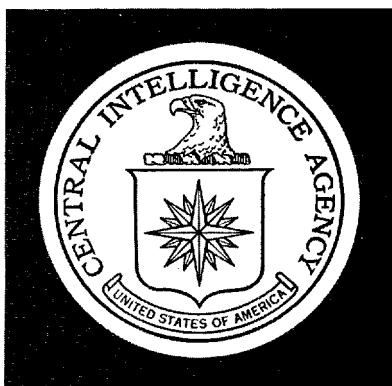


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[South Vietnam: Several heavy engagements in the Mekong Delta highlighted military activity in South Vietnam over the weekend.

Allied forces operating against large-scale Communist troop concentrations and base areas in the northern delta killed more than 300 of the enemy in a series of battles in Vinh Long, Dinh Tuong, and Kien Phong provinces. Moreover, ground exploitation of B-52 strikes west of Can Tho in Phong Dinh Province yielded an additional 29 Viet Cong killed. Allied casualties in all of these actions were light.

Nearer Saigon, the Communists stepped up their terrorist and sabotage activity. Portions of the eastern flank of the Ben Luc bridge southwest of Saigon astride Highway 4--the capital's economic lifeline to the delta--were destroyed by an underwater demolition charge. A pontoon bridge was erected as a temporary bypass, but military and civilian traffic was snarled along approach routes throughout the weekend.

Since 21 August, the Viet Cong have damaged or destroyed nine important bridges in the IV Corps area, four in the past week. Captured documents have placed increased emphasis on the interdiction of overland lines of communication, especially Highway 4, in an effort to strangle Saigon economically by disrupting the flow of vitally needed agricultural products from the delta to the capital. Through their interdiction efforts the Communists also hope to force farmers to rely more heavily on the delta's inland waterways rather than allied-patrolled roadways for the transport of their produce, because this greatly facilitates Viet Cong taxation and control measures.

Elements of three North Vietnamese regiments--the 21st, 31st, and 141st--continued to harass the]

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[allied Special Forces camp at Thuong Duc southwest of Da Nang, but no major ground contacts developed. The allies have launched a multi-battalion sweep operation to relieve the enemy's 10-day siege.



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Czechoslovakia: Statements by Czechoslovak leaders attempting to soften the impact of the recent Moscow communiqué probably will have little effect on the popular impression that the Dubcek leadership has all but caved in to Soviet demands.

[The rather bleak outcome of the talks may have generated a Western press report that the current leadership is about to resign. According to a UPI story of 6 October, high government sources in Prague claim that Dubcek, President Svoboda, Premier Cernik, and National Assembly President Smrkovsky may resign at a plenum to be held sometime this week. Rumors concerning the resignation of the Dubcek leadership have been heard in the past, however, and there is nothing to confirm this latest report.]

Dubcek reportedly was in tears when he embraced Smrkovsky at the airport upon arrival from Moscow just before midnight on 4 October. Only Cernik stopped to comment to reporters, saying the talks had been "very serious, very calm, and without complications." He further claimed that the delegation had pointed to Soviet "shortcomings" in carrying out previous agreements, but made clear that the delegation was reconciled to active Soviet "assistance" in carrying out the "normalization" process.

Details of the communiqué apparently were known in Prague several hours before the delegation returned. Significantly, there was no crowd of Dubcek well-wishers on hand, probably indicating popular dissatisfaction over the outcome of the talks. Should the leadership in fact lose public support or become divided, the Soviets could be expected to make short work of erasing the Dubcek reforms.

On 5 October, Prague radio carried an interview with Czechoslovak Defense Minister Dzur, who expressed optimism over prospects for an early withdrawal of Warsaw Pact troops from Czechoslovakia. Dzur said he counted on the departure of the large majority of these forces before Czechoslovakia's 50th anniversary on 28 October. He qualified this, however, by claiming that much will depend on Prague's implementation of the recent Moscow protocol.

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Peru: The new military government's restraint has helped to avoid strong public reaction, and protest demonstrations are dwindling.

Members of ousted President Belaunde's cabinet have been released from detention. Rumors that other political leaders would be arrested apparently were groundless, although constitutional guarantees have not yet been restored. Most important political groups still criticize the coup, but two have justified it. One of these is a faction of Belaunde's own party which broke with him on 21 September.

25X1 [redacted] the principal extremist student organization has decided to refrain from violence in the belief that the new government is strongly progressive and nationalist, as well as in the hope of preserving university autonomy.

The military government's caution not to alienate the public will help it realize its apparent plans to retain power for some time. A formal notification of its assumption of power sent to the US Embassy mentioned "cordial relations," but there is little indication that the officers expect an early resumption of relations by the US.

The government promptly canceled the agreements which Belaunde had reached last summer with the US-owned International Petroleum Company. It called the agreements "injurious to national interests."

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Chile: The Christian Democrats and the Communists have formed an alliance at the University of Chile that may enable them to gain control of most of the university machinery.

An earlier attempt at cooperation was short-lived, but the Christian Democrats evidently believe that such an alliance is their only way to maintain influence in the university. The Christian Democrats presently control the student federation but have very little strength among the teachers.

The university student federation, headed by a Christian Democrat, joined Communists in riots on 5 October. The US Consulate and the Uruguayan Embassy in Santiago were attacked during the meleé, and the son of Christian Democratic presidential hopeful Radomiro Tomic was injured.

The Communists have cooperated with the more extremist Socialists in the past, and they reportedly wanted to continue this partnership during the convention on university reform that ended on 29 September. The Socialists, however, believed that they had to take an independent position, and their chief participant reportedly was extremely hostile to the Communists.

If the alliance between the Christian Democrats and the Communists holds together, it should score an overwhelming victory in next month's election of new officers for the student federation and may also obtain control of other university bodies. [redacted]

[redacted]

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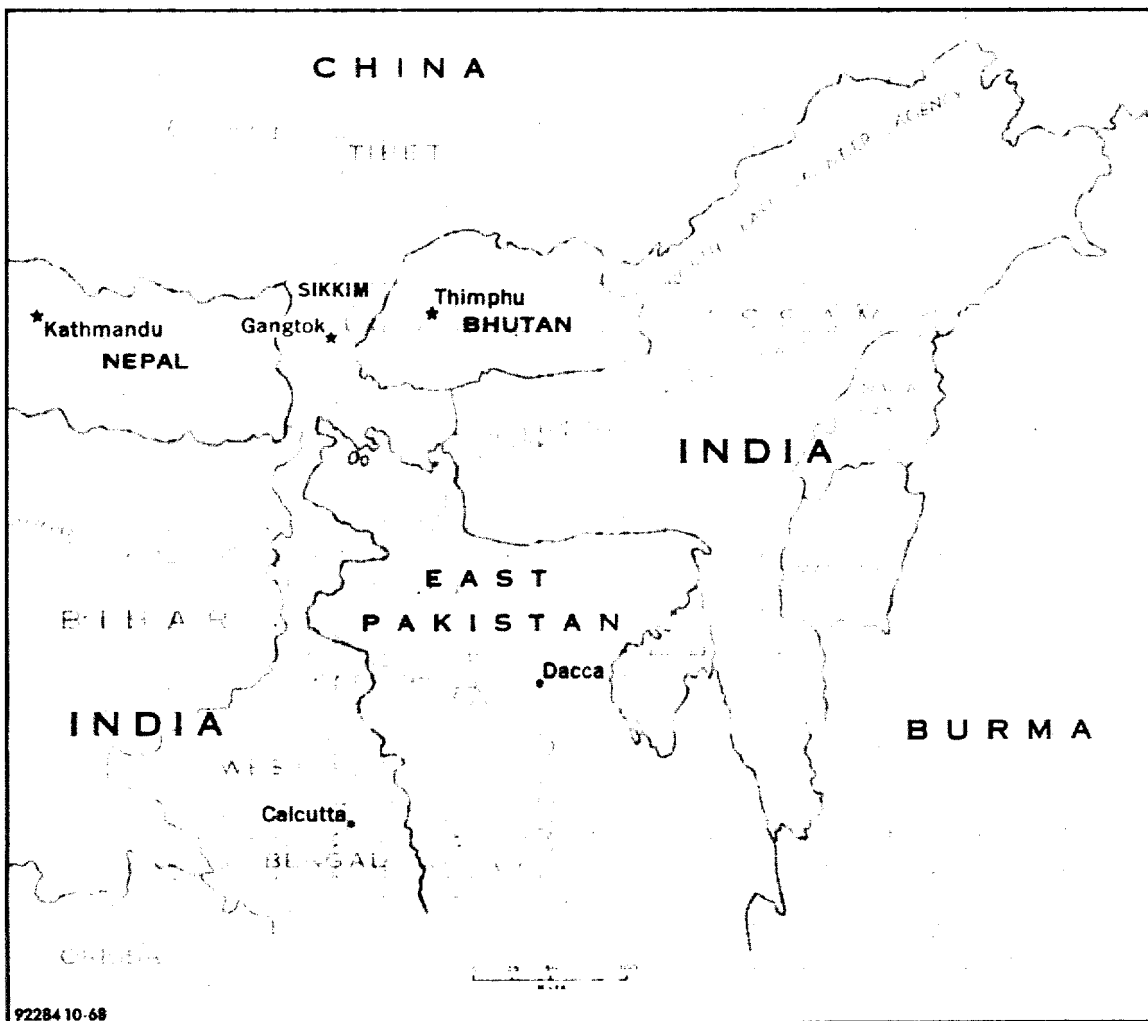
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India-Sikkim: Sikkimese demands for greater autonomy are growing, but they are unlikely to lead to any loosening of India's hold.

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[REDACTED] The Sikkimese resent their protectorate status, which imposes Indian control over Sikkim's defense and foreign relations and has permitted India to place its officials in prominent positions throughout the Sikkimese Government.

Sikkim's ruling maharaja, in his contacts with foreign diplomats, has voiced considerable frustration over the inhibitions imposed on Sikkim by the treaty. Although in September his government officially deplored a small anti-India demonstration in Gangtok, the capital, it probably sympathized with the demonstrators' demand for independence.

India reportedly is willing to loosen its control over Sikkim's internal administration, but the already poor prospects for any broad treaty revision will probably diminish even further in reaction to Sikkimese pressure tactics.

The kingdom's strategic location astride the Tibetan border makes it a vital link in India's border defense against China. Increased Indian attention has been drawn to the region by the recent redeployment of Chinese troops along Sikkim's border and by Indian parliamentary and press allegations of sinister motives behind American scholarly research projects in the Himalayas. In September, India revoked its newly permissive attitude toward travel to Sikkim and is now issuing permits only in exceptional cases. [REDACTED]

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NOTE

Latin America: Terrorist attacks against US personnel and facilities may occur in various Latin American countries this week in commemoration of the first anniversary of Che Guevara's death on 9 October.

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