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20 April 1961

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN



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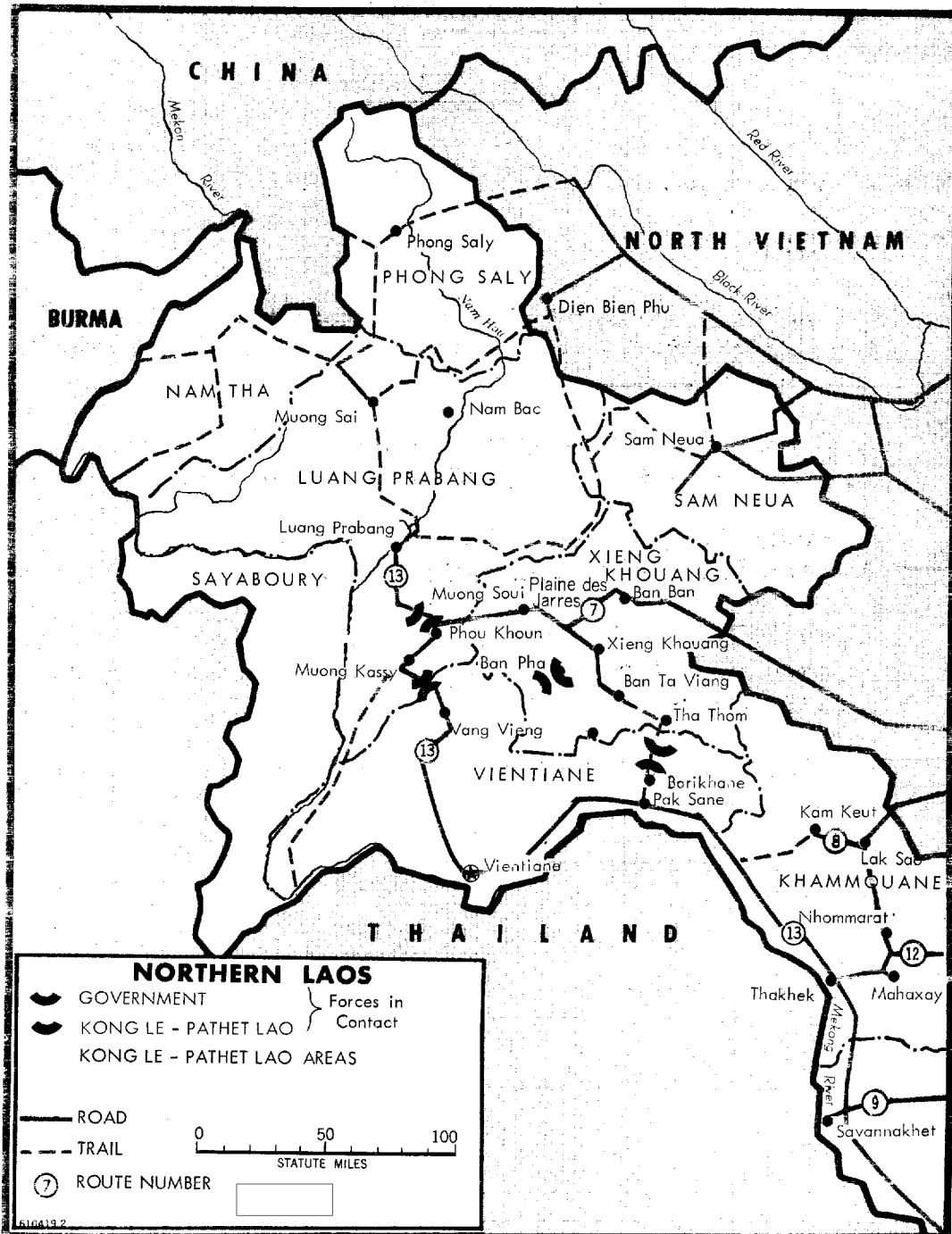
20 April 1961

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN

CONTENTS

1. Laos. (*Page i*)
2. Cuba. (*Page ii*)
3. Angola: South Africa refuses to provide Portugal most of requested military equipment.
(*Page iii*)
4. Congo: UN may bring in supplies via former French Congo unless UN forces allowed back in Matadi. (*Page iii*)
5. South Vietnam: Further comment on opposition in armed forces to Diem regime. (*Page iii*)
6. Arab States - UN: US position on recent UN resolutions concerning Israel increases Arab opposition to US on Cuban issue. (*Page iv*)
7. Watch Committee conclusions. (*Page iv*)

~~TOP SECRET~~



20 Apr 61

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN

Map Page

~~TOP SECRET~~ []

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN

20 April 1961

DAILY BRIEF

Laos:

[The Watch Committee at its meeting on 19 April reached the following conclusion concerning Laos.]

[Communist forces in Laos continue to hold the military initiative and are now capable of developing simultaneous offensive threats against selected objectives in widely separated areas. There are indications of Communist preparations for an attack against Muong Sai in upper Laos as a prelude for a subsequent threat to Luang Prabang. Communist military successes in central Laos pose a serious threat to Thakhek, and there appears to be an increase in Communist guerrilla activity in southern Laos. Meanwhile, Lao Army forces are fully extended and are unable to meet threats in one area without weakening their capabilities in other sectors. The Bloc's logistic support by airlift and overland continues undiminished. Communist forces apparently intend to press their military advantage so long as conditions appear favorable for such action.]

[In its reply of 16 April, the USSR expressed willingness to join the UK in calling for a cease-fire in Laos prior to an international conference. At the same time, the Soviet position remains sufficiently equivocal to permit the Bloc to procrastinate on the establishment of such a cease-fire and for the Communist side to raise demands on other issues.] []

[] (Backup, Page 1) (Map)

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~~TOP SECRET~~ [redacted]

*Cuba: Anti-Castro fighters early on 19 April continued in a weak defensive position in southern Las Villas province as the Castro regime deployed, under strong air cover, its tanks and artillery against them. All communication between insurgent forces in Cuba and their general headquarters outside ceased at 1530 on 19 April, according to high exile sources, who added that vessels offshore had offered to evacuate those remaining. The survivors, however, were dispersing into the countryside late on 19 April. [redacted]

The regime has tightened security precautions throughout the country and arrests and executions have been markedly stepped up. [redacted]

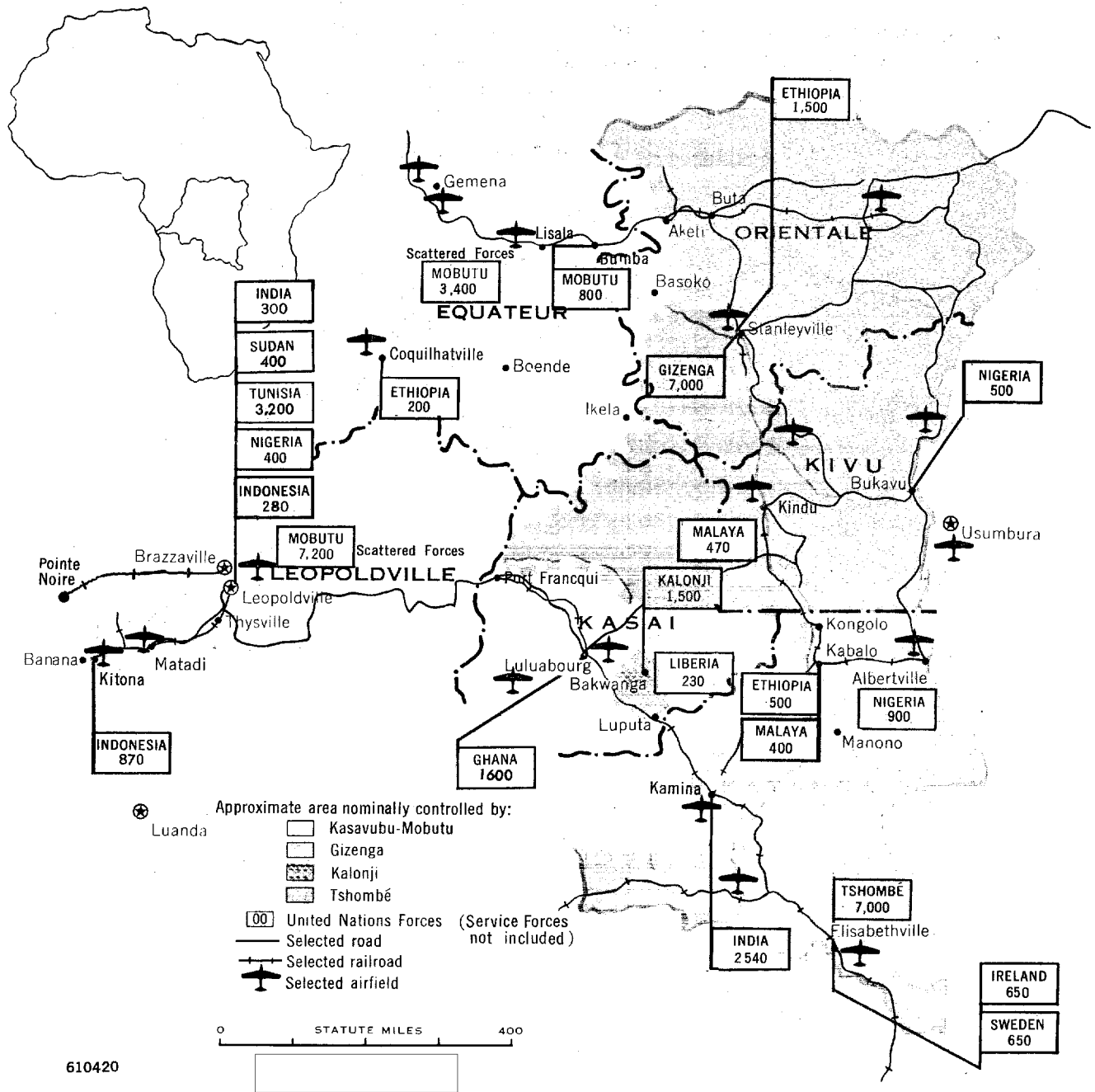
[redacted] instructed a subordinate unit in Oriente province to "prepare very summary proceedings against those who were going to commit crimes in order that they may be executed." [redacted]

20 Apr 61

DAILY BRIEF

ii

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~~TOP SECRET~~ [redacted]

Angola: Portugal will not receive military equipment previously requested from the Union of South Africa except for about 500 twenty-pound bombs--which presumably would be used to combat the continuing native disorders in northern Angola [redacted]

[redacted] The Portuguese military attache reported that South African military officials were concerned that military supplies now in South Africa would not meet minimum requirements for the Union's defense and took the line that military assistance to Portuguese authorities in Angola would increase world hostility to South Africa. [redacted]

[redacted] (Backup, Page 2)

Congo: [The UN is renewing efforts to secure the return of UN forces to Matadi. Hammarskjold advised a US official on 17 April that if Kasavubu failed to respond favorably to a new UN demarche concerning Matadi, the UN would begin bringing in supplies via Pointe Noire, in the former French Congo. Such a move would probably dissipate much of the good will engendered by Kasavubu's recently improved relations with the UN Command.]

Unrest in Katanga, where Tshombé has attempted to deny food supplies to the UN forces, continues to pose the threat of incidents between UN forces and Katanga gendarmerie. A Belgian official in Elisabethville has characterized Tshombé as "in a foul mood" as a result of the agreement on 17 April between Kasavubu and the UN Command and the reported rapprochement between Mobutu's and Gizenga's forces in Orientale Province.) [redacted]

[redacted] (Backup, Page 4) (Map)

South Vietnam: [South Vietnamese officials have acquired documents purporting to show that a group of senior military officers has been plotting a coup against the Diem regime. Although the documents may have been planted either by the Communists or by self-seeking government factions, this development will probably increase mutual distrust between political]

20 Apr 61

DAILY BRIEF

iii

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~~TOP SECRET~~ [redacted]

[redacted] and military leaders. In addition to previously reported restiveness among lower ranking officers, some senior officers are coming to feel that the Communist guerrillas cannot be defeated as long as Diem remains in power.

[redacted] (Backup, Page 6)

Arab States - UN: [The reaction of the Arab states to the US position regarding two recent Arab resolutions in the UN on matters affecting Israel has been described by the Jordanian foreign minister as one of "extreme irritation." Jordan's UN representative has informed Amman that he and all other Arab delegates have concluded that the Kennedy administration has "definitely" swung to the side of Israel on Arab-Israeli issues and that the Arab states can expect this line to be followed in the future. The Arab delegations in New York have in consequence become more vigorous in opposing the US on the Cuban issue in the UN.]

[redacted] (Backup, Page 7)

[WATCH COMMITTEE CONCLUSIONS

- A. No change from last week.
- B. No change from last week.
- C. LAOS: Carried on Page i of the Daily Brief.

20 Apr 61

DAILY BRIEF

iv

~~TOP SECRET~~ [redacted]

~~TOP SECRET~~ []Situation in Laos

[Government troops in Thakhek, reinforced by additional units from the Savannakhet and Pak Sane areas, reportedly have moved some 15 miles east from the town along Route 12 but have not yet contacted the enemy. A spokesman in Vientiane claims that 400 government paratroopers have been dropped in the Nhommarat area, but there is no confirmation of this. Meanwhile, some two thousand civilians from Thakhek have crossed the Mekong to seek refuge in Thailand.]

[]

Enemy forces continue mopping up operations against Meo guerrilla positions in the mountainous terrain south of the Plaine des Jarres. []

a Meo base about eight miles northwest of Ban Pha fell on 18 April as a result of a strong attack by a superior number of enemy forces. Enemy attention will probably be turned soon against the command post of Meo leader Colonel Vang Pao, which is located in that general area. If the enemy succeeds in scattering the government guerrilla forces, it will be able to move south against Pak Sane with little danger of harassment in the rear.

[Soviet airlift sorties into Laos continue to be scheduled. On 18 April, a total of nine Soviet IL-14s and six Soviet LI-2s flew 15 sorties into Laos, six of which were apparently airdrops in the Nam Bac area. In addition one North Vietnamese LI-2 flew from Hanoi to Xieng Khouang.] []

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~~TOP SECRET~~ [redacted]Situation in Angola

[redacted] a briefing given the Portuguese ambassador in South Africa by Portuguese Brigadier Rezende, the commander of the Angolan air region. According to the Portuguese ambassador, Rezende's report "could not be more alarming, nor could it reflect a greater feeling of urgency and seriousness." The diplomat advised Rezende not to "tell the whole truth" in South Africa, although "it might be useful for the South African military authorities to know that the situation in Angola is more somber and serious than is indicated in the press." Rezende's basic purpose was to investigate the possibility of adapting the bombs as soon as possible to the Portuguese planes available and to find out whether it would be possible to obtain a "larger number of bombs, heavier bombs, and other arms--including airplanes--which apparently are needed urgently in Angola." [redacted]

Lisbon is feverishly trying to reinforce its military strength in Angola. The Portuguese press has reported that an airlift has been installed between Lisbon and Luanda; planes began landing in Luanda on 14 April with equipment and some troops. Civilian air traffic has increased, with three planes from the Portuguese Indian Air Transport cooperating. Some medical and engineer troops arrived from Mozambique bringing Portuguese troop strength up to about 12,000 men, of whom about 4,000 are white. In Angola the military classes trained in 1959 and 1960 have been mobilized, and senior reserve officers have been urged to volunteer for service.

Native terrorists continue their attacks in widespread areas of northern Angola, but the press reports that for the first time the rebels appear to be following a tactical plan--including a siege of at least one town considered vital for Portuguese defense plans--rather than merely carrying out scattered raids. [redacted]

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[redacted] the
Angolan natives now are determined to continue the fighting
until independence is achieved even if they have to rely
principally on arms captured from Portuguese military
personnel. The Portuguese press claims that hundreds of
rebel reinforcements are funneled into northern Angola from
the Congo through a rebel-held corridor.

[redacted] (The Leopoldville headquarters of the Angola Peoples'
Union (UPA) reportedly has little information on the fighting
because it lacks communications facilities to coordinate
the action.) UPA [redacted]

[redacted] lacked the means to extend the movement into Luanda and
[redacted] found no liberal European element with which
African nationalists could combine forces. [redacted]

~~TOP SECRET~~ [redacted]

~~SECRET~~The Situation in the Congo

{The UN Command appears increasingly disposed to take a tough stand in its relations with the Leopoldville and Katanga governments. Hammarskjold's unpopular Congo representative, Rajeshwar Dayal, reportedly plans to leave for Leopoldville on 28 April. In Katanga, where the UN continues to airlift reinforcements from Tanganyika in the face of Tshombé's threats, the situation remains tense. UN officials in Leopoldville have stepped up efforts to return UN forces to the port of Matadi even at the risk of jeopardizing the recent improvement in their relations with the Kasavubu government. Pointe Noire, which Hammarskjold has mentioned as an alternative port to Matadi, handles on an annual basis only one third the tonnage of Matadi, and all goods brought in there would have to be brought across the Congo River at Brazzaville.}

{Only in Orientale is the UN Command inactive. The status of the proclaimed truce between Mobutu's Congo Army and the rebel forces remains unclear; although a Stanleyville broadcast has denied the existence of any truce, it is possible that some agreement has been reached among commanders in the field.}

{In conversation with an American official, a Belgian consular officer stated that the Ministry of African Affairs in Brussels had assured Belgian officers that service with Tshombé's forces would be considered equivalent to service in Belgian forces with respect to retirement. The Belgian added, however, that on instructions from Brussels he had warned Belgian officers against participating in any action against the UN Command.}

{Prospects for a meeting of Congo political leaders at Kamina, Katanga--scheduled for 20 April for the purpose of implementing decisions reached at Tananarive--appear dubious. }

{ Tshombé's attendance is in question, while Gizenga has sent a message to the UN in New }

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[York again denouncing the Tananarive conference last March as "not representative of the country" and as a maneuver "designed to counteract the work of the General Assembly."]

[redacted]

[redacted]

~~SECRET~~ [redacted]

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[REDACTED]

Increased Military Dissatisfaction With South
Vietnamese Regime

[In conversations with the American Army attaché, Brigadier General Le Van Kim, recently transferred from the Dalat officers' school and assigned to study plans for countering insurgency, has expressed bitterness over inefficiency, nepotism, and corruption in the government and has stated that President Diem and his entourage must be replaced. Kim complained that Diem's policy of directing military operations personally or through orders to provincial authorities without staff guidance was "impossible to live with" and that the army could defeat the Communists if properly used. In late March the marine corps commandant also reportedly complained that the army command was "hamstrung by politics.")]

[Since the abortive coup against Diem last November, the military have been conscious of increased surveillance by the clique of trusted Diem followers enjoying favored positions in government and army. A reported government plan to attach political commissars to army units is likely to be regarded as a tightening of political controls and may cast further doubt on the sincerity of Diem's intention to carry out improvements in the military command and intelligence functions. Diem's public comments have indicated that he feels the army's primary need is an increase in troop strength. He has recently authorized a large number of promotions to boost armed forces morale.)]

[There is no evidence supporting the authenticity of the documents alleging plotting by acting chief of staff General Nguyen Khanh, field commander General Duong Van Minh, training commander General Mai Huu Xuan, and unnamed Communists. The recent assignment of General Kim under General Minh, who has at times been critical of Diem, would place in a strategic position two of the army's most competent and respected officers. The government may intend to hold these documents, regardless of their validity, for use in the event it feels it must move against the alleged plotters.)]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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~~CONFIDENTIAL~~Arab Resentment Against US Stand in UN

{The Arab UN delegations reportedly have decided to oppose the United States on "all" issues, but this unanimity may be broken in at least some instances by certain Arab governments.}

{Jordanian UN representative Rifai has been a leader of Arab delegates who have been considering sponsoring a resolution on Cuba, contrary to the wishes of the American delegation. Jordan's Foreign Minister Nasir has said that Rifai has been instructed to take no further action on the resolution until he reports fully to Amman. The American ambassador reported that anti-US bitterness in certain circles of the Jordanian Government--normally the most pro-American of the Arabs--nevertheless is very deep because of the US stand on the recent Arab resolutions.}

{The two resolutions concerned the Palestine refugees and Israel's Independence Day military parade in Jerusalem. The Arab proposal to have the UN General Assembly consider means of safeguarding the property rights in Israel of Palestinian refugees was adopted on 18 April by a vote of 47 to 19 in the Assembly's Special Political Committee, over the opposition of the United States, Britain, and Israel. A two-thirds vote is needed for final adoption by the Assembly. A milder United States proposal on aid to the refugees which made no reference to the disputed property rights provision was defeated--amid Arab applause--by Asian, African, and Communist-bloc votes.}

{The Arabs also resented the American-proposed amendment to the Security Council's resolution of 11 April, which called on Israel to forego using heavy military equipment, in violation of the Israeli-Jordanian armistice agreement, in its Independence Day military parade in Jerusalem on 20 April. The American amendment fixed responsibility for maintaining calm in the area on Jordan as well as Israel.}

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

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The Director of the Budget

The Director, Office of Civil and Defense Mobilization

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The Deputy Under Secretary of State for Administration

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