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8 October 1960

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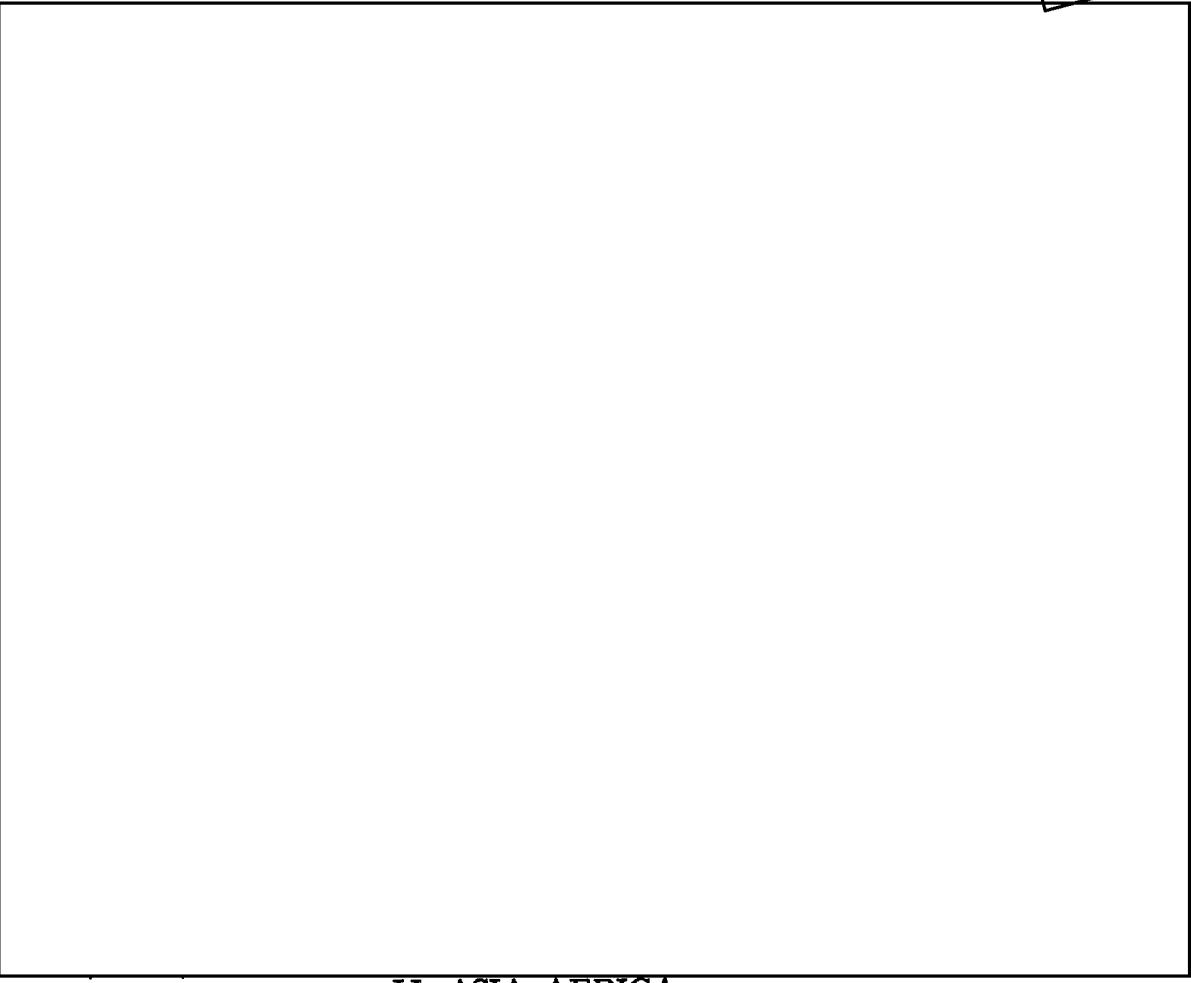
8 October 1960

DAILY BRIEF

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I. THE COMMUNIST BLOC

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II. ASIA-AFRICA

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(South Africa: Although his victory in the recent republic referendum solidifies Prime Minister Verwoerd's position as leader of the politically dominant Afrikaner community, the narrow victory margin--less than 80,000 votes out of]

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[more than 1,600,000--is likely to deepen the divisions within South Africa's white population. The 10 million Africans in the Union, who were excluded from the vote, appear to be indifferent to the republic question, regarding it as a squabble within the white community. Tension is high among the white population in Natal Province, stronghold of the country's English-speaking minority, and talk of the province's secession has been widespread. Verwoerd is likely to be subject to increased criticism from relatively moderate Afrikaners, many of whom regard the narrow referendum victory as an insufficient mandate for the establishment of a republic. However, traditional Afrikaner solidarity will probably keep defections to a minimum, and Verwoerd may receive increasing support from racial conservatives in the English-speaking community.]

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Nigeria-USSR: Nigeria, which became independent on 1 October, has rebuffed a Soviet bid for the immediate establishment of diplomatic relations. Nigeria's moderate Prime Minister Balewa refused to commit his government to such ties despite the insistence of Moscow's delegates to the independence celebrations that they had been "instructed" by Khrushchev to establish an embassy in Lagos. As has been the practice of Soviet delegations attending independence ceremonies of other African states, the delegates made wide contacts and reportedly distributed lavish gifts to prominent personalities.

Although pressures for diplomatic ties with the USSR will undoubtedly increase in the future, Balewa will probably resist the immediate establishment of relations. On the other hand, because of Nigeria's announced policy of nonalignment, Balewa is likely to give serious consideration to establishing such relations at a time of his own choosing, probably within the next year.

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Laos: King Savang appears to have abandoned his plan to promote a political reconciliation between the Souvanna Phouma government and General Phoumi's Savannakhet Revolutionary Committee. While highly critical of Souvanna's recent actions, []

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[the King told Ambassador Brown on 6 October that he would appoint a new government only if Souvanna resigned or were forced out by the National Assembly. Savang claimed he was powerless to act without the support of either a united army or a united public opinion, neither of which he has at present.]

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III. THE WEST

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[Redacted]

Prime Minister's Position Strengthened by South African Republic Referendum

Prime Minister Verwoerd's victory in the recent republic referendum has confirmed the organizational effectiveness of the Afrikaner-controlled Nationalist party and has solidified his own position as leader of the Union of South Africa's politically dominant Afrikaner community. However, the narrow margin of victory--less than 80,000 votes in a total of more than 1,600,000--is likely to deepen the division between the Afrikaners and the large English-speaking minority.

Tension in the English-speaking community has been especially high in Natal Province, long a stronghold of anti-republic sentiment. Some of the province's leaders have hinted that if a republic were established they would attempt to secede--a move which almost certainly would be opposed by both English and Afrikaners in the rest of the country. The province will probably remain in the Union, but opposition to the Verwoerd government can be expected to become more bitter.

Verwoerd also is likely to be subject to increased criticism from relatively moderate Afrikaners, especially in Cape Province. The Cape Nationalists reportedly believed that to obtain a clear mandate for the republic, Verwoerd would need at least 60 percent of the vote in the referendum; they may therefore argue that the 52 percent actually obtained does not justify the establishment of a republic. While such criticisms may be voiced in private, traditional Afrikaner solidarity will probably keep public defections to a minimum. In fact, Verwoerd may even broaden the base of his authority by obtaining the support of some racial conservatives in the English-speaking community.

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The Situation in Laos

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King Savang appears to have abandoned any effort to force a political compromise between the Souvanna Phouma government in Vientiane and General Phoumi's Savannakhet Revolutionary Committee. In a 6 October audience with Ambassador Brown in Luang Prabang, the King indicated that for the present, at least, he has resigned himself to permitting events to take their own course. Savang said that Souvanna, who saw him on the same day, had asked him to send a cable to Savannakhet ordering Phoumi and Prince Boun Oum to dissolve the Revolutionary Committee and proclaim their allegiance to the government. The King refused, telling Souvanna that it was his responsibility either to seek reconciliation with the committee or to subdue it by capturing Savannakhet.

Savang severely criticized Souvanna, not only for permitting Vientiane forces to violate the 28 September cease-fire agreement with Phoumi, but also for allowing the Pathet Lao to gain a position of such great strength. He added that Captain Kong Le was still a force in Vientiane and that the Pathet Lao were pulling the strings there.

Souvanna meanwhile has claimed to several sources that there is not enough time to reach a settlement with Phoumi before the negotiations with the Pathet Lao which were to begin on 7 October. One of the chief negotiators for the Pathet Lao side is reported to have arrived in Vientiane.

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claims he warned Souvanna of the dangers of negotiating with the Pathet Lao at the present juncture but that he made little impression on the premier. is reported by other sources to be ready to abandon his at best nominal loyalty to Vientiane at the opportune moment.

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Pro-Savannakhet officers are also reported plotting to take over control of the Second Military Region, with headquarters in Xieng Khouang Province. Only ten days ago an internal turnover in the region's command had swung the region over to Souvanna. In Vientiane, General Ouane, the armed forces commander, has indicated qualified willingness to find some way to cooperate with Phoumi in preventing further Pathet Lao gains.

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