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*National Intelligence Estimate*¹SECRET
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[WASHINGTON,] January 15, 1953.

CONDITIONS AND TRENDS IN THE MIDDLE EAST * AFFECTING US
SECURITY

THE PROBLEM

To identify the major forces and trends in the area, to assess their origin, relative strength, and probable development, and to estimate their effect on the Western and Soviet positions in the area, in the absence of general war.

CONCLUSIONS

1. In addition to its objective of contributing to stability in the Middle East, the West has a specific and basic concern with the extensive oil resources and strategic location of the area. Denial of these assets to the West would constitute a serious setback to it in the struggle with the Soviet Bloc, even if the area did not come directly under Communist control.

2. Patterns of authority are being undermined by rising discontent among nearly all social groups. This discontent is finding expression in growing demands for elimination of foreign influence and for internal social, economic, and political reforms.

3. Attainment of stability is obstructed by the ineffectiveness of Middle Eastern governmental and political institutions, by inadequate development of economic resources, by Arab-Israeli hostility, and by inter-Arab rivalries.

4. The USSR will continue to encourage disorder and anti-Westernism and to exploit the substantial opportunities for creating friction among states of the area, between them and the West, and

¹ A note on the cover sheet reads as follows: "The following member organizations of the Intelligence Advisory Committee participated with the Central Intelligence Agency in the preparation of this estimate: The intelligence organizations of the Departments of State, the Army, the Navy, the Air Force, and the Joint Staff. All members of the Intelligence Advisory Committee concurred in this estimate on 8 January 1953."

* This estimate deals with Iran, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Egypt, and the principalities of the Arabian Peninsula. Conditions in Turkey and Israel, and their relations with the West and the Soviet Bloc, differ in so many respects from those in the rest of the Middle East that they will be treated only insofar as they affect developments in the rest of the area. [Footnote in the source text.]