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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN



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DAILY BRIEF

I. THE COMMUNIST BLOC

USSR-Nepal: TASS announced on 23 April that the USSR has reached agreement with Nepal on the exchange of resident diplomatic missions. (Soviet Ambassador Ponomarenko told a high Indian official on 20 April that the agreement was "in response to Nepali overtures.") India, which regards Nepal as being within its sphere of influence, will not look with favor on this move. (Ponomarenko--accredited to Nepal as well as India--will pay his farewell call to Katmandu over the week end of 25-26 April, at which time he may seek to finalize agreement on Soviet economic aid to Nepal of about \$7,500,000.)

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III. THE WEST

Finland-USSR: Evidently under pressure from President Kekkonen, the commander in chief of the Finnish Defense Forces will make a "friendship visit" to Moscow in early May in response to an invitation from the Soviet defense minister. (The visit is in line with Kekkonen's belief that Finland must make special efforts to assuage Moscow's doubts concerning Finland's neutrality.)

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France: (In a move designed to emphasize De Gaulle's desire for a US-UK-French division of the world into areas of defense responsibility, France is establishing two new "major" military commands--one including the Western Mediterranean, North Africa, and the Sahara; the other embracing the French Community area in Africa. The precise relationships which De Gaulle envisages between the new commands and NATO are unclear. The first presumably would include the French Mediterranean fleet, and might involve a formal declaration of withdrawal of part of the French ground forces now in Algeria from their NATO commitment. The second apparently would involve only non-NATO forces in west and tropical Africa.)

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I. THE COMMUNIST BLOC

USSR and Nepal to Exchange Resident Diplomatic Missions

TASS announced on 23 April that the USSR has reached agreement with Nepal to exchange resident diplomatic missions. Heretofore diplomatic contact has been maintained through the Soviet and Nepali embassies in New Delhi and by occasional trips to Katmandu by Soviet Ambassador Ponomarenko--accredited to Nepal as well as India--and other Soviet diplomats from New Delhi.

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The USSR is breaking a "gentlemen's agreement" to postpone opening of a diplomatic mission in Nepal. The Indian Government, which regards Nepal as being within its sphere of influence, will not look with favor on this move. Should the United States accept the long-standing Nepali invitation to open an embassy in Katmandu, Communist China--which now has permission to open a consulate in Katmandu--can be expected to press for establishment of an embassy.

A 20-man Soviet economic delegation has been in Nepal since mid-February negotiating on economic aid projects; Nepal has reportedly agreed to accept a Soviet credit of about \$7,500,000 to construct a sugar mill, a hydroelectric plant, and communications projects, but an agreement has not yet been signed. (Ponomarenko is to visit Katmandu over the week end of 25-26 April, at which time he may seek to sign a formal agreement covering the aid.)

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Ponomarenko is being replaced as ambassador to India by I. A. Benediktov, who served in the post for five months in 1953. It is not known whether Benediktov will also be accredited to Katmandu or whether a resident ambassador will be appointed to head the new diplomatic mission there.

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III. THE WEST

Finnish Commander in Chief to Visit Moscow

General K. A. Heiskanen, commander in chief of the Finnish Defense Forces, accompanied by four major generals, will make a "friendship visit" to Moscow in early May at the invitation of Soviet Defense Minister Marshal Malinovsky. Although a group of Finnish officers attended the 1956 May Day celebration in Moscow, General Heiskanen has resolutely opposed making a visit himself. The US Embassy concludes that he has yielded to pressure from President Kekkonen.

During Kekkonen's state visit to the USSR in May 1958, Premier Khrushchev emphasized the desirability of visits by Finnish officers as an indication of good will and peaceful intentions. Kekkonen has since indicated that he feels that the USSR is taking a hard attitude toward Finland and that the Finnish Government must be prepared to follow a flexible policy and to make certain "tactical concessions."

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