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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN



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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN

28 December 1959

DAILY BRIEF

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I. THE COMMUNIST BLOC

II. ASIA-AFRICA

Indonesia - Communist China: Djakarta's reception of Chinese Communist Foreign Minister Chen Yi's letter of 24 December has been cool, and Indonesia continues to show no disposition to make concessions to Peiping. In fact, one report alleges that Indonesia may be preparing to restrict Chinese economic activities further by closing Bank of China branches in Indonesia in January. Chen Yi's letter made a "specific proposal" that the two countries promptly exchange ratification instruments of the dual nationality treaty signed in 1955, and appointed Peiping's ambassador in Djakarta as senior Chinese delegate to a committee to implement the treaty. Chen Yi made no other new proposals for settling the dispute, but implied Peiping's recognition of the necessity to "adjust the economic position of Overseas Chinese in Indonesia."

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India: As campaigning for the special election in Kerala State on 1 February gets under way, the anti-Communist parties together seem capable of defeating the Communists by a substantial margin. The "United Democratic Front" formed by the anti-Communist parties will deny the Communists their usual opportunity to win a disproportionate number of assembly seats by splitting the non-Communist vote. Disillusionment with the Communist party in Kerala as a result of its performance while in office and the reaction of Indian Communists to the Sino-Indian border dispute has also improved the prospects of the Congress party and its allies. However, communal antagonisms and latent personal rivalries among the anti-Communist forces could still narrow their margin of victory, and almost certainly will complicate efforts to form an effective coalition government following the election.

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III. THE WEST

Brazil: [One of President Kubitschek's principal advisers told the US Embassy last week that the Brazilian Government is greatly disturbed over the unrest and strikes being stirred up by Vice-President Goulart's Labor party and the Communists, and that immediate vigorous action is planned to block them. Ambassador Cabot feels that the Kubitschek government may be exaggerating the dangers of the situation and the extent of Labor party and Communist agitation, but the ambassador considers the situation so "nervous" as a result of food shortages and rising living costs that a leftist uprising or a coup would "not be altogether surprising."] [REDACTED]

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LATE ITEM

*Laos: [The young reformist group-- the Committee for the Defense of National Interests (CDNI)-- and Premier Phoui continue to maneuver for political advantage. Following the presentation of demands by the CDNI on 26 December, Phoui has agreed to ask the King's approval to allow the present government to resign and be reappointed in a caretaker status. This action would accept the CDNI argument that the present regime is unconstitutional. The CDNI would not participate in the government, but would play an influential role in preparing for future elections. However, the outcome of even this temporary compromise proposal depends largely on the King's attitude, and the basic political dispute must be regarded as still unresolved.] [REDACTED]

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I. THE COMMUNIST BLOC

II. ASIA-AFRICA

Mid-Term Election Prospects in India's Kerala State Favor The Anti-Communist Front

As campaigning for the special election in Kerala State on 1 February gets under way, the anti-Communist parties together seem capable of defeating the Communists by a substantial margin. The elections will be held under President's Rule, imposed when the Communist state government was dismissed on 31 July.

The expensive lessons learned by Congress and Socialist party politicians following their defeat in the 1957 elections apparently are paying dividends. Congress leaders have taken firm steps to recondition the party and correct the chronic weaknesses that permitted the Communists to come to power. Congress election workers for the first time are organizing down to the precinct level. In addition, the apparently firm agreement establishing a "United Democratic Front"--under which leaders of the Congress party, the Praja Socialists, and the Moslem League have allocated the constituencies each group will contest--denies the Communists their previous opportunity to win a disproportionate number of seats by splitting the non-Communist vote. The anti-Communist front will also benefit from active support of the Hindu and Christian communal organizations which led the successful agitation against the Communist government last summer.

Widespread disillusionment with the Communist party in Kerala has been the main factor in improving its opponents' prospects. The reputation of the party, already seriously damaged by its policies while in office, has been further downgraded as a result of its national leadership's "unpatriotic" reaction to the India-China border dispute.

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The Communists, however, are not likely to be routed. They remain the best organized and best financed group in Kerala. Party workers have been propagandizing vigorously since August, and already have an impressive campaign apparatus in the field. Moreover, the personal rivalries and communal antagonisms traditional in Kerala politics lie just beneath the surface of the "united" democratic front. These weaknesses could still narrow the margin of victory for anti-Communist elements and almost certainly will complicate the problem of forming an effective coalition government after the elections.

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