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24 December 1958

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN



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11 DECLASSIFIED

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NEXT REVIEW DATE:

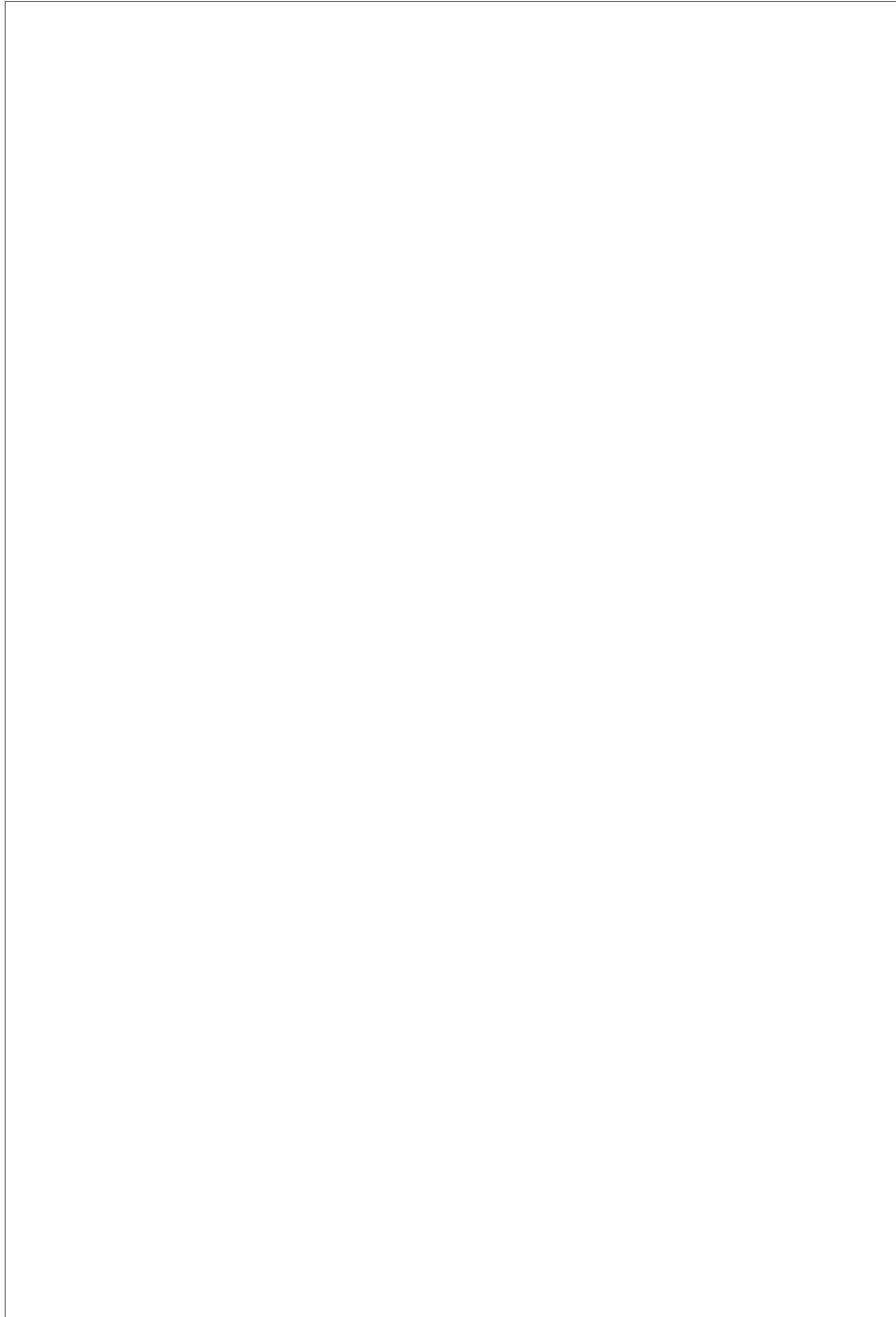
2010

AUTH: JF 70-2

DATE: 4-4-80

REVIEWER

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LATE ITEM

Launch Under Way at Tyura Tam (Information as of 0430 EST 24 December): A valid launch operation is under way at the USSR's Tyura Tam Missile Test Range. If the countdown proceeds normally, firing would be at approximately 1300 GMT (0800 EST), 24 December 1958. The rapid development of the activity and a lack of details early in the countdown precludes determination of the type vehicle involved.

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24 DECEMBER 1958

I. THE COMMUNIST BLOC

Soviet tanker in contact with submarines remains in Cape Canaveral down-range area.

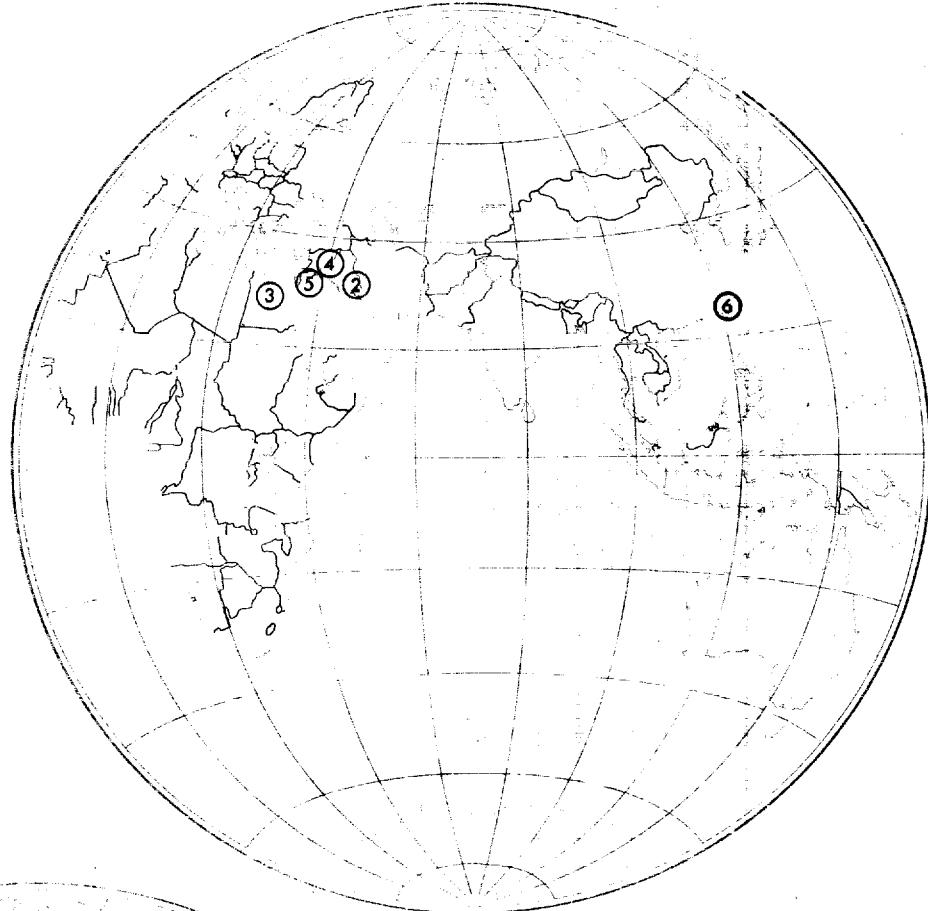


①

Soviet shipments of arms to Iraq continue; now total more than 10,000 tons.



②

**II. ASIA-AFRICA**

Nasir in speech makes first direct attack on Communists; accuses Syrian party of opposing Arab nationalism.



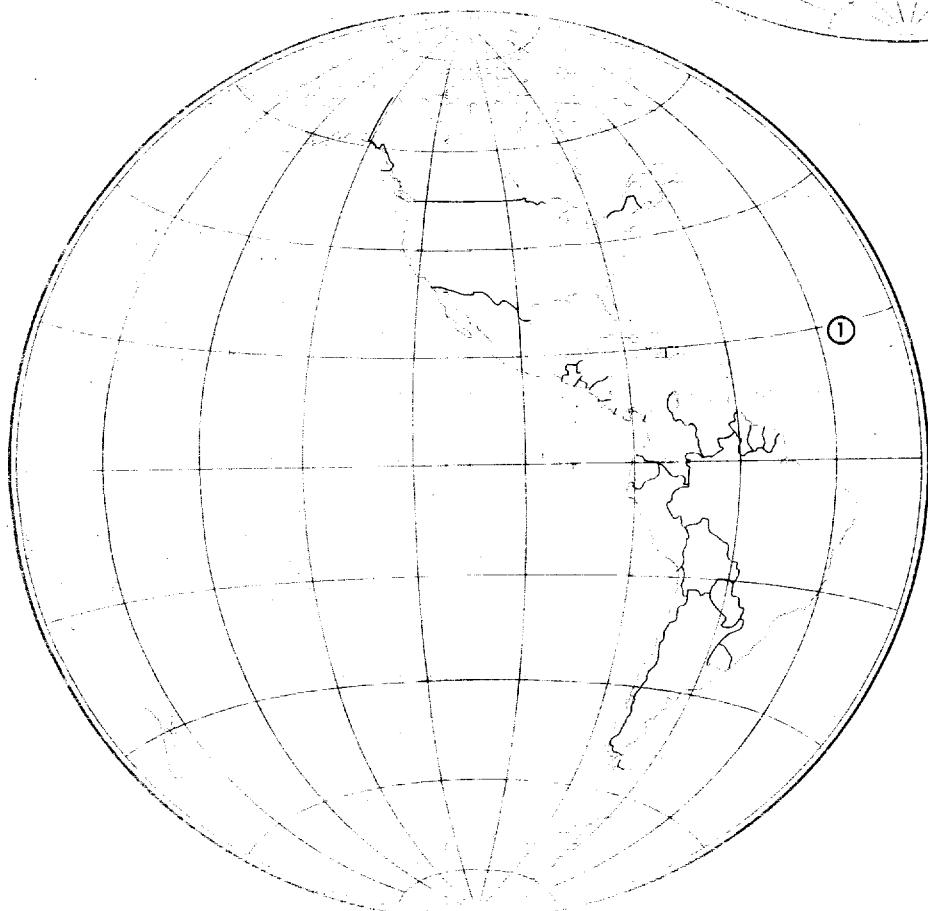
③

UAR withdraws some supporting elements for MIG squadron stationed in Iraq.



④

- ⑤ Jordan - Husayn planning early change in present government of Rifai, who intends to resign next spring.
- ⑥ Chiang Kai-shek's decision to relinquish presidency after 1960 will not alter his control of state affairs.

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN

24 December 1958

DAILY BRIEF

I. THE COMMUNIST BLOC

SIRAB
JW

Soviet naval activity: The Soviet tanker Vilyuisk is still in the general down-range area of the Cape Canaveral missile test range, where it has remained since 10 December, approximately 750 miles southwest of the Cape Verde Islands. Naval communications on 19 December indicate a direct association between the tanker and a Northern Fleet submarine detachment, probably in the same general area.

No
JL

USSR-Iraq: With the arrival at Basra of a third cargo of arms which is expected momentarily, nearly 10,000 tons of materiel will have been delivered under a \$170,000,000 Soviet-Iraq arms deal concluded in November. A fourth Soviet cargo ship has been ordered to load arms for delivery to Iraq.

(Page 1)

Watch Committee conclusion -- Berlin/Taiwan Strait: No Sino-Soviet bloc country intends deliberately to initiate direct military action against US forces abroad, US allies, or areas peripheral to the orbit in the immediate future.

No significant changes were noted during the past week in either the Berlin or the Taiwan Strait situations.

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II. ASIA-AFRICA

PJD

Watch Committee conclusion -- Middle East: A deliberate initiation of large-scale hostilities in the Middle East is unlikely in the immediate future. The situation, however, remains precarious throughout the area, particularly in Iraq, Jordan, and along the Syrian-Israeli border.

JW

UAR: In the course of his 23 December speech celebrating the second anniversary of the Anglo-French evacuation of Suez, Nasir charged the Communist party in Syria with opposing Arab nationalism and Arab unity and said that the "force of the Arab people" had compelled Communists and "opportunist" to "hide in their holes." This is Nasir's first personal public attack on the Communists, and may signal a new drive to suppress their activity in the UAR as well as a stronger effort to limit Communist influence elsewhere in the Arab world.

HO

UAR-Iraq: The UAR is preparing to return to Dumayr airfield in Syria some of the support equipment and personnel of the MIG fighter squadron which has been stationed in Iraq since late September,

The intent is to enable additional fighters to move quickly from Iraq if required for operations against Israel; at present there are only two MIG squadrons in Syria. Planning for the redeployment may also be related to political differences between Nasir and the Qasim regime.

HJ

Jordan: Prime Minister Rifai says he intends to resign next April in order to run the government from behind the scenes. King Husayn, however, may be planning changes earlier and is considering naming one or two "liberal" politicians to the cabinet. Husayn appears increasingly restive in view of what he considers his country's basically untenable position as an island of Western influence surrounded by hostile governments.

(Page 2)

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Nationalist China: Chiang Kai-shek's announcement that he will not seek re-election to the presidency of Nationalist China in 1960 does not mean that he will abandon his leadership of the ruling Kuomintang party, the real basis for his control of state affairs. A primary reason for his decision is the difficulty of changing the constitutional prohibition against a third term. If a solution to this problem can be found, he may reconsider. If he does step down, Vice President Chen Cheng would probably succeed Chiang as president.

(Page 3)

24 Dec 58

DAILY BRIEF

iii

~~TOP SECRET~~

I. THE COMMUNIST BLOC

Fourth Soviet Arms Cargo Apparently Scheduled for Iraq

The Soviet vessel Jan Jores, a former US Liberty ship now undergoing repairs at Odessa, has been directed to proceed to Nikolaev later this week to "load cargo similar to that of the Pskov." The Pskov arrived in the Iraqi port of Basra on 11 December with the second cargo of Soviet arms for Iraq. The first delivery to Basra was made by the Dmitry Pozharsky on 18 November, only a few days after a Soviet-Iraqi arms deal reportedly worth \$170,000,000 was concluded.

Another Soviet vessel, the Ismail, was due in Basra between 18 and 26 December. With its arrival, nearly 10,000 tons of military equipment will have been delivered. The shipments thus far have included artillery, tanks and military vehicles, and probably a variety of smaller arms.

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II. ASIA-AFRICA

Developments in Jordan

King Husayn is again planning to replace the cabinet of Samir Rifai with a less unpopular government. Although the King is under no illusion that any new government--to be selected primarily from among Jordan's old-line politicians--would be an improvement, he feels that change is desirable for psychological reasons. Premier Rifai [redacted]

[redacted] planned to resign in April; the King, however, presumably contemplates an earlier cabinet reshuffle and is considering the inclusion of one or two politicians more "liberal" in outlook.

The King is considering asking Senate President Said Mufti, a supporter of Rifai, to form the new cabinet. Rifai hopes to replace Mufti as president of the Senate and is confident that he can continue to run the government from behind the scenes. He wishes to have his brother, Abd al-Munim Rifai, appointed foreign minister in the new government. The premier is also defense minister and foreign minister, and his claim that he needs a rest has good basis in fact as he has had several mild heart attacks.

Rifai's government has become so unpopular that it is in many ways a liability to the monarchy. The regime is blamed for deteriorating economic conditions, and Rifai's army reorganization program has offended Bedouin elements in the army and government, upon whom the monarchy has relied for its principal support. The King risks further opposition from the Bedouins if he retains Rifai. [redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted]

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Chiang Kai-shek Announces He Will Not Seek Third Term

Chiang Kai-shek announced on 23 December before a meeting of the Mainland Recovery Planning Board, a group composed chiefly of Kuomintang party members, that he would not seek re-election to the presidency of Nationalist China in 1960 when his second term expires. A third term would require a constitutional amendment which would arouse opposition from liberal elements on Taiwan. Presumably, Chiang believes he could continue to control the state effectively from his equally important post as leader of the ruling Kuomintang party.

Vice President Chen Cheng would be Chiang's logical successor. Chen is a long-time associate in whom Chiang has confidence, and his designation as the official Kuomintang candidate would be tantamount to election.

If the threat of Chinese Communist military action against the offshore islands continues, Chiang may decide to stay in office. [redacted]

[redacted]

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The Deputy Under Secretary for Administration

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