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16 May 1959

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN



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DAILY BRIEF

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II. ASIA-AFRICA

UAR: [President Nasir apparently does not intend to conciliate other relatively pro-Western Arab and North African states, such as Jordan and Tunisia, in order to rally support for his anti-Communist campaign. In a reflective discussion on 9 May, Nasir gave Ambassador Hare the impression that the main obstacle to such a reconciliation is the personalities of the other leaders. Nasir took the general position that while he would not object to a rapprochement, he was not particularly hopeful.]

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Thailand - Cambodia - South Vietnam: [Thai and South Vietnamese officials will meet secretly in Vietnam this month to plan future covert operations in Cambodia,]

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[Both countries--particularly South Vietnam--have supported Cambodian dissident elements engaged in anti-Sihanouk radio and pamphlet propaganda following the abortive Dap Chhuon coup plot last February. These activities have not only served to consolidate Sihanouk's position and influence him toward the Communist bloc, but are basic to Cambodia's suspicious attitude toward the US.]

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NO



NO

III. THE WEST

France: [De Gaulle is reported indifferent to pleas of high French officials that he permit the storage of American atomic warheads in France. He was unmoved by warnings from these officials that some of the nine US Air Force strike squadrons in France may be withdrawn and that France's defense posture would be weakened. Despite the pressures of the Berlin crisis, he will probably continue to oppose storage not only as a derogation of French sovereignty, but also because he hopes to further his objective of French "equality" in Western tripartite global military and political policy determination.]

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NO
Argentina: [President Frondizi's cabinet reorganization, including thus far the ministers of foreign affairs and agriculture and the secretaries of commerce, finance, and transportation, probably presages no change in the US-backed economic stabilization program. Opposition to the program is more intense than Frondizi anticipated and is being exploited by Communists and extreme Peronistas to promote labor agitation and violence.]

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II. ASIA-AFRICA

Nasir Comments on Relations With Arab States

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[In an interview with Ambassador Hare on 9 May, Nasir indicated that he does not contemplate seeking a reconciliation with such Arab states as Jordan and Tunisia in a bid for support of his anti-Communist campaign. Ambassador Hare received the impression that "the main obstacle to reconciliation was a question of personalities," with Nasir's personal dislike for some Arab leaders supplementing more basic differences over questions affecting the Arab world. However, steps toward a rapprochement would probably not be rebuffed by Cairo.]

[Nasir again protested that Bourguiba's accusations against the UAR were unjustified, stating that the Tunisian President feared the growth of Arab nationalism among his people. Regarding Jordan, he claimed the UAR was acting with restraint, but had no intention of ever appearing "cozy" with the government of King Husayn. He added that the recent change in government there had made the situation more difficult because of the "poor record" of the new prime minister, Hazza Majalli, but the "last thing" the UAR desired was the "burden" of taking over Jordan and its problems.]

[Nasir brushed off relations with Libya, Lebanon, and Saudi Arabia as posing no immediate problems. However, he suggested that trouble with Saudi Arabia might follow if King Saud resumed an active role. On relations with the Sudan, he complained that "foreign influence" was the main difficulty, and the current military crisis had also retarded efforts to solve the major problem of an agreement on division of the Nile waters.)

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South Vietnam and Thailand Continue Intrigues Against Cambodia

[Thai and South Vietnamese officials are to meet secretly in Vietnam this month at Saigon's initiative to plan future covert operations against the Sihanouk regime in Cambodia,]

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[The meeting was arranged during talks last month at the Vietnamese Embassy in Bangkok. General Prapat, one of the most powerful figures in the Sarit government, subsequently was contacted directly by Saigon. He approved the general aims of the conference and appointed an emissary.]

[South Vietnam and Thailand both have continued to assist Cambodian dissidents, led by expatriates Sam Sary and Son Ngoc Thanh in anti-Sihanouk activities following the abortive Dap Chhuon plot last February. These efforts have included the printing and distributing of revolutionary tracts in Cambodia and anti-Sihanouk broadcasts over mobile clandestine transmitters. Vietnam has taken the lead in this and previous efforts against Sihanouk, while Thailand has been more circumspect.]

[Vietnamese and Thai interference in Cambodia has had the effect of further consolidating Sihanouk's position and increasing his tendency to turn toward the Communist bloc. Moreover, Cambodian awareness of these intrigues forms the basis of Phnom Penh's present strong suspicions of the United States.]

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III. THE WEST

De Gaulle Still Unlikely to Approve Storage of American Atomic Warheads in France

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[President de Gaulle has rebuffed high French officials who have urged him to permit storage of American atomic warheads in France for the use of the nine US Air Force strike squadrons there,]

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25X1 [De Gaulle reportedly gave short shrift to a plea of Chief of Staff General Ely, and said to Premier Debré, "Who cares if the Americans remove three squadrons to Great Britain?" When Debré argued that removal of the squadrons would weaken France's defense posture, De Gaulle reportedly replied, "We will build our own ICBMs."]

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25X1 [the French President has long opposed foreign control of nuclear weapons in France, and he is not likely to change his mind because of the Berlin crisis. He has stated that he does not expect the Berlin crisis to erupt into war. His decision to withdraw the French Mediterranean fleet from NATO wartime control was taken against the advice of his top military and political advisers.]

25X1 [His opposition to integration of French national forces in NATO and to foreign control of atomic weapons depots in France is based on the grounds that it is a derogation of French sovereignty. De Gaulle also hopes that his adamant position on this issue will further his primary objective of attaining French "equality" in Western tripartite global policy determination.]

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Argentine Cabinet Reorganization

The Argentine economy minister's statement to Ambassador Beaulac that the present cabinet reorganization does not presage a change in the US-backed stabilization program is in line with recent policy pronouncements which underscore the need to press the program. He admitted that opposition to Frondizi's program was more intense than had been anticipated. Thus far Frondizi has accepted the resignations of the ministers of foreign affairs and agriculture, the secretaries of finance, commerce, and transportation, and his trusted personal adviser, Rogelio Frigerio. Other resignations, especially of lesser officials, are expected before replacements are named next week.

The reorganization, contemplated earlier by Frondizi, was probably timed to counter recently renewed military charges that some officials are inept and too complacent about Peronism and Communism in government. Such charges are being played up by various discontented military elements, especially retired naval supporters of former Vice President Rojas, to gain support for a coup. Most active officers, however, still prefer constitutional government.

Frondizi's dependence on the military has been increased by continuing labor agitation and violence, led mainly by Communists and extremist Peronistas.

Communists were issued bottles of gasoline to force bus drivers to comply with the illegal general strike called on 15 May, and the press reports one bus was actually burned. In addition, the discovery on 14 May of serious sabotage of telephone installations and fire-fighting apparatus has reportedly raised fears that saboteurs may try to cripple other public utilities.

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