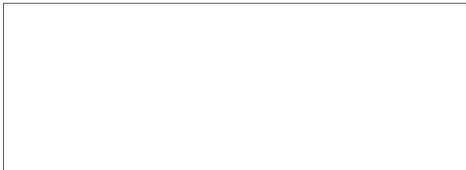


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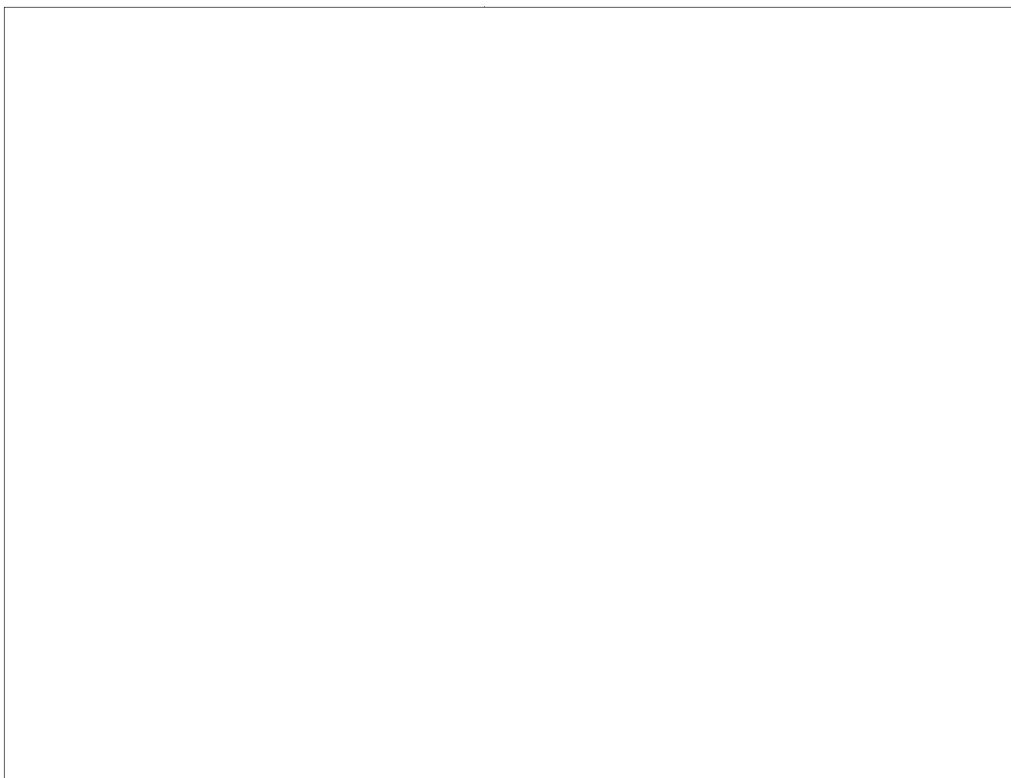


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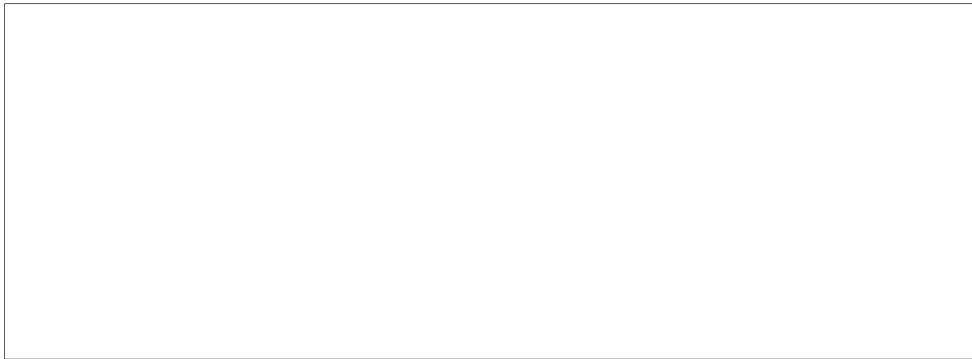
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DATE 12-28-79 REVIEWER:

OFFICE OF CURRENT INTELLIGENCE CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY



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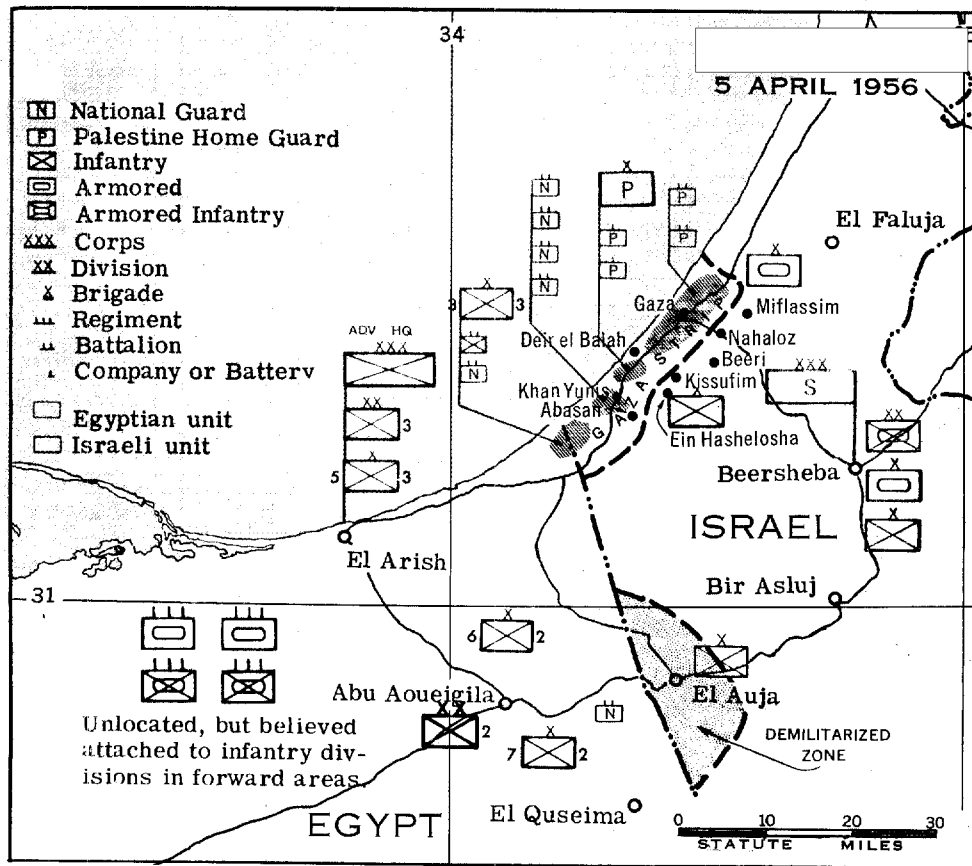
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1. THE FIGHTING ALONG THE GAZA STRIP



A series of armed clashes between Egyptian and Israeli forces along the Gaza strip culminated in a general exchange of small arms, mortar and artillery fire on 5 April. This is the most serious incident in this sector since the Israeli raid on Khan Yunis on 31 August-1 September 1955. While it is possible that Egypt or Israel may find in this incident the occasion for further action which could lead in turn to all-out war, the circumstances suggest that neither side is deliberately seeking war at this time.

During the past week casualties, including fatalities, have become more numerous in the Gaza



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clashes. The latest incident appears to have developed out of the earlier patrol actions in which three Israelis and one Egyptian were killed.

Egypt has charged that, commencing at 0030 on 5 April, Israeli forces opened fire on Egyptian strip settlements of Gaza, Deir el Balah, Khan Yunis, and Abasan. Egyptian forces then claim to have returned the fire and a general exchange took place all along the border throughout the day.

According to an Israeli military spokesman, Egyptian forces early in the morning launched the first of a series of seven attacks against the three Israeli border settlements of Kissufim, Ein Hasheloshah, and Nahaloz. Other reports assert that the settlements of Miflassin and Beerli were also attacked. In each case Egyptian forces withdrew after receiving Israeli fire.

UN truce supervisor General Burns on 5 April ordered a cease-fire by midnight. Earlier on 5 April, Israeli foreign minister Sharett had warned of "grave results" unless Egypt halted its attacks, asserting that Israel "reserved freedom of action in self-defense."

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2. PRAVDA DENOUNCES CRITICISM OF PARTY BY MEMBERS

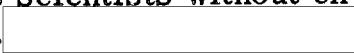
Comment on:



Pravda's latest comment on the anti-Stalin drive indicates that destruction of the Stalin myth has led to criticism of the Communist Party itself.

In an editorial on 5 April, Pravda states that at recent party meetings, including one held in a scientific institute, certain members "utilized inner party democracy to make slanderous statements directed against the party's policy and its Leninist foundations." "Under the guise of condemning the cult of the individual some rotten elements are trying to question the correctness of the party's policy."

According to Pravda, the party permits free discussion of policy but "has never tolerated and will not tolerate petty bourgeois licentiousness, and particularly antiparty statements, in its midst, even if they are few in number."

Pravda's statement of the permissible limits of criticism is an attempt to keep the reaction to the anti-Stalin drive within safe bounds. Criticism of the party is equivalent to criticism of the regime itself. The attack on Stalin is apparently producing more freedom of discussion than the leadership will countenance. The regime faces a dilemma in attempting to stimulate intellectual initiative among such crucial groups as scientists without encouraging criticism of fundamentals. 

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3. FIRST CHINESE COMMUNIST COMMENT ON DENIGRATION OF STALIN

Comment on:



Communist China's first comment on the Soviet re-evaluation of Stalin appears in a 4 April People's Daily editorial based on discussions held at a meeting of the Chinese Communist Party's politburo. The Chinese comment follows, in general, Moscow's justification of its attack on Stalin.


The editorial does not indicate that the Kremlin's denigration of Stalin has created any real problems of party or government policy for Peiping. It calls for "serious" study of the works of Stalin, especially those "correctly summarizing Soviet experience in construction." The Chinese formula has been that Stalin's theories were applied and developed--i. e., altered where necessary--by Mao Tse-tung. In the current comment, Stalin's theories are said to have been "crudely applied" by previously discredited Chinese leaders up to 1935--the year in which Mao became the party's leader.

The editorial suggests that the Chinese Communist Party will not abandon its special treatment of Mao Tse-tung, which has continued since the Soviet party congress. Stalin's "serious mistakes" are said to have derived primarily from his isolation from "the masses," whereas the Chinese party is said to be based firmly on the "mass line." Peiping has justified Mao's personal leadership of the Chinese party in recent months on the ground that he above all other Chinese leaders "feels the pulse of the broad masses."

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4. SOVIET LEADERS ASSIGN TOP PRIORITY TO DISARMAMENT

 At a Kremlin reception on 3 April, Premier Bulganin told the French ambassador and the American chargé that the Soviet government attaches first priority to disarmament. At the same reception, Khrushchev said that "the question of peace, that is to say that of disarmament, takes first place while the German question and all others come next." He expressed agreement with French premier Mollet's published statement that the West had been mistaken in placing German unification ahead of disarmament at the Geneva foreign ministers' conference.

The American chargé believed that the Soviet government is confident that it has made such appealing concessions that the West will find it difficult to avoid discussing them seriously or to reject them. He also suggests that the Soviet leaders believe their new proposal on reduction of conventional armaments will evoke sympathy in the uncommitted areas and among some circles in Europe and, if accepted, will increase Soviet resources for self-development and foreign assistance.

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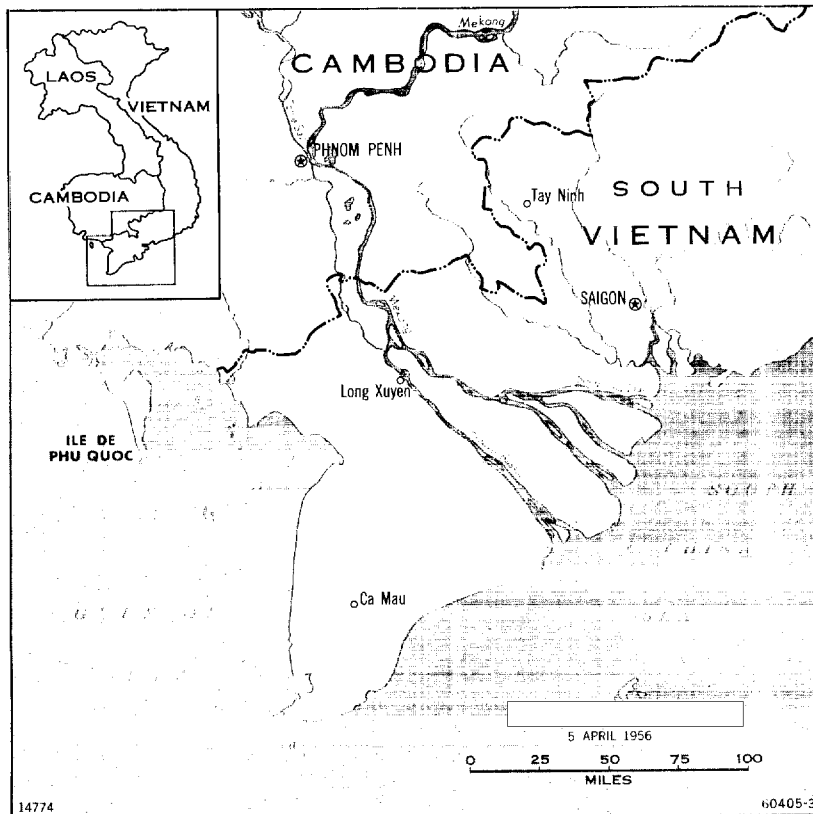
5. DIEM CONSIDERING MILITARY ACTION AGAINST ISLANDS CLAIMED BY CAMBODIA

South Vietnam's President Diem has stated [redacted] that his government probably will soon be involved in a serious controversy with Cambodia over two small islands near Phu Quoc. According to Diem, these islands, which he claims are clearly Vietnamese territory, were occupied recently by Cambodian troops. He is therefore considering sending Vietnamese army elements without warning to drive out the Cambodians.

[redacted]

Comment

Cambodia's claim to the islands is vague and is apparently based on the contention that sovereignty was illegally transferred when Indochina was under French control. Phnom Penh issued a



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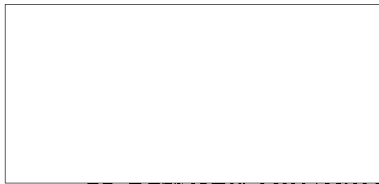
strongly worded communiqué several months ago denouncing Vietnamese intrusion and interference with Cambodian fishing vessels in the area.

Relations between Cambodia and South Vietnam have recently been severely strained as a result of a series of border incidents and bitter recriminations which have led to the closing of the border between the two countries. Phnom Penh, however, last week indicated a willingness to seek a settlement of this dispute. Any military action as proposed by Diem would seriously prejudice the possibility of a settlement and stimulate anti-Western sentiment in Cambodia, where the view is widely held that the Diem government is under Western influence.

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6. LAOTIAN PREMIER URGED TO MEET PATHET LAO LEADER IN HANOI



The Indian chargé in Vientiane is promoting the idea of a "courtesy visit" by Laotian premier Souvanna Phouma to Hanoi as the best means

of settling the Pathet Lao problem, according to Ambassador Yost. The chargé said he felt the Viet Minh would lend its "good offices" for talks in Hanoi between Souvanna Phouma and Pathet Lao leader Prince Souphannouvong. He added that the Viet Minh might well "advise" the Pathets to accept the government's authority in the two northern provinces in return for a government pledge not to participate in military alliances or to permit the presence of foreign military installations or personnel in Laos.

Ambassador Yost believes the Indian diplomat is expressing the views Hanoi wants conveyed to the Laotian government.

Comment

Souvanna Phouma has asserted he will treat any Communist approach with "great circumspection." Unless he feels his government's grievances against the Pathet Lao are adequately taken care of at the forthcoming talks of the Geneva co-chairmen in London, he may be attracted by a Communist offer to settle the problem without reference to the Geneva agreement.

Viet Minh terms for "persuading" the Pathet Lao to relinquish control of the two provinces would presumably include exclusion of American influence in Laos.

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7. POSSIBLE MILITARY OPERATIONS AGAINST DISSIDENTS IN SOUTHWEST CHINA

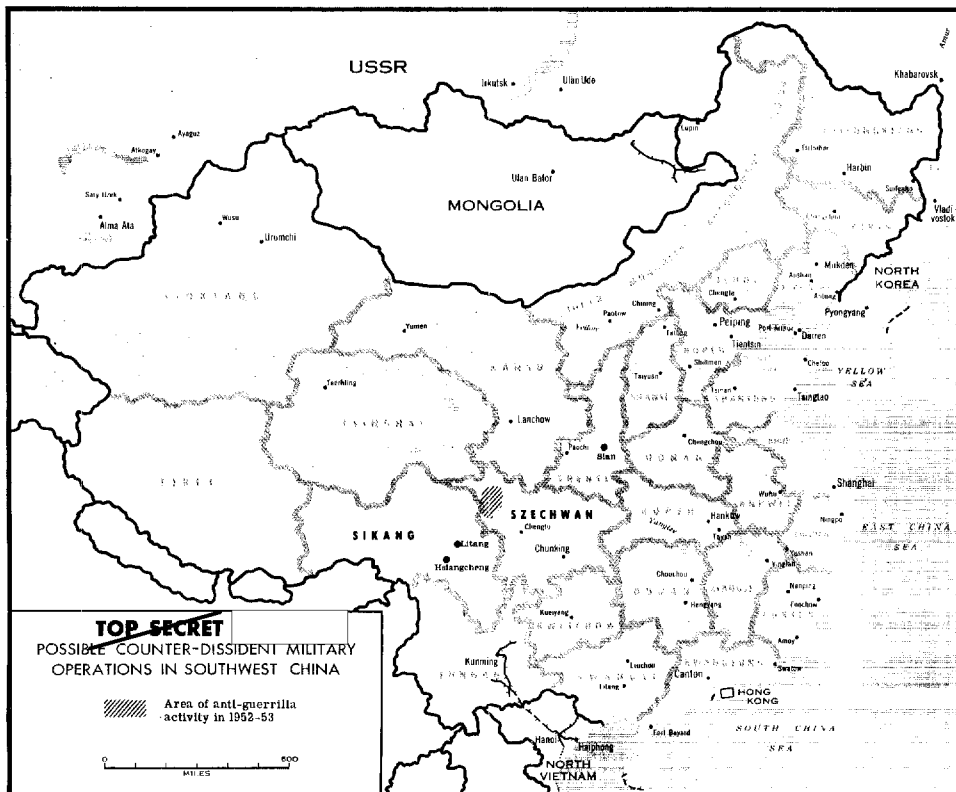
Comment on:

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted] Chinese Communist military forces may have been engaged in action against dissident forces in Southwest China. At least five piston bombers, probably BAT (TU-2) planes, from Sian reported that they had carried out bombing and strafing missions on targets in the village of Hsiangcheng. Ground forces were reported engaged with the "enemy" at Hsiangcheng and Litang.

There is some possibility that the activity reflected co-ordinated air-ground exercises, but several messages seem to indicate combat operations. One of the



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bombers was told on 31 March that it was not necessary again to bomb an "enemy"-held Lama temple which had already been hit, since "the important thing is to intimidate."

Communist ground units claimed that "the enemy was completely destroyed" on 30 March, and no aircraft have been reported in the vicinity since 31 March.

The area involved in this activity is not far from the scene of Communist China's heaviest anti-guerrilla action against Nationalist remnant forces and restive local tribes, which teamed up against the regime in the Szechwan-Sikang border area in 1952. They were not eliminated as an organized force until late in 1953, after Manchurian-based fighters and bombers were moved to the area to support cavalry units in attacks on mountain strongholds.

The Chinese Communists can expect occasional trouble from dissident local tribes and religious sects in western China. It has been rare, however, that such trouble has required strong military countermeasures.

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THE ARAB-ISRAELI SITUATION
(Information as of 1700, 5 April)

See item 1, page 3, for comment on Egyptian-Israeli fighting along the Gaza strip.

Israeli regular units have been withdrawn from the Lebanese border during the past two weeks, according to the Lebanese chief of staff. A similar Israeli withdrawal from the Syrian frontier was reported previously. These movements may indicate that Israel is more immediately concerned over possible action along the Egyptian border.

Four Soviet bloc mine craft and a Polish merchant vessel, suspected of being en route to Egypt, have been reported west of Ireland. The mine craft probably are ex-Soviet T-43 class mine sweepers known to have been ordered under the Egyptian-Soviet bloc arms deal. They are equipped for both mine sweeping and laying, and often operate as escort vessels as well.

The Egyptian naval attaché in Poland has stated that, in addition to some 200 Egyptian naval personnel who have received training in Poland, approximately the same number are training in Czechoslovakia and the USSR.

the Egyptian list of requirements for additional Soviet bloc arms includes 55,000 rifles and 25,000 submachine guns as well as the previously reported 40 MIG fighter aircraft and at least 20 light jet bombers. A new program is being worked out for the training in Czechoslovakia of Egyptian technical personnel in the maintenance and servicing of bloc aircraft.

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