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7 November 1963



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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN



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DAILY BRIEF

*South Vietnam: The generals have created new machinery to formalize their control over the provisional government headed by Premier Tho.

They have announced the formation of a 12-man Military Executive Committee as the highest authority in the country. In effect a supracabinet, it is headed by General "Big" Minh, with Major Generals Don and Dinh as vice chairmen.

The generals also announced at a press conference yesterday the creation of a "council of sages," a consultative body to be chosen by the military from nationalist and professional groups. The council is to study and advise on questions dealing with the rights and aspirations of the citizenry and problems of transition to permanent government.

While expressing the hope that martial law and press censorship will soon be lifted, the generals are vague about the timing of general elections. A spokesman indicated that elections would be held after the attainment of "a truly democratic system."

There are already complaints by some Vietnamese political elements that the government is too technical and nonrepresentative, that it lacks political acumen, and will not long be able to hold popular support. [The first new political group to declare its existence under the present government.]

(the Catholic-oriented National Rehabilitation Party is likely to join the ranks of the critics. Its leaders, erstwhile coup plotters Huynh Van Lang and Colonel Pham Ngoc Thao, feel that their long-term efforts to mount a coup were usurped at the last moment by the generals.)

(The generals' awareness of their own internal divisions is reflected in the formation of a small internal body to monitor sentiments and activities among their ranks in order to lessen friction and avoid serious splits.)

(The new regime is continuing to purge Diem appointees, particularly in the police and intelligence services. Replacements named to these services by General Mai Huu Xuan, the new police director, are largely drawn from old intelligence hands who worked with the French and were Xuan's associates when he held a similar post in the mid-fifties.)

(Some shake-up is also under way among the province chiefs, many of whom are considered by the generals to be incompetent and corrupt, or tainted by loyalty to the former regime.)

The Viet Cong were blamed for three grenade explosions in Saigon on 5 November. Further urban terrorist attempts are likely despite intensified security efforts by the government.

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USSR: Workers in two Soviet cities have apparently staged protest strikes against current bread shortages.

A West German journalist considered reliable by his embassy has heard that strikes took place last week in the Ukrainian cities of Krivoi Rog and Odessa. In the former, workers sat down by their machines and benches, refused to work, and demanded more compensation to purchase other foods. Dockworkers in Odessa refused to load butter on ships bound for Cuba.

There are also rumors that Odessa dockworkers struck earlier in October, and Soviet sources allege that similar strikes and riots recently occurred in the Urals area.

No details are available on the regime's reaction to these disturbances, but neither police nor army units have been used as yet, and it is unclear whether or not the strikes have been settled.

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*USSR-Berlin: Khrushchev's remarks on 6 November to a group of American businessmen were designed not only to obscure the fact that the US convoy refused to comply with Soviet processing demands but also to generate increased concern in the West that future incidents on the Autobahn might lead to a dangerous military confrontation.

In reiterating the claim made by Soviet checkpoint authorities on 4 November that the USSR has the right to establish convoy inspection procedures, Khrushchev is trying to maintain the impasse on this issue in order to heighten the urgency of negotiations on the political level to remove this source of tension.

Khrushchev is again resorting to tactics he has used repeatedly over the course of the Berlin conflict. He is seeking to confront Western governments and public opinion with what is intended to appear as a choice between prospects of a new crisis carrying risks of a military clash or an agreement to negotiate under conditions favorable to the USSR.

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NOTES

France - Communist China: (De Gaulle has no intention of extending diplomatic recognition to Peiping "at this time." He told Ambassador Bohlen on 5 November that "sooner or later" some relationships would have to be worked out with Communist China, but that when the time came for recognition, "the US would certainly be informed in advance." Ambassador Bohlen believes that De Gaulle was talking about events quite far in the future.)

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Rumania-Yugoslavia: Rumanian party First Secretary Gheorghiu-Dej will visit Yugoslavia within the next week to sign an agreement for joint Rumanian-Yugoslav construction of an ambitious power and navigation project on the Danube. A Yugoslav diplomat has implied that the primary purpose of the visit, which Tito may return in "several months," will be a broad review of Yugoslav-Rumanian relations. The hard-line regime in Bucharest, which has regarded Belgrade's domestic policies with disfavor, has been the most reluctant of the Soviet bloc states to improve its relations with Yugoslavia.

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Dahomey: Recent reports from Dahomey continue to point to Minister of State Justin Ahomadegbe, who has labor as well as military support, as the person who would probably head the new regime now being organized. The real strong man, however, may be Dahomey's second-ranking military leader, Captain Alley, who is described by French officials as tougher and more intelligent than the present provisional government head, Colonel Soglo. There are now indications that ex-President Maga has lost some support in his native northern region.

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NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE ESTIMATES

(The United States Intelligence Board, on 6 November 1963, approved the following national intelligence estimates:

SNIE 36.7-63: "The Situation and Prospects in Yemen!"

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NIE 31-63 : "The Prospects for India"

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