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PARATROOPS FLY EAST.

Two paratroop battalions fly to Cyprus - not to reinforce that troubled island, but as a reserve which can be rushed at a moment's notice to any crisis area in the Middle East. Latest trouble spot is Jordan, where recent riots have been quelled by the Arab Legion under its British commander and founder, Glubb Pasha, seen here with his officers.

The riots were against the Baghdad Pact, the Middle East military alliance which the young pro-British King Hussein would like to join, but which many Arabs feel would tie their hands in the struggle with Israel. Overtures from his Arab neighbours are putting Hussein in an embarrassing position.

At Blackbushe Airport the airlift goes on following Britain's decision to add to its mobile reserves in the Eastern Mediterranean - a decision which means a quick move for the airborne men, only a few hours after returning from their Christmas leave. A quick cuppa warns the morning departure.

The troops involved are Headquarters 16th Independent Parachute Brigade, and the 1st and 3rd Battalions of the Parachute Regiment. Their function, says the War Office, is "the protection of British subjects in the area, should the need arise? Behind that bold statement lies a crisis of which no one can yet see the outcome.