

NSC BRIEFING

3 February 1960

KERALA

- I. Coalition of anti-Communist parties in Kerala State scored decisive victory over Communists in elections on 1 February. *With 10 seats still undecided, the*
- A. United front of Congress, Socialist, and Moslem parties won 117 assembly seats, in 127-member state assembly; Communists took only 10.
- B. Serious setback to Communist party in South India.
- C. Congress party, though very close to majority on its own, probably will form coalition government with Praja Socialist party.
- II. New government will have no easy time.
- A. Congress and Socialist leaders--once bitter rivals--probably will be unable to maintain same degree of cooperation in power as they have in opposition.
- B. Kerala's economic problems (unemployment, food shortage, lack of resources) also make it unlikely new government can improve on record of past regimes unless New Delhi pours in extra funds for development.
- III. Communist party will retain considerable potential in Kerala.
- A. Percentage of popular vote for Communists (close to the 35% won in 1957 election) indicates they still have strong hold on lower classes.
- B. Communists will use this point in attempt to lessen damage to their prestige elsewhere in India, particularly in states (West Bengal, Andhra) where they hope to win power through ballot.