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23 September 1959

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Copy No. C 63

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN



DOCUMENT NO. 20
NO CHANGE IN CLASS. X
I: DECLASSIFIED
CLASS. CHANGED TO: TS S C
NEXT REVIEW DATE: 2010 25X1
AUTH: HR 702
DATE: 4.19.80 REVIEWER:

25X1

State Dept. review completed

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Approved For Release 2002/10/21 : CIA-RDP79T00975A004700200001-7

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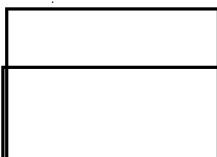
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DAILY BRIEF



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II. ASIA-AFRICA

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*UAR: Nasir told Ambassador Hare on 17 September that he had concluded it is "virtually impossible" for a non-Communist country to come to basic agreement with the USSR and that the trend of UAR-Soviet relations is "downward." He added that the USSR is following a "policy of pressure" toward the UAR, although this is not yet evident in the economic field. Hare comments that Nasir's "disenchantment" points toward the UAR's eventual assumption of a policy of neutralism in fact, rather than only in words.

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Sudan: After taking a series of precautionary measures against possible new moves by dissident army officers and political leaders, the Abboud military government has announced sentences of life imprisonment against the six officers primarily responsible for the abortive coup attempt of 22 May. The government ordered an army alert beginning on 10 September. In an effort to minimize hostile public reaction, Abboud commuted the death sentences recommended by the court martial. In an earlier conciliatory move on 19 September, he announced he was studying various ways for a gradual shift to "representative government."

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Cambodia - South Vietnam: (Evidence being accumulated by the Sihanouk government indicating South Vietnam's encouragement of Cambodian dissident elements points to the likelihood of a rapid deterioration in the recently improved Cambodian - South Vietnamese relations. Anti-Sihanouk broadcasts continue to emanate from South Vietnamese territory, and Cambodian security forces recently have intercepted several armed dissident agents allegedly trained at a sabotage school in South Vietnam. The belief of Cambodian officials that the bomb attempt on Queen Kossamak's life last month was the work of dissident leader Sam Sary, whom they are convinced is still supported covertly by South Vietnam, adds to their suspicions.)

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III. THE WEST

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Honduras: Frictions are mounting between the Honduran armed forces and armed partisans of the governing Liberal party. Reports of an imminent attempt by the military to effect a coup have caused the Liberal-controlled police to prepare for action in defense of the Villeda Morales regime. Serious fighting could be touched off by a relatively minor incident.

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DAILY BRIEF

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II. ASIA-AFRICA

Nasir Comments on UAR-USSR Relations

(In a lengthy conversation with Ambassador Hare on 17 September, UAR President Nasir reviewed his difficulties with the USSR, beginning with his anti-Communist campaign last December, and concluded with the statement that it was "virtually impossible" for any non-Communist country to reach basic agreement with the Soviet Union. He complained of continued Soviet interference in matters related to "local" Communists, and stated that the recent ups and downs in Soviet-UAR relations now have settled into a downward trend. Nasir prefaced his remarks by commenting that he hoped the Khrushchev visit to the United States would be successful in easing world tensions, but added pessimistically that it would be a "difficult matter" because of the USSR's dedication to the world-wide propagation of Communism.)

(Nasir claimed that the USSR was following a policy of pressure in its relations with the UAR, specifically mentioning alleged price increases and delays in arms deliveries. He said, however, that the pressure was not yet evident in the economic field, presumably referring to commercial transactions and Soviet commitments under economic aid programs.)

(In the sharpest Soviet press attack in recent months, Pravda charged on 19 September that an "anti-Soviet campaign" was currently being waged by the UAR press and accused "certain ill-disposed persons" of using the press to worsen Soviet-Arab relations. The American Embassy in Moscow comments that Pravda's reference to "nonpolitical" Soviet economic aid, particularly in regard to the Aswan High Dam, suggests that Moscow may have wished to hint publicly that Cairo's present course, if continued, could affect the Soviet economic aid program.)

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Sudanese Government Prepares for New Trouble

The Abboud military government anticipates a hostile public reaction to the sentences for life imprisonment imposed on the six army officers primarily responsible for the abortive coup attempt of 22 May and the lesser sentences given six other implicated officers. Abboud commuted the death sentences of the six leaders.

The government delayed the announcement while it took steps to minimize the expected reaction and adopted precautionary measures against possible moves by dissident army officers and political leaders. Abboud and his Deputy Commander in Chief Hasan Bashir Nasir used a series of officer transfers and reassessments to strengthen their control. As a further precaution, the government on 10 September instituted an army alert.

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In response to growing popular pressure for "return of the army to the barracks," Abboud declared on 19 September that he was considering various alternatives for a gradual return to "representative government." (One plan submitted to him for study is the single-party "national union" system used by Nasir in the United Arab Republic.)

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Cambodian - South Vietnamese Relations

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(A deterioration in relations between Cambodia and South Vietnam may result from the Sihanouk government's growing conviction that South Vietnam is actively encouraging Cambodian dissident elements. Spurred by the 31 August bomb attempt on Queen Kossamak's life, which the government attributes to dissident leader Sam Sary, Cambodian officials have been quietly gathering evidence to document their suspicions.)

(Three "Free Cambodia" agents captured recently by Cambodian security forces allegedly have confessed to having been trained at a sabotage school in South Vietnam; in addition, ten armed Vietnamese seized on Cambodian territory earlier this month are reported to have admitted being agents of the small Cambodian dissident movement. The continuation of clandestine anti-Sihanouk broadcasts emanating from South Vietnamese territory is an added factor. The arrest in Phnom Penh of a Vietnamese charged with delivering the gift-wrapped bomb to the palace grounds addressed to the Queen, has particular significance in view of the suspect's close identification with South Vietnam's former representative in Cambodia, Ngo Trong Hieu, who was deeply implicated in the abortive Dap Chhuon coup effort last spring)

(The frequently impetuous Sihanouk has acted with great restraint, seemingly reluctant to damage the "entente" with South Vietnam which he claimed his top-level talks there in early August had achieved. He has also acted promptly to head off propaganda efforts by the pro-Communist press to implicate the United States in the bomb incident, and has indicated he would welcome American help in trying to salvage relations with South Vietnam. In this instance, Sihanouk's concern over Communist pressures against Laos and India probably has deterred the normal tendency of Cambodia to move closer toward the Sino-Soviet bloc during disputes with South Vietnam) 25X1

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Tensions Between Military and Government Party Dangerously High in Honduras

Frictions are mounting dangerously between Honduran armed forces and armed partisans of the governing Liberal party. There are reports of an imminent coup attempt by the military, which has been accused by El Cronista--a Tegucigalpa newspaper with Communists on its staff--of summarily executing two members of the civil police who allegedly killed an army officer in a bar-room brawl on 6 September. [Redacted] parts of the army and the entire air force are on full alert.

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[Redacted] the outcome probably will depend on the positions taken by President Villeda Morales and the university students. A strong plea by the popular President for peace between the military and the Liberal party probably would be obeyed, but Villeda Morales has proved to be indecisive and equivocal during other crises. According to a press report, the main Honduran student federation, FEUH, which is influenced strongly by Communists, joined El Cronista on 20 September in demanding that those responsible for the alleged police deaths be brought to justice.

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El Cronista and the FEUH have acted as constant irritants to the military and periodically have revived the civil-military feud that has existed since the constitution written in 1957 for the first democratically elected government in Honduras gave the armed forces an autonomous status within the government.

Serious fighting between the military and the "Black Army" could be touched off by a relatively minor incident.

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