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19 March 1960

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN

AGENCY

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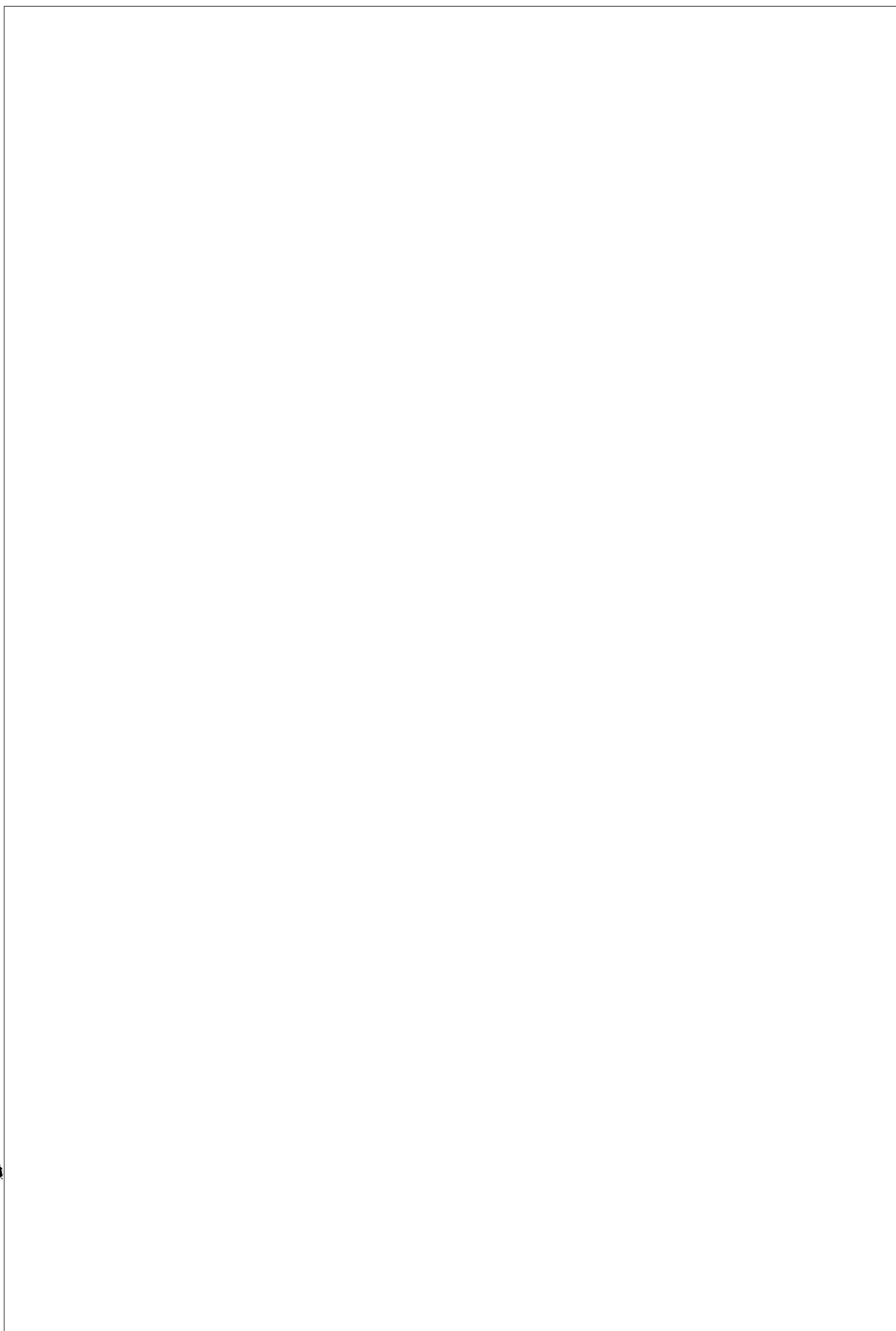
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19 MARCH 1960

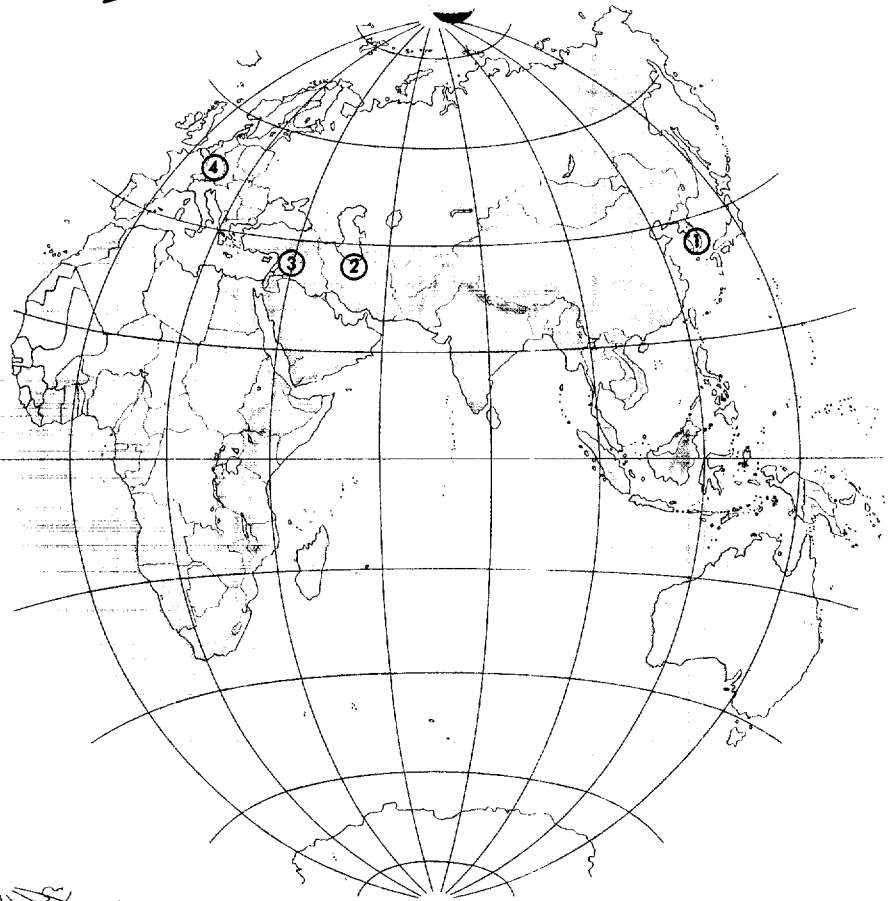
I. THE COMMUNIST BLOC

II. ASIA-AFRICA

South Korea--Danger seen of further anti-government demonstration on 26 March, Rhee's birthday; opposition Democrats walk out of National Assembly. ①

Iranian Majlis passes controversial land-reform bill at Shah's insistence. Passage of bill, however, will add little or nothing to monarchy's urban reformist support at this time. ②

New cabinet appointments in Syria suggest Sarraj's influence with Nasir is still strong. ③



III. THE WEST

④ Adenauer's Berlin plebiscite proposal reportedly was made against advice of key Bonn government officials.



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19 March 1960

DAILY BRIEF

I. THE COMMUNIST BLOC

II. ASIA-AFRICA

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South Korea: [The South Korean Army Counter Intelligence Corps (CIC) expects further antigovernment demonstrations on 26 March, President Rhee's birthday. [redacted] an increasing number of military personnel have been giving evidence to the press and to officials of the opposition Democratic party about the Rhee administration's illegal election tactics.] The Democratic party, meanwhile, has declared last Tuesday's election "null and void," and its representatives have walked out of the National Assembly. The Democrats can be expected to seize every opportunity to exploit the widespread resentment aroused by the election. [redacted] (Page 1)

OK

Iran: At the insistence of the Shah, the Iranian Majlis on 15 March passed a controversial land-reform bill by an overwhelming majority. The attempt by landowners to use threats of opposition by the Shiite clergy to block passage of the law apparently backfired, although the law was revised to take care of religious objections. [The Shah expects implementation of the law will be slow, and] passage of the bill will add little if anything to the monarchy's urban reformist support at this time. The opposition of the landlords, meanwhile, will continue, and probably will defeat much of the intent of the law unless the government maintains continual pressure and supervision. [redacted] (Page 2)

OK

UAR: At least four of the seven new members of the Syrian cabinet appointed yesterday by UAR President Nasir are reported to be supporters of Syrian Interior Minister Sarraj. This suggests that Sarraj's influence with Nasir is still strong. There had been reports that relations between the two had deteriorated. [redacted] (Page 3)

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III. THE WEST

OK
West Germany: [Chancellor Adenauer's proposal announced on 16 March in Washington for a plebiscite in West Berlin prior to the summit conference was made against the advice of key government officials in Bonn. These officials felt that the proposal was too much of a "propaganda stunt" and "psychologically inopportune."] [redacted] (Page 4)

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DAILY BRIEF

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I. THE COMMUNIST BLOC

II. ASIA-AFRICA

Renewed Rioting Anticipated on President Rhee's
Birthday, 26 March

[redacted] expects renewed anti-government demonstrations on 26 March, President Rhee's 85th birthday, and is taking measures to prevent "unfortunate incidents" in connection with the scheduled public celebration. One reason for this concern is that an increasing number of military personnel are giving evidence against the illegal election tactics of the government to Democratic party officials and newspapers.]

The opposition Democratic party, which is taking every opportunity to exploit continued popular resentment, has labeled the elections "null and void." Democratic members walked out of the National Assembly on 18 March in protest against the elections and asserted that they will boycott future sessions. They also are reported to be considering resigning from the assembly.

The election-day disturbances emphasize the antipathy that has been building up since the Rhee government resorted to force and locked up opposition legislators in order to enact repressive internal security legislation in December 1958. The disorders on 15 March also were notable for the large student participation in protest against the actions of constituted authority. [The American Embassy in Seoul has noted that current trends in the political situation threaten the development of a politically stable and militarily strong nation.]

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Shah Forces Passage of New Iranian Land-Reform Bill

At the insistence of the Shah the Iranian Majlis on 15 March passed a revised land-reform bill by an overwhelming majority. The revisions were made to satisfy the clergy, which objected on religious grounds to any law which would permit taking property without the consent of the owners. Top religious leaders had joined with the landlords in opposing the measure.

The landowners appear to be no better off than under the earlier version of the bill. The present draft places heavy taxes on all lands in excess of maximum authorized holdings. The landlord may retain the land if he pays the taxes, which are well above the annual income per acreage. Heavy punishment up to life imprisonment is provided in case of fraud.

The Shah's regime has outmaneuvered the landlords, but at the same time the position of the religious elements has been enhanced by their demonstrated ability to force changes in proposed legislation. [The Shah has stated that he expects implementation of the bill to be slow because of lack of surveys and other necessary information. He also believes that the bill can be modified whenever deficiencies show up.] The bill may bring early benefits through provisions enabling landlords ultimately to retain larger holdings if in the meantime they make better use of their land.

Landlord opposition to the reform measure will not cease but will probably be discreet until the extent of implementation becomes clear. There will be many opportunities for circumvention of the new law, and only constant supervision by the government will assure success. The Shah will probably gain little new popular support as a result of this bill until experience shows that its provisions are being enforced by the government.

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Nasir Names New Syrian Cabinet Members

Nasir on 18 March filled six vacancies in the Syrian region cabinet and appointed a seventh man to a new portfolio. The vacancies resulted largely from the resignations late last year of Baathist members who opposed Cairo's handling of Syrian affairs. Four of the seven appointed have been associated with Sarraj, present minister of interior for the region. Minister of Labor and Social Affairs Akram Dayri, Minister of State for Presidential Affairs Jadu Izz al-Din, and Minister of Agrarian Reform Ahmad Hunaydi are all former military officers and were members of Sarraj's "Little Revolutionary Command Council" prior to formation of the UAR. Sarraj's secretary general in the Interior Ministry, Yusuf Muzahim, now has been appointed minister of religious endowments.

The appointment of apparently pro-Sarraj ministers suggests that Nasir intends to continue relying on Sarraj and his supporters to execute Cairo's policies in Syria and tends to discredit reports that Nasir was preparing to ease the ambitious interior minister out of power. It seems likely, however, that Nasir will remain somewhat distrustful of Sarraj.

The selection of Husni al-Sawwaf as the new minister of economy was probably based on his excellent qualifications for the position. Thabit al-Aris, minister of culture and guidance, is a long-time member of the Syrian foreign service and, like al-Sawwaf, is generally considered to have a pro-Western outlook. There is little background information available on former naval officer Jamal al-Sufi, appointed to head the newly created Ministry of Supply.

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III. THE WEST

Adenauer's Berlin Plebiscite Proposal Surprises Bonn Government Officials

[Chancellor Adenauer's proposal for a referendum on Berlin preceding the summit conference, which he announced in Washington on 16 March, was made against the advice of key government officials in Bonn,]

Adenauer's advisers had argued that the proposal smacked too much of a "propaganda stunt," since everyone knew how Berliners felt on the matter.]

[The announcement caught his own party leaders in Berlin off balance and made opposition Social Democratic leaders suspicious that the chancellor was motivated by domestic political considerations. Mayor Brandt believes that the city elections in December 1958, only ten days after the Soviet ultimatum on Berlin, were equivalent to a referendum and] it would be "silly" to ask Berliners if they were satisfied with their unhappy status.]

[Other Socialist leaders consider the proposal unwise at this time, since it might preclude using a plebiscite as a fall-back position in the event of a summit deadlock. Berlin Interior Minister Lipschitz thinks that a hasty plebiscite would have an unfavorable impact on world opinion.]

Reaction of the West German press to Adenauer's talks with President Eisenhower is strongly divided. A number of progovernment papers interpret the results as an "Adenauer victory," while the press in general sees a retreat for the chancellor in his effort to insist on an unyielding Berlin position. One paper views the plebiscite proposal as merely camouflage for the chancellor's retreat from his uncompromising stand on the Berlin issue.

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The Under Secretary of State
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