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24 January 1956

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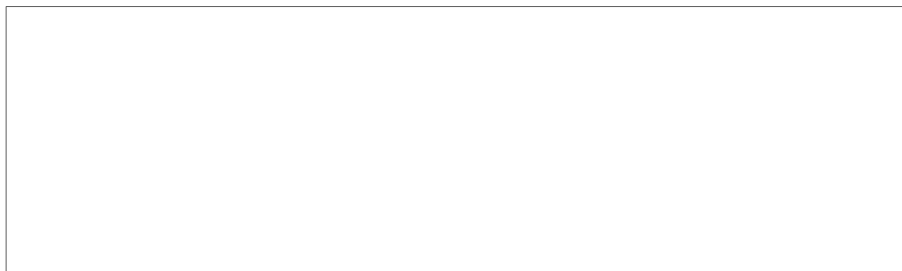
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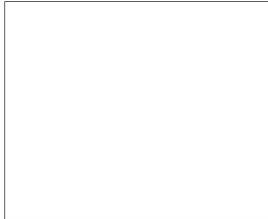
THE ARAB-ISRAELI SITUATION

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1. THE BOMBAY RIOTS



Following a week of rioting in Bombay and other cities of India, the Congress Party executive committee, which frequently speaks for the government of India, announced on 23 January that the government would not alter its decision to divide Bombay state into three new states--namely, Bombay City, Maharashtra, and Gujarat--as part of the plan to revise state boundaries throughout India along linguistic lines.

This decision is not likely to be altered unless violence increases throughout India, in which case the government might suspend all efforts at reorganization.

In dividing Bombay state, the government would accede to the desires of Mahrattis in the south and Gujaratis in the north for independent states of their own. At the same time, by creating a separate state of Bombay City, the government hoped to end bitter disputes between Mahrattis and Gujaratis for possession of the city as capital of their respective states.

Actually, it appears that the government's plan to divide one of the richest states in the country would bring it no obvious benefit. Moreover, the announcement of the plan has provided the Communists with an issue that they are able to exploit to the discredit of the Congress Party. It seems doubtful that the Congress Party can maintain in the three new states the organization and loyalty which previously gave Bombay the reputation of being the best administered and politically the second most influential state in India.

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2. KING SAUD REITERATES HIS POLICY TOWARD US

[REDACTED] King Saud of Saudi Arabia reiterated to his ambassador in Washington on 16 January his strong desire to maintain close friendship with the United States. He stated that "up to the

present the Americans have showed us nothing except a co-operative attitude whether in the Buraimi matter or in respect to the arms.... If we obtain what they have promised us, it would be out of the question for us to exchange their friendship for that of others."

The king said that the USSR has been making offers "night and day" and is prepared to give aid at any moment. He concluded that should the United States reject Saudi Arabia's requests, he believed that arms could be obtained easily from the USSR.

Comment

This statement to his ambassador of Saud's policy toward the US is consistent with his earlier statements to American officials. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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3. FRENCH ARMY IN ALGERIA SUFFERS LARGE LOSSES

Heavy fighting in eastern Algeria in the last few weeks resulted in about 400 French army dead and wounded,

Although the French encircled some groups of rebels, a Moroccan regiment in the French army permitted the bulk of the Algerian rebels and their leaders to escape. All tribes in the locality are said to have joined the rebels, and sabotage of communications has increased.

The rebels have excellent intelligence on French troop movements, while the French are unable to obtain advance information on rebel activities.

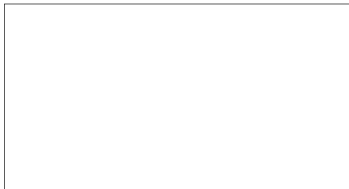
Comment

the Algerian situation is worsening. News reports, which are based on French press releases, however, continue to emphasize rebel casualties and play down French military difficulties and losses.

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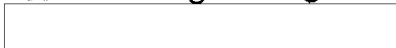
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4. NEW SOVIET AMBASSADOR TO PAKISTAN



Ivan F. Shpedko, the new Soviet ambassador to Pakistan, served in Kabul from 1949 to 1953 as senior counselor and chargé at the Soviet embassy and is believed to have been in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Moscow since then. Since the USSR has publicly supported Afghanistan and India against Pakistan, his reception by the Pakistani government is likely to be cool.

Should the USSR, however, offer Pakistan economic and technical aid, the growing feeling in Pakistan that neutrality pays better dividends than firm adherence to the West would probably cause government leaders to give consideration to the offer in the hope of obtaining stronger support from the West.

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THE ARAB-ISRAELI SITUATION

[redacted] 23 January)

No significant military incidents have been reported.

A Jerusalem radio report that Syria is planning army maneuvers near the Syrian-Israeli border and has evacuated civilians and declared martial law in the area is not confirmed. [redacted]

[redacted] two unidentified "but apparently Israeli" military aircraft violated Saudi airspace on 10 January in the vicinity of Tebuk near the Saudi-Jordanian border. The Saudi government said that instructions had been issued to shoot down military aircraft which flew over this area without permission, and asked the Jordanian government to inform it of any foreign military aircraft flying over these regions. [redacted]

Secretary General Hammarskjold of the United Nations, who has been holding talks with Egyptian premier Nasr in Cairo, told the American embassy that agreement has been reached regarding the United Nations proposals for the El Auja demilitarized zone. Although details were not given, the agreement reportedly provides for demarcation of the boundary, withdrawal of Egyptian troops from the Sinai border region adjacent to the demilitarized zone, and reduction of Israeli strength within the zone to the status prevailing on 3 October 1955. UN truce supervisor General Burns has been attempting to obtain Israeli-Egyptian agreement to these proposals since early November, following the Israeli attack of 2-3 November on an Egyptian outpost at El Auja. In a letter of 4 January to General Burns, Israel "confirmed" acceptance of the UN proposals. This agreement, if maintained, should greatly reduce incidents in this area.

[redacted]

[redacted]

Egyptian premier Nasr told Marshal Tito that the prospect of an Arab-Israeli settlement had worsened over the past year. Nasr said that the Baghdad pact had loosened the ties between the Arab states and that he could not undertake steps toward settlement when no other Arab leader would go along. [redacted]

[redacted]

24 Jan 56

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