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27 April 1956

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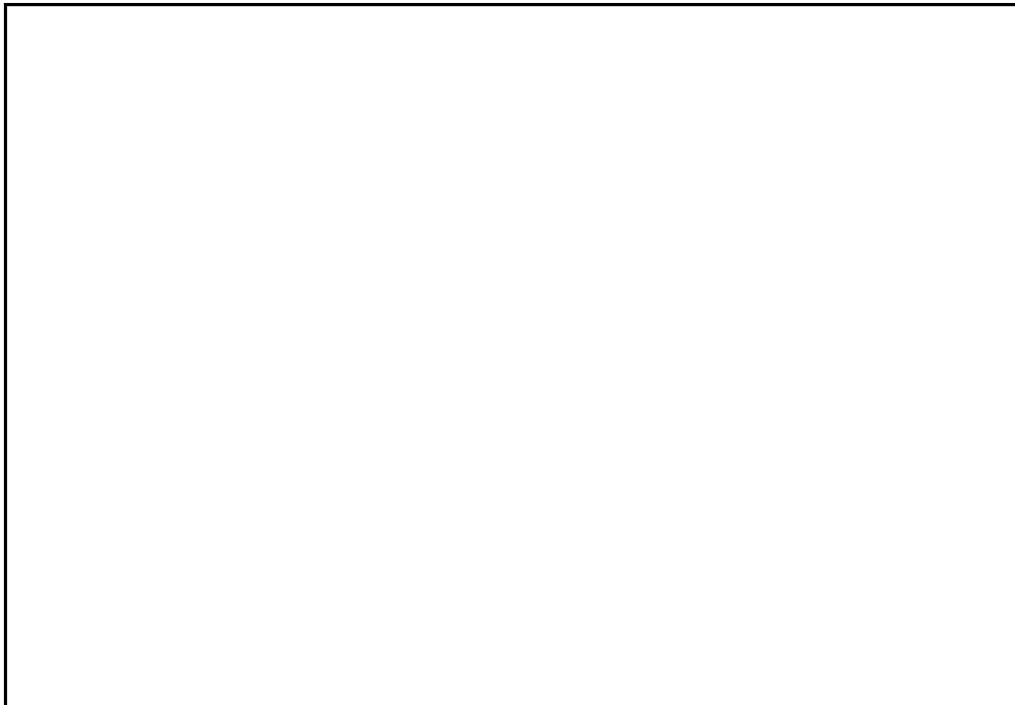
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1. DANGER OF COUP SEEN IN PANAMA

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[Redacted]

The American embassy in Panama believes the political situation there has deteriorated to such an extent that a coup is possible unless President Arias and the administration's presidential candidate, De la Guardia, are able to unite the feuding factions of the government party.

Minister of Government and Justice Remon, who now wields increasing power but would have no stake in an administration headed by De la Guardia, may attempt to oust the government before the 13 May national elections and form a junta which would include Lt. Colonel Saturnino Flores, second commandant and reportedly the real power of the National Guard, Panama's only armed force.

Comment Remon and Flores are believed capable of staging a successful coup. Remon is probably now Panama's strongest politician. He favors as president Enrique de Obarrio, a capable and pro-American economist and politician.

Panamanian politics are in a turmoil over the approaching elections and over the still-unsolved assassination of the president in January 1955, in which influential politicians were probably involved. Public suspicions and dissatisfaction over the government's handling of the case were apparently the cause of the 21 April rioting in Panama City, and mutual recriminations regarding responsibility for the crime appear to be responsible for the widening rift within the administration's corrupt political machine.

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2. LAOTIAN PREMIER AGAIN URGED TO VISIT HANOI

The Indian chargé in Vientiane recently told Ambassador Yost that the Viet Minh has again indicated a desire to invite Laotian premier Souvanna Phouma to Hanoi for a "courtesy visit." Souvanna Phouma told Yost he preferred dealing directly with the Pathet Lao, but felt there might be some advantage in talks in Hanoi aimed at securing a public Viet Minh commitment to noninterference in Laotian affairs. He also said that if Ho Chi Minh and Chou En-lai were willing to treat Laos as a fully independent state, he would be willing to establish normal relations with both Communist China and North Vietnam.

Ambassador Yost feels that Souvanna Phouma would probably accept an invitation to Hanoi.

Comment

This is the third time since February that the Indian chargé has indicated the Viet Minh is interested in having the Laotian premier come to Hanoi. On 4 April he indicated that such a trip might result in the Viet Minh "advising" the Pathets to accept royal government authority over the two disputed provinces in northern Laos in return for a pledge of Laotian neutrality.

Laotian leaders generally are inclined to believe that a political solution of the Pathet problem lies only in Peiping and Hanoi.

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3. USSR ASKS TO SEND FISHERIES EXPERTS TO TOKYO

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[REDACTED]

Ichiro Kono, chief of the Japanese fisheries mission now en route to Moscow, has strongly recommended that the Japanese government approve the Soviet request for permission to replace the head of its unrecognized mission in Tokyo and to send Soviet fisheries experts to Japan. Foreign

Minister Shigemitsu told Ambassador Allison the Foreign Ministry opposes these suggestions and takes the stand that all fisheries matters should be discussed in Moscow.

Shigemitsu fears, however, he can not win cabinet support for this position. He stated that in any event Japanese acceptance of the Soviet proposal would not mean the granting of diplomatic status to the Soviet mission in Tokyo.

Tokyo press reports state that the USSR has requested diplomatic status for the fisheries experts it wishes to send to Tokyo.

Comment

Heretofore, the Japanese have refused to permit the USSR to replace departing personnel of the unofficial Soviet mission which remained in Tokyo after the occupation. While acceptance of the Soviet request would not necessarily accord diplomatic status to the present Soviet mission in Tokyo, it would certainly be a step in that direction. As no compensating concession from the Soviet side is as yet apparent, granting the demand would seriously weaken the Japanese at the forthcoming fisheries negotiations.

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**4. CAMBODIA NEGOTIATES AID AND TRADE
AGREEMENTS WITH COMMUNIST CHINA**

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Cambodian foreign minister Nong Kimny told Ambassador McClintock in Phnom Penh on 24 April that the Cambodian economic delegation now in Peiping had negotiated an economic aid agreement as well as a trade pact.

Comment

No details on these agreements are available as yet, although Cambodian prince Sihanouk recently announced that Peiping was offering the equivalent of over 800,000,000 riels (\$20,000,000 at the official rate) in economic aid. Communist China has not hitherto given financial assistance to any non-Communist country.

Chou En-lai is scheduled to visit Cambodia in June. (Concurred in by ORR)

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5. CZECH DEFENSE MINISTER DISMISSED

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The dismissal of Alexej Cepicka from his posts as defense minister and deputy premier and from the politburo of the Czech Communist

Party is the severest action taken against a top Satellite official in the current drive against Stalinist practices.

It is the first change in the Czech hierarchy since the death of President Gottwald in 1953. Two other politburo members, Vice Premier Kopecky and Slovak party first secretary Bacilek, are also reportedly to be demoted.

Cepicka, who is charged with "shortcomings and mistakes he committed in the execution of state and party functions," is an ideal scapegoat. A ruthless Communist hated by the general population, he was also unpopular with party members who believed he rose rapidly in the party hierarchy after the war because he was the son-in-law of former president Gottwald.

Cepicka's successor as minister of defense, Colonel General Bohumil Lomsky, is the former first deputy minister. Unlike Cepicka, Lomsky is a professional military man. He received his training in Moscow and served as a staff officer in the Soviet army during World War II.

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THE ARAB-ISRAELI SITUATION (Information as of 1700, 26 April)

UN secretary general Hammarskjold apparently has not yet obtained final agreement from Jordan to a cease-fire on the Jordan-Israel border. A Jordanian communiqué stated that the results of the Hammarskjold talks would be submitted to King Hussain and the parliament for a final decision, which then would be given to Hammarskjold before he left the Middle East. Hammarskjold has left Amman for Beirut.

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According to the Israeli Foreign Ministry, Hammarskjold feels enough encouragement from his Cairo visit to explore the possibilities of an over-all Arab-Israeli settlement. The Israeli officials said Hammarskjold believed that territorial questions were relatively unimportant in any settlement, but that solution of the refugee problem was vital. Foreign Minister Sharett stated that Israel was willing to co-operate on the refugee problem on three conditions: (1) that the approach was made within the framework of peace, (2) that refugees repatriated would be limited to a "reasonable number," and (3) that Prime Minister Nasr would abandon any territorial claims. Israel has called for the solution of specific problems within the framework of general peace negotiations, while the Arabs have consistently maintained that specific problems should be resolved outside the context of any peace negotiations.

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attack near the Jordan border in which four Israelis were killed was not the work of "true fedayeen" terrorists but one of several bands of local Jordanians known to be copying the real fedayeen squads. Publicly, Israel has suggested that this attack was un-

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recruiting young men in border villages for possible future
use as fedayeen.

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The French Ministry of Defense informed
American officials in Paris that France would soon supply another
12 Mystere jet fighters to Israel, making the total 24.

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