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9 January 1961



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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN



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9 JANUARY 1961

I. THE COMMUNIST BLOC

II. ASIA+AFRICA

Situation in Laos.

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Situation in the Congo.

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Jordan seeking financial aid from Iraq.

③

III. THE WEST

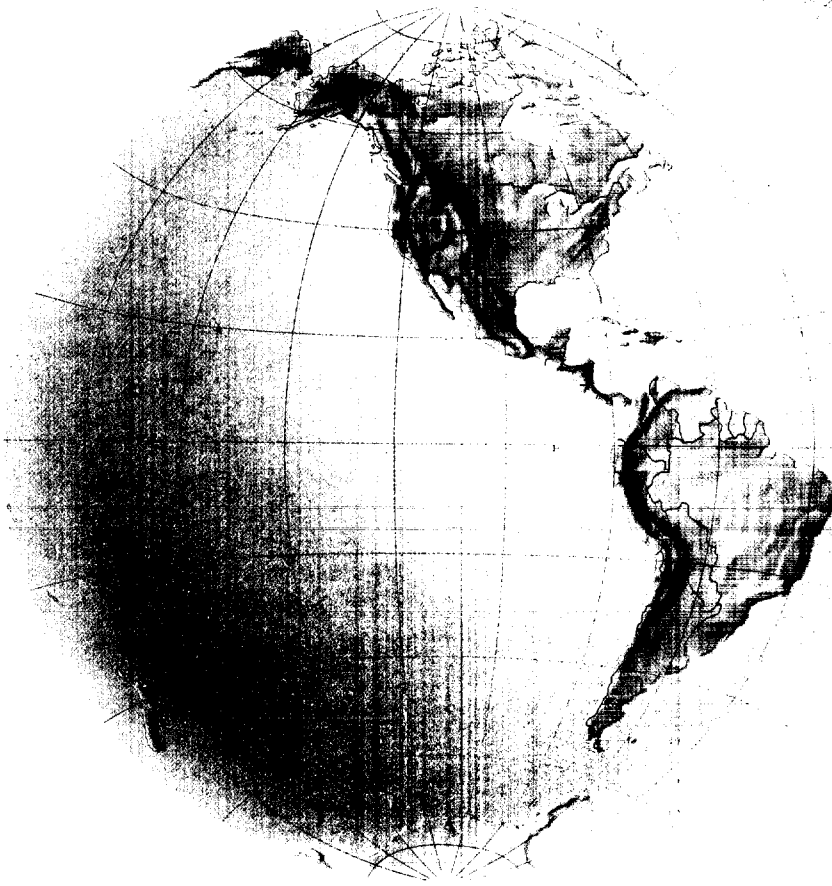
Belgian strikes gradually receding.

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LATE ITEM

Referendum voters approve De Gaulle's Algerian policy.

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN

9 January 1961

DAILY BRIEF

I. THE COMMUNIST BLOC

II. ASIA-AFRICA

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Laos: The fall of Nam Bac to the Pathet Lao increases the threat to Luang Prabang, although the royal capital does not appear to be in any immediate danger. [Government troops meanwhile have secured the junction between the Vientiane - Luang Prabang road and the road running eastward toward the Plaine des Jarres. Little fighting has been reported in Xieng Khouang Province as government troops continue their withdrawal to a reassembly point south of Xieng Khouang town.] In contrast to press reports alleging that the USSR had stopped its airlift to the Kong Le - Pathet Lao forces with the investiture of the Boum Oum government on 5 January, North Vietnamese communications reflected the flights of 16 of 20 scheduled aircraft for 6 and 7 January and the scheduling of six IL-14 flights from Hanoi to Vang Vieng and five to Sam Neua for 8 January.

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modified*

Bloc propaganda coverage of the Laotian situation continues to claim widespread victories for the Pathet Lao, while Moscow obscures the question of the Soviet airlift by asserting that the United States is unable to convince its allies that the USSR is transporting military personnel into Laos.

[Page 1] (Map)

Congo: The Gizenga dissidents appear to have assumed control of the governmental apparatus in Kivu Province, and continue to reinforce their military forces in the area. [] Arms and money which formed part of the cargo of an IL-14 from the UAR were delivered to Gizenga at Stanleyville on 6 January. [] There are indications that northern Katanga--largely controlled by anti-Tshombé

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Baluba tribesmen--may be receptive to overtures by the dissidents. In a conversation with a UN military commander, Baluba leaders recently reiterated their opposition to Tshombé, called for the return of Baluba leader Jason Sendwe from "exile" in Leopoldville, and demanded assurances that their tribal areas would remain part of a united Congo rather than of Tshombé's "independent" state.

In an apparent effort to capitalize on anticolonial themes which were expressed at the recently concluded Casablanca conference of radical African states, Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister Zorin on 7 January called for a meeting of the UN Security Council as soon as possible to discuss "new acts of aggression" by Belgium against the Congo. [redacted]

Iraq-Jordan: Jordan, which extended recognition to Qasim's Iraqi regime in October 1960, is now seeking financial assistance from Iraq, according to diplomatic circles in Baghdad. Qasim is reported to be favorably disposed toward the request but has not yet made a final decision. Financial aid to Jordan probably would arouse considerable opposition among the Iraqis, many of whom disapprove of the re-establishment of Iraqi-Jordanian relations because they view it as aligning Iraq and Jordan against the UAR. [redacted] (Page 3) OK

III. THE WEST

Belgium: The Socialist-led strikes which have crippled much of Belgium for almost three weeks appear to be gradually receding and now remain concentrated largely in the Walloon areas of the south and the port of Antwerp. There is growing concern on all sides over the revival of old antagonisms between linguistic and economic groups engendered by the strikes which threaten to become more acute as the strike action is prolonged. Negotiations are continuing for a compromise, but Prime Minister Eysken's Social Christian - Liberal government has given no indication OK

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that it intends to agree to Socialist demands to withdraw its controversial austerity program. The lower chamber of parliament reconvenes on 10 January to resume debate on the measure. [redacted] (Page 4)

LATE ITEM

*France-Algeria: De Gaulle is expected to consider the referendum vote as a mandate to accelerate his search for an early solution of the Algerian problem. Three-fourths of the voters in metropolitan France voted their approval; in Algeria, many Moslems abstained from the balloting, but incomplete tallies indicate that a clear majority of the voters had approved. De Gaulle may soon make another offer to the rebels in terms less rigid than before, perhaps waiving his previous insistence that a negotiated cease-fire precede political discussions. Although rightist opposition leader Jacques Soustelle has warned that the European settlers in Algeria will regard the vote in France as "abandonment," the key to any successful settler opposition to defy De Gaulle or to delay his next move remains the attitude of the army. [redacted] The army has maintained discipline thus far, but its morale is reported to have sagged as a result of De Gaulle's recent swift policy moves.)

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Algerian rebel leaders are to meet in Tunis tomorrow to consider their next moves in light of the referendum. [redacted]

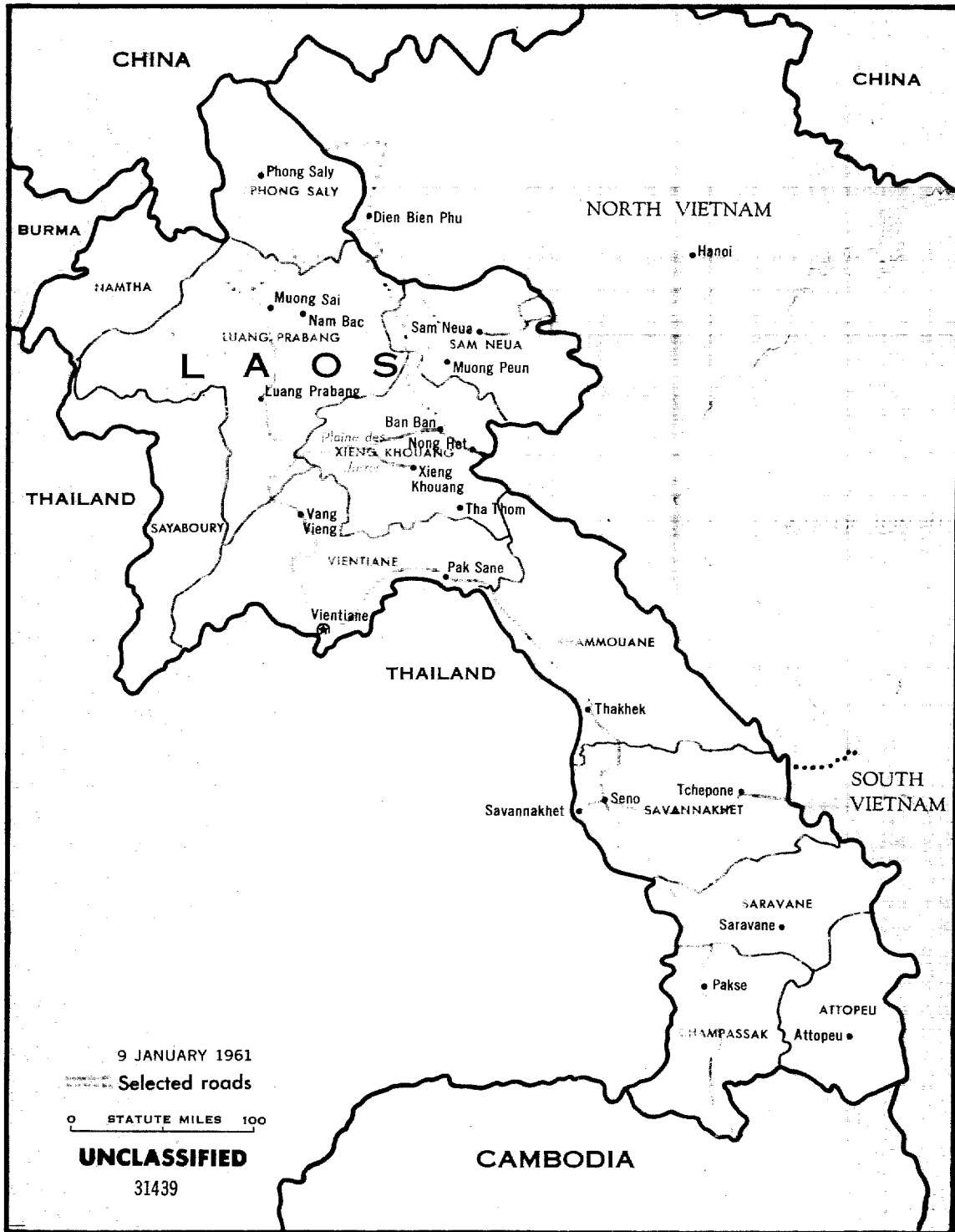
[redacted]

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DAILY BRIEF

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~~SECRET~~Situation Laos

The loss of Nam Bac village to the Pathet Lao increases the threat to Luang Prabang, although the royal capital does not appear to be in any immediate danger. Control of Nam Bac will enable the Pathet Lao to proceed down the Hou River toward Luang Prabang, 55 miles south. [Laotian defense officials anticipate, however, that the Pathet Lao will first move on Muong Sai, 30 miles to the west of Nam Bac, which would pose a threat to the Pathet Lao rear in any attack on Luang Prabang by way of the Hou River. The government plans to send general Ouane to Muong Sai to set up defenses there.]

[Five government companies meanwhile have secured the junction between the Luang Prabang - Vientiane road and the road running eastward to the Plaine des Jarres. The government force apparently met no resistance; however, there are indications it is already coming under Pathet Lao harassment. In Xieng Khouang Province, little fighting has been reported in the past two days. Government troops are withdrawing southward from the Nong Het - Plaine des Jarres road. Col. Kham Kong has been assigned to command a task force whose mission is to retake the Plaine des Jarres. His headquarters will be at Pak Sane, but he plans to establish a command post at Tha Thom. Preparations for a drive against the Plaine des Jarres will take considerable time as it will be necessary to regroup the scattered government forces available for such a mission and resupply them by air.]

In contrast to press reports alleging that the USSR had stopped its airlift to the Kong Le - Pathet Lao forces, with the investiture of the Boun Oum government on 5 January, [redacted] the flights of 16 of 20 scheduled aircraft for 6 and 7 January and the scheduling of six IL-14 flights from Hanoi to Vang Vieng and five to Sam Neua for 8 January. North Vietnamese LI-2s were also scheduled for flights on the same day to Vang Vieng and Sam Neua. [redacted]

On 5 January Izvestia, in Moscow's first reference to the Soviet airlift, charged that US allegations the USSR was carrying

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military personnel from North Vietnam to Pathet Lao forces was "imperialist propaganda" and that the US was unable to convince SEATO allies of the validity of this accusation.

In Phnom Penh, Souvanna Phouma does not appear disposed to accept King Savang's offer of an early audience in Luang Prabang. Although he has as yet not given a final answer, Souvanna's initial reaction was that he would not return to Laos until a coalition government was possible. He has long believed that the only solution to Laos' problems is a reconciliation between the Pathet Lao, centrist, and rightist forces. (Souvanna is reported to have told one of his fellow exiles in Phnom Penh that he would not tender his formal resignation as premier, since the installation of the Boun Oum government automatically removed him from that office. Although this position is technically correct, Souvanna's failure to resign formally facilitates the bloc's maintenance of the fiction that his government remains the "lawful government of Laos," as does a statement attributed to him by the press that the Boun Oum regime was imposed by force.)

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~~CONFIDENTIAL~~Jordan Seeking Financial Aid From Iraq

Iraqi Prime Minister Qasim is favorably disposed toward a Jordanian request for financial assistance, according to information from the Lebanese ambassador in Baghdad who until recently handled Jordanian affairs there. The amount and terms of the aid sought were not disclosed. Qasim reportedly has not made a final decision on the matter.

Iraqi aid to Jordan probably would arouse considerable opposition among many Iraqis who are displeased over the rapprochement with Jordan, which they view as aligning Iraq against the UAR. Qasim, however, may consider that benevolence toward Jordan would enhance his prestige as an impartial Arab leader amid apparently rising pan-Arab sentiment in Iraq. A progovernment Baghdad newspaper has referred to possible efforts by the Iraqi Government to eliminate differences between the UAR and Jordan.

The Jordanian Government is preoccupied with the UAR's threat to its security and with its perennial financial problems. The Jordanians apparently hope Qasim will be helpful in both of these situations. King Husayn's regime swallowed its outrage over the murder of Husayn's Hashemite relatives in the Iraqi revolution of 1958 and recognized Qasim's regime in October 1960. Since then gradual progress has been made in re-establishing relations between the two countries.

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~~CONFIDENTIAL~~Belgian Strike Situation

The three-week-old Socialist-led strikes which have crippled much of Belgium appear to be gradually receding and now remain concentrated largely in the Walloon areas of the south and the port of Antwerp. An early end to the work stoppages in the "red belt" of the industrial south is not expected, however, because of the 7 January vote by the Socialist-controlled General Federation of Belgian Workers to continue the strikes.

Prime Minister Eyskens' Social Christian - Liberal government remains determined to proceed with parliamentary considerations of its controversial austerity program--the omnibus bill--and the lower chamber will reconvene on 10 January to resume debate on the measure. Eyskens has indicated he is prepared to return the bill to committee with certain conciliatory amendments after its debate in the chamber, but he has refused to agree to Socialist demands to withdraw the bill. He has the support of the powerful Roman Catholic trade union federation which has refused to support the strikes.

Efforts to mediate the strikes are continuing, but there has been little basis for negotiation because of the refusal of both sides to retreat from their basic positions. In this stalemated situation the Belgian press is mentioning increasingly the possibility of new elections this spring after the austerity legislation is passed or a reorganization of the government.

The prolonged strikes have also served to revive antagonisms between linguistic and economic groups and created breaches which may be difficult to heal. On 3 January, Walloon Socialist deputies, meeting without their Flemish and Brussels colleagues, for the first time in the party's history adopted a resolution implying support for an autonomous French-speaking Walloon area within a federal state. The Walloon representatives maintain that the steadily deteriorating economic situation in southern Belgium is attributable to government policies which favor the Flemish-speaking north.

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