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11 November 1960

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN



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I. THE COMMUNIST BLOC

II. ASIA-AFRICA

Situation in Laos.

South Korea--Unification with neutralization advocated by vocal minority in South Korea.

Japanese patrol boats protecting fishing vessels from South Korean seizure authorized to fire in self-defense.

Iraq--Qasim regime arrests ten prominent Communists.



(5)

(6)

III. THE WEST

Bolivian President, facing continued economic difficulties and pressure from left to seek Soviet help, planning fake coup as excuse for declaring "state of siege."



LATE ITEM

(6) Reported coup in South Vietnam.

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN

11 November 1960

DAILY BRIEF

I. THE COMMUNIST BLOC

II. ASIA-AFRICA

*Laos: Junior officers in Luang Prabang, headquarters of the First Military Region, reportedly seized control there on 10 November, a move which may bring that area somewhat closer to General Phoumi's Revolutionary Committee in Savannakhet.

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[redacted] these officers plan initially to stay neutral between Savannakhet and the Souvanna Phouma government in Vientiane, but "relations with Savannakhet will come later." The coup apparently was staged while First Military Region Commander Col. Houmpanh and Armed Forces Commander General Ouane were out of the city with Souvanna Phouma, who is currently touring northern Laos. The move may have been stimulated by the belief that Souvanna was taking inadequate measures to counter the Communist-dominated Pathet Lao and that Ouane and Houmpanh had temporized too long in carrying out their pledge to lead the First Military region into opposition against Souvanna if he did not bring the Pathet Lao under control.

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South Korea: The newly won freedom in South Korea is permitting a strong and vocal minority among intellectuals and students to suggest that unification of the country can be achieved by its neutralization. Their efforts will be aided by the powerful attraction which unification has for all Koreans. The American Embassy in Seoul believes this minority will be encouraged by India's present sponsorship of a UN formula for neutralizing and unifying Korea. The government and the majority of informed Koreans, however, publicly oppose neutralization, and a majority of students seems inclined at this time to distrust such a proposal.

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25X1 *Japan - South Korea: Japanese patrol boats in the vicinity of the "Rhee Line" in the Korean Strait have been authorized to shoot in "emergency self-defense" if necessary during operations to protect Japanese fishing vessels from South Korean seizure. This reversal of a standing prohibition against use of arms undoubtedly stems from a 2 November machine-gun attack on a Japanese patrol vessel. The Ikeda government, however, remains intent on improving relations with South Korea through negotiations for an over-all settlement of differences.

*Iraq: The Qasim regime has dealt the Iraqi Communist party another blow by arresting ten prominent Communists, including at least one central committee member. This move, following the harsh suppression of Communist-inspired riots from 5 to 7 November, is likely to induce other key members to go underground. If Qasim endorses this action, this may placate dissatisfied anti-Communist elements who have felt that his recent policies have been too favorable to the Communists.

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III. THE WEST

Bolivia: President Paz Estenssoro may be planning to engineer a fake leftist coup attempt against his own government to provide an excuse within the next two weeks for declaration of a state of siege. Paz has been unsuccessful in his efforts to improve Bolivia's critical economic condition in his first three months in office. Although he apparently prefers Western assistance, he faces strong political pressures to seek Soviet economic help and raise wages despite a threat of renewed inflation.

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LATE ITEM

*South Vietnam: According to information available as of 0400 on 11 November, President Diem appears to have turned over control of the South Vietnamese government to the armed forces following an assault on the presidential palace led by paratroop battalions with little opposition from forces other than the presidential guard. According to some reports, at least 30 persons were killed. The coup leaders, who have some support from Diem's civilian political opponents, are considered to be non-Communist and claim that their purpose is to strengthen the country's effort to combat Communist dissidence and subversion. They appear to include professional army officers who have been voicing concern over the adverse effect of political interference on military operations. They have also criticized Diem's nepotism and authoritarian measures as hampering his ability to maintain popular support. There is no evidence that the Communists had any part in the coup, but Communist guerrillas may attempt to take advantage of the confusion by striking at governmental centers.

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LATE ITEM

Reported Military Coup in South Vietnam

(Based on information available as of 0400 hours EST, 11 November)

President Ngo Dinh Diem has reportedly lost control of the South Vietnamese government to the armed forces following a military coup staged in the early hours of 11 November. The coup effort apparently was spear-headed by four paratroop battalions which attacked the presidential palace at 0300 hours local time and overpowered the presidential guard battalion after several hours of heavy fighting; army, navy and police forces in the Saigon area seem either to have joined the coup or offered only passive resistance. According to some reports, at least 30 persons were killed in the fighting. The coup group appears to be in control of key military and communications installations and has announced the formation of a ruling revolutionary council. The president had earlier called for army reinforcements from outside the Saigon area, but there is no indication that his appeal has been acted on. As of 1050 hours, firing in the capital city had substantially subsided. Reportedly, president Diem has not been harmed.

The military action reportedly was headed by Capt. Du Quoc Dong, said to be a competent US-trained officer in command of the 1st Airborne Battalion. The position of armed forces Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Le Van Ty is unclear; he has been variously reported to be under arrest and to have been named president pro tem.

A civilian lawyer and leader of an anti-Diem group, Hoang Co Thuy, claims to be political adviser to the group, and to have supporters among uncoordinated oppositionist labor and religious factions.

Key figures in the coup are considered to be non-Communist and have claimed on the Saigon radio that the purpose of

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their action is to strengthen the campaign against Communist guerrilla activities because of Diem's ineffectiveness in dealing with the situation. No actions have been reported against foreigners and the group has allegedly stated that it desires American and Japanese aid.

In recent months, opposition as well as some government circles have increasingly vented long-standing grievances against repressive measures of the Diem government and Diem's authoritarian rule through a family clique which fostered favoritism and corruption. Certain professional army officers were particularly bitter over political interference in command assignments which they felt interfered with the army's effectiveness against the Communist dissidents. They had also increasingly expressed concern that Diem's failure to make sweeping reforms was creating a dangerous political situation in Saigon and contributing to rural apathy which favored the Communist guerrillas. Recent gestures by Diem have been inadequate to rally popular support and to contain Communist guerrilla activities which have been spreading to previously quiescent areas of the country.

While there is no evidence of North Vietnamese involvement in the coup, Hanoi has embarked on an intensive effort to topple Diem, urging stepped-up guerrilla terrorism and offering to cooperate with any groups politically opposed to Diem. Hanoi has had a coup in mind, but it does not appear that the leaders of the revolutionary committee meet North Vietnam's criteria for a group which can be led into a coalition government and eventually absorbed by the Communists. A successful coup would tend to confirm Hanoi's belief that the situation in the South is ripe for Communist exploitation. In this respect, the Communist guerrillas may move quickly to strike at government administrative centers while the effectiveness of South Vietnam's army is reduced by confusion. Thus far, Moscow radio has limited its reporting on the situation in South Vietnam to quoting western press coverage. Hanoi

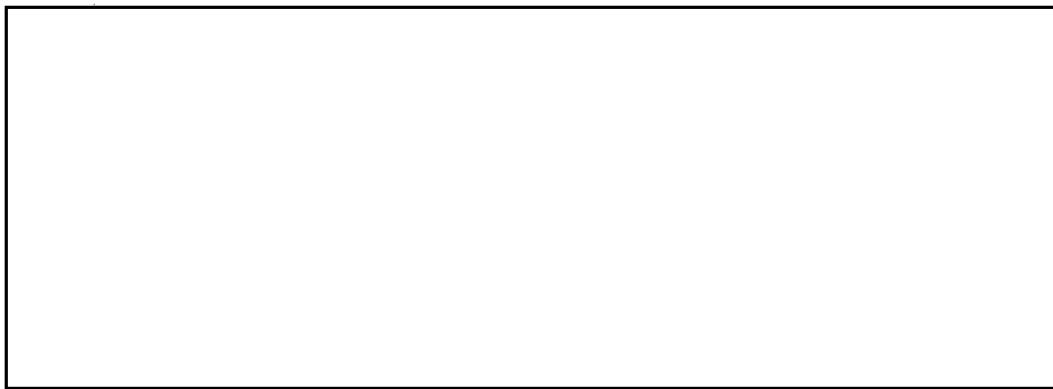
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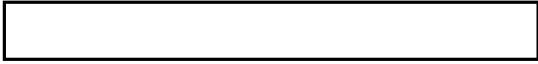
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25X1 has reported briefly and without comment quoting Saigon
Radio. [redacted]

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