



DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
BRIEFING MEMORANDUM

7507161

S/S

*bypass*

APR 10 1975

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To: P - Mr. Sisco

From: NEA - Harold H. Saunders, Acting

Sikkim

The reports of trouble in Sikkim come as no surprise. It has been clear for more than a month that forces supporting Sikkimese Chief Minister Dorji and those behind the Chogyal were moving toward a showdown. According to press reports, India has now forcibly disarmed the Palace Guards, the last vestige of real power left to the Chogyal; and we believe it probable his days are numbered.

Shortly before the amendment to the Indian constitution making Sikkim an associate state went into effect March 1, the Chogyal generated considerable criticism by his comments in Kathmandu (where he attended King Birendra's coronation as a personal guest). He charged that Sikkim did not have a fully responsible government and declared he would leave "no stone unturned" in seeing Sikkim's separate identity preserved.

With steadily increasing antagonism, the Sikkim Congress first staged demonstrations against his return to Sikkim, then called several times for his removal. Chief Minister Dorji also forbade members of the government from meeting with the Chogyal and refused to talk with him directly. There have also been charges that the Chogyal's Palace Guard was being used to undermine Dorji or even to assassinate him. India's Foreign Secretary Kewal Singh recently visited Gangtok and the GOI subsequently warned the Chogyal not to "interfere" with the democratic process in Sikkim.

We have no information on a "coup" attempt reported in a ham radio broadcast from the Sikkim


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Palace and picked up in Tehran. Our guess is that the broadcast may have been an effort by the Chogyal to generate international support to forestall the disarming of his guard. We assume Delhi will be reporting fully when the facts become clearer.

We can expect some press and Congressional interest here if the Chogyal is in fact removed, especially because his wife, the former Hope Cooke, is in the U.S. (She has made informal inquiries through intermediaries regarding procedures for her to remain here). There has been a steady stream of correspondence, for example, from a group called the Friends of Sikkim (Senator Pell and Congressman Symington are sponsors) urging us to raise the Sikkim affair at the UN. We have held to the line that we are not involved in this problem and see no reason to change our position in light of current developments.

Drafted:NEA/INS:RDL:orton:mmk  
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*Edwin* **INS** **NEA**

7507162



DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
BRIEFING MEMORANDUM

S/S **ASK**

APR 10 1975

*14/21*

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

To: P - Mr. Sisco

From: NEA - Alfred L. Atherton, Jr.

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*4/7/75*

SIKKIM

Further on Sikkim. The GOI seems to be moving quickly toward full absorption. The Sikkim Assembly is reportedly seeking to abolish the monarchy and to gain full Indian statehood. The Assembly has also apparently promised to put the question to some kind of referendum, but whether the Chogyal can hang on in Gangtok until then is a moot question. He may now be under some form of house arrest and the GOI will likely come down hard on him. In fact, in a meeting with Spike Dubs this afternoon, Indian DCM Eric Gonsalves said he expected the Chogyal to be removed and Sikkim fully merged with India quickly.

On an urgent basis we are reviewing the policy implications of such a development and preparing contingency press guidance as well as talking points for responding to Congressional inquiries. We are also looking into how we might handle a possible request for political asylum in the U.S. by the Chogyal.

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Drafted: NEA/INS:R [signature] ton:ei  
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**BY S/S-I**