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17 December 1958

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN



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17 DECEMBER 1958

I. THE COMMUNIST BLOC

Khrushchev sees Berlin proposal as first move in major political offensive over Europe.

Soviet destroyer modified for guided missile firing

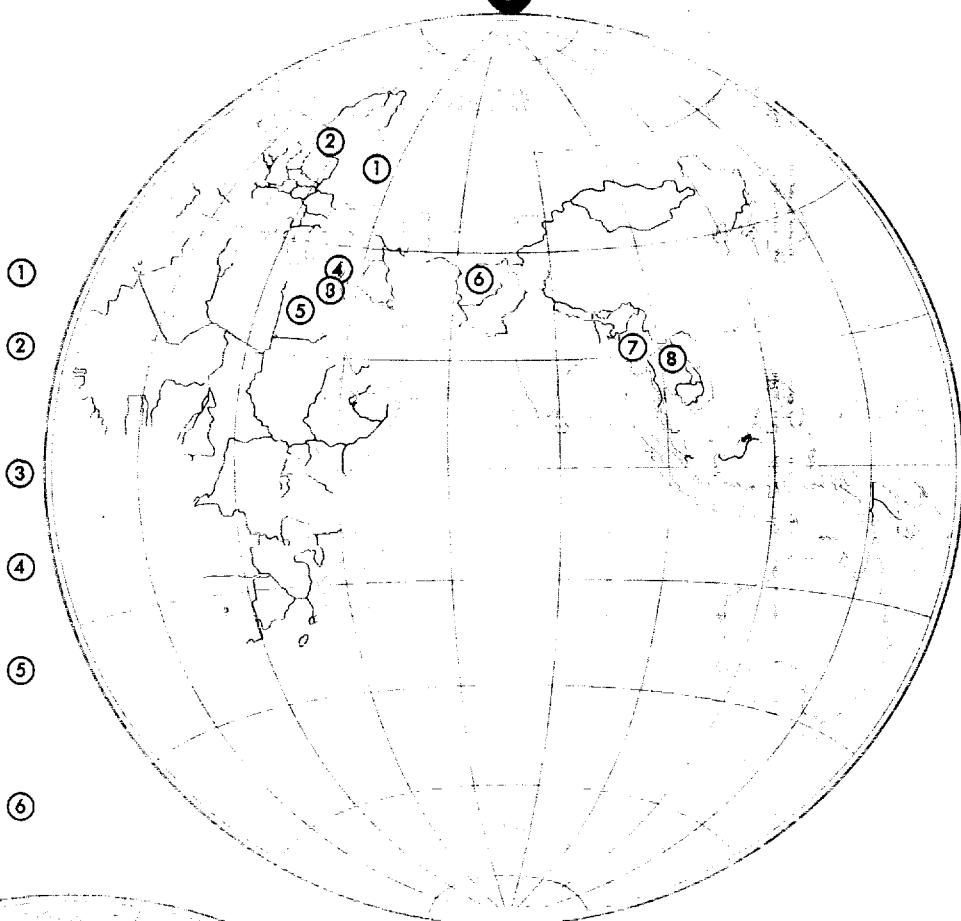
II. ASIA-AFRICA

Arab-Israeli border situation report.

Lebanese Government may recognize Communist China soon. [redacted]

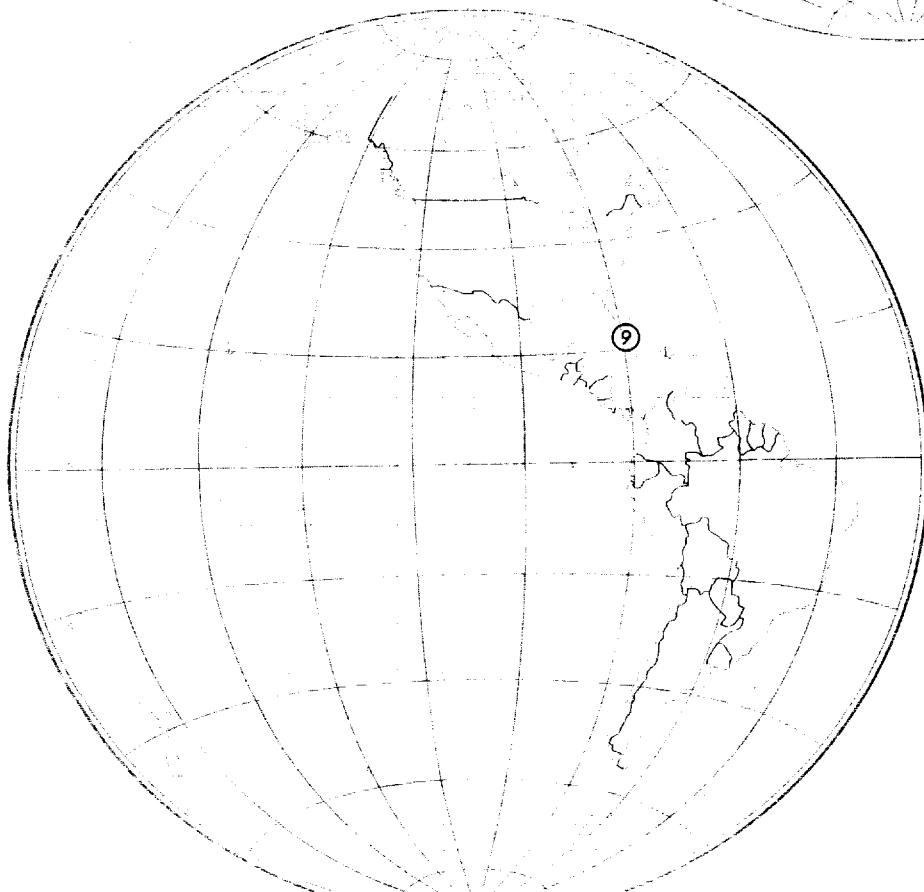
Nasir may launch propaganda campaign against Communist activity in Iraq.

Afghan fears of new Pakistani regime heightened by recent tribal disturbances and murder of Afghan official.



- (7) Burma - Former Premier U Nu warns military against trying to prolong stay in power.
- (8) Laos - Army leaders now favor full military take-over pending constitutional changes.
- (9) Cuban military demoralization continues as government builds up forces for new attacks.

III. THE WEST

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN

17 December 1958

DAILY BRIEF

SIRAB

I. THE COMMUNIST BLOC

No

*USSR: Recent Soviet public statements and private remarks by Khrushchev provide further evidence that the USSR envisages its Berlin move as the opening phase of a major political offensive in Europe. In a conversation with the Italian ambassador on 13 December, Khrushchev expressed his desire for a top-level meeting to discuss not only Berlin, but also a German peace treaty, a nonaggression pact, European security, reduction of forces in Germany, and withdrawal of foreign troops from Europe. He said the Berlin problem was probably the least important of all these measures.

(Page 1)

USSR: The modifications on a Kotlin class destroyer photographed in the Baltic Sea on 30 October suggest this ship has been equipped to fire some type of guided missile. Practically all conventional armament had been removed and a new installation dominated the entire after main deck. Other reports have indicated that such ships also are in operation or in trials in the Black Sea and Pacific.

(Page 2)

(Sketches and photograph.)

II. ASIA-AFRICA

No

Arab-Israeli situation: Although there have been no new border incidents, both sides remain alert and are psychologically prepared for more fighting. The Israeli administrative office concerned with mobilization plans is reported to be working 24 hours a day, but there are still no signs of other than routine call-ups for training. A second UAR general staff conference has been held in Cairo, but active UAR preparations for hostilities also appear minimal.

(Page 3)

No

Lebanon-Communist China: Prime Minister Karami and Foreign Minister Uwayni have given the Japanese representative in Beirut the impression that Lebanon will recognize Communist China in the near future. A closer relationship with Sino-Soviet bloc states is almost certainly one of the foreign policy adjustments which Karami wishes to make in order to bring Lebanon into line with Arab neutralism. [redacted]

No

UAR-Iraq: Nasir may be beginning an open propaganda campaign against Communist influence in Iraq, which he has hitherto sought to combat clandestinely. Cairo's Al-Akhbar, a newspaper published by a confidant of Nasir, has referred for the first time to anti-UAR activity by Communists in other Arab states, citing such activity in Baghdad. The pro-UAR press in Lebanon has been attacking the Iraqi Communists for the past week. [redacted] (Page 5)

OK

Afghanistan-Pakistan: Afghan apprehensions about the new military regime in Pakistan may have increased recently. Kabul probably suspects that Karachi is behind the recent murder of an Afghan district official and subsequent night raids by Afghan tribes in the same area near the Pakistani border. Afghan Foreign Minister Naim has previously expressed his fear that the Ayub regime would make an effort to overthrow the present Afghan Government. [redacted] (Page 6)

No

Burma: Former Premier U Nu, in his first major political address since leaving office last October, has expressed confidence that General Ne Win would hold elections in April as promised, thus in effect warning the army not to try to stay in power indefinitely. U Nu also denied that he would quit politics. Nu's speech may foreshadow increased efforts by Burmese political elements to mobilize public opinion against the army's indefinite retention of power. [redacted]

N.D.
OK

*Laos: The army is increasingly dominating planning for a coup to impose a strong anti-Communist government and to ensure long-term stability through constitutional modifications. Army leaders apparently now intend to seize control openly and, pending the establishment of a provisional government, rule directly without the facade of constitutional legitimacy and civilian leadership which Premier Phoui has sought. Phoui may play no more than an advisory role behind the scenes during the transitional period.

III. THE WEST

Cuba: Demoralization continues to spread in the army, and even high officers are now reported to believe there is no hope of defeating the rebels. The government, however, has been building up its forces in Santiago and dropping leaflets in Oriente Province urging the civilian population to leave immediately to avoid air and land attacks against the rebels. A major offensive by the government at this time is not likely to end in a decisive victory for either side. [redacted] (Page 7)

I. THE COMMUNIST BLOC

USSR Seeks to Exploit Berlin Crisis to Advance Broader Aims in Europe

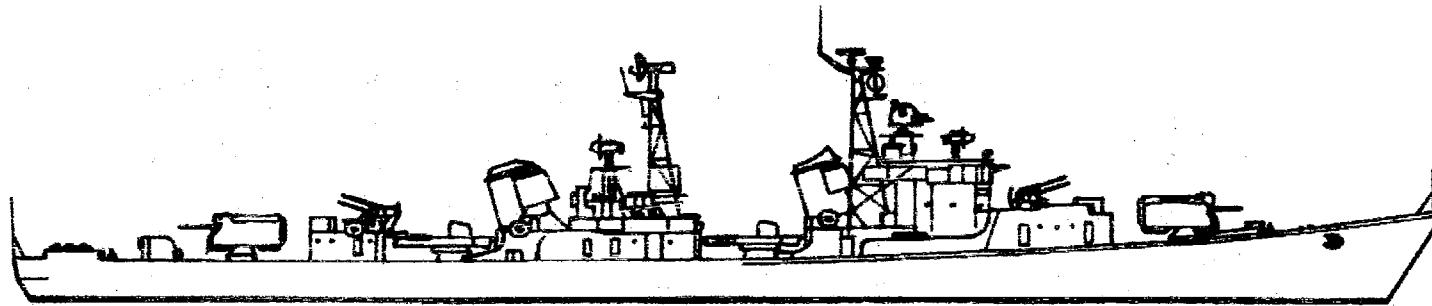
There are increasing indications that the Soviet leaders envisage their move to precipitate a crisis over Berlin as the opening phase of a major political offensive in Europe. Recent Soviet public pronouncements and private remarks by Khrushchev reflect the Soviet desire to exploit the Berlin issue to attract greater interest in various disengagement schemes which would lead to the demilitarization and neutralization of Germany.

In a conversation with the Italian ambassador on 13 December, Khrushchev indicated his desire for a top-level meeting to discuss not only Berlin, but also a German peace treaty, a nonaggression pact, European security, reduction of forces in Germany, and withdrawal of foreign troops from Europe. He said the Berlin problem was probably the least important of all these measures.

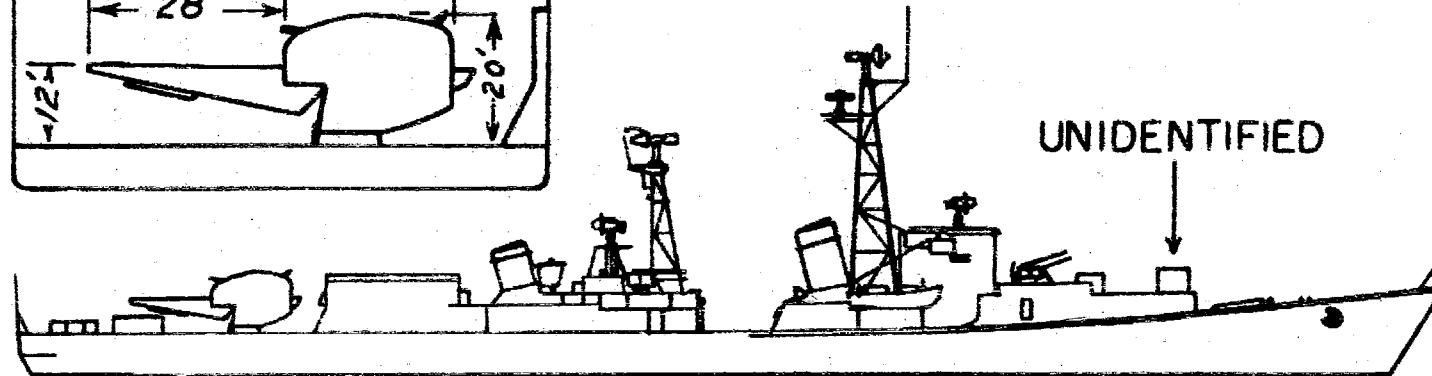
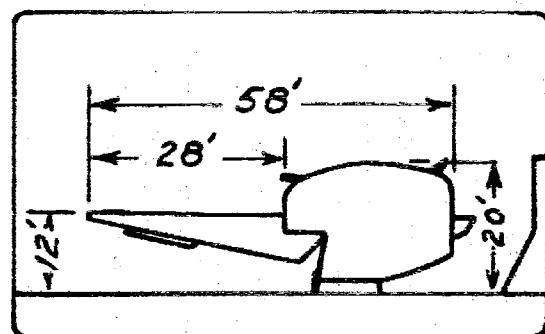
Khrushchev took this same line in an interview with the correspondent of a Munich newspaper. He contended that acceptance of his Berlin proposal would be a "point of departure" for improving the general European situation and would create "favorable preconditions" for dealing with such problems as the creation of a demilitarized zone in Central Europe by a pull-back of the forces of the "two opposing military groups." He also proposed a mutual reduction and eventual withdrawal of foreign forces in Germany and even the complete withdrawal of foreign forces from Europe.

The Norwegian ambassador in Moscow believes Khrushchev dangerously misjudges Western firmness regarding Berlin. He says Khrushchev asked him two weeks ago if he really thought the Western powers would fight over Berlin and said it was unthinkable they would do so.

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STANDARD KOTLIN - CLASS DESTROYER



GUIDED - MISSILE - CONFIGURED KOTLIN - CLASS DESTROYER
WITH INSET SHOWING DIMENSIONS OF LAUNCHING MOUNT

Photograph on reverse of following page

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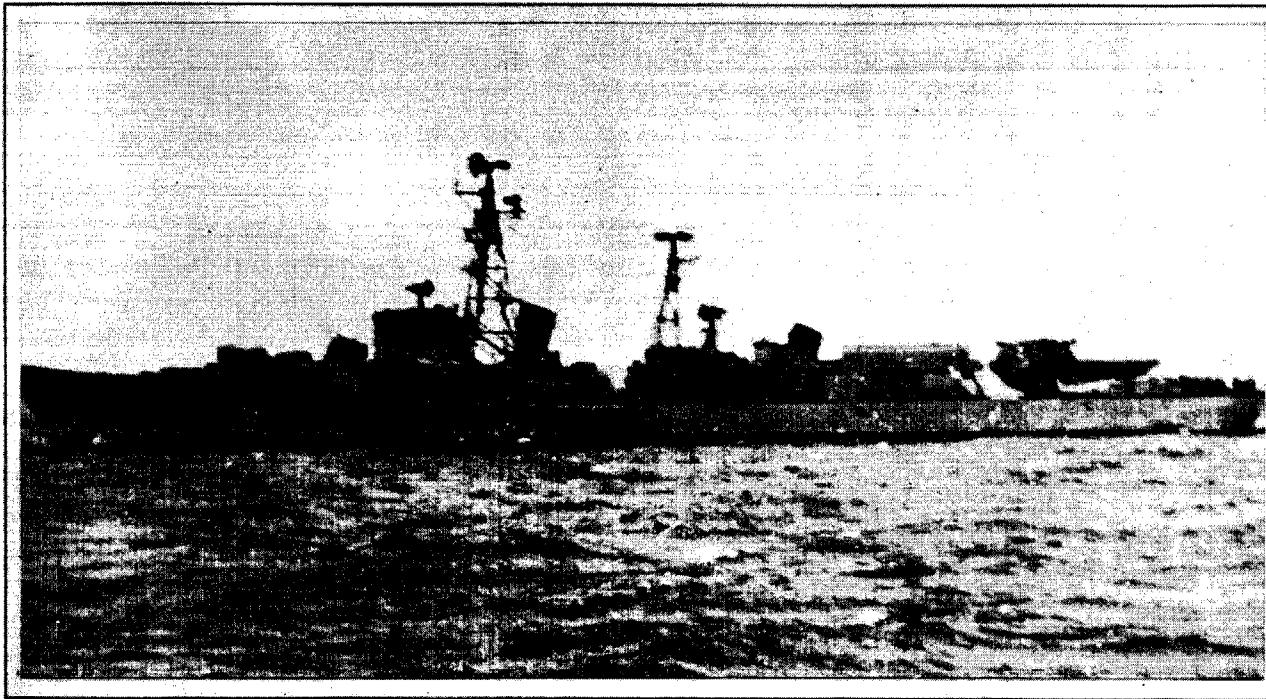
Soviet Guided Missile Destroyer Photographed

A greatly modified Soviet Kotlin-class destroyer was photographed on 30 October near Tallin in the Baltic Sea. The main battery guns, fire-control director, torpedo tubes, and one 57-mm. antiaircraft weapon have been removed. In place of the after main battery gun mount is a large installation which is apparently designed to launch some type of guided missile, probably surface-to-surface. Adjacent to this launcher is a large deckhouse which could serve as space for stowing, servicing, and handling missiles.

On the forecastle of the ship, replacing the former forward main battery mount, is unidentified equipment which may be an antisubmarine weapon, an antiaircraft gun, or a smaller missile installation. The ship also has a new and unusually high foremast with new electronics equipment.

This destroyer moved on 10 December to Baltiysk, headquarters of the Baltic Fleet. Reports have indicated that modified Kotlin-class destroyers are also operating or engaged in trials in the Black Sea and the Pacific Ocean. One of these units may have been involved in firings of unusual weapons in the Black Sea on 23 and 31 October.

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II. ASIA-AFRICA

Israeli-UAR Tension

The UN Security Council's deferral of action on Israel's complaint against the UAR, pending Secretary General Hammarskjold's forthcoming trip to the Middle East, will probably bring further warnings from Israel that it cannot count on the UN machinery and will be forced to deal with Arab "aggression" by other measures.

Although the Israeli administrative office concerned with mobilization is reported to be working 24 hours a day, there is no sign thus far of other than routine call-ups for training.

[redacted] Syrian forces have directed small arms fire into Israel every night this week but that the Israelis did not return the fire. [redacted] have not seen any concentrations of Israeli troops or equipment in the Lake Hula area, although another Bailey bridge is reported to have been moved into this area.

There also are no indications of a general alert or even limited mobilization in Cairo, despite the two days of meetings the UAR General Staff has held. The UAR appears nevertheless to be particularly attentive to possible action along the Egyptian-Israeli border. [redacted]

[redacted] defensive positions be occupied at Al-Tamad in east-central Sinai. Early on the previous day, [redacted] unidentified aircraft approaching from Sinai dropped flash bombs over several Israeli targets, presumably for photo reconnaissance. Reconnaissance missions emanating from Syria, however, may have been curtailed. [redacted]

UN observers have reported that Israeli overflights of Sinai and Gaza during the past several weeks have increased lately, with the planes approaching El Arish, the main Egyptian base

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in eastern Sinai, from the Mediterranean as well as from over the border. The Cairo press claims a brigade now en route to El Auja, a UN-designated "neutral zone" on the Israeli side of the border, will raise Israel's strength there to two brigades, including armored units. This concentration is unconfirmed by other sources.

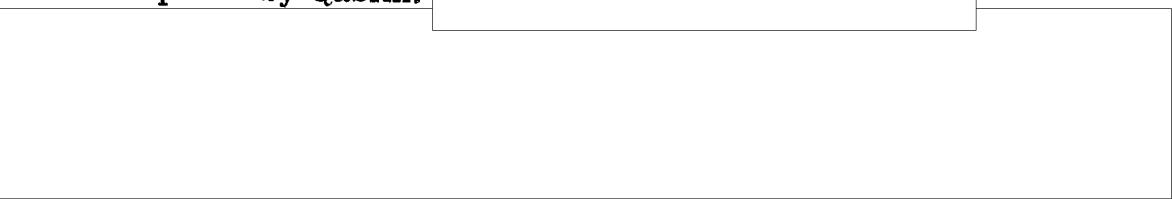
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Nasir and Iraqi Communists

The 13 December issue of the Cairo daily Al Akhbar, published by a confidant of President Nasir, carried three brief items critical of Communist anti-UAR activity in Iraq. With the exception of infrequent announcements of the arrest of local Communists, this is the first known instance of Egyptian press comment on Communist activity in an Arab country. Together with recent attacks on the same subject in the pro-UAR Lebanese press, the Al Akhbar items could foreshadow an open propaganda campaign by the UAR against Communist influence in Iraq.

The Iraqi situation poses a dilemma for Nasir. Heavily dependent as he is on Soviet economic and military support, he may hesitate to force a showdown on the Communist issue at this time. He is said to be convinced, however, that the USSR will not ignore an opportunity to effect a Communist take-over in Iraq. He has been asked by anti-Communist elements in Iraq to refrain from an overt attack on the Qasim regime pending the outcome of an army-supported coup attempt in Baghdad, of which he was reportedly advised by Iraqi Ambassador Sammarai on 11 December.

The Communist-led demonstrations against Assistant Secretary Rountree, showing again the Communists' capability to incite mob action in the face of army security measures, seems likely to increase the Iraqi Army leaders' concern for internal security. The Rountree visit is being used by the Communists, not only to whip up anti-American sentiment, but also to maintain the condition of political tension which they helped create last week when the pro-UAR plot was exposed by Qasim.



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Afghan Fears Pakistani Subversion

Border incidents will probably increase fears already expressed by Kabul that Pakistan will seek to replace the present Afghan Government with a regime more favorable to Pakistan.

Kabul probably suspects that Pakistan instigated the recent murder of the district official administering the Afghan border city of Jalalabad. It may also fear that Pakistan is behind subsequent night raids by Afghan Shinwari tribesmen who live near the Pakistani border. Apparently no serious fighting has taken place, and Kabul hopes to put down this unrest before it becomes more serious. The Afghan royal family is already nervous about its ability to remain in power. Any indications that Pakistan may be inciting the powerful "Pushtoon" tribes to revolt will be watched with anxiety and might provoke a strong reaction against Pakistan.

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III. THE WEST

Cuban Army Preparing New Offensive Against the Rebels

A build-up of Cuban Army troops in Santiago and the arrival of tanks, armored cars, and other supplies in the last few days indicate that the Batista government may be preparing its long-expected offensive against the rebels. The army has dropped leaflets urging the civilian population to evacuate areas where action is contemplated, warning that air and land attacks will be made. Opposition elements claim that the government is planning a "scorched-earth reprisal policy."

Despite these signs that the army is preparing a concerted drive, discontent and demoralization continue to spread in the armed forces. Even high officers close to the chief of staff are now reported to believe that there is no hope of defeating the rebels.

Previous "all-out" government offensives have failed, and it seems unlikely that a new offensive will be any more successful, despite the government's superior arms. Many of the army troops are green and lack the will to fight, whereas the rebels, riding a wave of successful campaigns, are a determined battle-hardened force. A major offensive now would probably not result in a decisive victory for either side.

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