U.S. force build-up in Lebanon. They believed we had more troops in Lebanon than we needed to control the situation there, and feared that our build-up might be directed against Iraq. The UAR was encouraging this view and sending large numbers of experts into Iraq. Although Iraq had made no move yet, indications were that it would leave the Baghdad Pact but would not enter the UAR.

"Reports were coming in, said Mr. Dulles, on Nasser's dissatisfaction with the union with Syria. Nasser perhaps wishes now that the UAR was a looser confederation of a type that Saudi Arabia and Iraq would join. There was also some dissatisfaction in Syria among Army officers and merchants—

"[1 paragraph (5 lines of source text) not declassified]"

"In Saudi Arabia, said Mr. Dulles, Faisal, the dominant figure, would try to make peace with Nasser on any terms that would not impair the independence of Saudi Arabia. It was reported that Saudi Arabia and Egypt had just concluded an agreement for the return of the Egyptian military mission to Saudi Arabia. King Saud might be sent for a long vacation soon. British concern over Kuwait was increasing. The ruler of Kuwait had refused a U.K. request for permission to land troops to protect the airstrip, and was considering joining the Arab League to propitiate Nasser and relieve the pressure for joining the Arab Union."

Agenda item 2, "The Situation in the Near East," consisted of a briefing by Gordon Gray on the continuing National Security Council Planning Board discussion on the Middle East; see Document 38. Gray stated that the Board's deliberations would result in one or more reports for future National Security Council consideration. In addition, Gray in-