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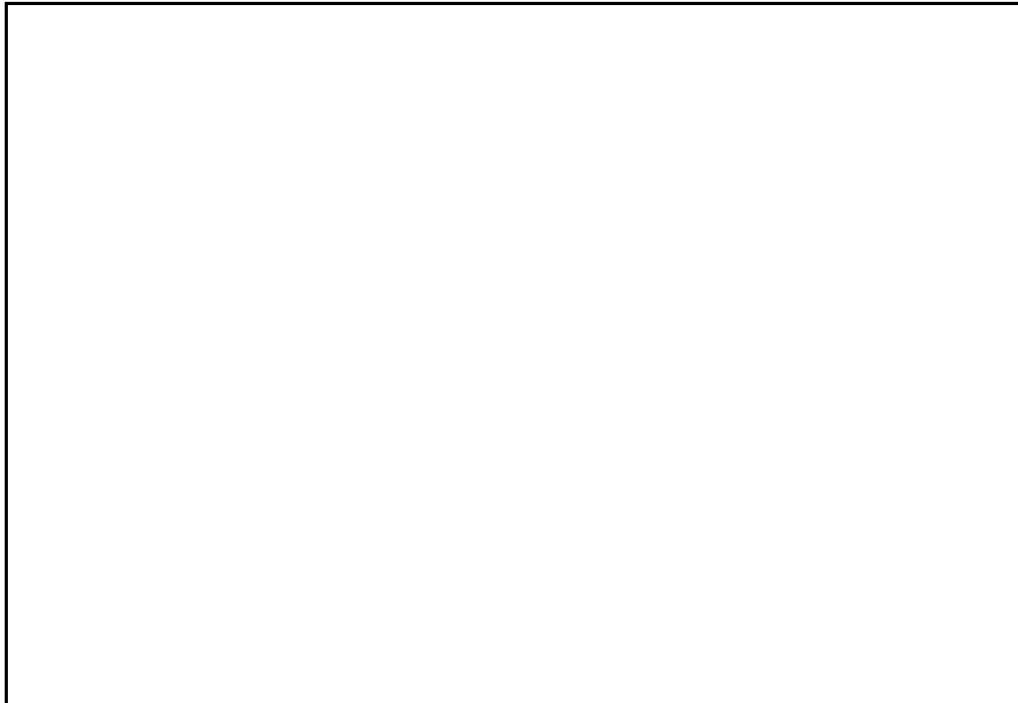
CURRENT INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN

DOCUMENT NO. 57
NO CHANGE IN CLASS
 DECLASSIFIED
CLASS. CHANGED TO: TS S C 2005
NEXT REVIEW DATE:
AUTH: HR 70-2
DATE 17-12-21 REVIEWER:

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CONTENTS

25X1



25X1A

4. LAOTIAN GOVERNMENT-PATHET LAO NEGOTIATIONS
(page 7).

5. COMMUNIST CRITICISM OF INDONESIAN GOVERNMENT
25X1A

6. TEST OF STRENGTH MAY BE SHAPING UP IN SYRIA

25X1A

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25X1A

4 Aug 56

Current Intelligence Bulletin

Page 2

25X1A



25X1

Approved For Release 2002/11/19 : CIA-RDP79T00975A002600570001-0

Next 3 Page(s) In Document Exempt

Approved For Release 2002/11/19 : CIA-RDP79T00975A002600570001-0

4. LAOTIAN GOVERNMENT-PATHET LAO NEGOTIATIONS

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In negotiations between the Laotian government and the Pathet Lao, which began in Vientiane on 1 August, Prime Minister Souvanna Phouma has proposed an agenda calling for cessation of hostilities, restoration of royal control in Phong Saly and Sam Neua Provinces, and integration of the Pathets into the national community without discrimination. Prince Souphanouvong, leader of the six-man Pathet delegation, has advanced a broader agenda including the formation of a coalition government, guarantees of the rights of the Pathet troops, and the "question of neutrality."

In his opening statement, Souvanna reassured the Pathet delegation of Laos' "strict adherence" to the five principles of peaceful coexistence, and emphasized that the Laotian people must not be disappointed in their hopes for a settlement at this time. Souvanna stated this settlement must be based, in general, on the Geneva accords and the recommendations of the International Truce Commission.

The American ambassador in Vientiane notes the absence of the pro-American Deputy Premier Katay from the delegation. Souvanna has said he feared Katay's pro-Western reputation would increase Pathet Lao suspicions of the validity of Laotian independence.

Souvanna has indicated that negotiations will be conducted by subordinate officials for "three or four days," after which he and Souphanouvong would hold a final meeting to close out the negotiations.

4 Aug 56

Current Intelligence Bulletin

Page 7

25X1A

5. COMMUNIST CRITICISM OF INDONESIAN GOVERNMENT

25X1A

The Indonesian Communist newspaper Harian Rakjat printed an editorial on 2 August which probably constitutes the strongest criticism that the Communists have yet leveled against the coalition government of Premier Ali Sastroamidjojo. Although the strongly anti-Communist Masjumi received its usual slaps, the editorial was apparently also aimed at the new moderate leadership of the National Party, which heads the coalition government.

Heretofore, the Communists have been pressing for a united front and have sought to promote relations with the National Party at the expense of the Masjumi. Because of the apparent shift toward moderation in Indonesian national politics, as indicated by President Sukarno's recent praise of the US and the emergence of the National Party's right wing as its dominant faction, the Communist Party may be finding itself forced into an opposition role.

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6. TEST OF STRENGTH MAY BE SHAPING UP IN SYRIA

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[redacted] a test of strength between rightist and leftist elements may be shaping up in Syria. Two cabinet ministers, members of the leftist Arab Socialist Resurrection Party (ASRP), have reportedly threatened to resign if President Quwatli does not sign the death sentences passed on members of the rightist Syrian Social Nationalist Party involved in the assassination of an ASRP army leader in April 1955.

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The rightists--conservative politicians supported by a group of senior army officers--moved to eliminate leftist influence in the army on 7 July when they forced the resignation of Chief of Staff Shuqayr. Since then, they have moved slowly and the leftists have had time to organize. Either the rightist or leftist faction in the army may be seeking a political issue on which to base the use of force to establish itself in power.

The American army attaché reported on 1 August that there was more than the usual number of army officers in Damascus. He suggested that they might be there to assess the situation and to align their forces.

25X1

4 Aug 56

Current Intelligence Bulletin

Page 9

25X1A

25X1

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Next 1 Page(s) In Document Exempt

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