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11 August 1958

Copy No. C- 57

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN



DOCUMENT NO. 7
NO CHANGE IN CLASS. X
DECLASSIFIED
CLASS CHECKED TO: TS S C
NEXT REVIEW DATE: 2010
AUTH: AD 772
DATE: 3/27/80 REVIEWER: [redacted]

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11 AUGUST 1958

I. THE COMMUNIST BLOC

Soviet diplomat now suggests Far Eastern issues as topic for summit meeting.

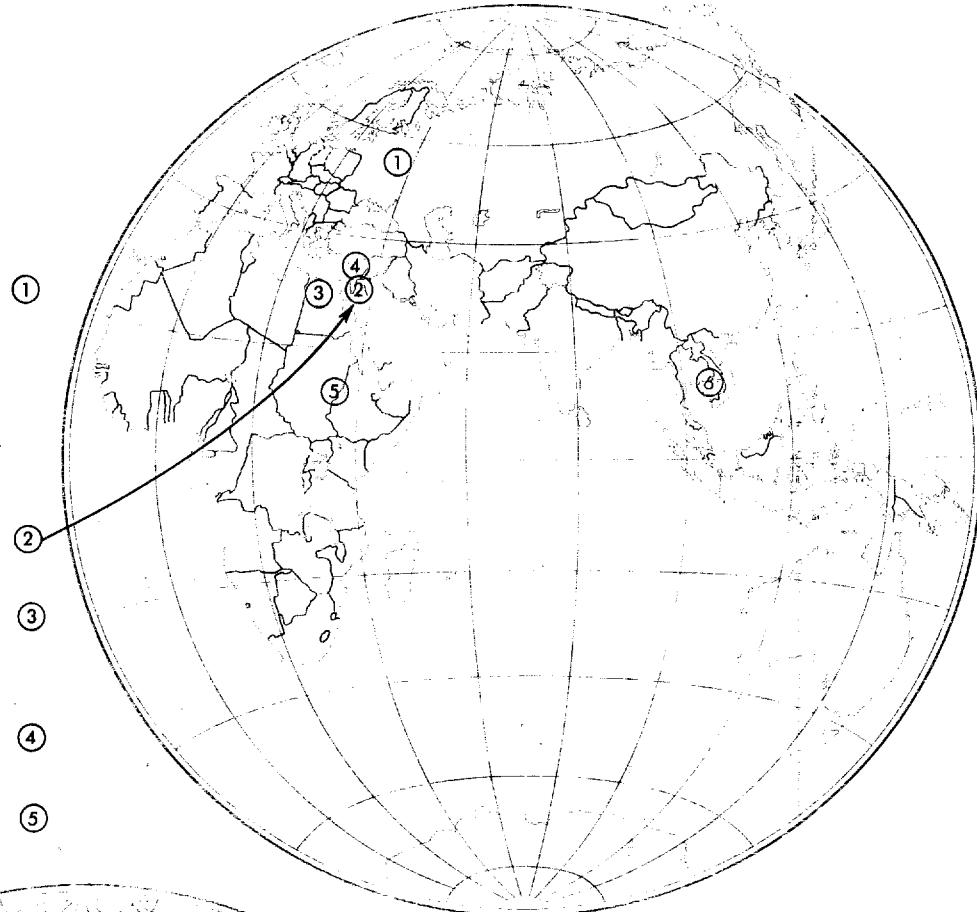
II. ASIA-AFRICA

Jordan - Reports persist of impending revolt against King Husayn who is determined to fight. Prime Minister Rifai has plan to abandon West Jordan to Israel if worst comes.

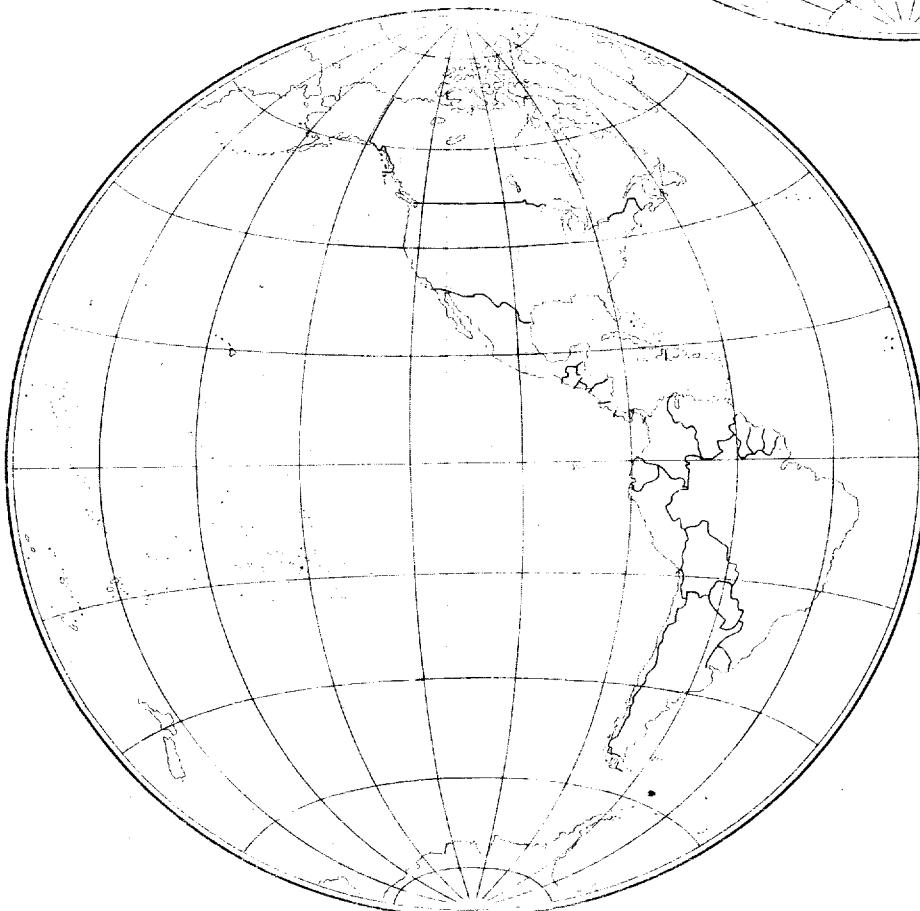
Nasir hews to standard line in conversation with Murphy.

Lebanon - Killing of pro-Chamoun politicians raises possibility of more violence and Christian-Moslem feuding.

Sudan and Ethiopia making plans to counter UAR influence.



⑥ Cambodia - There are a number of reports of plans to overthrow Sihanouk because of his recognition of Peiping.

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN

11 August 1958

DAILY BRIEF

I. THE COMMUNIST BLOC

*Summit talks - Soviet view: The USSR still favors a heads-of-government meeting to discuss "main areas of conflict," including disarmament, the Middle East, and the Far East, [redacted] This may be the beginning of a Soviet effort to develop Far Eastern issues as a potential topic for summit consideration.

[redacted] Communist China has no intention of attacking Taiwan. [redacted] Middle Eastern tensions had eased since late July. In an effort to bolster the Soviet position on the eve of the special UN General Assembly session on the Middle East, Khrushchev declared in his 10 August speech that the threat of war in the Middle East "remains very acute." [redacted] (Page 1)

II. ASIA-AFRICA

Jordan: There continue to be reports that a revolt against King Husayn may occur at any time. Husayn is evidently determined to go down fighting. The King has launched a major propaganda attack against Nasir. Rifai says that if the worst comes, he plans to abandon West Jordan; to use the Jordan River as a "fire break" to protect Amman, the symbol of the Hashemite kingdom; to block any eastward retreat by the Palestinian refugees, and "let Ben-Gurion deal with them." Rifai's insistence that he is serious about this plan is a symptom of the government's apparent desperation in a situation in which Rifai admits almost every course of action has been blocked.

[redacted] (Page 2)

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No
Murphy-Nasir talk: The UAR president repeated his standard objections to American policy and offered no new suggestions for easing tensions in the area. He said he "failed to see" how King Husayn, a "nice young man," could survive politically. Nasir strongly implied that Iraq would be admitted to the UAR, although as usual he insisted that he already has enough troubles. He said he had told the Iraqis not to seek advice from the USSR, since his experience had been that "if one asked them for advice several times they would begin giving orders." Nasir asserted he is willing to cooperate to maintain Lebanon as an independent state. He again contended that any subversive activity by Egyptian representatives in the Arab world has been due to excessive zeal by individuals.

Following the talk, Nasir's top aide, Ali Sabri, told the Burmese representative in Cairo that "we remain unconvinced" . . . of American "sincerity."

Lebanon: The assassination of three pro-Chamoun partisan leaders on 10 August will intensify fear among Chamoun's supporters that they will be the targets of "massacres" from which General Shihab will be unwilling or unable to protect them. Militant Christian groups in particular will probably resist attempts to disarm them for fear that political murders will turn into religious feuding. Further assassination attempts against Chamoun supporters, possibly including members of the present cabinet, are likely.

Ethiopia-Sudan: Ethiopian officials remain gravely concerned over the UAR threat to the Sudan. A confidential envoy from Sudanese Premier Khalil is now in Addis Ababa to discuss cooperation between the two countries.

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Cambodia: Persistent rumors of plotting to overthrow Premier Sihanouk reflect heightened opposition by various political elements to the premier. Such activity has probably been stimulated by Sihanouk's recent recognition of Communist China.

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III. THE WEST

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DAILY BRIEF

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I. THE COMMUNIST BLOC

Soviet View on Summit Talks

The USSR continues to favor a heads-of-government meeting in which to discuss the main issues of East-West tension, including disarmament, the Near and Middle East, and the Far East, according to the counselor of the Soviet Embassy in Paris, Yerofeyev, who talked with American officials on 7 August. He claimed that the "only thing" that caused a five-power summit meeting "within the framework of the UN Security Council" to fall through was De Gaulle's refusal to attend.

Inasmuch as the "Far East" has not been submitted as a summit topic by the Soviet Union in the exchanges on the subject which began last December, the reference may foreshadow a Soviet intention in this regard in future calls by Moscow for a heads-of-government meeting.

Moscow is convinced, Yerofeyev said, that there is little chance of Taiwan's continuing to exist as a separate entity after Chiang Kai-shek's death, and that the Chinese Communists do not intend to attack Taiwan. He gave no assurances, however, about Chinese Communist intentions toward the offshore islands. While he admitted that tensions in the Middle East have relaxed, he urged that the US and the USSR reach agreement on Middle East issues warning that a "new flare-up"--such as the downfall of Jordan's King Husayn--"might occur at any time."

Yerofeyev also said the USSR does not intend to give nuclear weapons to Communist China, that the Chinese will develop their own weapons in the "foreseeable future." Soviet party presidium member Suslov recently expressed a similar view in Moscow when he told a visiting Austrian official that Chinese scientists were being trained in the Soviet Union and that Communist China would have the atomic bomb in "four or five years." Yerofeyev made no statement regarding possible Soviet delivery of missile weapons to China.

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II. ASIA-AFRICA

Jordanian Situation

Jordanian Prime Minister Rifai, acknowledging that almost every course of action for King Husayn's government has been blocked except surrender to pro-Nasir elements, said on 9 August that he has concluded that in case of a revolt the government should try above all to save the capital city of Amman as a symbol of the Hashemite kingdom. This reasoning, he said, had prompted the recent transfer of army units to Amman at the cost of leaving the rest of the country less protected. If "the worst" comes, the prime minister said he plans to abandon West Jordan with its overwhelming population of refugees, using the Jordan River to seal off the rest of the country from a possible movement of the refugees eastward, and "let Ben-Gurion deal with them."

The Israeli Government has said on several occasions that it would have to take military action if a pro-Nasir coup or revolt occurred in Jordan, and that it is preparing its public for this eventuality. On 8 August, Tel Aviv's armed forces radio service, in what appears to have been an orientation program for military personnel, broadcast the statement that the danger to Israel has increased immensely in view of the possibility that Nasir's control would soon encompass Jordan, and warned that "all our political and military efforts must be devoted to avert this danger."

Nasir told Deputy Under Secretary Murphy that he is fully aware of the Israeli attitude on Jordan but that he had no answer to the problem of finding a solution which would relax tensions. He also said that if Israel attacked Jordan the UAR "of course" would counterattack.

Three independent reports have asserted that a coup or revolt in Jordan is scheduled for this week. King Husayn himself apparently feels the climax of his "fight" is probably near, and he seems determined to resist. However, he is more resigned

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than optimistic over the outcome. A previously reported Syrian concentration of armor near the Jordan border has been discounted, but the border areas remain extremely tense.

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Ethiopia Promises Assistance to Sudanese Premier Khalil

Ethiopian officials, in discussion with American representatives, have described the situation in the Sudan as grave and called for American understanding and especially financial aid for an Ethiopian program to combat Egyptian subversive efforts. Acting Ethiopian Prime Minister Aklilou reported that an envoy from Sudanese Premier Khalil was in Addis Ababa to discuss means of cooperation between Ethiopia and the Sudan to arrest the growth of UAR influence in Khartoum.

Aklilou stated that Khalil, who has a secret defense treaty with Emperor Haile Selassie, has asked for Ethiopian secret police agents and 3,000 to 5,000 Ethiopian troops if necessary and has received the Emperor's agreement. A similar promise of troops by the Emperor at the time of the Wadi Halfa border crisis in February reportedly served to strengthen Khalil's morale despite the serious logistics problem of transporting the Ethiopian troops. Aklilou also suggested that the 40,000 Ethiopian residents of the Sudan could be used to combat Egyptian penetration.

The Ethiopian official's plea for American financial assistance stressed the amount spent by Cairo to subvert the Sudanese Government and armed forces, and he emphasized Ethiopia's inability either to match such subsidizing or to counter Egypt's propaganda campaign among the large Moslem minority of Ethiopia.

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Cambodian Premier May Be Target of Coup Plotters

Opposition elements in Cambodia are said to be actively considering the overthrow of Premier Sihanouk. Dissatisfaction in influential Cambodian circles over Sihanouk's one-man rule has been growing, and various reports suggest that his recognition of Communist China has precipitated the coup planning.

The ranks of the opposition are not clearly defined, and there is some question as to the coordination of their efforts. General Dap Chuon, anti-Communist governor of Siem Reap Province northwest of Phnom Penh, recently sent word to the American ambassador of his "deep distress" over the Peiping recognition, stating that although he was loyal to the monarchy and to Sihanouk, he loved his country more than either. He is now reported willing to participate in a coup. Possibly in this connection, General Lon Nol, army chief of staff, is said to be trying to establish closer relations with Dap Chuon. Other elements appear to be involved in planning of coups for reasons of political persuasion or personal gain.

A move by rightists against Sihanouk would have at least the tacit approval of the South Vietnamese and Thai governments. Several reports allege that coup plotters have already appealed to them for assistance. South Vietnamese President Diem has frankly stated that "thinking" Cambodians will eventually oust Sihanouk.

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