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NSC BRIEFING

1 July 1954

SEIZURE OF SOVIET TANKER

- I. on 22 June, two Nationalist DE's well south of Formosa intercepted Soviet tanker, TUAPSE, (bound Shanghai from Black Sea: cargo - 12,000 tons Rumanian kerosene). (Danish-built, 9,000 tons; delivered to USSR 1953 in face US protest based Battle Act).

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**C. Nationalists announced 28 June
cargo unloaded; have indicated
TUAPSE will be released.**

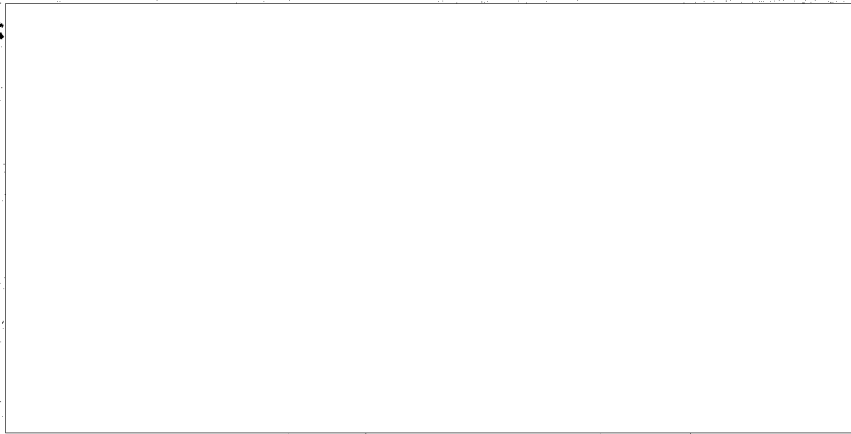
**D. Vessel was still in Nationalist
hands as of _____.**

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D. In mid-afternoon of 24 June, US ambassador Bohlen given note protesting THAPSE's seizure "by the Naval forces of the US," demanding "immediate" return vessel and cargo, punishment "responsible American personnel."

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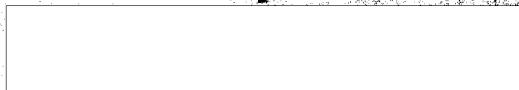
IV. Most significant aspect Soviet reaction to date is note's attempt assign US responsibility seizure.

A. Must have known true identity DE's.

B. Studied omission Nationalists could reflect Soviet embarrassment at action by "Chiang Kai-shek remnant clique."

V. Re. possible Soviet actions, likely that USSR will wait to see whether Nationalists release TUAPSE soon.

A. Could take "appropriate measures" at any time by sending naval escort with vessels near Formosa.



1. Would help restore prestige; also show readiness guard Soviet communications with China.

2. However, would imply willingness risk incidents possibly involving US Navy.

3. Major effort could weaken defensive naval strength in area at critical time.

B. More likely that escort effort, if made, will be small-scale.

1. However, distance from Vladivostok requires escorts be based Chinese ports, where facilities limited.

2. Risk incidents would remain.

C. During wait for release TUAPSE, Soviet propaganda condemns seizure as evidence US desire for conflicts in Far East; calls air surveillance technique for tip-off.

1. On diplomatic level, USSR may request Security Council action, on grounds tanker case indicative US "aggressive intent," threat to peace.
2. If TUAPSE released soon, propaganda line probably will weaken, but continue harp on Nationalist seizure cargo.

[REDACTED]

VI. On balance, believe due prestige considerations and importance economic commitment provide China oil, USSR will not permit indefinite interference with Pacific traffic. Expect tankers now delayed will soon resume voyages, possibly with escort.

A. USSR calculates this would not cause US counteraction.

B. Further calculates that "freedom of seas" doctrine implicit in action would be regarded favorably by most other maritime nations.