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Cd/Ed
3.3(h)(2)
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1 February 1958



CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN



DOCUMENT NO. 27
NO CHANGE IN CLASS. x
IT DECLASSIFIED
CLASS. CHANGED TO: TS, S
NEXT REVIEW DATE: 2020
AUTH: 1-7-80
DATE: 1-7-80 REVIEWER: 



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1 FEBRUARY 1958

I. THE COMMUNIST BLOC

USSR claims position "elastic" on summit conference.

Peiping continues attack on "rightists."

USSR urging Laos to establish diplomatic missions.

II. ASIA-AFRICA

Proclamation of Egyptian-Syrian union expected soon.

Syria continues close military relations with USSR.

Israel concerned over long-range effect of Egyptian-Syrian union.

Indonesian army chief calls conference of Sumatran military commanders.

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②

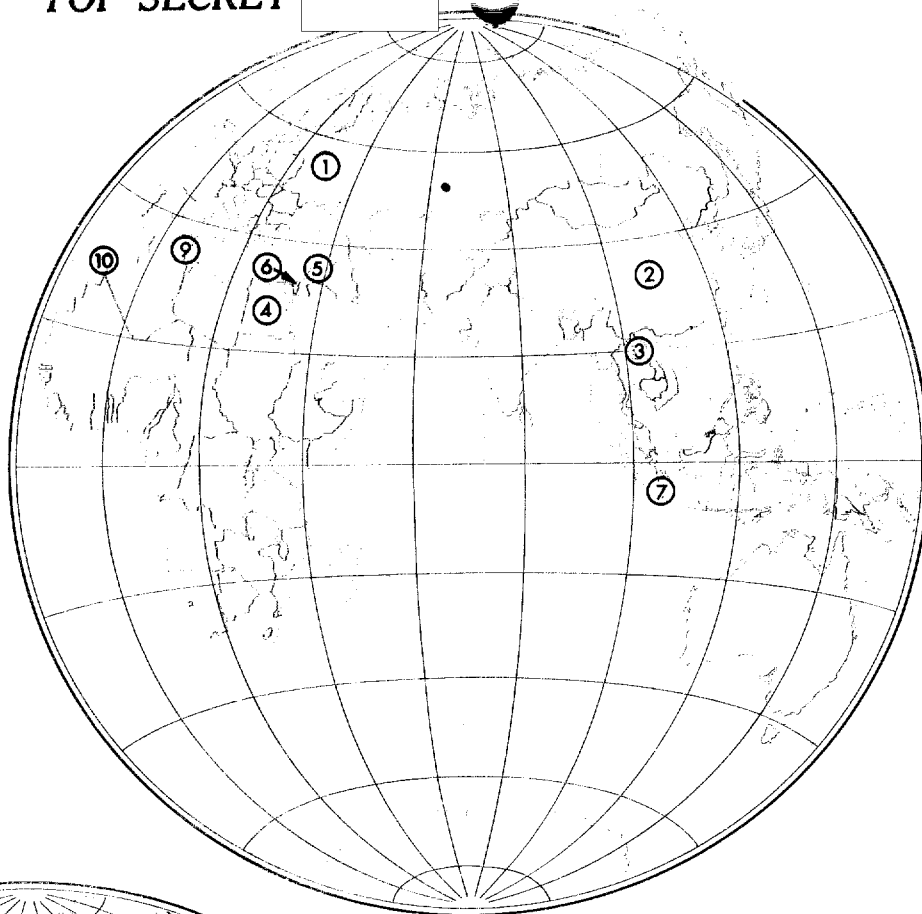
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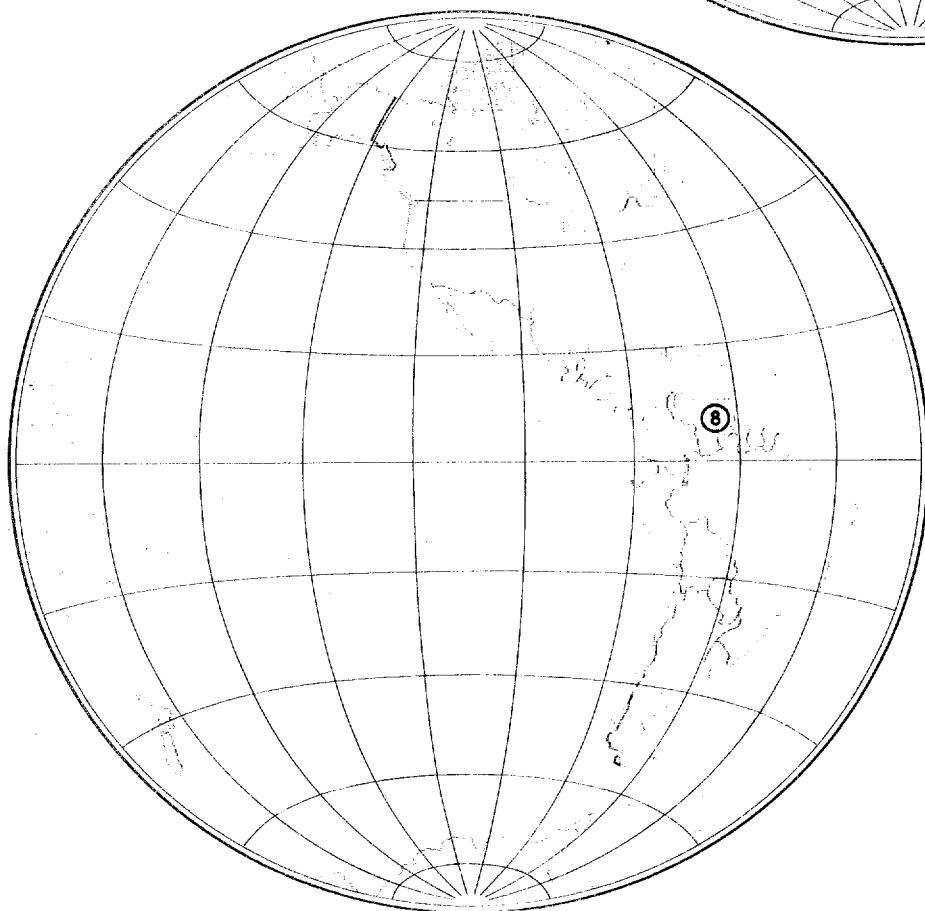


III. THE WEST

United civilian support of Venezuelan junta may not last long. ⑧

France increasingly concerned over Algerian rebels in Tunisia. ⑨

Spanish offensive against irregular Army of Liberation expected in Ifni. ⑩



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1 February 1958

DAILY BRIEF

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I. THE COMMUNIST BLOC

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JK Communist China: Peiping has fired the communications, food, and timber industry ministers. They have been under attack since last June for "opposing" Communist party domination of the central government. Three more ministers and four vice ministers have also been criticized recently in the Communist press. Some of these men may possibly be dismissed during the National People's Congress which convenes on 1 February. [redacted] (Page 2)

JK Soviet pressure on Laos: The USSR is again pressing Laos to exchange diplomatic missions. This move is probably timed to counter the favorable effects of Prime Minister Souvanna Phouma's visit to the US and has the longer-range objective of buttressing the Communist-controlled Pathet Lao political and subversive campaign within Laos. The Laotian Government may continue to

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stall, at least until after the elections for additional National Assembly seats to be held 4 May. [redacted]
(Page 3)

II. ASIA-AFRICA

no Egyptian-Syrian union: Syrian President Quwatli's arrival in Cairo on 31 January will probably be followed very soon by a joint proclamation with Nasir on Egyptian-Syrian union. [redacted]

no Syrian-Egyptian-Soviet military ties: Syrian-Egyptian-Soviet military collaboration continues to be close. Damascus is sending additional trainees to the USSR, and additional Soviet instructors are scheduled to go to Syria to give courses and to participate in discussions of tactical and strategic doctrines. The USSR is also providing Syria with generally reliable information on Israeli military forces. Syria in turn furnishes Egypt with military information. [redacted]
(Page 4)

no Israeli-Syrian tension: Israel's note to the United Nations charging Syrian "aggression" is a reminder of Israel's long-range concern over the effect of Egyptian-Syrian union on Israel's security. Syrian nervousness regarding Israeli intentions is suggested by the fact that a Syrian official has queried the American Embassy in Damascus about Israeli troop movements. However, a reconnaissance of Israel's northern and central commands has revealed no observable Israeli military build-up. [redacted]

no [redacted]

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with dissident plans to deliver an ultimatum to Djakarta, and it is doubtful that all will attend. A split between Javanese and Sumatran elements of the Masjumi party is developing over support for a rival government on Sumatra. [redacted] (Page 1)

no

The Communist bloc continues to develop its relations with Indonesia. A Polish delegation recently departed for Djakarta to investigate the chartering of Polish ships to Indonesia and to offer personnel for operation of Indonesian vessels. The recent visit of Czech Premier Siroky resulted in a communiqué aligning the bloc with Indonesia on important local and international issues.

[redacted]

III. THE WEST

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Venezuela: The widespread civilian support presently behind the Venezuelan governing junta may not last long. The political party leaders hold varying and often conflicting views, and some are calling for a revision of Venezuelan petroleum policies. Their basic unifying interest is the desire to expand civilian influence in government--a potential source of conflict with the military. [redacted] (Page 6)

no

France - Tunisia: Recent reports suggest that civilian leaders in Paris are beginning to share to an increasing extent the frustrations of French military leaders in Algeria over the sanctuary in Tunisia enjoyed by Algerian rebels. It is unlikely that Premier Gaillard will sanction a major punitive offensive at this time, but the Algerian-Tunisian frontier situation continues to have explosive potentialities, and new incidents might force Gaillard's hand. In the meantime, Paris is apparently delaying any further diplomatic approaches to Bourguiba. [redacted]

no

Spanish West Africa: The Spanish offensive being prepared for early February against the irregular Army of

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No

Liberation may be mounted in Ifni as well as in Spanish Sahara and the Southern Morocco protectorate. France is to assist the Spanish forces with transport and materiel, and a French supporting offensive into Spanish Sahara appears likely. [redacted]
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I. THE COMMUNIST BLOC

Soviet Views on Preparations for Summit Meeting

Soviet Ambassador Malik told British Acting Prime Minister Butler on 28 January that the Soviet views on the composition and date for a heads-of-government meeting are "elastic," but repeated the public Soviet position that a foreign ministers' conference should follow, rather than precede, a summit meeting. Malik said Moscow wants preparatory arrangements to be made through diplomatic channels.

Khrushchev's remark to the London Times, published 1 February, that the Soviet Union is willing to postpone a summit meeting, if the date of "within two to three months" suggested to the West in Bulganin's January letters is "too soon," is designed to underscore Soviet flexibility on this point.

The USSR has been encouraged by signs of Western disunity, particularly by British and French statements, and will probably continue to hold out for a summit meeting with a minimum of preparation. The Soviet leaders are apparently confident that mounting popular pressures on Western governments will eventually force the United States to drop its insistence on adequate preparatory work by a foreign ministers' conference as well as through diplomatic channels.

The absence of Soviet criticism of French Premier Gaillard's proposal that a foreign ministers' conference refrain from "substantive" discussion of issues suggests that Moscow might eventually agree to foreign ministers' talks if limited to such questions as composition, agenda, and other procedural matters.

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~~CONFIDENTIAL~~Chinese Communist Cabinet Shake-up

Communications Minister Chang Po-chun, Food Minister Chang Nai-chi, and Minister of Timber Industry Lo Lung-chi were removed from their posts on 31 January by the standing committee of the National People's Congress in Peiping. All three men have been under attack since last June for political deviation--including "opposition" to Communist party domination of the central government.

Three more ministers and four vice ministers have also been criticized recently in the Communist press. The minister of building materials industry has confessed "mistakes" in leadership which permitted counterrevolutionaries to penetrate subordinate offices in his ministry. The minister of education and the minister of marine products were under fire earlier for criticizing the Communist party.

Some of these men may possibly be dismissed by the National People's Congress which convenes on 1 February. Others are expected to lose their posts during the next few months of the "rectification" campaign.

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Moscow Again Bids for Diplomatic Exchange With Laos

The USSR is again pressing Laos to exchange diplomatic missions. Soviet officials in Bangkok, who made the approach, probably timed it to counter the improved US-Laotian relations resulting from Premier Souvanna Phouma's visit to Washington. The USSR's longer range objective is to support the developing political and subversive campaign by the Pathet Lao now that it has given up its military efforts to gain power in Laos.

Laos may continue to delay a decision, at least until after the national elections for additional assembly seats to be held on 4 May. Souvanna would probably be embarrassed to default so quickly on assurances given in Washington and London, and he may also wish to assess the Pathet Lao's popular strength before running the risk entailed in accepting bloc embassies.

The Pathet Lao has surrendered its former base areas in Sam Neua and Phong Saly Provinces. The Laotian Army as of 29 January occupied key posts along the provinces' borders with North Vietnam and Communist China.

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II. ASIA-AFRICA

Syrian and Egyptian Military Relations With the Soviet Union

Syrian-Soviet military ties and, to a lesser extent, those between Egypt and the USSR, continue to be close. Some 170 Syrian military trainees will probably leave soon for the Soviet Union, where training of other Syrian and Egyptian military personnel is already under way. A group of Soviet officers arrived in Syria on 15 January to participate in discussions with Syrian and Egyptian officers on organization of infantry and armored units. Syrian-Egyptian-Soviet discussions of Soviet tactical and strategic doctrine have been planned. In mid-February, 15 Soviet military instructors are scheduled to arrive in Syria to give staff-college-level courses to members of the army. The USSR has provided the Syrians with extensive and generally accurate intelligence on the strength and disposition of Israeli military forces, much of which the Syrians relay to the Egyptians. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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Indonesian Army Chief Orders Sumatran Commanders
To Java Meeting

Army Chief of Staff General Nasution has ordered the four Sumatran army commanders, two of whom are actively engaged in the dissident movement, to report personally to him in Bandung, West Java, on 4 and 5 February to discuss critical regional problems. Nasution undoubtedly hopes to forestall reported Sumatran plans to send an ultimatum to the central government in early February. He may also calculate that, if all or some of the commanders fail to attend the conference, he can charge them with insubordination, and subsequently discharge them from the army.

The anti-Communist Masjumi party may split over support of the Sumatran movement. Several Masjumi leaders, including the party chairman, Natsir, are already in Sumatra and are working actively with the dissidents. Javanese elements of the party, however, fear central government retaliation if they openly support the Sumatrans and are considering opposing as unconstitutional the proposed rival government which may be established in Sumatra.

According to Padang radio, public meetings are being scheduled throughout central Sumatra to urge the resignation of the Djuanda cabinet. Senior dissident military leaders are to address the groups. [REDACTED]

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III. THE WEST

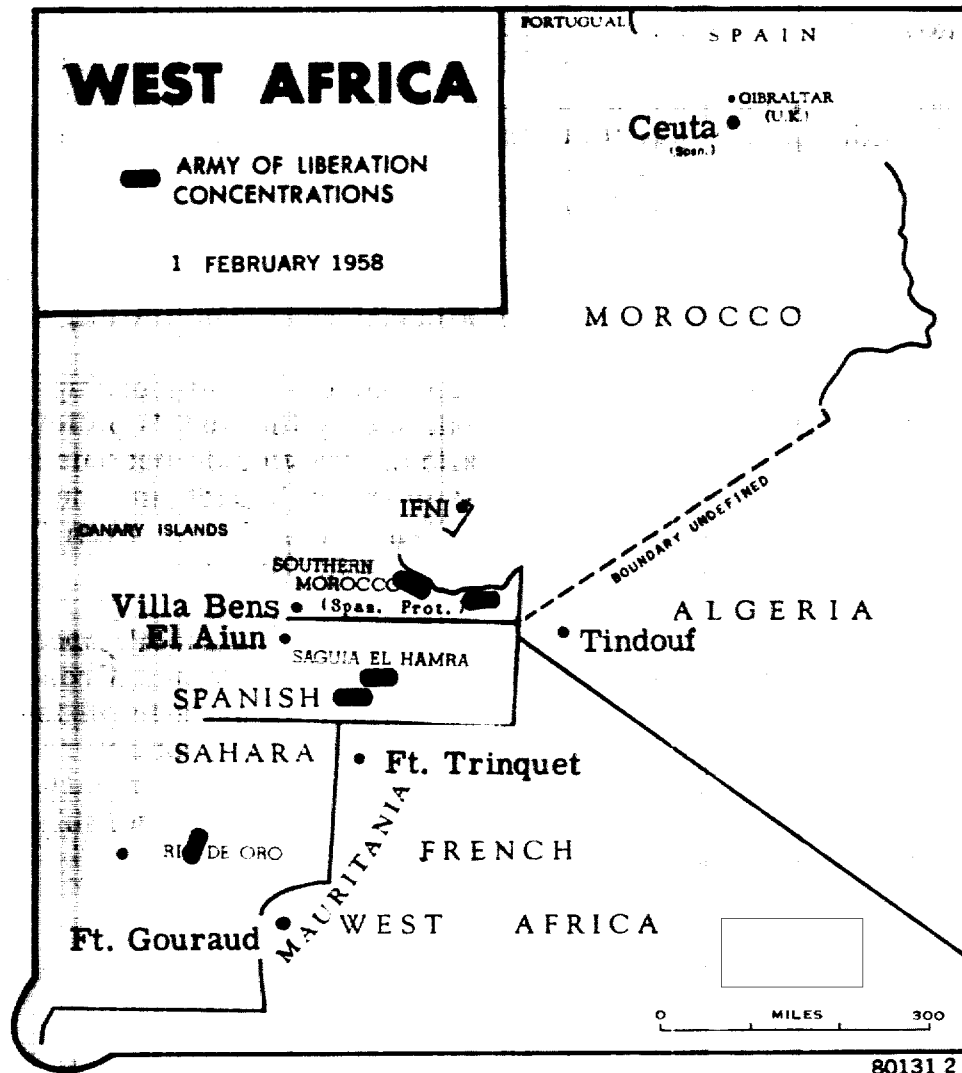
Outlook in Venezuela

The widespread civilian support of the Venezuelan governing junta may not last long as a result of the varied and often conflicting views of the political leaders. The announced unity among the four major parties, including the Communists, could break down in a struggle for representation in government and in unilateral efforts of the parties to extend their popular and labor support. Their principal unifying interest, since President Perez' ouster, apparently is the desire to expand civilian influence in government--a potential source of conflict with the military.

The Communists stand to gain by their membership in the four-party Patriotic Front and by the junta's policy of allowing the return of all exiles. They could become a powerful force in the labor movement by broadening the position they were allowed to retain under Perez, even if the military block the legalization of the party.

Although the junta plans to continue Venezuela's present petroleum policies, some political leaders are already calling for a revision or review. The nationalistic oil issue has current political appeal because US voluntary restrictions on oil imports, extended to all five US import districts by December 1957, have provoked considerable public resentment.

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Spanish Offensive in West Africa Reported Scheduled for
Early February

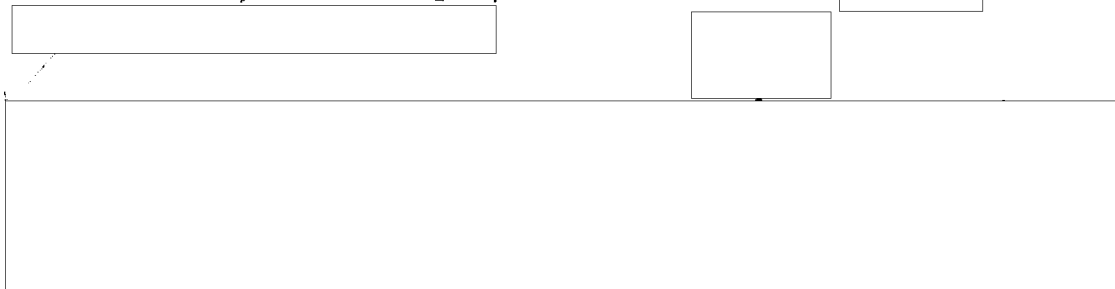
There are indications that the Spanish offensive being prepared for early February against the irregular Army of Liberation may also be mounted in Ifni, as well as in



The US air attaché in Madrid reported on 29 January that the Spanish Air Force would send about a dozen planes to El Aiun within a few days and more later. He added that Spanish aircraft already in the West African area included five helicopters and 20 light bombers.

France is to assist Spanish forces with naval transportation from Spain and also materiel, [redacted]

[redacted] a number of light armored scout cars comprised the only French military assistance given so far. A French supporting offensive into Spanish Sahara appears likely, with French forces reportedly prepared to move west from Tindouf, Fort Trinquet, and Fort Gouraud. [redacted]

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