

INR-NIE files¹*National Intelligence Special Estimate*SECRET
SE-23

[WASHINGTON, March 17, 1952.]

PROSPECTS FOR AN INCLUSIVE MIDDLE EAST DEFENSE
ORGANIZATION²

THE PROBLEM

To examine the possibility of forming an inclusive Middle East defense organization; to estimate the kind of organization which may be possible; and to indicate the major problems which would be encountered in efforts to improve the effectiveness of such an organization.*

ESTIMATE

Present Status of The Middle East Command Proposal

1. The establishment of a Middle East defense organization was first proposed in October 1951, when the US, the UK, France, and Turkey invited Egypt to join with them as a founding member in setting up a Middle East Command (MEC). Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa had already agreed in principle to the concept of MEC. In November 1951, the sponsoring powers issued a supplementary statement informing Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, and Israel of the principles which they would follow in the establishment of MEC. By implication these

¹ File of National Intelligence Estimates maintained by the Bureau of Intelligence and Research.

² According to a note on the cover sheet, "The intelligence organizations of the Departments of State, the Army, the Navy, the Air Force, and the Joint Staff participated with the Central Intelligence Agency in the preparation of this estimate. All members of the Intelligence Advisory Committee concurred in this estimate on 13 March 1952."

A memorandum by W. J. McWilliams, Director of the Executive Secretariat, to the Secretary of State, dated Mar. 19, not printed, explained that the Estimate did not readily lend itself to summarization, but the first section was a review of the status of the Middle East Command proposal. It reads, in part: "We suggest you begin reading on page 2 which discusses 'Prospects for Establishment of an Inclusive Middle East Defense Organization,' and continue through page 3. The Estimate was prepared at the request of the NSC Senior Staff." (780.5/3-1952)

* While the Western Powers and Turkey may themselves establish a MEC, "an inclusive Middle East Command organization" is herein defined as one which obtains the active cooperation of most of the Middle Eastern countries. [Footnote in the source text.]