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18 March 1955

Copy No. 88

**CURRENT INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN**

DOCUMENT NO. 51  
NO CHANGE IN CLASS   
 DECLASSIFIED  
CLASS. CHANGED TO: TS S C  
NEXT REVIEW DATE: 2010  
AUTH: HR 70-2  
DATE: 8 Jan 80 REVIEWER:

**Office of Current Intelligence****CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY**~~TOP SECRET~~

## SUMMARY

### FAR EAST

1. Comment on condition of Chinese Communist air bases in Fukien (page 3).

### SOUTHEAST ASIA

2. Vietnamese defense minister wary of military action against sects (page 3).

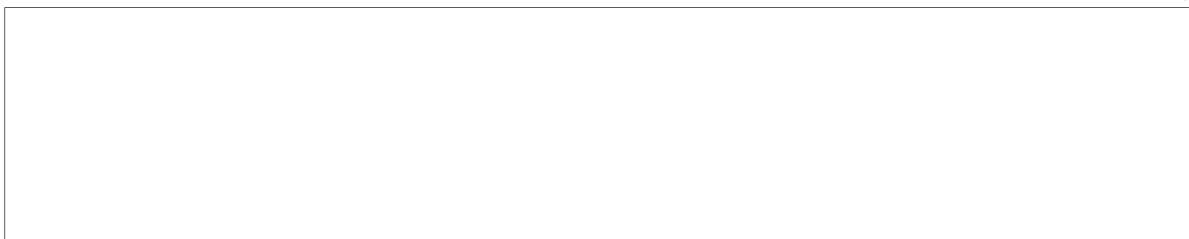
### NEAR EAST - AFRICA

3. Iranian officials fear Soviet reaction to Iran's participation in regional defense (page 5).
4. France sees Syrian independence indispensable to Israel (page 6).

### WESTERN EUROPE

5. Right-wing British Laborites plan new tactics to ensure Bevan's expulsion (page 7).

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**FAR EAST****1. Comment on condition of Chinese Communist air bases in Fukien:**

[redacted] [redacted] the Chinese Communists have apparently not yet begun to renovate the six airfields in the coastal area of Southeast China opposite Formosa and the Nationalist-held offshore islands (see map, p. 4). [redacted]

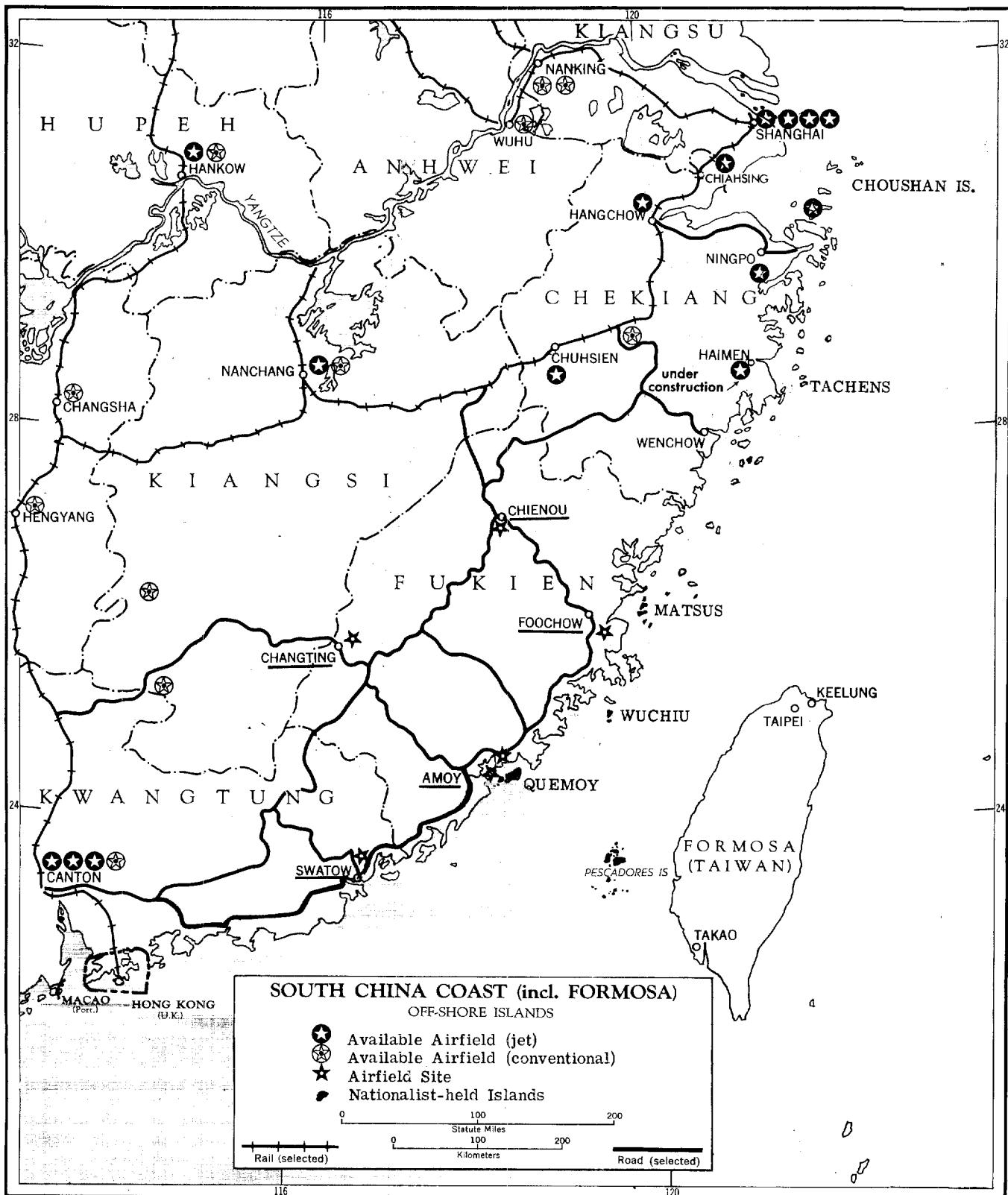
All six bases, with the possible exception of the one at Foochow, are judged unserviceable for air operations. Runways at the Foochow field, which perhaps could be used, are not long enough for jets.

Chinese Communist bombers can reach the Matsus and Quemoys from existing bases outside Fukien Province, but Peiping would probably want to ready some of the Fukien fields in order to provide close-in jet fighter support prior to launching major attacks on the islands. Operational air bases in Fukien are considered essential for major operations against Formosa.

The Chinese Communists are believed capable of readying any one of the Fukien area fields for jet operations in five days' to two weeks' time.

**SOUTHEAST ASIA****2. Vietnamese defense minister wary of military action against sects:**

[redacted] The Vietnamese defense minister and three other cabinet members believe an attempt to solve the sect problem by military means would result in a civil war "which Diem cannot win."



18 MARCH 1955

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[REDACTED] Premier

Diem is more worried about the Binh Xuyen than about the other sects. The premier asked General Ely to request the return of two armed corvettes which the French provided the Binh Xuyen and also asked that Ely supply the Vietnamese army with tanks. The Vietnamese general staff believes the Binh Xuyen is currently capable of isolating and controlling Saigon.

Comment: Diem's current tactics against the sects stress political maneuvers--for the most part the lavish distribution of bribes--rather than force. By such means, he hopes to weaken the sects as a whole to the extent that a military solution would be feasible.

Such subordinate commanders as he has been able to buy off, however, are likely to stay "bought" only so long as funds are forthcoming. In the meantime, the Binh Xuyen, whose armed forces are the most effective, have not been weakened. Their lucrative holdings appear to be such as to put them beyond any price Diem could raise.

#### NEAR EAST - AFRICA

##### 3. Iranian officials fear Soviet reaction to Iran's participation in regional defense:

[REDACTED] Iranian government leaders are showing great concern over Soviet reactions to indications that Iran is giving favorable consideration to joining the Turkish-

Iraqi pact, according to the American embassy in Tehran.

Because of this concern, knowledge of the Shah's proposal for military staff talks among Iran, Iraq, Turkey, Pakistan, the United States, and Britain as a step toward joining the pact is being limited to as few Iranian officials as possible.

Comment: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Recent articles in the Soviet press state that Iranian participation in a Western regional defense arrangement is "inadmissible" and, according to the American embassy in Moscow, a tone of "generalized threat" to Iran is developing.

[REDACTED]

4. France sees Syrian independence indispensable to Israel:

[REDACTED]

Comment: Although the French have officially indicated to the United States that the maintenance of Syrian independence is secondary to establishment of an effective

Middle East defense, [redacted] Paris opposes Syrian adherence to any Middle East grouping which might diminish French influence in this former mandate.

Tel Aviv will view with favor this indication that Paris now may take the lead in promoting new Western assurances for Israeli interests.

#### WESTERN EUROPE

**5. Right-wing British Laborites plan new tactics to ensure Bevan's expulsion:**

[redacted]

The narrow majority (141-112) by which Aneurin Bevan's Labor Party status in parliament was removed may make it necessary for the right-wing elements to adopt new tactics in order to ensure his expulsion from the party, according to the American embassy in London.

Right-wing leaders, including the former chancellor of the exchequer and the heads of three of Britain's top trade unions, are considering "cornering" Bevan before the National Executive Committee meets on 23 March. An "abject apology" is being prepared which, it is expected, Bevan will refuse to sign. He could then be expelled without greatly endangering party unity.

According to the embassy, the closeness of the 16 March vote is explained by Attlee's deliberate failure to make the issue a test of confidence. He refused to state that the "shadow cabinet" would resign if its motion were defeated.

Comment: Identification of the right-wing leaders confirms the impression that trade union leaders are responsible for the determined effort to purge Bevan. Their determination contrasts sharply with Attlee's continued vacillation, and may presage growing criticism of his leadership.