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1 February 1961

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN



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1 February 1961

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN

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DAILY BRIEF

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Laos: There have been no significant military developments reported during the past 24 hours. [redacted]

[redacted] The Soviet airlift into Laos continued through 31 January. The two AN-12s which flew round-trip to Haiphong from Canton on 29 and 30 January have been scheduled to fly to Peiping from Canton on 1 February. They will probably return to the USSR from Peiping.

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North Vietnam on 30 January issued the fifth in its series of long memoranda detailing alleged warlike acts in Laos of the US and "its most stubborn satellites." The fourth memorandum was issued on 5 January. In bringing its list of accusations up to date, Hanoi takes the opportunity to criticize "the new US authorities," charging that they follow the Laotian policies of the previous administration. This line has been taken by Communist China and North Korea, too, although it has been avoided by the USSR. [redacted] (Backup, Page 1)

Congo: The trend toward further fragmentation of the Congo is marked by the recent efforts of the leader of Equateur Province, Jean Bolikango, to obtain military assistance from President Dacko of the neighboring Central African Republic (CAR). Reportedly Dacko promised help to defend Equateur against Gizenga's troops and said he was ready to slip his troops across the frontier in Congolese uniforms, if Bolikango would agree to a CAR-Equateur merger under Dacko's leadership. Bolikango, [redacted] is also negotiating with groups in the neighboring French Community Republic of Congo concerning a possible merger of territories.

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Sudan: [redacted]

[redacted] a "secret organization" has been set up in the Sudan and is planning a coup against General Abboud's military regime for the beginning of March, [redacted]. The group reportedly includes "army officers of various ranks and some civilian intellectuals." [redacted] the leaders of the organization intend to have no contact with any foreign state prior to the coup, "so that the revolt will have a purely nationalist stamp." [redacted] The Abboud regime has managed to survive chronic plotting and three coup attempts in its slightly more than two years of power; in recent months it has been faced with widespread opposition among political and religious leaders who are demanding immediate steps for a return to civilian government. [redacted] (Backup, Page 3)

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*Israel: Despite the resignation of Prime Minister Ben-Gurion, one day after his coalition government defeated a no-confidence motion growing out of the turmoil over the "Lavon affair," his Mapai labor party is almost certain to dominate any reorganized coalition in view of its overwhelming plurality within the parliament. If Ben-Gurion does not reconsider his decision, Levi Eshkol, long-time finance minister and deputy to Ben-Gurion, probably would be the Mapai's choice as his successor. [redacted] (Backup, Page 4)

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Brief*

Burma: [redacted] Prime Minister Nu's current friendliness toward the Chinese Communists and his domestic maladministration have precipitated a pronounced rift within the Burmese military leadership. This situation has been aggravated by Army Chief of Staff General Ne Win's refusal to intervene in nonmilitary affairs. Brigadier Maung Maung, army director of training and adviser to General Ne Win, has submitted his resignation over Ne Win's charges that he is too openly anti-Chinese and pro-American. Personality clashes between these two strong-willed army leaders [redacted]

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[have also contributed to the rift. Maung Maung has [redacted] [redacted] advocated the return of military rule in Burma, which Ne Win has resisted so far. His resignation is reportedly to be announced at the annual commanding officers' conference on 3 February and is expected to precipitate a sharp discussion of General Ne Win's army leadership. A number of top military officers in Burma are reported sympathetic to Maung Maung's viewpoint.

[redacted]

[redacted] (Backup, Page 5)

El Salvador: The five-man ruling Directorate has quickly consolidated its position following the 25 January military coup against a three-month-old regime that had come under heavy Communist and pro-Castro influence. Numerous Communists have been arrested, but sporadic acts of violence against the new authorities are still probable. Anti-militarist sentiment is strong in the university, where Communist student leaders may be attempting to organize a student protest strike and acts of sabotage and terrorism. The armed forces at present appear united behind the new regime, but the detention of several high-ranking and capable officers for their association with exiled ex-President Osorio could lead to dangerous cleavages in the future. The new government, which is conservatively oriented, has repeatedly proclaimed that it will rule democratically and on 30 January announced the lifting of martial law. The new leaders have also publicly expressed recognition of the need for social reform and have said that the era of "rich take all" is over in El Salvador. To date, only Guatemala, Nicaragua, and Spain have recognized the new regime.

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North Vietnam Issues New Laos Memorandum

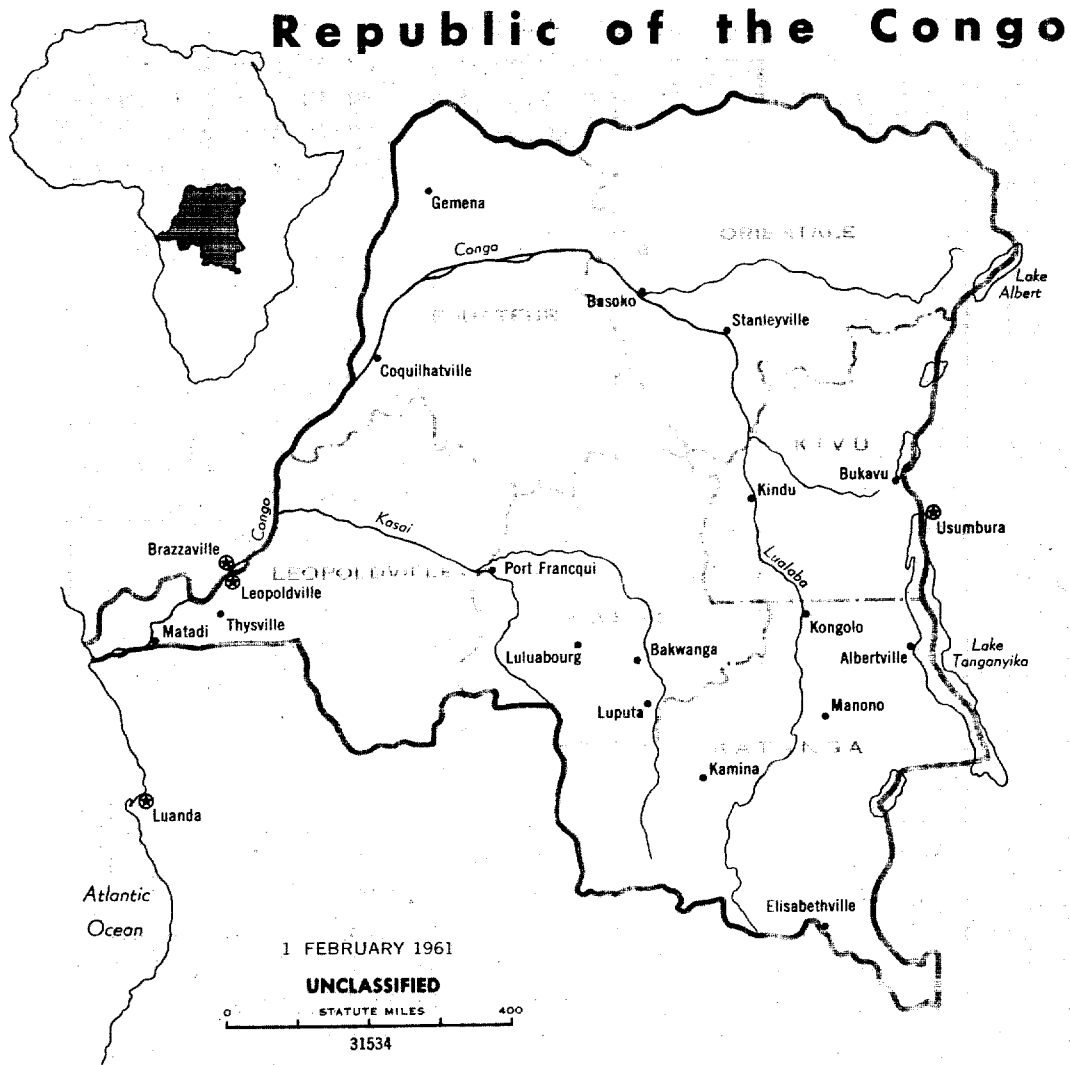
North Vietnamese charges of US "aggression" in Laos, detailed in a long memorandum on 5 January, have now been updated to include criticisms of the "new US authorities." The fifth and latest addition to this growing series of memoranda was issued in Hanoi on 30 January.

The US and its "most stubborn satellites"--South Vietnam, Thailand, and Nationalist China in this instance--are "still striving to extend the aggressive war in Laos," the latest memorandum begins. The memorandum then winds its way through a chronological listing of accusations taking into account virtually every recent US statement or action which could even remotely be connected with Laos. The last item in the list is a charge that a group of non-Communist Asian nations were plotting a "secret military alliance" in Manila on 18 and 19 January.

Having carried their compilation of charges to the day before the US inauguration, the North Vietnamese then stated that "despite statements by the new US authorities about their desire for an independent, free, and unaligned Laos, military intervention by the US warmongering clique continues." While this memorandum is the first North Vietnamese effort to link the new administration with the Laotian situation, it is not Hanoi's first critical commentary. On 20 January, the North Vietnamese stated that President Kennedy's inaugural address brought before the world "a program aimed at threatening peace."

Communist China and North Korea also have taken a critical position on the new administration. Both Pyongyang and Peiping have said they expect no change in US policy--North Korea ventured its opinion that no US administration can "possibly change the doom of US imperialism." Moscow, however, has maintained a cautious approach in its propaganda since the new US administration assumed office.

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~~TOP SECRET~~Situation in the Congo

The Leopoldville government is seeking ways to increase its military effectiveness. [On 28 January Kasavubu made a plea to Ambassador Timberlake for prompt and direct assistance in obtaining arms to permit loyal troops to take the initiative against Gizenga's forces, claiming that "half the soldiers have no rifles." Kasavubu suggested that the US might buy arms in Belgium, as these would be identical with those now in use by the Congolese Army and difficult to trace. Kasavubu did not reply directly when asked if his government had actually inventoried the arms on hand.]

Equateur Province's leader Bolikango, Kasavubu's information minister, is an intelligent and dynamic man who has made previous approaches, notably to the Portuguese ambassador in Leopoldville, for assistance in setting up an independent state in Equateur Province.

[redacted] He probably controls the Bangala tribe of Equateur Province, which forms a sizable part of the Congolese Army. His approach to the Central African Republic was followed on 28 January by a request to Ambassador Timberlake that the US extend him at least indirect aid. His separatist intentions were evident in his proposal to use the requested aid to raise a force of Bangalis to protect Equateur Province from Gizenga's Stanleyville regime. Ambassador Timberlake comments that this attitude is another example of the unwillingness of local Congolese leaders to submerge their aspirations in order to preserve unity.

There is little doubt that the French cabinet's 25 January criticism of the UN role in the Congo reflects De Gaulle's views. [At the UN, the French representatives have said that the French African states, disillusioned with Kasavubu, are eager to work with Nigeria or even Ghana to prevent chaos and a Communist take-over in the Congo which would have a disastrous effect on neighboring states.] [redacted]

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~~SECRET~~Anti-Regime Maneuvering in the Sudan

The Abboud military regime has been under intermittent pressure from political and religious leaders for a return to civilian government. In November a group headed by the leader of the powerful Ansar religious sect presented a petition to the government demanding that the army "go back to the barracks." The Supreme Military Council--the regime's top governing body--was split over what action to take against the signers; it finally determined to ignore the petition officially, and contented itself with mild measures to chastise some of the signers. The opposition, which is by no means unified itself, has not tried to bring about a showdown; it appears, however, to be gaining important new adherents among leaders of the trade unions that now are being permitted to re-organize after having been suspended for more than two years.

It seems unlikely that the new plotting organization is in a position to control key military units. [In recent months Major General Hasan Beshir Nasr, deputy commander of the armed forces, has strengthened his hold on the army by ensuring that loyal officers man all key posts] He has indicated in the past that he would resist any attempt to displace the military regime.

The plotters may be hoping to use the occasion of the yearly rotation of troops to launch their coup attempt. This brings substantial numbers of troops from the regional commands into the Khartoum area, as army units are rotated between the northern and southern provinces. This year the rotation is scheduled to begin in February, and probably will not be completed before sometime in March.

Relations between the Sudan and the UAR have been warmer under the Abboud regime than they were under its predecessor. However, very recently the UAR has become irritated over Abboud's refusal to permit UAR supplies for pro-Lumumba forces in the Congo to transit the Sudan, either by air or surface. Accordingly, Nasir would probably welcome a new Sudanese regime which might be more cooperative with his efforts to supply the Gizenga forces in Stanleyville.

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Ben-Gurion's Resignation

In view of Ben-Gurion's past utilization of resignation as a political tactic, his present move could be a maneuver designed to exert maximum pressure on his own Mapai party to expel Pinhas Lavon as a condition for Ben-Gurion's resumption of party and government leadership. He said that he resigned because he could not accept the cabinet's exoneration of Lavon of responsibility for an abortive intelligence operation in 1954. Ben-Gurion had advocated that a judicial inquiry, rather than a cabinet committee, investigate the evidence bearing on the controversy.

Ben-Gurion's resignation seems primarily to be an abdication of leadership of Mapai in protest against its failure to settle the Lavon affair--essentially an intra-party controversy--on Ben-Gurion's terms. These terms probably included the expulsion of Lavon from the party and his removal as secretary general of the Histadrut, Israel's labor federation in which Mapai has the dominant voice. Ben-Gurion has accused Lavon of stating "falsehoods and slanders about the defense establishment" which Lavon headed at the time of the abortive intelligence operation in 1954--the central issue in the current controversy. The operation reportedly involved the planting of bombs in USIA libraries in Egypt with the aim of damaging Egyptian-US relations. The conspiracy was uncovered by the Egyptians, and several Israeli agents were executed early in 1955. Lavon subsequently was charged by an Israeli government investigating committee with responsibility for the affair--on the basis of falsified evidence, according to testimony of last year which reopened the controversy. Ben-Gurion also accuses Lavon of attempting to transfer responsibility for the operation to Ben-Gurion and two of his protegés, Shimon Peres, who was director general of the Defense Ministry under Lavon, and Moshe Dayan, who then was chief of staff. The implication in Lavon's recent statements is that he was "framed" by Peres and Dayan. Ben-Gurion is said to be deeply disturbed over Lavon's criticisms of the defense establishment. Ben-Gurion claims Lavon has undermined confidence in the Israeli Army, with which Ben-Gurion has been intimately associated since the period of the Palestine Mandate.

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Political Discontent May Cause Open Rift in the Burmese Army Command

From the time of General Ne Win's decision in August 1959 to return the Burmese Government to civilian control through national elections, there have been rumblings of discontent among senior army officers. They have argued that the Burmese people are not prepared to choose intelligently in national elections, and that the sweeping army-sponsored reforms had not been adequately established in Burmese society. The overwhelming victory of U Nu's Union party in the parliamentary elections of February 1960, with the ensuing elimination of the army's reforms and deterioration of the government's administrative efficiency, has increased the army's discontent. Brigadier Maung Maung, with the support of the deputy chief of staff, Brigadier Aung Gyi, and a number of the senior officers, has urged General Ne Win to intervene forcefully for the reform or ouster of the Nu government. Although Ne Win promised his army colleagues to act against Nu "if necessary," he has thus far withstood their demands. His refusal has been based on a personal distaste for political office and a shrewd estimate that civilian politicians would not willingly accept a second military government under present circumstances. The major leaders of both the government and opposition have been reported prepared to form an all-party government to forestall any military take-over.

(The immediate cause for Maung Maung's resignation from the army was a running argument with Ne Win over Nu's current rapprochement with Peiping. Although Ne Win's suspicion of the Chinese and his anti-Communism are as deep-rooted as Maung Maung's, he will tolerate no action which might interfere with demarcation of the Sino-Burmese border, which he estimates cannot be completed before April. In the heat of argument on 21 January, Ne Win charged Maung Maung with personal responsibility for introducing too many American personnel and excessive amounts of US equipment into the army and thus providing the Chinese a basis for criticizing Burma.)

The outcome of the commanding officers' conference is uncertain despite the support for Maung Maung. Although

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Ne Win's prestige in the army may have slipped, [redacted]
[redacted] over the past year, he
could not be displaced without disrupting the unity of the
army--the only united and disciplined base of power in
Burma. [redacted]



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