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24 April 1961

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CENTRAL

INTELLIGENCE

BULLETIN



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24 April 1961

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN

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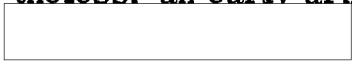
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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN

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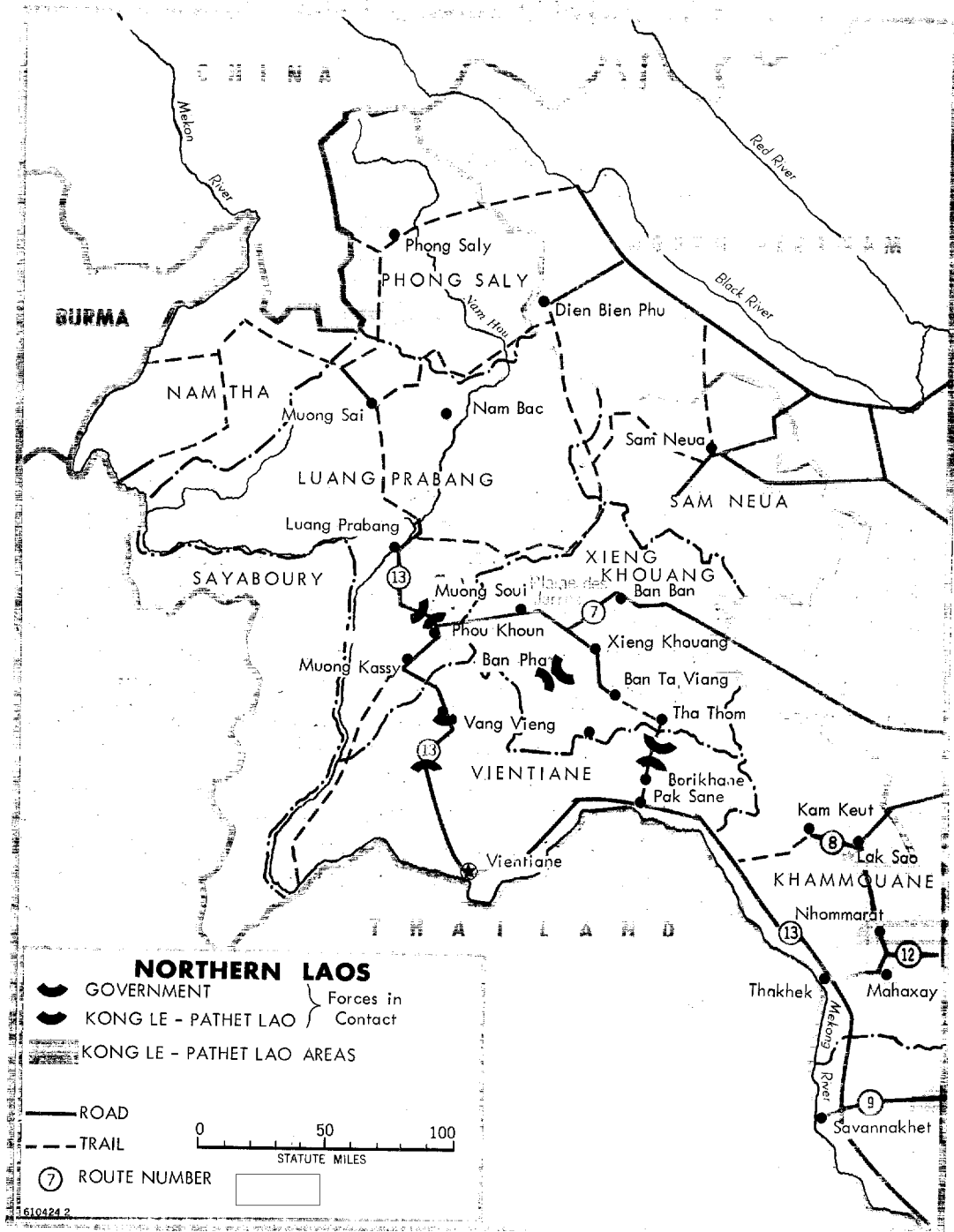
DAILY BRIEF

*France: (Information as of 0430 EST) French military insurgent control has been extended to most of Algeria and government fears that the insurrection will spread to metropolitan France have increased. [A relatively small insurgent force could seize the centers of power in Paris and there is doubt that regular security and police forces in France could be relied on for active opposition to French army units.] The government's claim on 23 April that a paratroop attack on Paris from Algeria was imminent and its arming of some civilian volunteer defenders were probably intended primarily to galvanize public sentiment against the insurrection and demonstrate to the army De Gaulle's widespread popular backing. Nevertheless, an early army move against Paris remains possible.



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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN

Map Page

Congo: In the follow-up constitutional talks which are scheduled to begin today at Coquilhatville in Equateur Province, President Kasavubu and Congolese factions represented in the Leopoldville government appear determined to press Tshombé to agree to a tighter federal structure for the Congo than envisaged at Tananarive. [Tshombé's personal position has weakened significantly since the March conference, and he is also under increasing pressure from Brussels to adopt a less provocative attitude toward the UN.] Representatives of the Stanleyville regime are not expected to attend the Coquilhatville talks.

No

(Page 3) (Map)

Laos: [The government stronghold of Vang Vieng on Route 13 has been taken by Kong Le - Pathet Lao forces. Vang Vieng's fall followed a well-coordinated enemy offensive both north and south of Phou Khoun junction. Government troops to the north of Phou Khoun fell back initially but, according to subsequent reports, rallied to retake their lost positions.]

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[The Soviet request that the issuance of a cease-fire appeal, invitations to a conference, and an approach to Nehru on reacting the ICC be delayed until today apparently was intended to give Chinese leaders time to talk with Souvanna Phouma, who arrived in Peiping on 22 April.]

The scheduling of Soviet transports for flights into Laos was resumed on 23 April. No airlift sorties into Laos were noted on 22 April.

(Page 5) (Map)

Cuba: The Swiss Embassy in Havana has reported that a large part of the population there is armed and in a fanatical mood and that massacres could occur if passions continued to rise. A number of American citizens have sought Swiss protection, and the Swiss are consulting the Canadian and British ambassadors on the possibility of negotiating the Americans' evacuation. The report, passed to the US Embassy in Bern on 22 April, noted that the situation in Cuba is graver than can

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be seen from outside. Several hundred American citizens elected to remain in Cuba after the United States severed diplomatic relations with the Castro regime last January. [redacted]

[redacted] Unconfirmed reports received by the Swiss Embassy in Havana state that the Cuban Government has arrested about 20,000 persons, [redacted]

[redacted] authorities in Camaguey Province alone had seized 5,000 people, including 43 priests. A growing number of Latin American chiefs of state, including the presidents of Mexico and Venezuela, are urging the Castro government to treat its political prisoners with clemency. [redacted]

Khrushchev's letter to President Kennedy on 22 April referred to the US presence there "against the clearly expressed wish of the Cuban people and government." This is probably intended to suggest that the USSR would support any Cuban demand that the US relinquish its base at Guantanamo. [redacted]

[redacted]

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French Military Revolt Spreads

[All regular communications with Algeria were out 22-23 April, but a member of Debré's personal staff admitted on 23 April that only two enclaves near Oran--an army base at Tlemcen and the large naval base at Mers-el-kebir--remain outside insurgent control. Admiral Querville, French naval commander in the Mediterranean, is reported to be in sympathy with the insurgent leaders, but he is not thought to have turned the Mers-el-kebir base over to them. The list of units which the insurgents claim as actively adhering to the revolt total about a quarter of total army strength in Algeria and appears to include practically all the units which have been engaged in active operations.]

Several key military personnel in Algeria including the Air Force Commander General Bigot have apparently joined the revolt. Army General Jean-Marie Gouraud, the Constantine Army Corps commander, is quoted by Algiers radio as having turned all units under his command over to the insurgents. General Andre Petit, deputy Saharan commander, is reported openly participating on the side of the insurgents. Some of the colonels who participated in previous extremist activity against the government slipped back to Algeria in time to join the rising. General Salan, the only one of the four coup leaders not in Algeria when it was first launched, has reportedly reached Algiers from Spain.

There is at present no specific evidence of political involvement in the insurrection. [Several reports state that Challe and the other military leaders claim that they want only to force De Gaulle to modify his Algerian policy but, if forced to depose him, would install a government composed of rightist political figures. Most often mentioned for high government posts are former Gaullist Jacques Soustelle, ex-Premier Georges Bidault, and several rightist Socialist leaders who favor French retention of Algeria. The military reportedly would limit themselves to a few key cabinet posts.]

In France, a number of high ranking officers are reported in sympathy with the insurgents, but at present none has openly identified himself with Algiers. Both General Olie, the Chief of Staff for National Defense and Louis Joxe, Minister for Algerian Affairs, have reportedly urged De Gaulle to move

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cautiously against the revolt as a result of their brief visit to Algeria. De Gaulle, however, appears determined to maintain his uncompromising stand against the insurgent leaders and the government has reportedly started planning a blockade of Algeria. A government official has estimated [redacted] that Algeria could hold out for 15 days on its present stocks. }
 [redacted]

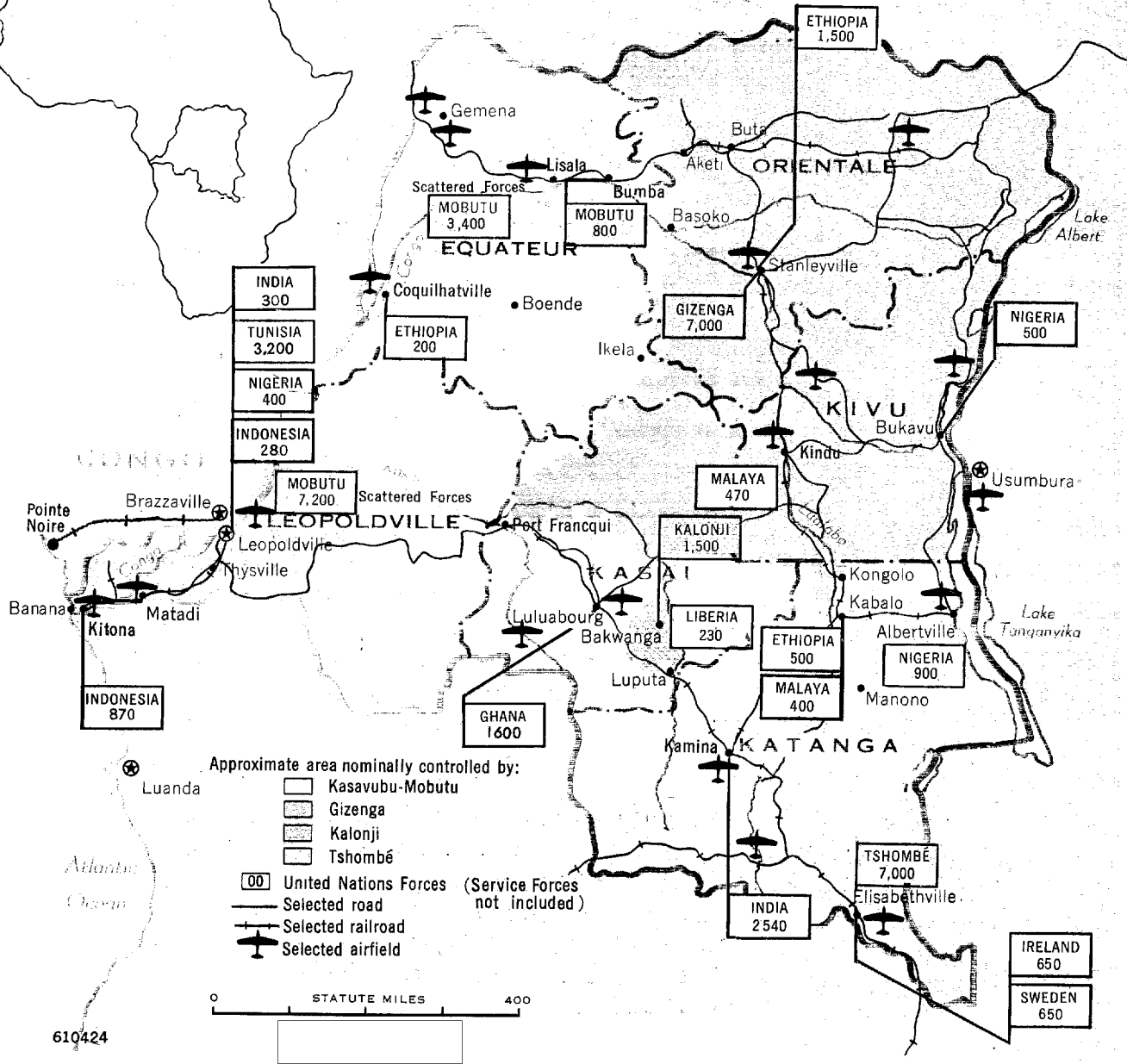
Immediate concern in Paris, however, has focused on the possibility of a paratroop invasion from Algeria, where there is probably sufficient air transport for this purpose. Air Force General Andre Puget, acting Chief of Staff for National Defense, said [redacted] that 5000 men could take the key government ministries. Puget said he felt there would be no violent public reaction to such a move and that neither military nor security forces in France would oppose it. }

It was probably to guard against such a rapid takeover, as well as for psychological reasons, that the Ministry of Interior announced the issuing of arms to civilian volunteers. The volunteers were urged to ready themselves for action against a paratroop attack. Representatives of nearly all major parties rallied to the government although Interior officials reportedly tried to limit arms distribution to known members of the Gaullist Union for the New Republic. The apparent success of these first attempts by De Gaulle to consolidate his vast but amorphous public support probably more than offsets the risks inherent in the creation of a "citizen's army. "

Meanwhile communist leaders have issued calls to other leftist groups urging unity of action in demonstrations against the insurrection. The free trade unions have thus far, however, been reluctant to do more than make similar, but separate, strike calls. A one-hour stoppage throughout France has been called by the major unions for 11 EST today. [redacted]
 [redacted]

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Republic of the Congo



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~~SECRET~~Situation in the Congo

[Katanga's President Tshombé is showing increasing anxiety over the official Belgian attitude toward his regime as the new government of the Social Christian (Catholic) and Socialist parties prepares to take over in Brussels, probably this week. Long unhappy over Belgium's failure to give him unqualified backing, he now apparently fears that Brussels is moving toward closer support of the Leopoldville government at Katanga's expense.]

[redacted] Tshombé [redacted] would be greatly disturbed by Belgium's resumption of full diplomatic relations with the central government. Discussions on this matter now are in an advanced stage and, according to the Belgian counselor in Washington, will probably bear fruit before mid-June. Tshombé in effect accused Brussels of planning to "stab him in the back" and threatened to follow the advice of anti-Belgian members of his regime, some of whom reportedly are pressing for the replacement of Belgian advisers with French nationals.]

[redacted] the new government headed by Prime Minister Lefevre would attempt to nudge Tshombé toward closer alignment with Leopoldville while supporting long-term policies designed to enable the central government ultimately to exercise its authority over Katanga. At the same time, Brussels will try to avoid precipitating Tshombé's downfall since Belgian officials are convinced that chaos and disorder would result. Early measures being contemplated include withdrawal of certain key Belgian advisers and the appointment of a more energetic consul general in Elisabethville.]

[Paul Henri Spaak, who is expected to be the new Belgian foreign minister, has already indicated he intends to exercise tighter control over Belgian activities in the Congo by absorbing the Ministry of African Affairs into the Foreign Ministry. He]

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{reportedly also hopes to force Belgian firms with holdings in the Congo to cooperate in channeling all Belgian aid and financial support through the central government in Leopoldville.)

{Meanwhile, the Sudanese UN contingent, originally totaling 394 men, has returned to Khartoum. The withdrawal was ordered early last month after Sudanese troops were forced out of Matadi by Mobutu's elements of the Congolese Army. However, the Sudan, while critical of the UN's handling of the Matadi incident, continues to support the over-all UN effort in the Congo. Sudanese officials have indicated that after a suitable period a new and better trained unit would be assigned to the UN operation.)

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Situation in Laos

{Government troops that withdrew from Vang Vieng shortly after midnight of 22 April, after being under heavy enemy attack all day, now are moving southward. Stocks of POL and ammunition were destroyed prior to the withdrawal. Vientiane is sending several companies of troops northward to reinforce defensive positions some distance south of Vang Vieng.}

{A government rout north of Phou Khoun junction on 22 April apparently was forestalled only by the commander's threat to turn his artillery on his own men if they fell back farther. Government troops in this area now are planning a diversionary attack to assist the forces withdrawing southward from Vang Vieng.}

{In Luang Prabang Province and southern Nam Tha Province, increased enemy military activity was apparent on 21 April. These probing actions, although possibly only a temporary show of force, may presage more widespread enemy activity in these areas in the near future. Kong Le - Pathet Lao forces are also continuing their pressure on government troops south of the Plaine des Jarres. In the Thakhek area of central Laos, no recent change in the military situation has been reported.}

{After Soviet officials had agreed with the British ambassador to issue on 22 April a cease-fire appeal, invitations to a conference, and an approach to Nehru on reactivating the ICC, Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister Pushkin requested that action be deferred until 24 April, ostensibly to give the USSR additional time to inform interested posts.}

The communiqué issued on 22 April at the end of Souvanna's visit to Moscow noted that "real conditions now exist to normalize the situation in Laos." The general line the USSR will take in the forthcoming negotiations was foreshadowed in the statement that both "governments" agreed that a political settlement should be based on the Geneva Agreements of 1954; the Vientiane agreements of 1956-57, which governed the "integration" of the Pathet Lao into the Laotian government and armed forces; and the joint

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statement by Souvanna and Neo Leo Hak Sat leader Prince Souphannouvong of November 1960, which outlined the principles of a neutral policy for Laos.

The communiqué also expressed the USSR's readiness to extend economic and technical assistance to Laos and announced that Moscow will build a hospital and a radio station in Laos as a gift to the Laotian people. [In a talk with the Canadian ambassador in Moscow, Souvanna confirmed that the USSR had promised economic aid.]

The USSR also won Souvanna's endorsement of Soviet positions on peaceful coexistence, Cuba, disarmament, liquidation of colonialism, and the admission of Communist China to the United Nations. [redacted]

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