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12 May 1960

CURRENT INTELLIGENCE WEEKLY SUMMARY



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12 May 1960

GROWING CRITICISM OF DIEM REGIME IN SOUTH VIETNAM

South Vietnamese President Diem, beset with a serious challenge from resurgent Communist guerrilla forces, also faces a growing problem of dissatisfaction among officials of his own regime, as well as among the public. Diem is taking urgent steps--chiefly military--in an effort to redress the internal security situation, but shows no inclination to liberalize his regime despite growing criticism. This attitude is consistent with his tough-mindedness and with his belief that the exigencies of the times require authoritarian rule.

A number of important Vietnamese figures, including high government officials, labor organizers, members of the National Assembly, and leaders of political parties, have privately expressed discontent and frustration with their "puppet" roles. Their complaint is that Diem's refusal to delegate authority beyond a tight circle of relatives and close associates has paralyzed effective government, fostered favoritism and corruption, alienated the people, and facilitated Communist subversion. Vice President Nguyen Ngoc Tho and other cabinet members fear for the government's stability unless political reforms are undertaken immediately.

A principal cause for widespread resentment is the pervasive influence of the Can Lao, a semicovert organization which exercises the real power and control in the government on Diem's behalf. Under the direction of Diem's brother and chief political adviser, Ngo Dinh Nhu, the Can Lao had gradually fashioned a commissar-like network throughout the government's political and military substructure.

Diem thus far has refused to acknowledge any serious shortcomings in his entourage, and brushes off critics of the regime as either opportunists, crackpots, or crypto-Communists. He has dismissed as "inconsequential" the public petition for more democratic practices issued in Saigon recently by a group of former Vietnamese government officials and civic leaders. This unprecedented attack on the Diem regime by a cohesive, non-Communist group, however, could be the forerunner of developments similar to those in South Korea which resulted in the overthrow of the Rhee regime. While this does not seem an immediate likelihood, Communist subversion--which has already gained a toehold in certain rural areas--is a particularly dangerous factor in the over-all situation. (SECRET)

US-JAPANESE SECURITY TREATY DIFFICULTIES

Intensified attacks by the Socialists and lack of cooperation from intraparty opponents of Prime Minister Kishi once again may delay ratification of the new US-Japanese security treaty. Rivals within the Liberal-Democratic party (LDP) are

procrastinating in order to deny Kishi a political victory which would assure his re-election as party president and continued tenure as prime minister.

Kishi has been seeking to increase his prestige and

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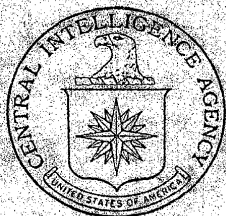
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CURRENT INTELLIGENCE WEEKLY SUMMARY

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GROWING THREATS TO SOUTH VIETNAM'S REGIME

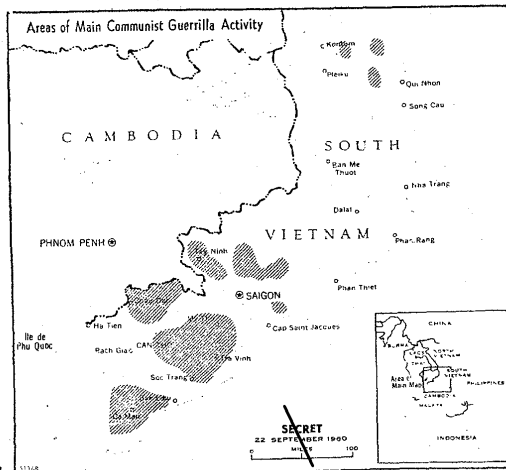
The Diem government faces a growing danger from the continued Communist guerrilla activity in the countryside, widespread peasant dissatisfaction, and restiveness among articulate groups in Saigon. After a slackening with the advent of the rainy season, the Communists again stepped up attacks in July, frequently operating in larger bands than previously. Possibly because of Vietnamese Army pressures in the delta provinces of the south and west, Communist activity increased north and east of Saigon. Main roads outside Saigon are insecure.

Recent reports that the Communists may plan sabotage and terrorism in the capital itself, possibly including Americans as targets, are being given greater than usual credence by the Vietnamese security service. It believes that special action groups may have entered the city in connection with the 15th anniversary on 23 September of the beginning of anti-French resistance, and has advised Americans against night travel in the city at this time.

President Diem continues to oppose the Communist threat primarily through military measures. In addition to intensified antiguerrilla training for the army, he hopes to centralize command and intelligence functions and to strengthen rural militias. At the same time, he has taken some steps to win greater popular allegiance. He has visited the countryside and,

in the face of peasant resistance, has announced a cutback in the construction of "agrovilles"--village regroupments designed to provide greater economic and physical security.

There is a possibility of demonstrations in Saigon against Diem's authoritarian rule. In August, certain non-Communist leaders in labor, refugee, and student circles reportedly were considering public protests; at the same time, a number of suspected agitators were arrested. Communist infiltrators probably would attempt to turn any demonstrations into riots. Saigon security officials reportedly have plans to prevent any demonstrations from gaining momentum. They could seek army assistance to quell disturbances, but it is uncertain whether army troops would remain loyal to Diem if ordered to suppress non-Communist actions with force.



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There has been renewed emphasis from the Communist regime in North Vietnam on the "struggle against the US-Diem clique" in the South. Speakers at the regime's party congress in early September indicated that North Vietnam would support non-Communist opponents of Diem looking toward the formation of a coalition government in Saigon. North Vietnamese Premier Pham

Van Dong told the Indian chairman of the International Control Commission in early August that events in Laos would eventually be repeated in South Vietnam and Diem would be overthrown, apparently by a coup d'etat rather than by guerrilla action alone, and replaced by a government which would negotiate reunification with North Vietnam.

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BELGIUM PLANS INDEPENDENCE FOR RUANDA-URUNDI IN 18 MONTHS

Belgium has announced a program of rapid political evolution for Ruanda-Urundi, which it administers as a UN trust territory. Under this program, the governmental structures which are being created in both Ruanda and Urundi will be broadened after the elections in the first part of 1961, with the result that each state will receive substantial internal autonomy. Full independence for the two is scheduled for the first half of 1962, with a target date of 1 April. After attaining independence, the two states will decide whether to be separate or to federate.

Belgium professes to hope that by introducing natives into all levels of government, it can avoid the mistakes made in the Congo. However, the low level of political development, the primitive nature of the territory's economy, and continuing tribal tension will probably lead to trouble, in which the UN is likely to become progressively more deeply involved as a re-

sult of its trusteeship responsibility.

Both Ruanda and Urundi have traditionally been ruled by the Batutsi (Watutsi) tribal group. Recently, however, the numerically predominant Bahutu, probably with Belgian support, have begun to contest Tutsi rule. Tensions between the two groups have resulted in a year-long series of riots, raids, and arson in the northern state of Ruanda, where the ethnic divisions are sharpest and the Tutsi are determined to retain control. Order is being maintained by three battalions of Belgian paratroops; however, the Belgian forces are scheduled to leave the territory when it receives independence, and it is doubtful that the indigenous security force now being trained will be willing or able to intervene effectively in future outbreaks.

The problem of Ruanda-Urundi's political backwardness can probably be lessened to some extent

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