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20 August 1959

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN



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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN

20 August 1959

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DAILY BRIEF



I. THE COMMUNIST BLOC

OK
USSR: Recent information on weather and acreage devoted to grain indicates a possibility that the Soviet grain harvest this year will not only be well below the record 1958 crop but may also be somewhat less than the mediocre 1957 harvest. The modest harvest prospects are likely to heighten criticism of organizational features and shortcomings in the agriculture program.

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II. ASIA-AFRICA

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Laos: The Laotian Army,

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NO
surprised a group of Communists last week on the outskirts of Vientiane discussing plans for terrorist action against American personnel and the US Embassy in Vientiane. The group escaped capture.

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NO
Watch Committee conclusion--Laos: Lao Government forces continue their efforts against dissident elements in the northern part of Sam Neua and the eastern portion of Phong Saly provinces. Dissident activity with probable North Vietnamese support and guidance continues. The North Vietnamese, by providing guidance and logistic assistance to the dissident elements in Laos, have the capability of intensifying operations through these elements to the extent of threatening seriously the internal security of the country.

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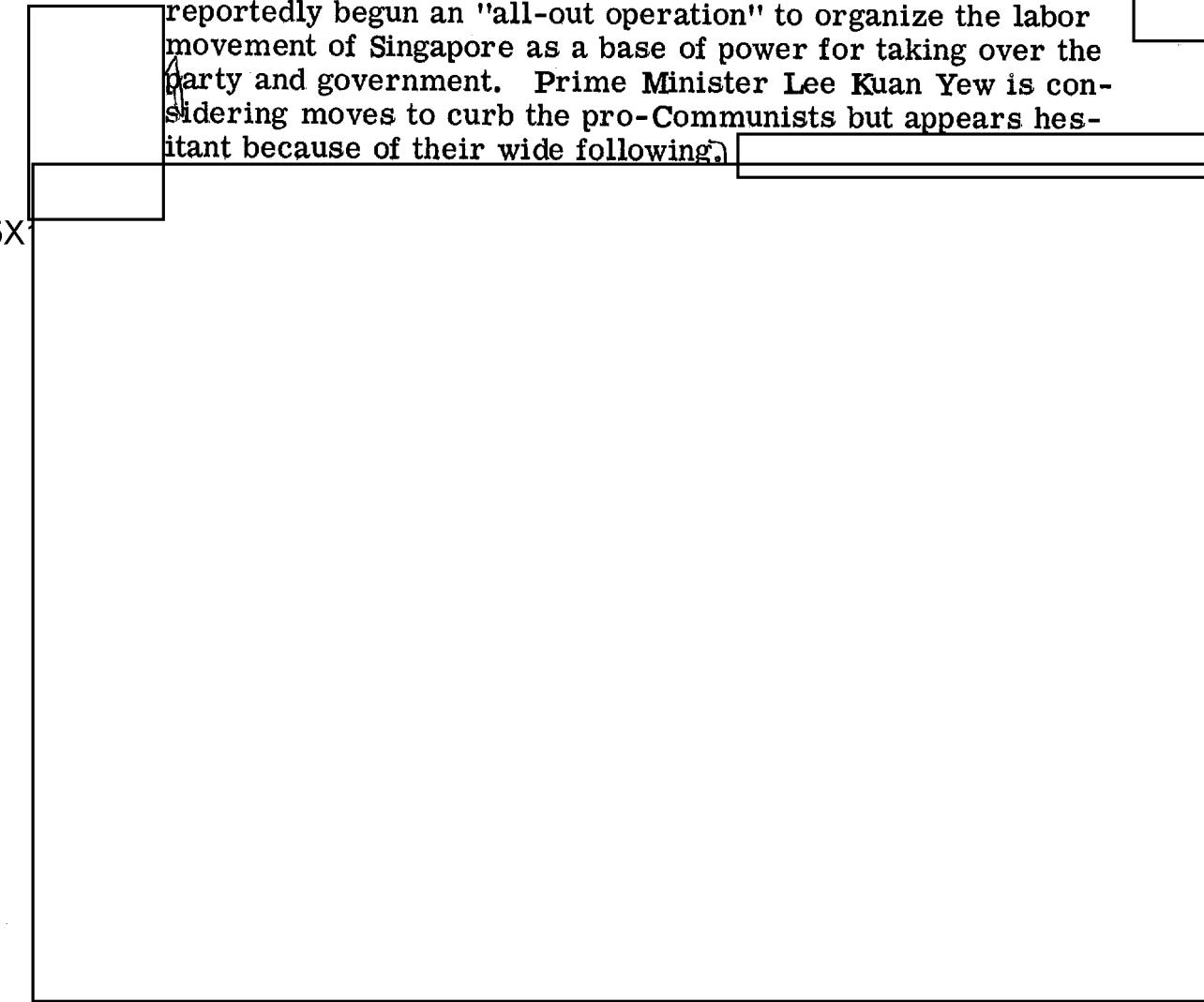
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Singapore: The growing activity and influence of pro-Communists in the ruling People's Action party of Singapore are posing a threat to continued control of the party by its "moderate" wing. Extreme leftist leader Lim Chin Siong has reportedly begun an "all-out operation" to organize the labor movement of Singapore as a base of power for taking over the party and government. Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew is considering moves to curb the pro-Communists but appears hesitant because of their wide following.

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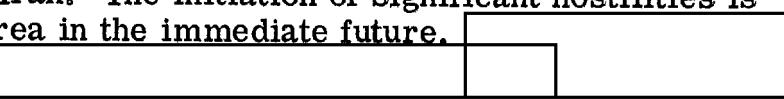


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Watch Committee conclusion--Middle East: Situations susceptible of direct exploitation by Sino-Soviet bloc action which would jeopardize US interests exist in the Middle East, particularly in Iraq and Iran. The initiation of significant hostilities is unlikely in this area in the immediate future.

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DAILY BRIEF

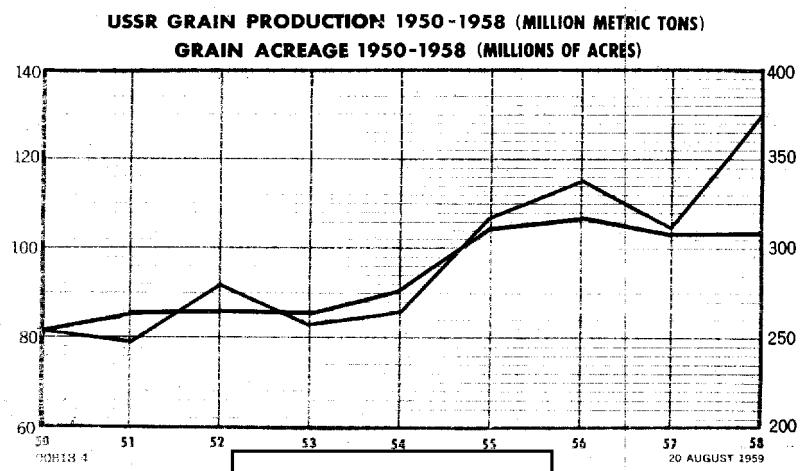
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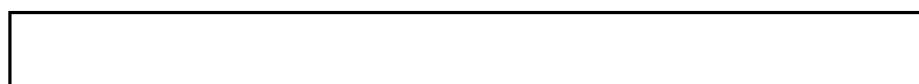


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I. THE COMMUNIST BLOC

Poor Grain Crop Expected in the USSR

According to present prospects, the USSR's 1959 grain crop may fall short of the 105,000,000 tons harvested in 1957--a mediocre year--and will be well below last year's record harvest of about 130,000,000 metric tons.

Except in the eastern portion of the New Lands, weather this year has not been favorable for grain yields. Soil moisture reserves were limited at the beginning of the growing season, and rainfall during the critical months of May, June, and July was less than half of normal.

Late crops such as sugar beets, sunflowers, and potatoes, as well as the production of livestock feed, probably have also been adversely affected. However, the weather during the remainder of the season may still alter the late crop picture considerably.

Because Soviet agricultural production has been much higher since the New Lands were first brought into use in 1954 and 1955, the poor prospects will not create a domestic food shortage. Soviet efforts to catch up with the US in production of livestock products will be affected, however, by the smaller feed supply, and less grain will be available for export. The poor prospects for this year, the first of the Seven-Year Plan, will probably heighten criticism of shortcomings in agriculture and be used by Khrushchev to justify speeding up his agricultural reforms.

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II. ASIA-AFRICA

Laos

The Laotian Army,

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25X1 [redacted] surprised a group of 12 Communist cadres one evening last week discussing plans for terrorist activity against Americans and the American Embassy in Vientiane. The group, which included two Vietnamese Communist agents from northeastern Thailand, escaped. Lending weight to this report is the Laotian Army's discovery of an arms cache in Vientiane on 13 August at a residence occupied by members of a Communist-front organization.

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[The American army attaché in Vientiane states that fragmentary information from Laotian army intelligence indicates recently increased partisan activity in northern Laos. Laotian military officials state that the guerrillas have broken down into smaller groups and are spreading out over larger areas in Sam Neua.]

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Radio

[redacted] Peiping has, however, warned repeatedly that military intervention in Laos by the US or a SEATO power would be regarded as a threat to the security of China.

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[The USSR is maintaining its position that the Laotian ICC should be reconvened in order to deal with the crisis. The Soviet ambassador to the UK reacted negatively to the British]

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[proposal that an observer be appointed by UN Secretary General Hammarskjold on the recommendation of the UK and the USSR as cochairmen. He took the position that Vientiane's refusal to accept the ICC is contrary to the Geneva agreements, but "grudgingly" agreed to pass the British proposal to Moscow. If Moscow refuses to approve the proposal, as seems likely, Hammarskjold will probably refuse to take any action without a mandate from the UN.]

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Moscow charged in a radiobroadcast on 18 August that Admiral Burke's statement regarding the possibility of US Navy involvement in the Laotian conflict demonstrates "once again" that the US "is prepared to embark on a military adventure" in Southeast Asia to retain Laos "within the sphere of its military blocs."

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Increasing Pro-Communist Activity in Singapore

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[There are signs that key pro-Communists in the ruling People's Action party (PAP) of Singapore, who were released from jail in June, have not kept their pledges to submit to the direction of the PAP executive committee and are, instead, actively undermining the party's "moderate" leadership. The growing influence of the extremists in labor and student circles appears to make a fight for control of the party inevitable.

[the pro-Communists are holding meetings to map their strategy against Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew.]

[The primary threat to Prime Minister Lee's leadership comes from Lim Chin Siong, who is the principal hero of left-wing Chinese youth. He is said to have begun an "all-out operation" to organize the labor movement as a base of power for taking over the party and the government. Lee is apparently uncertain how to curb Lim's power without making a martyr of him.]

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[Despite the risks involved, Lee's prospects for curbing extremist activities are probably better now--soon after electoral victory--than they will be in the future when it becomes obvious that his government will be unable to solve many of Singapore's pressing political and economic problems.]

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