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22 February 1958

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN

INTELLIGENCE



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22 FEBRUARY 1958

I. THE COMMUNIST BLOC

USSR appears concerned over reaction in East German party to purge by Ulbricht.

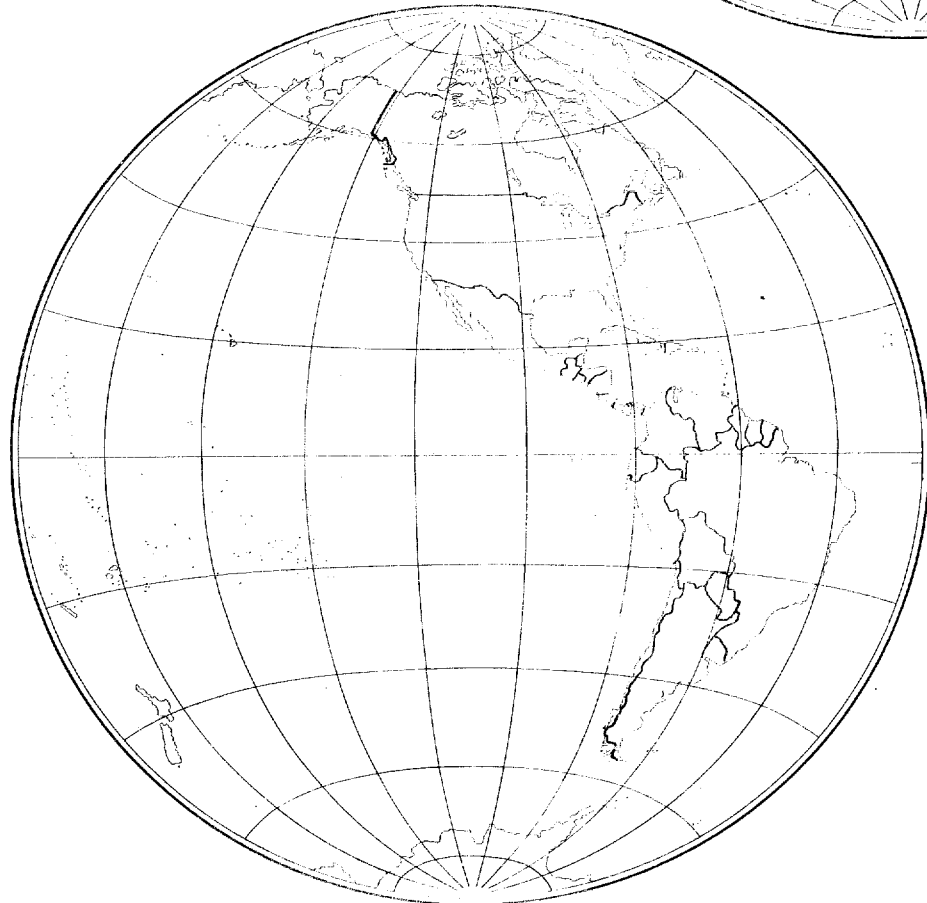
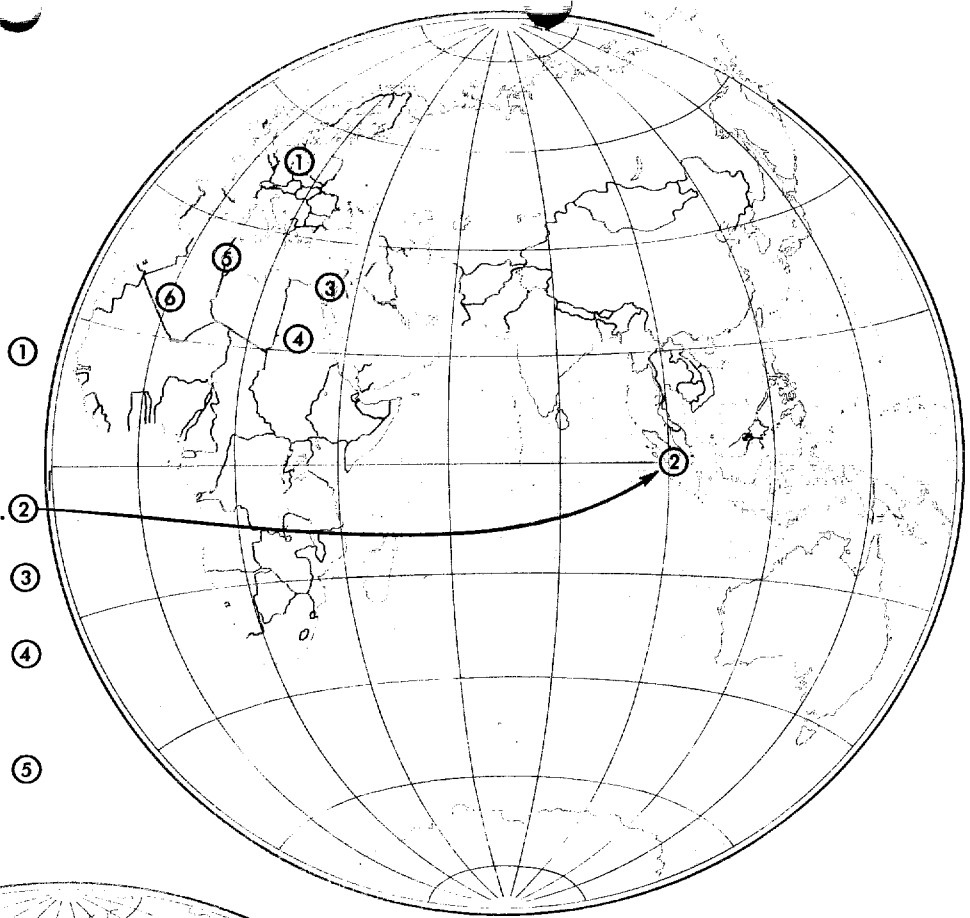
II. ASIA-AFRICA

Indonesia - Dissidents say Indonesian Air Force bombed two Sumatran towns.

Egyptian-Syrian plebiscite on union conducted without serious incident.

Nasir backs down in Sudan border dispute; agrees to put off negotiations.

Bourguiba's closure of French consulates makes any French conciliatory gesture unlikely.



III. THE WEST

⑥ French defense minister's plan to re-inforce French strength in Algeria will be difficult to carry out.

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22 February 1958

DAILY BRIEF

I. THE COMMUNIST BLOC

USSR - East Germany: The Soviet Union appears to be concerned over the adverse reactions within the East German Socialist Unity (Communist) party to the recent purge by Ulbricht. If the opposition to Ulbricht appears to be so strong as to threaten party unity, the Kremlin may be persuaded to reassess the political-economic situation in East Germany. [redacted]

[redacted] it is likely that they will question Fritz Selbmann, a top Ulbricht opponent, who is now in Moscow. [redacted]

Indonesia: The rebel government has announced that the Indonesian Air Force bombed two Central Sumatran towns on 21 February. This could be the beginning of harassing air and naval raids against the dissidents, within the very limited capabilities of the government forces. Djakarta will not be able to mount a ground attack against Central Sumatra in the near future. Sukarno's speech on 21 February, while couched in moderate language, did not reveal any intention to make concessions. [redacted] (Page 2) (Map)

II. ASIA-AFRICA

Egyptian-Syrian union: The plebiscite in Egypt and Syria expressing approval of union of the two countries was conducted without serious incident on 21 February,

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no despite concern over possible disturbances in Syria. The governments of Iraq and Jordan have agreed to postpone recognizing Nasir's United Arab Republic until after formal federation of Jordan and Iraq on 15 May. [redacted]
[redacted]

no Egyptian-Sudanese dispute: Nasir has retreated from his previous position and has agreed to earlier Sudanese proposals to put off negotiations. Nasir ordered plebiscite commissioners to function in the disputed areas on 21 February, apparently to maintain Egypt's legal position, but instructed them not to resist if the Sudanese halted their activity. The Sudanese have taken into custody a group of Egyptian officials who entered the Wadi Halfa area.
[redacted]

no Tunisian situation: Bourguiba's closing of five French consulates in Tunisia has probably set back any show by Gaillard's government of making conciliatory gestures. Gaillard's political position has weakened, and he was able to defeat a rightist motion attacking his Tunisian policy in the National Assembly on 19 February only because the 143 Communist deputies abstained. In Tunisia, the government and the population have been further aroused by reports that the French army unit at Ramada in southern Tunisia has seized control over an area about 25 miles in radius. [redacted]

III. THE WEST

sk French troops for North Africa: Defense Minister Chaban-Delmas plans to withdraw 50,000 French troops from Europe and Central Africa as replacements and reinforcements for the army in Algeria. These plans will be difficult to carry out in view of limited manpower resources in Europe and security and logistical considerations in Black Africa. It is believed that although a

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on substantial proportion of the troops will be taken from France, the deficiency will be made up by drawing troops from Morocco and by extending the term of conscript service beyond 24 months. Growing opposition to the military pacification effort in Algeria will probably be strengthened. At the same time, political and military extremists can be expected to increase their insistence on holding firm against the rebels and Tunisia.
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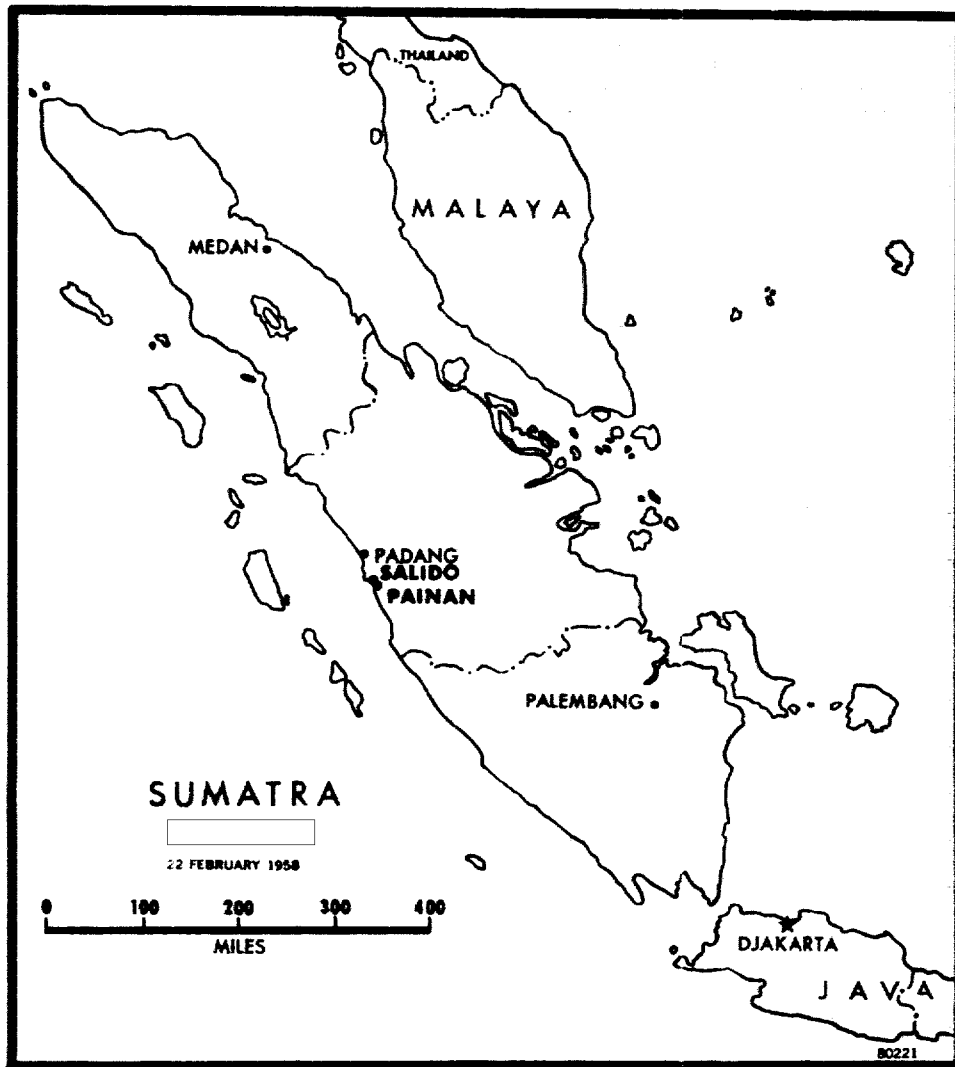
I. THE COMMUNIST BLOC

USSR Appears Concerned Over East German Reactions To Party Purge

The Kremlin may be having second thoughts about the recent East German purge because of the unsettling effect it is having among the East German Communists. If the opposition to Ulbricht appears to be so strong as to threaten party unity, the Kremlin may be persuaded to reassess the political-economic situation in East Germany. The USSR apparently has felt obliged to retain Ulbricht for fear that his ouster might encourage excessive popular and party demands for liberalization.

Fritz Selbmann, a top Ulbricht opponent recently appointed to a subordinate government job and rumored dropped as a deputy premier, is now in Moscow where he may be questioned about the East German party situation by Soviet party leaders. Selbmann is ostensibly negotiating an atomic energy agreement with the USSR. Premier Otto Grotewohl left East Berlin on 12 February for a "health cure" and reportedly is in the Soviet Union.

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II. ASIA-AFRICA

Aerial and Naval Harassment in Central Sumatra Expected

Indonesian Air Force bombings on 21 February of Painan and Salido, small Sumatran towns south of the rebel capital of Padang, as reported by the dissidents, may represent the first implementation of President Sukarno's firm attitude toward the dissidents. Djakarta has announced that increased naval and air strength is to be deployed against dissident-held areas. These forces have extremely limited capabilities and probably will be used primarily to enforce economic sanctions, but further harassing raids against the dissidents can be expected.

Air Vice Marshal Suryadarma, the air force chief of staff, apparently has been pressing Sukarno to use force and to avoid compromise. The air force is Communist-infiltrated, and both Sukarno and the Communists may independently be using the air force as an instrument to maintain their positions in the Indonesian political complex.

The Indonesian Army's plans for dealing with the dissident problem apparently have not been finalized, and technical problems and uncertain troop loyalties probably will delay any contemplated ground action against the dissidents for a considerable period.

Djakarta's foreign exchange problems, which have been seriously aggravated by the dissident problem, may be temporarily eased by Soviet assistance. An Indonesian Foreign Ministry official told an American embassy officer that "interesting" conversations were taking place with the USSR, which had renewed its offer of foreign exchange assistance. A deal for several Soviet ships has also been accepted "in principle."

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III. THE WEST

French Reinforcements for Algeria

French Defense Minister Chaban-Delmas' recommendation that 50,000 French troops be withdrawn from Europe and Central Africa as replacements and reinforcements for the army in Algeria will be difficult to implement in view of limited manpower resources. General Salan, commander of French forces in Algeria, requested 50,000 reinforcements in February, and the serious military situation in eastern Algeria has evidently convinced the defense minister of the necessity of the move.

The decision to take troops from Black Africa was announced the day after the notice that withdrawals from Europe were planned. This may have resulted from concern over stripping France's NATO contribution. Chief of Staff Ely is opposed to any cuts in France's NATO-committed units in Germany, and a large proportion of the personnel in France are conscripts insufficiently trained for service in Algeria. The security situation in the Cameroons and the western Sahara and the logistics problems involved in transporting forces from these areas seem to rule out this source. Withdrawals from Tunisia are not contemplated. Therefore, unless substantial withdrawals are made from French forces in Morocco, conscripts may be retained in service beyond the current maximum of 24 months, probably by administrative decree.

Growing domestic French opposition to the pacification campaign in Algeria will probably be strengthened by the reinforcement program, but political and military extremists will be encouraged in their refusal of any compromise with the rebels or Tunisia.

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