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Thailand: Prime Minister Thanom has voiced new reservations about the depth of the US commitment to Thailand.

Thanom has said that "recent events" suggest the US may pull out of South Vietnam and Southeast Asia sooner than expected and under circumstances that would leave free countries in the region in a "precarious position." He said that Bangkok's concern was particularly acute as a result of Thailand's "profound commitment" in permitting the use of Thai air bases to prosecute the war.

Without specifically saying so, Thanom implied that Bangkok believed it was not being informed of the US position regarding forthcoming negotiations with Hanoi or how the US intended to proceed with the ground war in coming months.

Thanom also indicated Bangkok's apprehensions would be calmed by new "assurances" from the US, particularly if they were definite. He specifically asked that a significant number of the 40,000 US Air Force personnel in Thailand remain at Thai bases after a US withdrawal from South Vietnam and that the provision of modern equipment to the Thai armed forces be accelerated.

Thanom restated the Thai position that, if there were a successful conclusion to the Vietnam war, Thailand would soon bear the brunt of Chinese and North Vietnamese aggression.

Thanom did not raise the issue of a bilateral mutual defense pact, but it is possible that the Thai will, at some later date, renew their call for one to replace the ineffective SEATO agreement.

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Although Bangkok appears to be controlling its real fears in order to gain fresh commitments from the US, it is clear that Thai leaders do not view negotiations with Hanoi with equanimity. Reluctant to commit their own troops and resources to the Vietnam struggle, the Thais have consistently urged a larger military effort there.

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Korea: Pyongyang may be planning a substantial increase in guerrilla activity against the South.

Last year the bulk of North Korean agent activity was directed toward espionage and the establishment of guerrilla bases. The current effort may well concentrate on terrorist incidents similar to the attempted raid on the presidential residence in January.



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The annual spring increase in infiltration of North Korean agents may already have started. Late last month an unidentified boat reportedly landed four persons on the west coast of South Korea. There also have been scattered reports of a few Communist infiltrators recently crossing the Demilitarized Zone.

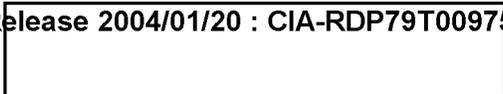
Prior to the North Korean ambush of US personnel near the Demilitarized Zone on 14 April, the situation in the area had been relatively quiet since the raid in January. The recent ambush was apparently deliberately planned and executed by the North Koreans, and was not a chance encounter between infiltrating agents and security patrols. This suggests that Pyongyang now sees less need for the relative restraint it has shown since the Pueblo seizure. With improved weather, an increase in both the number and the level of guerrilla operations against the South is likely.



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Egypt: Nasir is convinced his domestic problems militate against meaningful negotiations with Israel.



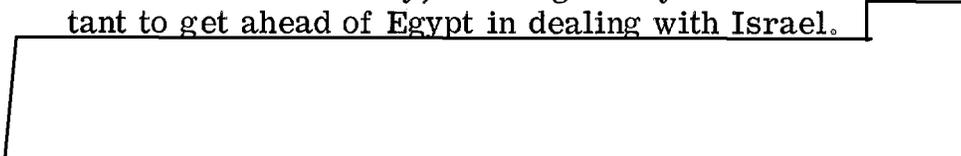
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Egypt's economic woes are another factor inhibiting Nasir from acquiescing to any form of negotiations with Israel. Egypt currently receives approximately \$245 million in annual subsidies from the oil rich states of Kuwait, Libya, and Saudi Arabia. Nasir believes these would be terminated if he agreed to negotiate with Israel, because this would be contrary to the decisions taken at the Arab summit conference last fall.



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Nasir's domestic troubles, both political and economic, are very real. These and other considerations will almost certainly dictate that any contacts between Israel and Egypt be as indirect, low-key, and circumspect as possible. This in turn will limit Jordan's maneuverability, as King Husayn will be hesitant to get ahead of Egypt in dealing with Israel.



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Libya: Libya is chafing under the burden of providing financial support to Egypt and Jordan.

Prime Minister Bakkush says he will seek a review by all the Arab states of the support payments now being given by Kuwait, Libya, and Saudi Arabia. He alleges that the support has become a general subsidy to the two governments rather than being used to rebuild their armies.

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It is doubtful, however, that Libya could withstand the strong pressures that Egypt would be likely to exert if an attempt were made to modify the payments. Nasir, on the other hand, evidently feels restrained by his heavy dependence on the subsidies and is keeping down Cairo's usual anticonservative propaganda.

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NOTE

Nigeria: Tanzania's recognition of Biafra has hardened Lagos' attitude toward possible peace talks. Speaking under instructions, the Nigerian ambassador in the US stated that "Biafra's instigation of Tanzania" has ruled out "any possibility" of a negotiated settlement of the civil war and made a military conclusion "inevitable."

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