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14 March 1957

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THE TAIWAN STRAIT

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1. GAZA STRIP SITUATION

Prime Minister Ben-Gurion's statement in the Israeli parliament on 13 March that "for the present" his government is taking "political measures" to oppose Egyptian attempts to regain control of the Gaza strip indicates that the Israelis are awaiting the outcome of Foreign Minister Meir's urgent appeal for American intervention before deciding on further steps. Ben-Gurion told the parliament that if military action became "appropriate and necessary," it would be taken without any prior notice.

In making her appeal to Ambassador Lawson on 12 March, Mrs. Meir accused UN secretary general Hammarskjold of serious bias against Israel and said she believed the Egyptian appointment of an "administrative governor" for Gaza had been made with Hammarskjold's knowledge, if not with his consent. If it became necessary to send "our boys" back to Gaza, Mrs. Meir said, "it would be with full knowledge that the UNEF would still be there."

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4. REVOLUTIONARY ATTEMPT IN CUBA

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The armed civilian attack on the presidential palace and a radio station in Havana on 13 March was probably intended to spark a full-fledged revolution to oust President Batista. Participants were primarily students and included José Echeverria, leader of the Communist-infiltrated Federation of University

Students, who was reported killed. The government appears to have the situation under control. The prompt military action against the rebels will discourage new outbreaks in Havana. Rebel forces may attack government installations in Oriente Province, however, where there is strong public opposition to Batista, who seized power five years ago this week.

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While the military appears again to have supported Batista, there have been indications of continuing unrest in the military. Prolongation of serious political unrest may reduce army support of Batista.

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5. STATE OF EMERGENCY ENDED IN THAILAND

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[Redacted]

Marshal Sarit's relinquishment of his temporary command of all the armed forces and police and the announcement ending the state of emergency indicate that a new modus vivendi has been negotiated between the factions led by Sarit and police director general Phao. Sarit has gained in prestige, but his opportunity for carrying out his reported objective of removing Phao and his followers from all positions of influence appears to have passed.

The composition of the new government, to be announced when the new legislature convenes on 14 March, will shed light on the degree to which Sarit's power has increased and Phao's has declined. Sarit may become minister of defense. There are indications that Phao may be dropped from the cabinet, although retaining his post as police director general. [Redacted]

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S U M M A R Y

13 February - 13 March 1957

THE TAIWAN STRAIT

Report No. 101

Report of the IAC Current Intelligence Group
for the Taiwan Strait Problem

1. There were no significant combat operations in the area during the period.

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2. Small vehicular-type revetments have been completed at Lungtien, Lungchi, Chingyang, Huian and Nantai airfields. This construction may be an indication that a more advanced degree of readiness has been established at these airfields. There continue to be no aircraft, however, at any of the Communist airfields along the Taiwan Strait.

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3. Indications are that the Chinese Nationalists intend to increase the number of 155-mm. artillery pieces in the Quemoys and Matsu group from some 40 to 70 in the near future. These additions would enhance Nationalist capabilities to harass ships attempting to enter Amoy and Foochow harbors.

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4. In their propaganda on Taiwan in recent weeks, the Chinese Communists have intensified appeals for Nationalist defections in order to bring about a "peaceful liberation." Portraying the United States as an unreliable ally, the Communists charge that Americans are supporting elements on Taiwan critical of the Nationalist government.

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