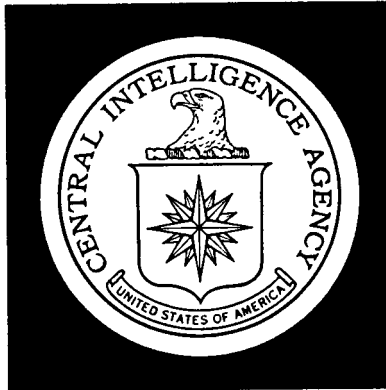


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WEEKLY REVIEW

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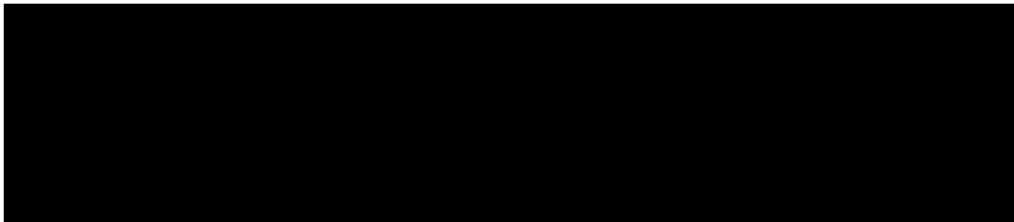
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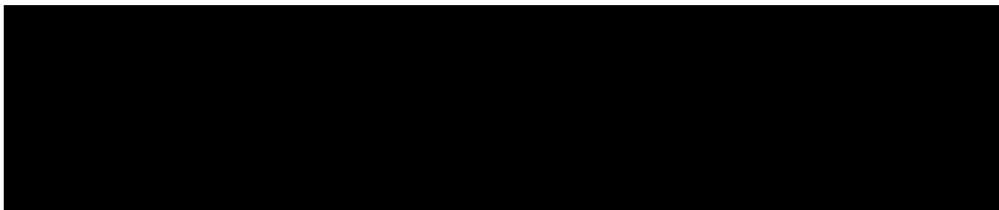
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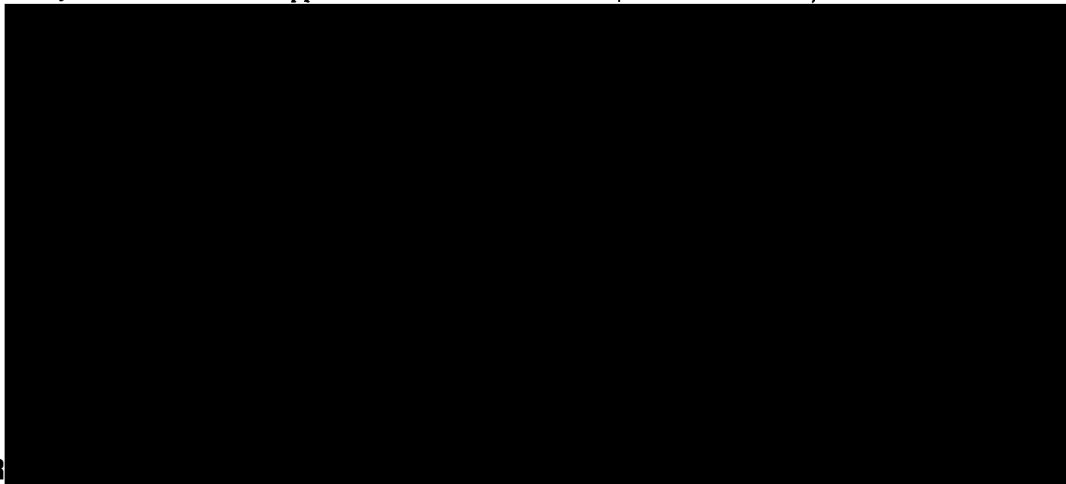


EUROPE



MIDDLE EAST - AFRICA

Ceylon: Soviets Send Supplies as Situation Stalemates (*SECRET SPOKE*) 16



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MIDDLE EAST - AFRICA

Ceylon: *Soviets Send Supplies as Situation Stalemates*

There has been little change in the security situation, with the insurgents avoiding contact with the government forces and the military content to retain a static, defensive posture. Although the government controls the major cities, the rebels apparently hold about ten large areas plus several scattered small pockets throughout the island.

Thus far, government forces have managed to contain major insurgent activity, but it is still possible that an all-out effort by the guerrillas could tilt the balance in their favor.

the Ceylon Communist Party/Peking (CCP/P) and all its front organizations plan to join the insurgent movement around the end of this month.

Even if the small CCP/P were to side openly with the rebels, however, it is unlikely that the insurgents would have the strength required for victory in the near future. There is no evidence that the CCP/P, in making its reported decision to join the insurgents, was acting under orders from Peking.

The insurgents themselves apparently believe their struggle will be a protracted one.

They also hope to gain increased popular support as a result of public and parliamentary criticism of the summary executions of captured insurgents by the security forces. The rebels believe that Sinhalese politicians sympathetic to their cause will play on the theme that the insurgents, sup-

posedly the cream of Sinhalese-Buddhist youth, are being eliminated by "reactionaries" acting in conjunction with Ceylon's Tamil-Hindu minority. The current presence of Indian troops and equipment in Ceylon could lend credibility to such an allegation.

In the initial days of the insurrection Prime Minister Bandaranaike was reportedly suspicious

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of Chinese Communist involvement in the rebellion. On 18 April, however, the Chinese ambassador called on her, and the following day the Government of Ceylon issued a statement denying rumors that a shipment of construction material brought in by the Chinese in connection with the building of the Bandaranaike Memorial Hall in Colombo had sinister implications.

Meanwhile, the power struggle between leftists and moderates within the government has continued. The leftists have regained some ground, after initially being suspected by Prime Minister Bandaranaike of backing the insurgents. Five of the original seven members on a government committee on reconstruction, whom she appointed, are prominent representatives of the far left. She later added two more moderates to the group, however, and at present neither side appears to be dominant. The leftist comeback may be partially a by-product of recently announced Soviet military aid to the government.

The USSR's military airlift—reportedly carrying six MIG-17 jet fighters, two KA-26 light helicopters and an unknown number of armored personnel carriers—is more than half completed. Ten AN-12s and two AN-22 transports are scheduled to deliver the military equipment, the first Ceylon has received from the USSR. Late last year Moscow agreed to provide Ceylon's Air Force with six helicopters under a trade agreement, but Colombo chose instead to rely on Western aircraft, with which Ceylonese personnel were more familiar.

At least 60 Soviet personnel have arrived to assemble the new equipment and to train the

Ceylonese in its use. The immediate practicality of the MIGs is questionable. Although one high-ranking Ceylonese Air Force officer claimed that Soviet personnel will fly combat missions with Ceylonese trainees at their side, an army commander stated that the Ceylonese would not use the MIGs until their own pilots could fly them. If Soviet equipment is to be used effectively in the near future, however, the Soviets or other qualified foreign pilots will probably have to fly the planes. In view of the publicity accorded recent Soviet deliveries, Moscow will probably be reluctant to become prominently involved in quelling the insurgents.

A number of factors presumably influenced the Soviet decision to come to the aid of the Bandaranaike government. Moscow regards the united front government as a distinct improvement over its predecessor and is particularly pleased that it includes the Ceylon Communist Party/Moscow. The Soviets have little sympathy for the tactics of the "Che Guevarists"; Moscow probably feared that the uprising would bring a right-wing reaction that would threaten recent leftist gains. The USSR, moreover, was aware of its vulnerability to charges of complicity with the insurgents because some of the leaders of the movement had studied in Moscow. In making their decision, the Soviets probably were also encouraged by the knowledge that their moves were in line with those of the Indian Government, which has also provided military assistance to Ceylon. They also were probably happy to have the opportunity to establish themselves as an arms supplier, and to offset the credit gained by Western countries in giving prompt support to the Ceylonese.

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