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9 March 1957

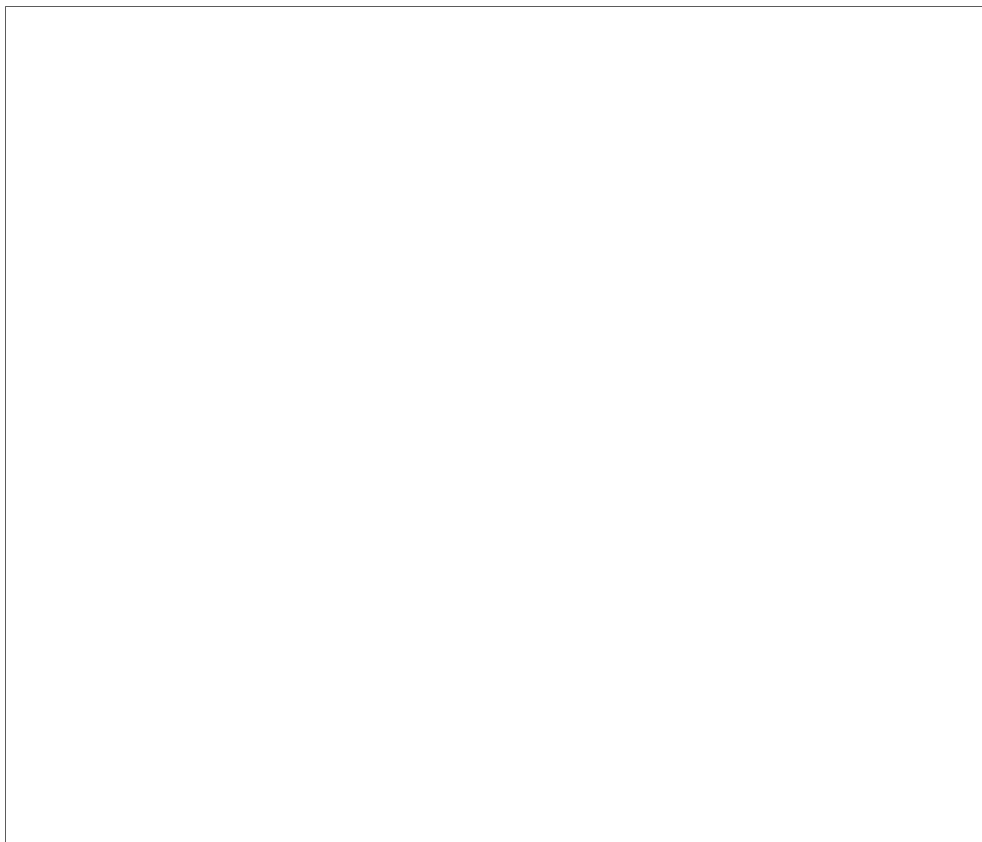
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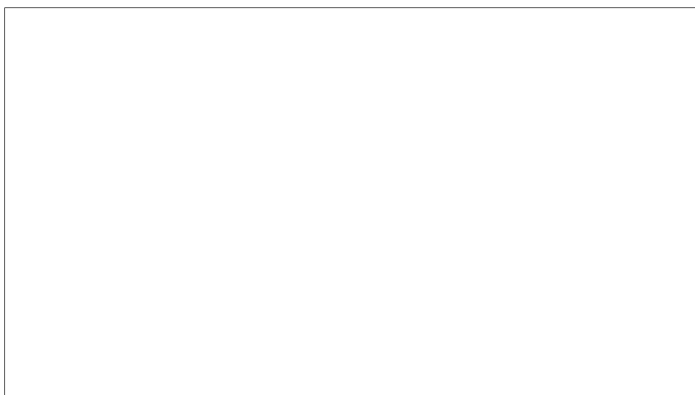
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~~TOP SECRET~~



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CONTENTS

No 1. COMMENT ON ISRAELI INTENTION TO FORCE PASSAGE THROUGH GULF OF AQABA [] (page 3).

OK 2. **INDONESIAN GOVERNMENT FEARS BORNEO WILL REVOLT**
[] (page 5).

[]

No 3. **TENSION RISING IN HUNGARY ON EVE OF 15 MARCH**
[] (page 6).

OK 4. **GOMULKA WARNS POLISH PRESS TO END ANTI-STALINIST CAMPAIGN** [] (page 7).

No 5. **GHANA OFFICIAL SUGGESTS RELATIONS MAY BE ESTABLISHED WITH SOVIET BLOC** [] (page 8).

~~TOP SECRET~~ []

~~TOP SECRET~~

1. COMMENT ON ISRAELI INTENTION TO FORCE PASSAGE THROUGH GULF OF AQABA

[REDACTED] Beirut informed Cairo that Israel planned to attack Egypt if Cairo attempted to obstruct passage of Israeli ships through the Gulf of Aqaba. (See Item 1, CIB, 8 March 1957.)

This report is in general accord with the statement of Israeli foreign minister Meir on 5 March to UN secretary general Hammarskjold to the effect that Israel "next week" would exercise the right to pass shipping through the Straits of Tiran. Mrs. Meir stated that Israeli naval vessels would be used "if necessary" in this undertaking. Prime Minister Ben-Gurion on 6 March informed the Israeli parliament he would use force to protect Israeli "rights" in the Gulf of Aqaba.

The principal channel for shipping through the nine-mile wide entrance to the Gulf of Aqaba is Enterprise Passage, a 4,600 foot wide deepwater channel adjacent to the Egyptian coast. (See map, p. 4.) There is a second narrower and shallower entrance, Grafton Passage, just to the east of Enterprise Passage. The Israelis have destroyed the Egyptian gun positions commanding the entrance to the gulf, leaving Egypt no immediate local capability for opposing the passage of Israeli shipping from the shore. Egypt has one frigate and about eight motor torpedo boats in the Red Sea area, and the Gulf of Aqaba is within range of Egypt's 35 IL-28 jet light bombers. Nevertheless, Israel's air power as well as its naval strength in the gulf--two frigates and two armed launches--is sufficient to cover passage through the gulf.

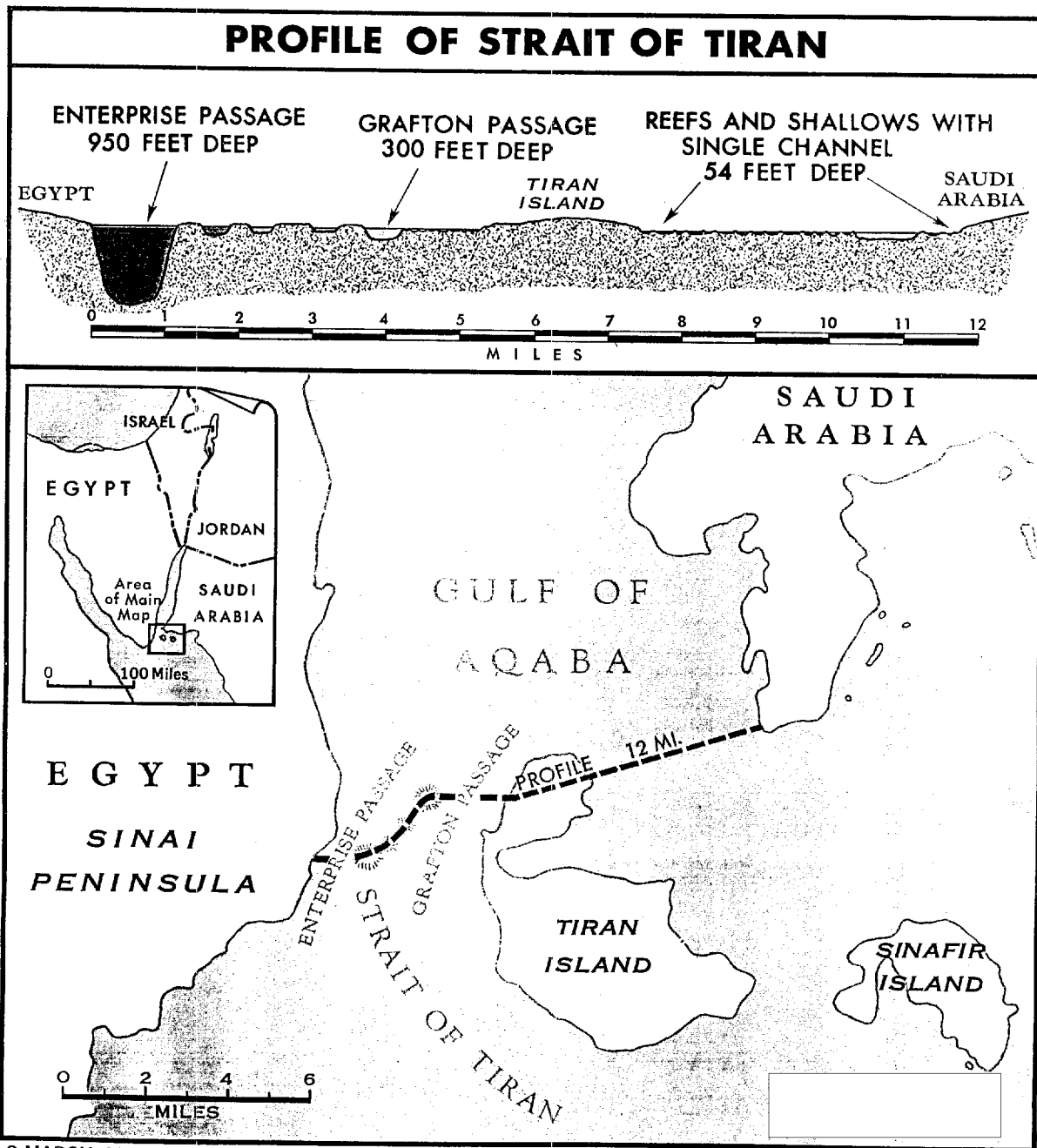
It is probable that Israel will attempt to send its ships through the Straits of Tiran and support their passage with force of arms if necessary in the near future. Egypt will certainly react with protests to any Israeli attempt to force the straits and may use force. An important deterrent factor to the use of force by Cairo is the presence of UNEF units at Sharm el-Shaikh.

The political posture of Britain and especially France strongly suggests that they would give Israel at

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least moral support in such action. Since the Israelis have demonstrated their ability to cope with Egypt militarily without outside assistance, it seems doubtful that direct military assistance is viewed as necessary at this stage.



9 MARCH 1957

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9 Mar 57

Current Intelligence Bulletin

Page 4

~~TOP SECRET~~

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2. INDONESIAN GOVERNMENT FEARS BORNEO WILL REVOLT




Indonesian officials in Djakarta are reported highly apprehensive that Borneo will join in the spreading revolt against the central government. They are particularly concerned over a reunion of army veterans in

Borneo which opened 5 March in defiance of an army ban on such meetings. In addition, the South Borneo governor, who returned from Djakarta just prior to the conference, carried the news that the central government had promised only a part of the \$40,000,000 special reconstruction budget which the province had demanded. The American army attaché comments that these developments are typical of those which preceded the emergence of autonomy movements in Sumatra and East Indonesia.

Representatives from Atjeh in North Sumatra and from the disaffected Central Sumatran province as well as local officers and civil leaders were reported present at the veterans' reunion.

Comment


Borneo is the only major area outside Java still accepting direction from Djakarta. There have been growing indications that Borneo, like Sumatra and East Indonesia, wants greater local self-government and a greater share of the central government's expenditures.

Central Sumatran military leaders have been in touch with Borneo officials within the past month and reportedly are trying to effect unity among all Indonesian elements opposed to the Ali cabinet and to President Sukarno's "concept!" 

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3. TENSION RISING IN HUNGARY ON EVE OF 15 MARCH

 With the approach of Hungary's national independence day, 15 March, Premier Kadar is showing extreme nervousness and making urgent efforts to assure calm.

The American legation in Budapest makes the "highly tentative" estimate that there may be sporadic outbreaks of violence but no widespread fighting in Budapest, and that popular hatred will probably be expressed in some form of silent demonstration.

There reportedly has been a sharp build-up in Budapest of Soviet and Hungarian forces. The security forces are jumpy and could become trigger happy, according to the legation. Popular hostility toward the regime is expressed in a variety of ways, such as work slowdowns and "ostensible stupidity" of students taking Russian language courses. Incidents of violence continue to be reported in Budapest and in widely separated parts of Hungary.

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4. GOMULKA WARNS POLISH PRESS TO END ANTI-STALINIST CAMPAIGN

[redacted] During a recent conference with the editorial staffs of two leading Polish intellectual journals, Gomulka demanded an end to their anti-Stalinist

campaign, [redacted]

[redacted] Gomulka told the editors that Moscow would be at his throat if their press campaign continued.

[redacted] Gomulka has become nervous and dictatorial in recent weeks, and during conferences does not permit the opposition to voice contrary views.

Gomulka feels his program is threatened chiefly by the radical ideas of the intelligentsia. He believes he can swing the Stalinist Natolin group to his point of view and keep them in line through appeasement. Gomulka plans to maintain good relations with Cardinal Wyszynski and the Catholic hierarchy, and the peasants. [redacted]

Comment

On 24 February one of these journals published an article as strongly anti-Stalinist as any recently seen in Poland. It is not clear whether it was written after Gomulka's admonition, and therefore in defiance of him.

Gomulka has already removed the editors of Zycie Warszawy and Trybuna Ludu, the principal government and party papers. On 27 February he criticized all of the press for antisocialist leanings.

In his attempts to appease the Natolins, who are not likely to come over to his point of view, Gomulka might undermine his popular support.

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5. GHANA OFFICIAL SUGGESTS RELATIONS MAY BE ESTABLISHED WITH SOVIET BLOC



Ghana's secretary general of external affairs told a group which included American officials on 5 March that his country may find it necessary to establish diplomatic relations with members of the Soviet bloc, although no final decision has yet been made. Prime Minister Nkrumah added that firm decisions have been taken only on establishing diplomatic relations with the United States, Britain, France and Liberia. Nkrumah stated that Ghana's policy will be "noninvolvement and nonalignment in the East-West struggle" but that Ghana "will protect its independence and resist domination."

Comment

The USSR has recently increased its purchase of cocoa, which accounts for over 60 percent of Ghana's foreign exchange earnings. TASS has already reported a Soviet invitation for Ghana parliamentary groups to visit the USSR.

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