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GENERAL

1. Singapore officials see Nehru determined to dominate Afro-Asian conference:

British officials in Singapore believe that Prime Minister Nehru will exert himself to the utmost to control the Afro-Asian conference. This thinking is based on the belief that Nehru has become apprehensive of Peiping since his trip to China last October and is determined to wrest the initiative in Asia from the Chinese.

Meanwhile, the American consulate general in Singapore reports that Australian representatives support the British view that the forthcoming Bangkok conference of the Manila pact powers should avoid criticism or discouragement of the Bandung talks. In this connection the consulate comments that local Asians generally assume that the United States is hostile to the Bandung conference.

Comment: The American embassy in New Delhi reported on 4 January that it believed Nehru could be counted on to combat any effort the Chinese Communists might make to dominate the Afro-Asian conference.

One of the chief themes of Chinese Communist propaganda regarding the conference is the charge that the United States is attempting to sabotage it. A similar line is also being followed by a large segment of the press in the neutral countries of Asia.

SOUTHEAST ASIA

2. Missing Thai politician said to be active with Communists in Laos:

Tiang Sirikhan, the popular Thai politician who disappeared in late

1952, is still alive and is heading a "Free Thai movement" based in Laos. [REDACTED]

Comment: [REDACTED]

It has been widely believed that the Thai police liquidated Tiang. If he is still alive, he would be a logical Communist choice to promote a dissident movement in northeastern Thailand, where his name is still greatly revered and dislike of the central government is endemic.

SOUTH ASIA

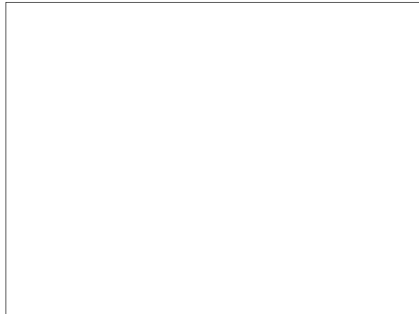
3. Afghan prime minister faces showdown with royal family:

[REDACTED] Afghan prime minister Daud appears to be heading for an early showdown with other members of the royal family who oppose his policy of increasing economic ties with the USSR.

Opposed to Daud are his two influential uncles Shah Wali Khan and Shah Mahmoud Khan, the latter of whom has just been called back to Kabul from Europe. Also opposed are the king and Daud's brother, Foreign Minister Naim. Religious leaders have publicly criticized the prime minister, and important business interests, which have been increasingly subjected to government control through Daud's loyal follower Finance Minister Malik, are also set against him.

Though Daud is intensely ambitious and energetic and has apparently been fighting against efforts to curb his activities, he has twice previously been forced to succumb to the will of the royal ruling group. At the moment, he seems to have insufficient political backing to beat his opposition in a showdown. [REDACTED]

WESTERN EUROPE

4. Adenauer proposes that West form group to study East-West meeting:

Chancellor Adenauer in his 14 January meeting with French premier Mendes-France proposed that the three Western Allies and the Federal Republic form a joint high-level working group to study plans for a conference with the Soviet Union sometime this year, according to Herbert Blankenhorn, a top Bonn Foreign Ministry official. The working group, which would be composed of leading representatives from Western parliaments, should consider questions relating to a European security system and German reunification.

On 16 January Mendes-France assured the American embassy in Paris that he is ready to discard another approach to the USSR in favor of a Western working group on East-West talks. He referred two or three times to a British suggestion for a possible "tripartite working group." He reiterated that some progress on East-West talks is essential for the passage of the Paris accords by the Council of the Republic.

Comment: This is the first effort by Adenauer to lay the foundation for an East-West meeting on German reunification. Further steps along these lines can be expected from the chancellor after the Paris accords are ratified.

Mendes-France no longer considers May a feasible target date for East-West talks as a result of delay in the timetable for French ratification of the Paris agreements.

LATE ITEM

5. Comment on Communist operations against Tachen Islands:

Chinese Communist operations against other islands of the Tachen group are likely to follow quickly upon the capture

of Ichiang Island on 18 January (see map, p. 7). The Communists are capable of taking any or all of these islands--including the two principal islands--against Chinese Nationalist opposition alone.

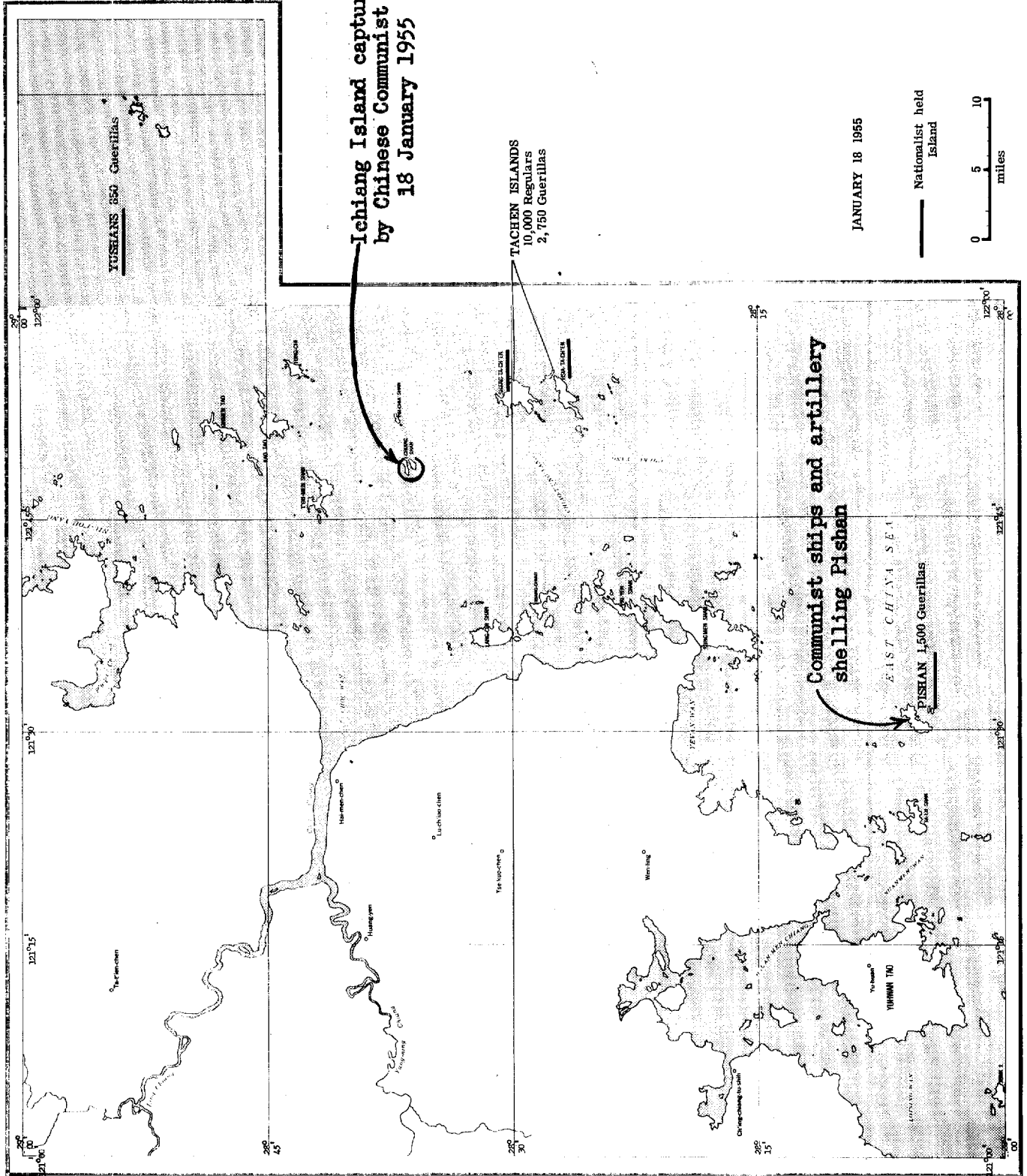
[redacted] on the evening of 18 January Communist ships and artillery were shelling Pishan, which is garrisoned by 1,500 guerrillas, and other vessels were observed near Yushan, which is manned by about 850 guerrillas. Pishan is about 35 miles southwest of the main Tachens, and Yushan, 35 miles northeast.

Ichiang, only seven miles from Upper Tachen, will serve as an ideal site for shelling all areas of the two principal islands of the Tachen group and the anchorage between the two.

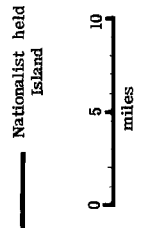
The Nationalist garrison on the two main Tachens--10,000 regulars and 2,750 guerrillas--may consider its position hopeless. Adequate air and naval support has not been provided, and the planned level of supplies has not been reached.

[redacted]

Chiang Kai-shek may be considering withdrawal of the Nationalist garrison in the Tachens, but the time for an effective evacuation may have passed.



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PRESENTATIONS DIVISION