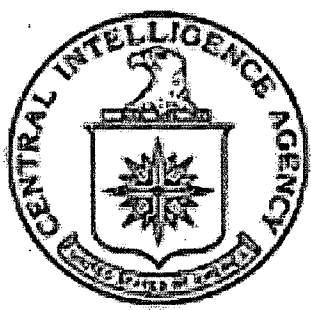


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2 February 1961

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except the United States, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, and Peru proposing joint conciliation of "the US-Cuban problem" by the Latin Americans acting outside the framework of the Organization of American States or the United Nations. Chiriboga's initiative is arousing little support, in part because the incumbent Ecuadorean Government lacks prestige in the hemisphere.

In a speech on 28 January in Las Villas Province, Castro for the first time publicly acknowledged the extent of the counterrevolutionary threat there. He claimed that anti-Castro guerrillas, which he said numbered over 500, in the Escambray Mountains are "fenced in to the point where they cannot escape. When these fences are strong enough, battalions of militia well and specially trained will advance on them."

Castro blamed the counterrevolutionary activity in Las Villas on the "bad" revolutionaries of the "Second Front of the Escambray," an independent group allied with Castro forces during the latter part of the anti-Batista revolution and then integrated into Castro's army. He said these "subversives have planted diversionist

seeds throughout this province" and were awaiting help in their plans for the US. Therefore, Castro went on, "We now have to clean out all our offices in this province."

Castro pledged that military operations in the mountains and the purges in provincial offices would convert Las Villas into "the most revolutionary province of Cuba." Two days before Castro's speech, the leader of the "Second Front of the Escambray," Eloy Guiterrez Menoyo, and a number of other Cuban army officers arrived in Key West by open boat seeking asylum.

Che Guevara, architect of the regime's statist economy and the official chiefly responsible for negotiating last year's economic agreements with the bloc, may soon receive a formal cabinet post.

Guevara is expected shortly to resign as president of the National Bank to take the new post of minister of industries.

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CONGO

The efforts of President Kasavubu and Colonel Mobutu to counter the activities of the pro-Communist Gizenga regime in Stanleyville face a growing trend toward fragmentation of

the Congo and are hindered by a shortage of military supplies.

Jean Bolikango, Kasavubu's information minister and the leader of Equateur Province,

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in northwestern Congo, has been negotiating with groups in neighboring republics of the French Community for military assistance and some form of territorial union.

Bolikango

has also discussed a possible merger of territories with groups in the French Community's Congo Republic.

Bolikango probably controls the Bangala tribe, which forms a sizable part of the Congolese Army. He plans to raise a force of tribesmen to protect Equateur Province and approached the American ambassador on 28 January for US arms for this purpose. Such activities illustrate the unwillingness of local Congolese leaders to submerge their aspirations in order to preserve unity.

The preparatory political conference at Leopoldville of Congolese factions--without participation of Gizenga's adherents--chose its officers and engaged in discussion of an agenda and procedural matters. Substantive discussions are

expected to take place at a later date in Elisabethville, but in view of the conference's unrepresentative nature and the continued disagreement between Kasavubu and Katanga President Tshombé, no significant decisions are expected. Meanwhile Kasavubu has rejected a military treaty with Tshombé and Kalonji, leader of the South Kasai state, but is expected to submit counterproposals. Tshombé and Kalonji have agreed to mutual recognition as autonomous states.

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The military situation on the frontier of Equateur and Orientale provinces remains obscure. Kasavubu has made a plea to the United States for prompt, direct assistance--suggesting that Belgian arms be bought similar to those now in use in the Congo--so that the Leopoldville regime could take the initiative against Gizenga.

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Gizenga's regime, too, is short of supplies and has looked to Cairo and the bloc for military aid. However, Sudan continues to refuse to allow aid material to move across its territory. TASS announced on 30 January that the USSR had asked Sudanese President Abboud to permit the Soviets to send food and medicine, in 20 trucks through the Sudan to pro-Lumumba areas of the Congo.

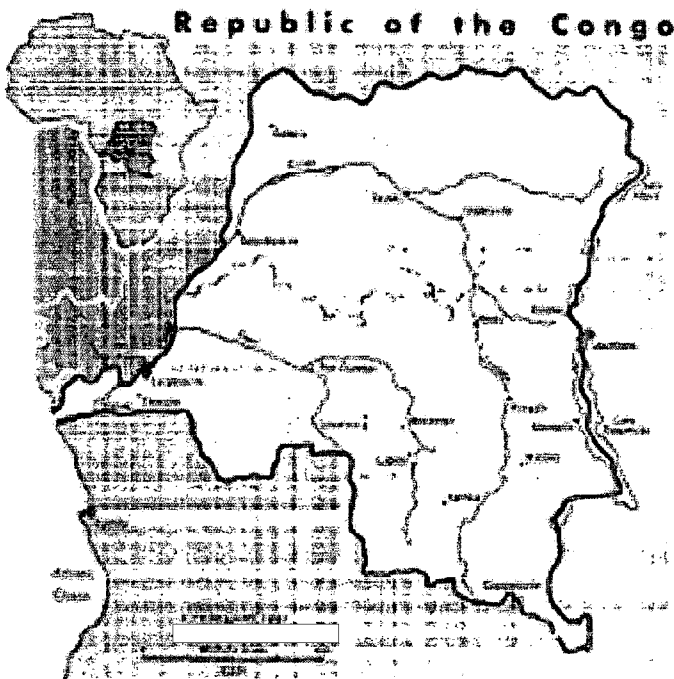
Sudanese officials fear that unless there is effective UN and Western action, the Congo situation may deteriorate to the point where the Sudan would be faced with a de facto Communist-supported government on its border. The Sudanese foreign

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administration is reportedly already collecting taxes--the Baluba tribesmen hostile to Tshombé, together with Congolese Army units loyal to Stanleyville, will be in a position to launch attacks against the mining complex and railroads which are economically vital to southern Katanga. On 30 January Katanga aircraft dropped bombs, probably improvised gasoline bombs or grenades, on Manono.

Tshombé's regime in Katanga may also be entering a difficult period in his relations with Belgium. The government has decided to replace the Belgian

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minister has denied reports that trucks from the Sudan had entered the Congo with arms for Gizenga.



commander of the Katanga armed forces with a French officer. This decision may cause a majority of the several hundred Belgian officers serving with the Katanga forces to resign and create a serious military problem for the state. In addition, Tshombé's own position apparently is under attack by his deputy premier, Jean Kibwo.

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Gizenga's forces in Kivu Province have taken the offensive by launching an invasion of remote northern Kasai Province. One group reportedly is aiming at Luluabourg; the other is trying to reach pro-Lumumba territory in eastern Leopoldville Province.

The Gizenga-supported Baluba tribal state of Lualaba, centered at Manono in Katanga Province, appears to be developing into a serious threat to the Katanga government. As this regime becomes entrenched--its provincial

In Brussels, the Belgian foreign minister has won cabinet approval to enforce a law forbidding Belgian citizens to serve in or recruit for foreign armies, which could lessen overt Belgian assistance to Katanga.

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The United Nations Command is beset with increasing difficulties as the African nations implement their threatened troop withdrawals. Guinea's 740 troops have embarked at Matadi, the UAR's 500 have been airlifted from Equateur Province, Morocco's 3,100 men expect to leave in early February, and Indonesia's 1,150 will leave in March. The remaining 13,000 troops are consid-

ered inadequate for policing the 900,000 square miles of the Congo.

Barnard's appeals last month to Ethiopia, India, Iraq, and Sudan for additional troops have not elicited a favorable response. The problem is the more critical in the light of the possible expansion of the UN's security duties in the Congo, a policy step being advocated even by some Afro-Asians.

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LAOS

A rival government to the Souvanna Phouma regime has been formally installed by Communist elements in Xieng Khouang town, stronghold of the Kong Le - Pathet Lao forces. According to a Pathet Lao announcement of 2 February, former Premier Souvanna Phouma--now in Cambodia--has designated Karsouk Keola, a member of his previous cabinet, to be acting premier pending his own "early" return to Laos.

Karsouk is to be assisted in discharging his functions by two other leftist supporters of the former premier: Quin Pholsann, appointed minister of defense, finance, and foreign affairs, and Tiao Sisoumang, named minister of social affairs, economy, and interior. Quin, minister of information in the former Souvanna government, previously had been acting in Souvanna's name as the representative of the "legal" government of Laos; Sisoumang had been a secretary of state in both of Souvanna's post-coup governments.

This move apparently was coordinated with Souvanna Phouma in talks held in Phnom Penh last week when a high-level Pathet Lao delegation headed by Phouai Vongvichit visited his en route from Hanoi to Xieng Khouang.

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While there is a possibility that Souvanna's name has been used with some liberty in connection with setting up the rump regime in Xieng Khouang, he must have at least given his tacit approval.

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Communist China's Foreign Minister Chou Yi, speaking at a Peiping rally on 2 February, promised aid to the "lawful Laotian government" of Souvanna Phouma if it is requested. Souvanna Phouma, who requested Soviet aid, has never recognized Peiping nor formally approached the Chinese for material assistance, but recognition of Peiping by the rump government in Xieng Khouang would provide the Chinese

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