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21 April 1961

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN



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21 April 1961

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Sirah

Laos: Pathet Lao leader Prince Souphanouvong and Quinim Pholsena, a minister of the Xieng Khouang "government," arrived in Moscow on 20 April presumably to consult with Souvanna Phouma as well as the Soviet leaders. [In his interview with the British ambassador on 19 April, Gromyko reiterated the Soviet Union's position that only the contending factions in Laos could actually arrange a cease-fire. Although he emphasized that the ICC should immediately proceed to Laos to verify the cease-fire and even urged that this should be done prior to a conference, Gromyko made this move conditional on an agreement between the Laotians themselves regarding a cease-fire.] *no*

[Government forces in the Thakhek area are moving cross-country south of Route 12 in an effort to recapture Mahaxay. Contact with the enemy apparently has not yet been made.]

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Cuba: The communique read in Fidel Castro's name on the Cuban radio early on 20 April acclaimed the victory "in less than 72 hours" over the "mercenary army" in southern Las Villas Province. Future Cuban statements are likely to expand on the theme that this victory was a significant defeat for "US imperialism." Meanwhile, strong repressive measures continue against those Cubans unsympathetic to Castro, and several "traitors," including Castro's former Minister of Agriculture Humberto Sori Marin, were executed on 20 April. On 19 April the G-2 unit in Matanzas urged Havana that "we must agitate the masses... to go in the streets" and demand the firing squad for "traitors." [redacted]

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Che Guevara had accidentally wounded himself and was in grave condition. There is no information to corroborate this.

Meanwhile, in Guatemala, Communists are [redacted] planning demonstrations on 21 April against President Ydigoras for his alleged assistance to the anti-Castro "mercenaries." [redacted] the demonstrations are to pave the way for a coup that would be "a lesson to the United States to leave Castro alone in the future." Ydigoras, though at present in a relatively strong position, does face opposition from diverse political elements and some dissidence in the armed forces. [redacted]

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*USSR-Germany: In response to the communiqué issued by the President and Chancellor Adenauer, Moscow published on 20 April an authoritative "Observer" article in Izvestia which stresses the urgency of a German peace settlement and a "special definition" of Berlin's status. The article makes no proposals for new negotiations, contains no hints of immediate unilateral Soviet action, and is probably intended to take advantage of current tensions over Laos and Cuba to issue a pointed reminder to the West that the USSR still considers Berlin and Germany to be priority issues. Izvestia warns against "further stalling" on these issues and declares that the USSR "cannot wait any longer, since all deadlines have passed." No new time limit for a settlement is mentioned, however. The article also repeats the line of the Soviet memorandum to Bonn of mid-February and urges Bonn to take the initiative in order "to have its weighty say" on a peace treaty. The standard warning that the USSR will sign a separate peace treaty unless one is concluded with both Germanies is also repeated.

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Communist China: Communist China is expected to conclude shortly a purchase agreement for some 6,000,000 tons of Canadian wheat to be delivered over a three-year period, apparently beginning in June. While final negotiations are still under way in Peiping, as currently envisaged the agreement would allow the Chinese to pay 25 percent down with the remaining 75 percent to be paid within six months after each shipment. According to the Canadian trade commissioner in Hong Kong, the Chinese at first tried to drive a hard bargain but have now "baldly stated" their need for grain. China already has purchased about 3,000,000 tons of grain from nonbloc sources for 1961 delivery, and another large-scale transaction is pending with Australia--perhaps also on credit. The credit terms--unprecedented in Chinese trade with the West--will help ease the impact on Peiping's balance of payments, but not sufficiently to prevent cutbacks in industrial imports.]

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Communist China - USSR: Communist China has asked the USSR to "discontinue the shipment in May and June" of jet fuel, [redacted] "limited capacity" as the reason for this postponement of deliveries. Moscow answered, [redacted] it was not possible to stop the May shipment of 40,000 tons but that no shipments would be made in June. The present rate of Soviet petroleum deliveries--an all-time high of 416,000 tons was scheduled for April--has presumably overtaxed Chinese storage facilities and possibly also transport capabilities.

Kenya: [The political deadlock in Kenya appears to have been broken by the Kenya African Democratic Union's (KADU) decision to participate in the formation of a government--the first under a new constitution providing for an African majority in parliament. KADU, the smaller of the two African parties, probably can count on support from European and Asian parliamentary members. However, unless it is also able to attract significant support from the Kenya African National Union (KANU)--which contains the country's most prominent African leaders--the new government probably will be short-lived. KADU's decision to form a government was made only after the British governor agreed to make preliminary arrangements for the release from detention of Mau Mau leader Jomo Kenyatta--probably before the end of this year--and indicated a willingness to consider other points.]

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Situation in Laos

Thailand is increasing its alert status in the border area adjacent to Thakhek. [The Laotian Government, meanwhile, has prepared a contingency request to Thailand to permit the evacuation of administrative services of Khammouane Province to Thai territory.] On 18 April, General Phoumi ordered martial law in Thakhek and the evacuation of the civilian population to Savannakhet. Phoumi also has the cabinet's authority to appeal for SEATO intervention at any time, but on 19 April he repeated his promise to Ambassador Brown to consult with him prior to taking such a step.

[Enemy forces south of Luang Prabang on Route 13 appear to be building up for an attack against opposing government troops.]

Meanwhile, north of the royal capital more Pathet Lao forces are reported to have arrived just north of the Muong Sai post. Little change has been reported from the other fronts.]

[Colonel Vang Pao, leader of the government's Meo guerrilla forces, [] the Meo people would suffer badly if a political settlement in Laos gave the Pathet Lao control over Meo-populated areas. He cited atrocities already committed by the Pathet Lao against Meos in areas where guerrilla units have been active.]

[Approximately 100,000 Meos reside in Laos. Most of them are in Xieng Khouang and Luang Prabang provinces; the rest are scattered throughout northern Laos.]

[The UK plans to issue a public announcement on the precise accepted Soviet terms for reaching a cease-fire in Laos in the hopes of providing a rationale for refusing to attend the conference if the cease-fire does not appear to be effective. The Soviet Union, however, probably feels that if the Pathet Lao - Kong Le forces do not sharply increase their military operations in Laos, the Western governments will participate in an international conference in Geneva even if there has been no formal]

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[redacted] agreement to a cease-fire.] Moscow propaganda has already attacked the decision to attach US military advisers to Phoumi's forces as a "provocative demonstration" designed to frustrate efforts to reach a settlement in Laos. Moscow radio has contrasted the US action with Britain's desire to reach "an early termination of hostilities in Laos." In an effort to blame the West for any protracted delay in achieving a meaningful cease-fire in Laos, Moscow said that the US apparently intends to postpone indefinitely the cessation of hostilities in Laos.

Hanoi on 20 April denounced the US decision to set up a military advisory mission in Laos as an "aggressive and war-provoking scheme" designed to "broaden" the fighting. Without specifying the action it might take, Hanoi declared that the US would be held "fully responsible for all consequences of its policy of military intervention" in Laos. [redacted]

[redacted]

Soviet airlift activity into Laos continues undiminished. The three Soviet IL-14s which arrived in North Vietnam from the USSR on 14 April are now flying airlift missions into Laos. Three other IL-14s were scheduled to leave Hanoi for Peiping.

[redacted]

[redacted]

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~~CONFIDENTIAL~~Kenya

[In the constitution of early 1960, British officials and Kenya nationalist leaders agreed that Africans would be given strong minority representation on the executive council in addition to a majority in the local parliament. The new system, which provided for 53 popularly elected members and 12 indirectly elected "national members," was put into effect following colony-wide elections last February. Of the 37 African seats in the 65-member parliament, KANU controls 20 seats and the smaller KADU 15; two seats are held by independents. The remaining 28 seats were allotted to the minority European, Asian, and Arab communities.]

[The constitutional arrangements in effect clearly indicated the early African domination of Kenya and the ending of white settler control over the colony's political life. The European community of some 66,000, in which a small group of large landholders has wielded influence disproportionate to their numbers, has for the most part reluctantly accepted the concept of ultimate African control. The Asian community of some 170,000--composed largely of commercial and small business entrepreneurs--is no longer a significant political force. The 37,000 Arab minority is conservative and will support efforts to form a representative government.]

[The leaders of KANU, president James Gichuru, general secretary Tom Mboya, Oginga Odinga, and Julius Kiano, are the most influential African nationalists in Kenya, and any government formed without their support would probably be short-lived. Ronald Ngala, the president of KADU, comes from the politically insignificant coastal area and has no important tribal backing. Most other KADU members represent minor tribes, and if in new elections constituencies were drawn strictly according to population, many KADU representatives would have little chance of being elected.]

[The release of Kenyatta and his early return to Kenya politics even in an advisory capacity would be of great significance to the nationalist movement. The Kikuyu tribe, the largest and

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most aggressive in Kenya, has in Kenyatta the country's best known nationalist. Under his influence tribal politicians might be stimulated to oust the present non-Kikuyu nationalist leadership. Although moderate nationalist leaders, recognizing Kenyatta's hold on the Africans, profess to follow his leadership, they undoubtedly hope to limit his participation in politics to some lesser role such as the titular head of government.

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