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25 March 1958

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN



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25 MARCH 1958

I. THE COMMUNIST BLOC

Latest Soviet aide-memoire repeats USSR's agenda proposals, makes no new suggestions.

(1)

II. ASIA-AFRICA

Djakarta Communists seek to incite antiforeign demonstrations; attack on US Embassy possible.

(2)

King's brothers believed to hold upper hand in Saudi Arabia.

(3)

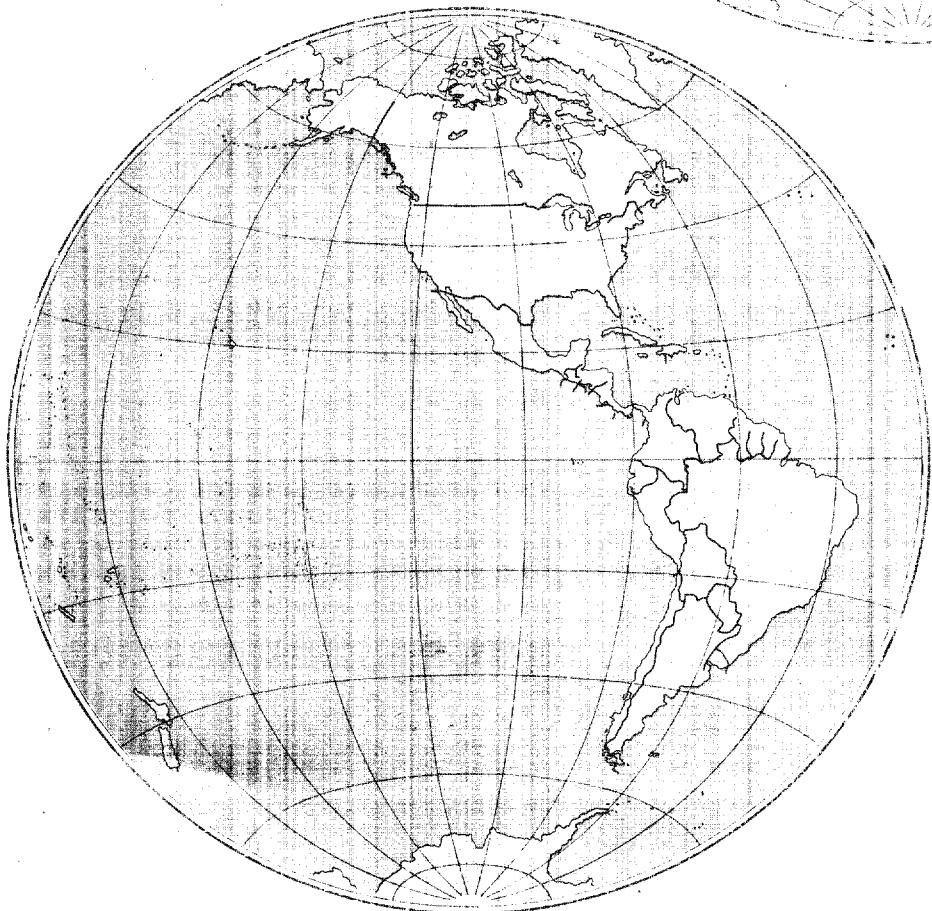
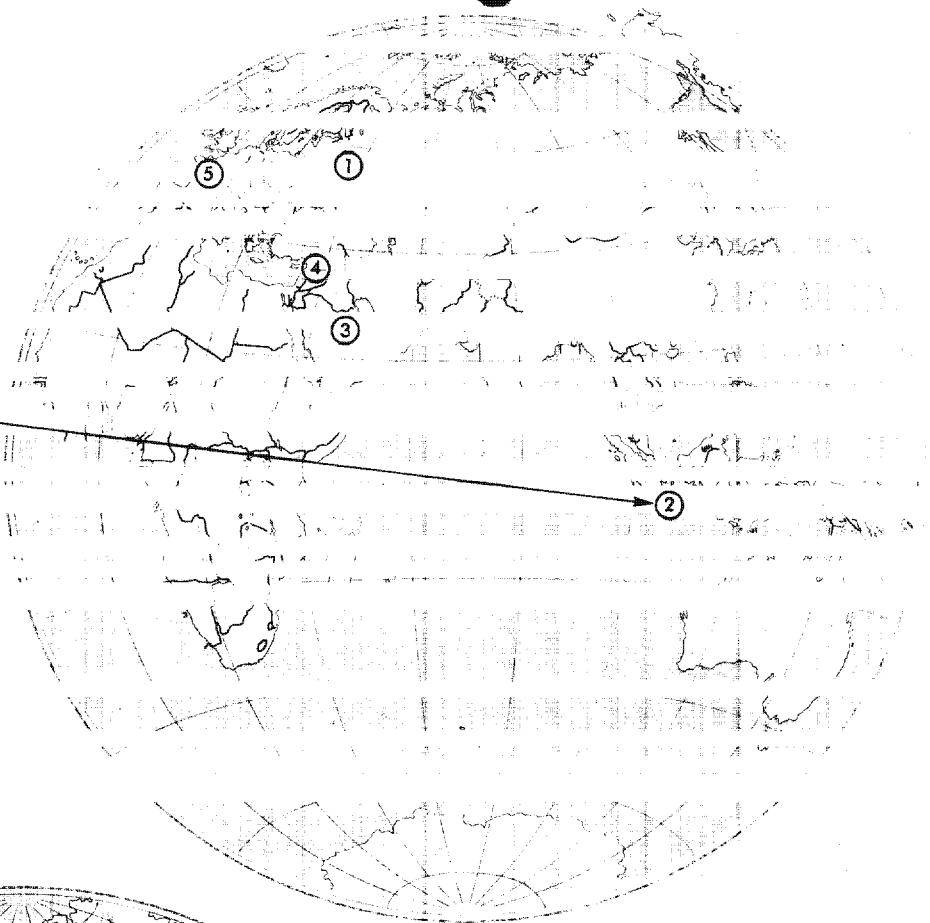
Egyptian troop movements to Syria facilitate Nasir's consolidation of control over Syrian forces.

(4)

III. THE WEST

France - De Gaulle's intentions remain inscrutable; British ambassador doubts he plans return to power.

(5)

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN

25 March 1958

DAILY BRIEF

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I. THE COMMUNIST BLOC

*Soviet note: The Soviet aide-memoire given Ambassador Thompson on 24 March failed to make any new proposals. It repeated the agenda the USSR suggested on 28 February for a summit conference, and reaffirmed its call for a foreign ministers' conference to deal only with organizational questions. The new note advanced no specific proposals for the date or composition of either conference, but again pressed the Western powers for specific answers to Moscow's agenda proposals, while resisting Western calls for substantive preparatory talks.

no

II. ASIA-AFRICA

*Indonesia: In Djakarta, local Communists are trying to arouse public feeling against "foreign intervention" by organizing demonstrations, which could include a mob attack on the American Embassy.

no

In North Sumatra, the present dissident threat to government control appears to have been dissipated. Central government messages report that the dissidents are demoralized and that large numbers have either surrendered or have been captured with their weapons.

*Saudi Arabian situation: King Saud's relationship with his brother, Crown Prince Faysal, remains unclear. In granting Faysal broad powers, Saud is reported to have bowed to a series of demands from his brothers. They asked that the King's advisers, Yusuf Yasin and Jamal Husayni, be replaced,

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and that Saudi Arabia align itself with the UAR. Cairo has not commented officially on the situation.

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Egyptian military moves in Syria: An Egyptian MIG jet fighter squadron will be deployed to Syria when Syria's newest airfield at Dumayr, northeast of Damascus, is ready about 1 April.

[redacted] two companies of Egyptian troops were scheduled to move to Syria by sea on 13 March.

Subsequent to this, a large party of Egyptian airborne personnel was seen in Damascus. Movement of these forces into Syria advances the integration of Egyptian and Syrian forces, and will facilitate Nasir's efforts to gain control over the Syrian military.

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III. THE WEST

France: General de Gaulle's intentions remain inscrutable. During an interview on 20 March the general gave [redacted] the impression of a man who was not contemplating an imminent return to power, nor did he seem capable of it. He appeared aged and tired and preoccupied with writing his memoires. On the other hand, recent first-hand reports by competent American observers had the general increasingly active and devoting much of his time to talking with various French political leaders.

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DAILY BRIEF

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I. THE COMMUNIST BLOC
No Back-up Material

II. ASIA-AFRICA

Saudi Arabian Developments

The Egyptian Government has thus far withheld official comment on reports that King Saud has granted extensive powers to his brother, Crown Prince Faysal, probably because Cairo is still uncertain of the changes that are actually to take place.

[redacted] the changes will reduce Saud to a position of merely titular authority, and that the validity of Nasir's accusations against the King has been upheld. The authoritative Egyptian newspaper Al Ahram commented: "When Nasir speaks, some crowns shake on certain royal heads." Cairo still plans to try one of Saud's fathers-in-law in absentia for his alleged role in the plot to break up the UAR.

The King's recent decree granting broad powers to Faysal is reported to have resulted from demands by a group of the King's brothers that the King discontinue his efforts to build up the authority of his sons. During the past year and a half, Saud has caused growing resentment by attempting to concentrate power in his own hands and those of his favorite sons, while Faysal has been largely excluded from formulation of policy. A reduction in the authority of Saud's sons could affect Saud's control over the armed forces.

While the new relationship between Saud and the crown prince remains uncertain, it appears unlikely that their former differences have been completely resolved.

Another condition imposed on Saud was the dismissal of his foreign advisers, including Yusuf Yasin, a Syrian, and Jamal Husayni, a Palestinian, whose influence over the King has been resented by the royal family, and their replacement by a council of prominent Saudi citizens. Saud's relinquishment of control over foreign affairs suggests that his intrigues against the governments of Egypt, Syria, and Yemen will be suspended, and that Saudi Arabia may increasingly follow the lead of the UAR in foreign policy.

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Egyptian Military Movements to Syria

A gradual build-up of Egyptian military forces in Syria now taking place will facilitate Nasir's efforts to gain control over Syrian military forces and will strengthen the military posture of the United Arab Republic against Iraq and Jordan as well as against Israel.

[redacted] a squadron of Egyptian MIG jet fighters will be dispatched to Syria shortly after 1 April, when a new airfield near Dumayr, 23 miles northeast of Damascus, will be ready to receive the aircraft.

[redacted] a shipment of Egyptian troops, apparently about two companies, was scheduled to move to Syria by sea on 13 March. On 18 March the American army attaché reported that more than 90 Egyptian air-borne and commando troops including several high-ranking officers, among them a general officer, were seen in Damascus. This suggests that Egyptian commando and parachute troops--perhaps as much as a brigade--will be stationed in Syria, or that the Egyptian troops will be integrated into the newly formed Syrian commando brigade.

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