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23 November 1960

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CENTRAL

INTELLIGENCE

BULLETIN



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Gabon: President Mba of the newly independent French Community state of Gabon has broken up an attempt to overturn his pro-West regime. Some leaders of the plot, including top officials in the National Assembly, are reported in hiding; others have been arrested. Several important figures who have been lukewarm toward Mba, such as the foreign minister, now have come out in his support. The President's position appears secure for the time being, but the prospects for long-term political stability in Gabon are not favorable.

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III. THE WEST

Cuba: The Cuban Government's foreign exchange reserves are almost exhausted, and finance officials were forced on 18 November to cancel orders for urgently needed materials--such as sugar bags--according to [redacted]

[redacted] the American Embassy. Fidel Castro himself was not immediately informed of the situation for fear of his reaction. [redacted]

[redacted] there can be no normal significant replenishment of the Cuban reserves until the new sugar crop is exported, beginning in January. Cuba is still dependent on Western sources for some materials not available through present Sino-Soviet barter deals. Continued inability to purchase such goods, particularly food and consumer goods and materials for the critically important petroleum industry, would pose grave problems for the regime. Cuban banking officials reportedly doubt that relief will be forthcoming from the Soviet Union.

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IV. WATCH COMMITTEE CONCLUSIONS

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- A. No Sino-Soviet bloc country intends to initiate hostilities against the United States or its possessions in the immediate future.
- B. No Sino-Soviet bloc country intends deliberately to initiate direct military action against US forces abroad, US allies, or areas peripheral to the bloc in the immediate future. *no*
- C. There are indications that the situation in Laos has entered a critical phase, and general military conflict between the Phoumi and the Pathet Lao - supported Souvanna Phouma forces may ensue at any time. The Pathet Lao under such circumstances can be expected to oppose vigorously, with the help of the Communist bloc, any attempt to unseat Souvanna Phouma.
- D. Other developments affording increased opportunities for exploitation by the Communist bloc:
 - 1. Algeria. Morocco's acceptance of Soviet military aid will make it easier for the bloc to supply Algerian rebel forces.

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V. CONCLUSIONS OF SPECIAL USIB COMMITTEE ON BERLIN SITUATION

The USIB has taken note of the following conclusions reached by its special committee on the Berlin situation, for the period 25 October 1960 through 22 November 1960.

1. There has been no significant change in the Berlin situation since the subcommittee's previous report of 25 October. During the early half of November, references to Berlin have been played down in Soviet news media--probably in part reflecting the current preoccupation of the Communist world with the meeting of bloc leaders in Moscow and a wait-and-see attitude regarding the impending change in the US administration. no
2. While the East Germans appeared primarily concerned with assessing and consolidating their earlier moves against West Berlin, the GDR did take some further minor steps in its campaign to assert control over goods moving in and out of West Berlin.
3. With the 1 January cut-off date for interzonal trade agreements between East and West Germany only a month and a half away, both the East and the West appear to be uncertain as to what actions and counteractions will be taken. However, it appears now that the West Germans may request that negotiations be started on the Interzonal Trade Agreement in the near future.

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Coup Foiled in Gabon

President Leon Mba of the French Community state of Gabon, which attained independence last August, has blocked a plot to destroy his political power. The President has proclaimed a state of alert for six months, and acted against several top government officials who were accused of trying to poison him. As a result, the president of the National Assembly, Paul Gondjout, and several others are in hiding. Foreign Minister Gustave Anguilé and the leader of the parliamentary opposition, Jean Aubamé, now have come out in support of Mba.

Mba's victory should ensure Gabon's continued pro-Western policies. If his regime had been upset and an alliance between Gondjout and Anguilé formed, Gabon would have been vulnerable to Soviet bloc infiltration. Gondjout has disagreed with Mba over the relative powers of the legislature and executive and apparently has been scheming to upset Mba for several months. He had succeeded in temporarily dividing the governing party and leaving Mba in a minority position. Anguilé, who together with Gondjout has represented ambitious elements among the most highly developed segments of local society, has in the past reportedly been influenced by Gabonese students in Paris who were members of Communist organizations.

Although the President's position appears secure for the time being, long-term political stability in Gabon is endangered by tribal rivalries and political immaturity. Gabon, which is heavily dependent on French economic and political assistance, has maintained closer ties with Paris than any Equatorial African republic, and there is virtually no antiwhite feeling at this time. This republic, alone of the economically underdeveloped four states of the former French Equatorial Africa, has rich resources --particularly wood products, oil, and mineral deposits already of interest to American industry. At Lambarené in the interior of Gabon, Dr. Albert Schweitzer conducts his world-renowned medical work.

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Director, Office of Civil and Defense Mobilization

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Executive Secretary, National Security Council

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The Secretary of the Treasury

The Department of State

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The Under Secretary of State

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The Deputy Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs

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