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25 January 1958

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN



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The USSR has recently shown renewed interest in establishing contact with Saudi Arabia. The Soviet ambassador in Damascus attempted to use a message from Bulganin, probably the 8 January note circulated to all UN members, as a pretext for a personal audience with King Saud. King Saud turned down the Soviet request but a Saudi official hinted that audiences may be granted in the future. The King states that his policy toward Communism has in no way changed.

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II. ASIA-AFRICA

The situation in Indonesia remains essentially unchanged. Reports of intentions to set up a rival government in Sumatra persist, but the dissidents are not believed to have come to any decision.

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III. THE WEST

Gaillard's and Pineau's strong statements to the French National Assembly on the Tunisian issue coincide with private expressions of French concern over Algerian rebel concentrations in Tunisia. Paris is expected to press Tunisia soon for the creation of some form of joint border controls. If, as seems likely, Tunisia refuses to assent to such controls, French military commanders in Algeria may believe that they would have government backing for actions crossing the Tunisian border.

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No North Atlantic Council representatives see any merit in the Rapacki plan as such

However, public pressure on government leaders to offer positive counterproposals continues strong.

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*The resignation of two military members of the new Venezuelan governing junta when faced with a student demonstration reflects growing civilian pressure for a large voice in the government. Some elements in the "Junta Patriotica," a leading organization in the ouster of President Perez, apparently want to eliminate the military from its traditional predominance in government. The strength of the governing junta's over-all backing is not yet known. It seems to be attempting to consolidate its military support by the appointment as minister of defense of a top officer involved in the 1-2 January revolt.

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DAILY BRIEF

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II. ASIA-AFRICA

No back-up material.

III. THE WEST

Heightened French Concern Over Algerian Rebels In Tunisia

The strong statements on the Tunisian issue made to the French National Assembly by Premier Gaillard and Foreign Minister Pineau are paralleled by private expressions of anxiety over the problem of Algerian rebel concentrations in Tunisia. Gaillard's military adviser has aired French concern over the presence in Tunisia of armed rebels, believed by the French to number about 7,000, who receive a steady stream of arms from abroad. The argument that Tunisian President Bourguiba is virtually at the mercy of such elements is frequently advanced in France and Algeria. While not confirmed, the rebel strength figure appears reasonable in light of recent developments.

Paris is expected to press Tunisia for some form of joint border control to supplement the new electrified barricade. French military leaders in Algeria, still smarting over the rebels' capture of four French soldiers, may engage in actions across the border on the assumption that they have Paris' implicit backing. Pineau said in the debate that even though the government nominally rejected nationalist Jacques Soustelle's motion calling for military retaliation across the border, Soustelle should not conclude that the government disapproved.

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