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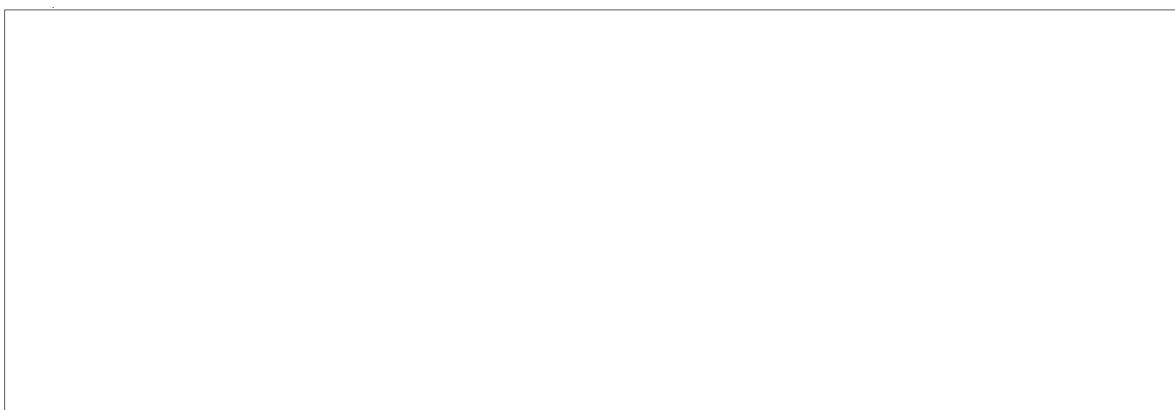


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Office of Current Intelligence

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SUMMARY

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SOUTHEAST ASIA

2. Magsaysay-Recto break seen irreconcilable.



President Magsaysay is apparently determined to destroy Senator Claro Recto and is publicly committed to blocking his renomination for the Senate on the Nacionalista Party ticket, according to the American embassy in Manila, which believes a reconciliation is now virtually impossible. A senator close to the president has advised him to seek Recto's expulsion by the Nacionalista executive committee prior to the party's nominating convention, which is less than three weeks off.

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Support for Magsaysay from provincial officials is impressive, but Nacionalista Senator José Laurel and his son, the house speaker, are now backing Recto's renomination. There are rumors that the Laurels and other congressmen still hope to heal the Recto-Magsaysay breach.

Comment: Magsaysay is in effect forcing a showdown with the "old-guard" Nacionalista leadership. According to a press report, the controversy has now been submitted to the party executive, many members of which are local officials seeking Magsaysay's support in the November election. Recto's position, however, is considerably strengthened by support from José Laurel, probably the leading party figure next to the president. If Magsaysay's present maneuver fails, his influence in the coming election and on the next legislative session may be considerably reduced.

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