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12 October 1959

Copy No. C 65

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN



DOCUMENT NO. 36
NO CHANGE IN CLASS. X
IS DECLASSIFIED
CLASS. CHANGED TO: 20FO
NEXT REVIEW DATE: 11.17.80
AUTH. NO. 70-2
DATE: 11.17.80 REVIEWER:

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Situation in Ceylon

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[Governor General Goonetilleke, in discussing the political situation in Ceylon with the American ambassador on 8 October, assured him that Prime Minister Dahanayake was sincere in expressing privately to the ambassador his anti-Communist position and his desire to work closely with the West. Goonetilleke appealed strongly for increased American economic aid during the next two "crucial" years. He expressed the belief and hope that Dahanayake would be able to survive the present crisis and last out the remaining 18 months of the government's constitutional term.]

[Goonetilleke's strong endorsement of Dahanayake probably is motivated by fear that his own position as Governor General is secure only as long as the present government remains in office.]

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[Dahanayake's command of a working majority in Parliament remains in doubt. The combined opposition parties have decided to introduce a no-confidence motion when the House of Representatives reconvenes on 27 October. Opposition spokesmen are vigorously protesting the government's continuation of a state of emergency, its stringent censorship regulations, and its failure to reconvene Parliament immediately. Despite their publicly expressed determination to defeat the government, leftist elements apparently continue to be reluctant to face elections and may therefore abstain or absent themselves in sufficient numbers to enable Dahanayake to win the test vote. The prime minister's own divided party is likely to give him nearly unanimous support in order to stay in office.]

[Rumors apparently are widely prevalent in Colombo of a conspiracy behind the recent assassination of former Prime Minister Bandaranaike, implicating certain ministers and high government party officials. The Communist party, which has taken the stand that the government is now completely controlled by "reactionaries," is instructing its branch organizations to spread such rumors so as to undermine public confidence in the new leadership. The maintenance of close press censorship, with any speculation on Bandaranaike's assassination specifically banned, probably is lending substance to reports that members of the government were involved.]

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