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2 April 1958

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DAILY BRIEF

I. THE COMMUNIST BLOC

yes
* USSR Council of Ministers: Two men--First Deputy Premiers Mikoyan and Frol Kozlov--will probably be delegated most of the day-to-day responsibilities in the new Khrushchev government. Mikoyan will continue to provide much of the behind-the-scenes brain work for Khrushchev. Kozlov, former Leningrad party boss and more recently premier of the Russian Republic (RSFSR), is perhaps being groomed by Khrushchev as the next Soviet premier.

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II. ASIA-AFRICA

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Tunisia: President Bourguiba and officials in his government are feeling mounting anxiety over the direction taken in the good offices negotiations. This has been encouraged by speculation in the French press as well as statements made by French officials regarding a commission to supervise the Algerian-Tunisian border, which was endorsed by French Premier Gaillard on 25 March but rejected by Bourguiba on 26 March. Tunisian officials warn that the government might be confronted by a situation compelling it to withdraw the concessions Bourguiba has already made to the good offices mission.

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I. THE COMMUNIST BLOC

Khrushchev's Council of Ministers

Premier Khrushchev has retained virtually intact the former Council of Ministers, reinforcing the belief that Bulganin's demotion from premier to chairman of the State Bank stemmed from his disloyalty to Khrushchev during last June's leadership crisis. Refurbishing of the "inner cabinet" by the appointment of party presidium members Kozlov and Mikoyan as first deputy chairmen, and Iosif Kuzmin, Dmitri Ustinov, Alexander Zasyadko, and Alexei Kosygin as deputy chairmen of the Council of Ministers indicates that Khrushchev intends to delegate the day-to-day operational duties of the government on a broad basis. Bulganin had only four deputies and no first deputies.

The elevation of Mikoyan from deputy to first deputy premier places him in a key position of government responsibility where he will continue to provide much of the behind-the-scenes brain work for Khrushchev. Mikoyan, the cautious Armenian whose ability for survival in the Soviet leadership is unmatched, probably would not be considered for a front-man position. There are some indications that Kozlov, who was transferred from party boss of Leningrad to chairman of the RSFSR (Russian Republic) Council of Ministers last December, was being groomed to replace Bulganin as premier, but was designated first deputy when Khrushchev himself decided to assume the top government job. He nevertheless has clearly been promoted and is presumably in line for the premiership should Khrushchev decide to relinquish it.

Of the four deputy chairmen, apparently only Kuzmin, chairman of Gosplan, will retain a portfolio. Zasyadko, judging by his background as a coal expert, will probably supervise the heavy industry sector. Kosygin will most likely bear primary responsibility for light industry, while Ustinov will oversee the defense industries.

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II. ASIA-AFRICA

Tunisian Government Concern Over Aims of Good Offices Mission

President Habib Bourguiba and officials in his government are increasingly concerned over the course of the good offices negotiations.. Spasmodic fears expressed earlier this year that the mission might side with France have been revived and encouraged by speculative articles appearing in the press in France and by statements made by public figures in Paris regarding the mission and its proposal of a neutral commission to supervise the Algerian-Tunisian border.

Premier Gaillard on 25 March conditioned his acceptance of other proposals of the good offices mission on Bourguiba's acceptance of border supervision, but Bourguiba rejected this condition on the grounds that he could make no further concessions to the French viewpoint without placing his government in a difficult position domestically. Warning that public opinion might force withdrawal of concessions already made to the good offices commission, the Tunisian defense secretary hinted strongly that tighter restrictions on French troops and civilians might be reimposed.

Meanwhile, the influential Tunis weekly organ of Bourguiba's Neo-Destour party criticizes the good offices mission for dealing solely with "false problems" while ignoring the real issue, Algeria. In its latest editorial, it suggests that if France were to evacuate all troops, including those at Bizerte, "Tunisia and the FLN"--the Algerian National Liberation Front directing the Algerian rebellion--would accept all control commissions, even UN forces on the border. Bourguiba may, consequently, make a counter-proposal conditioning acceptance of a UN commission to investigate border incidents on total evacuation of French forces in Tunisia.

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