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17 September 1957



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CURRENT INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN

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25X1A

25X1A

Approved For Release 2003/01/27 : CIA-RDP79T00975A003300130001-0

CONTENTS

- ok. 1. SARIT OVERTHROWS PHIBUN GOVERNMENT IN THAILAND
(Information as of 2400 hours EDT 16 Sept 57)

25X1A

25X1A

25X1A

- ok 2. TITO-GOMULKA COMMUNIQUE

25X1

- ok 6. SYRIAN ARMY CHIEF PLANS PALESTINIAN COMMANDO CORPS

25X1A

- ok 7. JAPANESE PROTEST ON 1958 US NUCLEAR TESTS SERIES

25X1A

- ok 8. POLITICAL DISSENSION IN FRANCE INCREASES OVER ALGERIAN STATUTE

25X1A

25X6

17 Sept 57

Current Intelligence Bulletin

Page 2

25X1A

Approved For Release 2003/01/27 : CIA-RDP79T00975A003300130001-0

1. SARIT OVERTHROWS PHIBUN GOVERNMENT IN THAILAND
(Information as of 0030 hours EDT, 17 Sept 57) 25X1A

25X1A

Latest reports from Bangkok indicate that Thai army troops commanded by Marshal Sarit are firmly in control of the city following their bloodless coup against the Phibun government on the night of 16 September.

Premier Phibun has fled and his whereabouts is unknown. Sarit has declared martial law throughout the country to guard against the possibility of a counter coup by the followers of Phibun and Police Director Phao who reportedly has given himself up.

The coup was precipitated by Phibun's adamant rejection of repeated demands by Sarit for the removal of Phao and his supporters from all official positions. Sarit apparently decided to take direct action when Phibun, on the morning of the 16th, sought to stall off an ultimatum calling for the cabinet's resignation and replacement by one formed "in accordance with the people's wishes."

The only clue to Sarit's future intentions is his establishment, prior to the coup, of a committee of 13 army officers and himself, as chairman, for the purpose of maintaining "peace and security." This group will almost certainly form the nucleus of a new ruling clique. Under this setup, Sarit would be in line to assume the premiership, although he may prefer to rule behind a front man.

Sarit's assumption of control of the Thai government promises to be followed by an extensive "house cleaning," particularly in the police force. Thailand's foreign policy, however, is unlikely to be drastically altered in the immediate future.

There will undoubtedly be strong pressures for the adoption of a more "independent" policy involving the loosening of ties with the West. Available information suggests, however, that Sarit has acknowledged the importance of American economic and military aid, although he may seek a greater degree of Thai supervision of its administration. He has also publicly endorsed Thailand's membership in SEATO. Another factor militating against his moving toward an accommodation with the Communists is that much of his present popularity is based on his being identified as the champion of the monarchy and of "traditional Thai values."

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2. TITO-GOMULKA COMMUNIQUE

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In a joint party and government communique signed on 16 September, Tito and Gomulka agreed on the correctness of their independent roads to socialism and reaffirmed that relations between

Communist states and parties should be based on the principle of equality and noninterference. The communique did not once refer to the Soviet Union. It did not take issue with the USSR, however, on any international problem.

The two men again stressed their desire for bilateral relations between Communist parties, but noted that multilateral relations "can also be very useful." The declaration embodies Tito's theory that progressive forces, even in capitalist states, are moving toward socialism and states that the very fate of socialism and peace depends on strengthening relations, cooperation, and unity among these forces.

With respect to international issues, Tito reiterated his previous stand on German unification and endorsed the Oder-Neisse as the final Polish-German frontier. Both countries invited other nations to adhere to this view. In addition, they called for the admission of Communist China to the UN and an immediate ban on nuclear tests as a first step toward disarmament.

Both powers pledged themselves to develop the broadest possible economic and cultural relations with all countries regardless of the political system. In order to promote cultural and economic cooperation, the two governments agreed to establish a Yugoslav-Polish economic commission and cultural information centers in their two capitals.

25X1A

17 Sept 57

Current Intelligence Bulletin

Page 4

25X1A

Approved For Release 2003/01/27 : CIA-RDP79T00975A003300130001-0

25X1

Approved For Release 2003/01/27 : CIA-RDP79T00975A003300130001-0

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