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30 March 1961

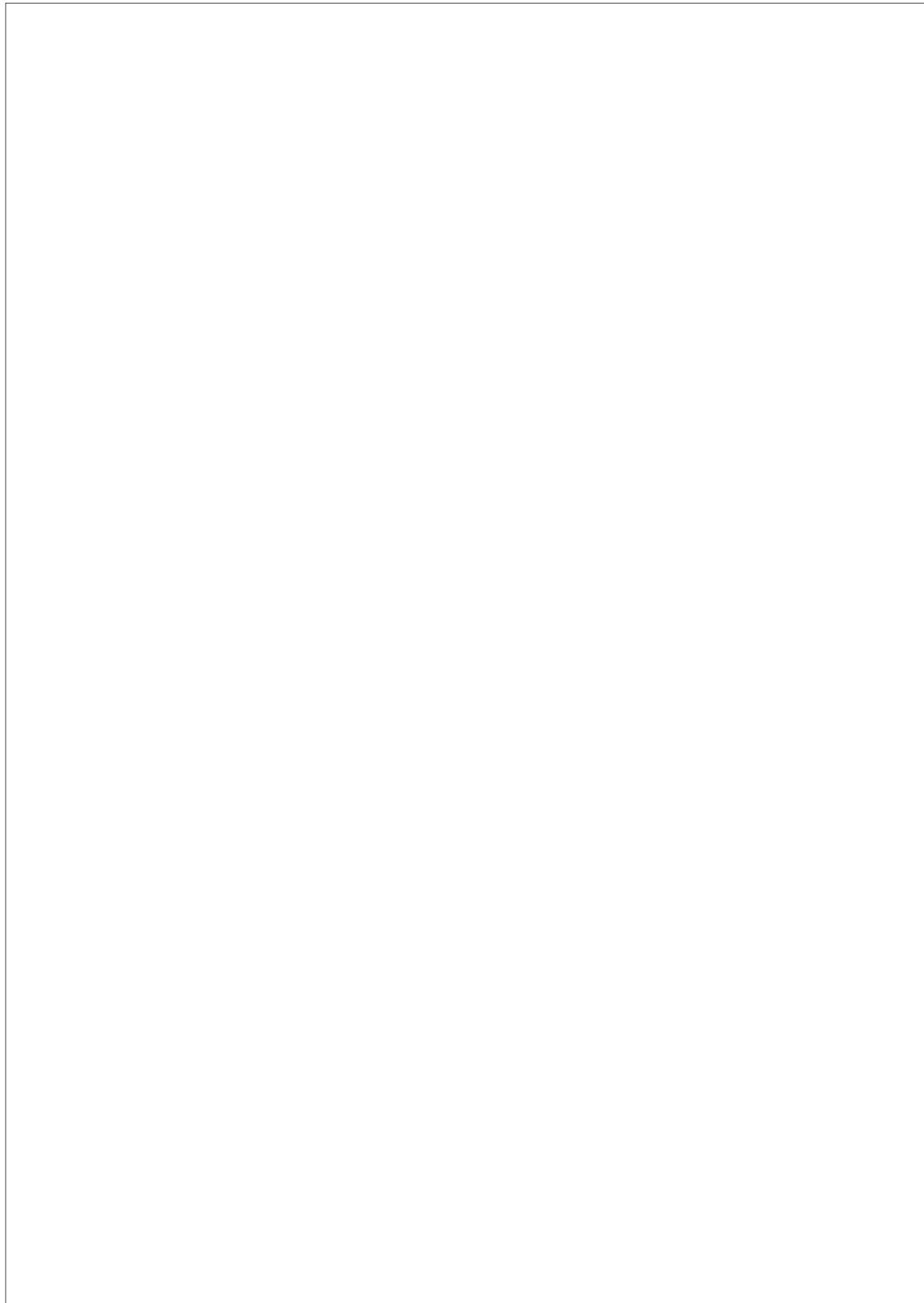
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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN



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30 March 1961

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN

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[]
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DAILY BRIEF

Serial
*Laos: Khrushchev

[] thinks the recent British proposals will open the way for a cease-fire and a settlement in Laos, but again insisted that Souvanna Phouma should head any government of Laos. He said the USSR's reply would be delivered in a couple of days.]

[During a recent interview in Burma, Communist China's Foreign Minister Chen Yi carefully skirted a question on SEATO intervention in Laos which would have provided an opportunity for making an explicit threat to counter such a move with Chinese forces. Asked what would be the result if SEATO openly invaded Laos, Chen Yi limited his written reply to a statement that "the civil war will be prolonged, the suffering of the Laotian people will be increased."]

The Soviet airlift into Laos goes on, however, and evidence continues to accumulate on the extent to which Viet Minh cadres have been used to stiffen Pathet Lao units. A conference of most Pathet Lao commanders, which presumably would precede a change in Pathet Lao operations or policy, was apparently in progress in Xieng Khouang on 29 March.

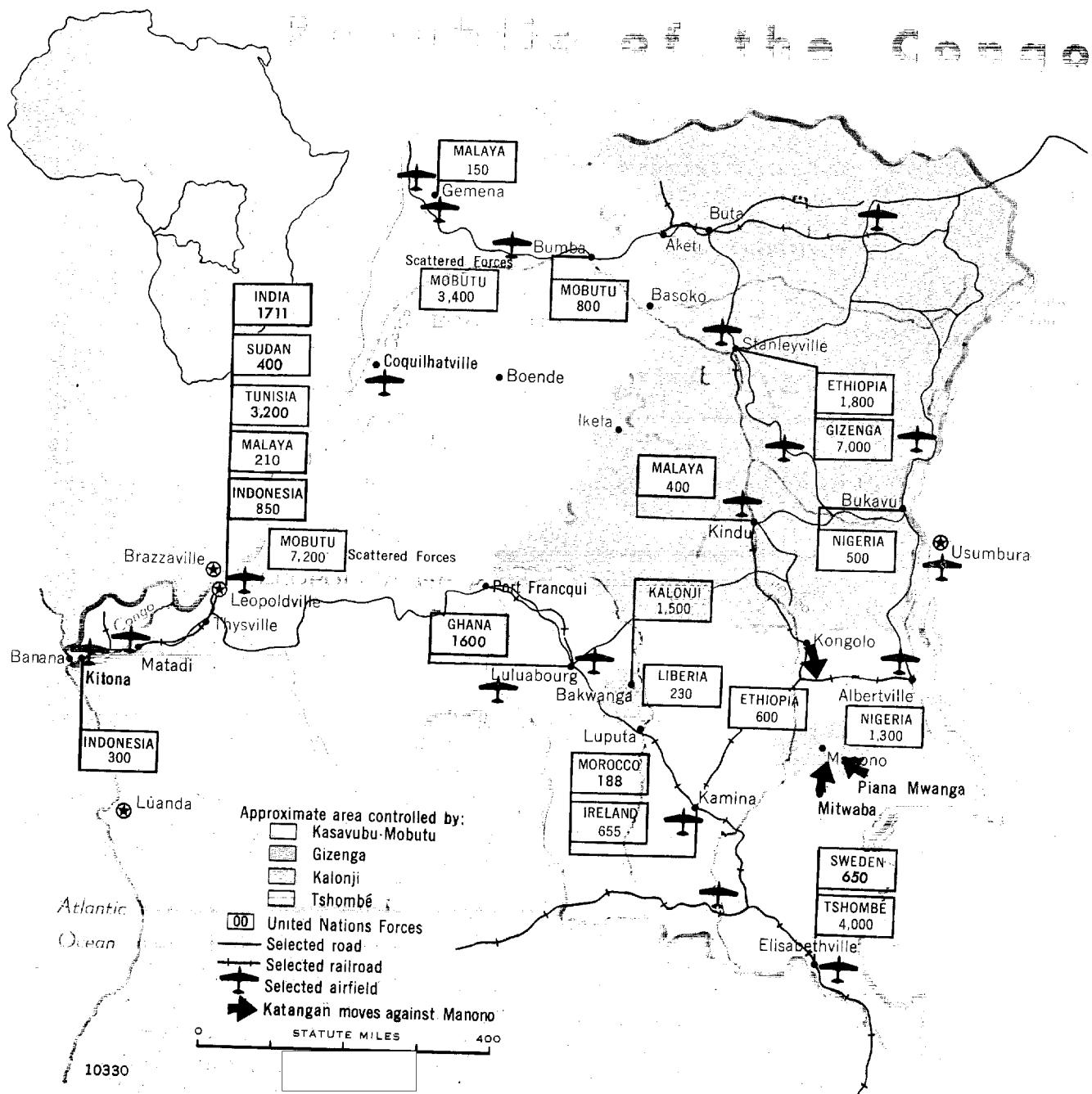
(Backup, Page 1) (Map)

[The Watch Committee at its meeting on 29 March reached the following conclusion concerning Laos:]

[Recent Communist military activity in Laos has been limited to very small-scale actions, suggesting that the Communists are restricting their operations for immediate political reasons. The Communist forces, however, are capable of stepped-up operations at any time, which, in view of the low morale of the FAL, could achieve rapid successes. There are indications of logistic support operations in the area north of Luang Prabang which could presage new combat operations.]

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against the royal capital. Otherwise, Bloc logistic support continues undiminished and may be increased if the Bloc anticipates any agreement on mutual suspension of arms deliveries. Bloc propaganda suggests that the USSR will not agree unconditionally to the UK proposal and that the Bloc will seek to avoid a commitment on a cessation of hostilities prior to an international conference; Pathet Lao opposition to a cease-fire has been particularly apparent. We know of no military moves by North Vietnam or Communist China for an expansion of the Laotian conflict, but some preparatory measures could have been or could be taken without detection.)

(Backup, Page 1) (Map)

Congo: According to the UN representative in Elisabethville, the movement of Tshombé's forces against Manono has begun. The Katanga forces, which number about 1,000, apparently plan to make a gradual advance on the town from the three centers of Mitwaba, Kongolo, and Piana Mwanga; according to reports of Swedish UN patrols, the troops advancing from Mitwaba may already have progressed halfway to Manono without encountering serious opposition. The UN official said that the size of the advancing force would make it impossible for the small Nigerian unit at Manono to interpose itself effectively. (Backup, Page 4) (Map)

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*Angola: Lisbon advised the governor general of Angola it had information

"incidents" would take place on 30 March, particularly in southern Angola. [redacted] governor general to take specific precautions at airports and in areas where there are large numbers of African workers. [redacted]

no

[redacted] possible action by an extremist group, the Union of Negro Laborers and Artisans. This group is not known to have been involved in the previous outbreaks, which have been concentrated in northern Angola. [redacted] (Backup, Page 5)

[redacted] ~ Somali Republic - USSR: [The Somali Government is apparently prepared to accept economic aid which it expects will

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Be offered by the five-man Soviet good-will mission scheduled to arrive in Mogadiscio on 30 March.] Although moderate government leaders have often stated a preference for Western aid, they feel pressed by a small but vocal Communist-influenced opposition party which would exploit the issue in a constitutional referendum set for 20 June.

(Backup, Page 6)

North Vietnam - Morocco: North Vietnam's campaign to gain wider international acceptance moved another step forward with the announcement on 27 March that Morocco had agreed to establish diplomatic relations and exchange ambassadors. The agreement caps a five-day visit to Rabat by North Vietnam's foreign minister, who has been touring Africa for the past month. Morocco is the fourth African nation to recognize the Vietnamese Communist regime in the past year, following Guinea, Mali, and Senegal.

(Backup, Page 7)

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WATCH COMMITTEE CONCLUSIONS

On the basis of findings by its Watch Committee the United States Intelligence Board concludes that:

- A. and B. No change from last week.
- C. LAOS--Carried on page 1 of the Daily Brief.

SOUTH VIETNAM

There are continuing indications that Viet Cong (Communist) guerrilla groups in South Vietnam will probably engage in a vigorous extensive campaign of sabotage and political terrorism in connection with and prior to the

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South Vietnamese presidential elections scheduled for
9 April.

D. CONGO

Although conditions in the Congo remain unsettled, there
are no new developments affording increased opportuni-
ties for exploitation by the Communist Bloc.

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The Situation in Laos

Khrushchev expressed some of the same views that Gromyko voiced during his meeting with President Kennedy the same day. The Soviet premier termed the British proposals of 23 March on Laos "constructive" and said they would make it possible to bring about a cease-fire and a settlement. He indicated that the Soviet reply would be forthcoming in a couple of days. As in earlier talks with Ambassador Thompson on 21 January and 9 March, Khrushchev minimized the importance of Laos, saying it would not change the East-West balance of power and that the Laotians would choose neutrality if left to themselves. Khrushchev also repeated earlier charges that Boun Oum is a drunkard and urged again that agreement be reached on a new government headed by Souvanna Phouma.]

In remarks clearly calculated to impress the Indian Government with the urgency of getting negotiations started, Khrushchev warned that movements by American military and naval forces were not helpful and said the USSR never gave way in the face of threats. He added that if the US wanted another Korea, it could have it, but this would be a "really bloody one."]

The favorable references to the British proposals made by Khrushchev and Gromyko, together with the generally moderate and positive tone of the Pravda article of 27 March, appear to reflect the Soviet leaders' awareness that recent military and diplomatic moves by the US and Britain have brought the contest over Laos to a new and more critical phase. Their cautious and generally positive response probably was intended primarily to forestall any decision by the SEATO conference which might raise the possibility of expanded military action in Laos. Moscow's response also suggests that the Soviet leaders are concerned that Western moves have deprived the bloc of the diplomatic initiative and put the bloc governments on the defensive. This concern was evident in the Pravda article's effort to demonstrate that the USSR was the earliest and most consistent proponent of negotiations and to portray the British proposals as acceptance of Moscow's position on convening an international conference and reactivating the ICC.]

Describing the Laotian crisis as a real test for the bloc,]

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the Pathet Lao must be included in any negotiations on the future of Laos. "If we compromise now," the official said, "we are accepting the strength of imperialism. We will be doing injustice to the progressive forces in Southeast Asia."

Cabinet discussions on the Laotian crisis were resumed on 29 March with the return of King Savang and General Phoumi to Vientiane after a visit of several days to southern Laos. Country team speculation is that broadening of the government may be a primary topic under discussion. Former Premier Phoui Sananikone, meanwhile, is working behind the scenes for a replacement of the present government, which he feels is "dictatorial" and only antagonizing the majority of the population. Phoui proposes that the King should persuade Boun Oum and Phoumi to step down, and then take personal charge of a transitional government pending a general election. There is considerable support for this proposal among other conservative Laotian politicians, and Savang reportedly has taken it under serious advisement.

With the possible exception of two flights, all scheduled airlift activity into Laos for 27 March was canceled, probably because of adverse weather conditions. On 28 March at least 14 flights into Laos were detected, some of which were to the Nam Bac area north of Luang Prabang. Periodic flights of AN-12 turboprop heavy transports from North Vietnam in support of these operations continue.

A prisoner who was recently captured near Vang Vieng claims to be an artilleryman from the 925th Frontier Security Battalion of the North Vietnamese Army. He alleges that his unit entered Laos near Nong Het in mid-January and that later in February he and about 45 other artillery specialists and infantrymen were assigned to the Pathet Lao 6th Battalion. Another prisoner captured on 23 March claims that a group of infantry specialists arrived at the Plaine des Jarres from Hanoi on 5 February. The prisoner alleges that he and some of the others were from the North Vietnamese 246th Independent Regiment, which has its headquarters in north-central

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North Vietnam, and that they were assigned to the Pathet Lao
3rd Battalion.

North Vietnamese combat advisers, technicians, and various specialists are known to be in Laos, but evidence that units, as such, of the North Vietnamese Army are in Laos continues to be inconclusive.

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~~SECRET~~Situation in the Congo

The UN is taking no military action to meet the threat to Manono, according to a 28 March report from the American army attaché in Leopoldville. General McKeown, the UN military commander, has been in Elisabethville attempting to persuade Tshombé to call off the offensive, but the Katanga government has given no indication that it will yield to UN pressure.

[The Belgian consul general in Elisabethville told the American consul on 28 March that between 85 and 90 Belgians now serving with Tshombé's forces would leave by mid-April. This total includes both military technicians under contract to the Katanga government and volunteers recruited for the white legion. About 240 Belgians were serving with the Katanga military in January, and the number may have increased since then. The consul general feared that small numbers of white volunteers might still be coming into Katanga. He hinted that Brussels might have to withdraw more Belgians as a result of international pressure, but he implied that the Belgian Foreign Ministry has little control over the Ministry of African Affairs, which apparently is continuing its assistance to Tshombé.]

[According to a Western journalist, 21 South Africans arrived in Elisabethville on 19 March. They claimed that they were being paid \$420 per month plus danger pay and stated they did not mind working for "that Kaffir Tshombé" as long as they received their pay. The South Africans have insisted that they serve as a unit, apparently because whites serving with African troops are a prime target of opposing shots. Normally, each white serves as a leader of five or six Africans, who apparently keep fighting only so long as the European is not immobilized.]

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~~TOP SECRET~~Situation in Angola

[redacted] the whites
 in southern Angola as tense because there had been numerous
 purchases of crude weapons by natives. [redacted]
 the governor general had received threatening letters from
 Angolan negro refugees in the frontier area of South-West
 Africa. [redacted]

Lisbon's request for South African cooperation in controlling
 the border area received a favorable response. [redacted]

[redacted]
 [redacted] The organization which probably instigated the initial up-
 risings in northern Angola, the Union of the Angolan People
 (UPA), led by Holden Roberto, reportedly now has agitators
 working in southern Angola. A small number of Angolan de-
 serters--whose homes are in southern Angola--from the Portu-
 guese Army are preparing to go to southern Angola under UPA
 auspices to foment further outbreaks. UPA headquarters has
 issued instructions to continue the uprising in Angola as long
 as possible.

[redacted]
 [redacted] The UPA is considering setting up an advanced headquarters
 in an area of northern Angola, where refugees report that a
 zone some 30 miles wide along the Congo frontier has been
 almost entirely evacuated by Portuguese troops and civilians.
 Refugees claim that Portuguese troops remain in the main
 towns and merely launch raids into the countryside.

[redacted]
 [redacted] Leopoldville's Minister of the Interior Adoula reportedly
 has promised the UPA--whose headquarters is in Leopoldville
 --that the Congo Government will establish a refugee camp in
 the Lower Congo area for the large number of Angolan refugees
 there. Roberto also plans to contact other African nationalist
 movements for political and material support.

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~~SECRET~~Soviet Mission Visits Somali Republic

bassador in Mogadiscio received the invitation from Premier Abdirascid during a casual conversation at a recent reception for a visiting UAR delegation.]

[The Soviet delegation--headed by Lesechko, the first deputy chairman of the State Planning Commission (Gosplan)--includes A. A. Shvedov, chief of the First African Division of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the deputy minister of health, and high-level trade and cultural officials. The composition of the mission suggests that Moscow is prepared to offer aid to the Somali Republic in several nonmilitary fields.]

[Since the Somali Republic became independent last July, the Soviet Union has established a large embassy in Mogadiscio, and advance parties have arrived from Prague and Peiping to establish embassies. Albania, Bulgaria, and Hungary arranged last year to set up diplomatic missions, but these have not yet arrived.]

[Abdirascid's government, which has been in power since the territory became independent, believes it must demonstrate substantial progress in economic development in order to win a clear-cut victory in the June referendum. The referendum is being held to approve or reject the draft constitution, which provides for national elections every five years. If approved, the referendum will in effect prolong the tenure of the present government for that period. The leftist Great Somali League (GSL), which has received financial support from Communist countries, almost certainly would seize on the government's refusal to accept Soviet aid as an important issue in its expected vigorous campaign to defeat the referendum.]

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~~CONFIDENTIAL~~North Vietnam and Morocco Establish Diplomatic Relations

North Vietnam and the four African nations with which it has succeeded in establishing relations have French as a common language, and each had experienced French political domination. In the joint communiqué issued in Rabat, as in similar communiqés throughout the foreign minister's tour, this kinship was stressed.

In his audience with King Hassan II on 24 March, Foreign Minister Ung Van Khiem extended an invitation from Ho Chi Minh to visit North Vietnam. He also assured the Moroccans of support for their claim to Mauritania and in turn received assurances of Moroccan support for North Vietnam's efforts to reunify Vietnam "peacefully."

Morocco established diplomatic relations with South Vietnam last year, and Ambassador Buu Hoi took up residence in Rabat in mid-December. While the North Vietnamese are less sensitive than the Chinese Communists about the diplomatic complexities of such a situation, they probably hope that Saigon's ambassador can be removed. Replying to a reporter's question during his Rabat visit, Khiem pointed out that in the case of Mali, the South Vietnamese representative had been ousted soon after the arrival of Hanoi's envoy. Actually, Mali's action at that time resulted primarily from the prior presentation by Saigon's chargé of a formal note explaining South Vietnam's likely reaction in the event Mali recognized Hanoi. This was interpreted by Mali as an ultimatum and an inadmissible interference in its "internal affairs."

North Vietnam already has resident ambassadors in Guinea and Mali. Foreign Minister Ung Van Khiem's delegation has recently concluded an economic and cultural agreement in Conakry and a cultural pact in Bamako.

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