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9 June 1961

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN



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DAILY BRIEF

*Laos: [With General Phoumi and most other government leaders out of the country, rumors of possible coup attempts are again current in Vientiane. Government security officials are said to be concerned over the reported formation of a group headed by a police colonel, with some support among army elements, whose aim is the overthrow of the government in favor of Souvanna Phouma. Although the ability of this particular group to effect a coup is not known, there is no question but that some sentiment exists in Vientiane for a change of government that would somehow bring an early end to the military and political conflict in Laos.]

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[No new significant military activity has been reported in the Pa Dong area. Government forces under Lt. Col. Vang Pao plan to establish a series of positions on high ground to the west of Pa Dong from which Vang Pao may attempt guerrilla activities against enemy forces in the area.]

Bloc airlift activities continued to be scheduled through 9 June.

(Backup, Page 1) (Map)

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***Dominican Republic:** Dominican authorities may be having some success in creating the impression that the regime is turning away from the ruthless policies of the past. The presence of the OAS subcommittee, which arrived in the Dominican Republic on 7 June, will temporarily hamper General Ramfis Trujillo in any public manifestation of his drive to consolidate his position in the armed forces.

On 7 June his public relations adviser remarked to a newsman that General Jose Roman, minister of defense, had "escaped." He had earlier been reported under arrest, and yesterday a presidential decree formally removed him from his post. General Roman, believed friendly to the US, is known to have had personal difficulties with Ramfis in the past and to have had contact with dissident elements prior to the assassination. Ramfis probably considers Roman's elimination a necessary step in gaining full control of the armed forces.

Official Dominican allegations on 7 June that the assassination of Trujillo was part of a "vast conspiracy with ramifications in a foreign country" are probably a prelude to an effort to implicate Venezuelan President Betancourt. This charge, which could probably be backed up by the Dominicans with plausible evidence, could be used in an attempt to urge removal of the OAS sanctions imposed against the Dominican Republic last August and prompted by Trujillo's effort to kill Betancourt. The American Consulate believes that the now-publicized contacts which a private American citizen had with the dissidents may later be used in an effort to implicate the United States, if this should serve the regime's purposes. [redacted]

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The Venezuelan foreign minister told Ambassador Moscoso yesterday that Colombia, earlier reported as reluctant to join possible joint action against the Dominican regime, is now agreeable to advancing the date of Venezuelan-Colombian joint fleet maneuvers previously agreed on for 18 to 25 June, and to moving its participating vessels from Colombian waters to the vicinity of the Dominican Republic. The Colombian vessels will consist of two destroyers and a frigate. Venezuela will have three destroyers participating. Both countries are agreeable to continuing the maneuvers as long as necessary. A Venezuelan navy captain was to leave for Colombia yesterday to serve as liaison between the two fleet units. [redacted]

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USSR: Recent practice flights by relatively large numbers of military aircraft over Moscow have been noteworthy for the first public display of air-to-surface missiles on bombers and air-to-air missiles on new high-performance fighters.

The practice flights over Moscow have been carried out daily since 30 May, and are probably in preparation for a major air demonstration on Soviet Aviation Day. Aviation Day has been observed quietly during the past few years in the USSR, usually in June or July, and there has been no significant air demonstration over Moscow since 1956. *mo*

Some of the practice flights have included the Bear turboprop heavy bomber, with an air-to-surface missile (ASM) which may be the 350-n.m. Cherub; the Badger jet medium bomber with an ASM which may be either the 55-n.m. Cracker or the 100-n.m. Truckle; and the Fishbed high-performance fighter, with air-to-air missile (AAM). On 6 June 10 Bears and 10 Badgers, all carrying ASM, and 51 of the new high-performance fighters were noted. *td*

Communist China - India: Peiping has apparently all but written off any chance for the present of normalizing its strained relations with New Delhi. Foreign Minister Chen Yi complained recently to a bloc diplomat in Geneva of the "increasing closeness" in relations between Washington and New Delhi. Chen also criticized Prime Minister Nehru's "determination to fulfill, with no excessive modesty," the role of spokesman for the Indian bourgeoisie. He said that these considerations, together with Nehru's fear that China's "enormous accomplishments" would seduce the impoverished Indian masses, accounted for India's unfriendly attitude and its "periodic fomentation" of border incidents. Chen's statements have been echoed by Chinese diplomats in New Delhi, and Chinese propaganda attacks on India's growing economic alignment with the US and the West have sharply increased during the *OK*

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[past few months. Chen also expressed satisfaction over what he termed the stronger public stand now being taken by the USSR against Nehru's foreign policy, implying that Moscow had been taken in for a time by Indian duplicity.]

North Vietnam:

[North Vietnam's food shortage is serious and that the regime is concerned about possible unrest. The British consul general reported the food situation in mid-May was becoming progressively worse and that he had heard open grumbling.]

[in April people in a number of localities were "starving" and warned all subordinate officials in the region not to "allow any kind of regrettable situation to break out."] (Backup, Page 3) *mo*

Panama: [Business and church groups which for several months have been urging the Panamanian Government to break relations with Castro have stepped up their campaign. Their efforts have received support this week in a manifesto from an important element of the government coalition--the Republican party led by Second Vice President Bazan. The Chiari government still maintains, however, that it will act against Cuba only on a multilateral basis.] (Backup, Page 4) *OK*

SELECTED INTELLIGENCE REPORTS AND ESTIMATES

(Available during the preceding week)

Short-term Prospects in South Korea: Significance of the May 1961 Military Coup Led by Major General Pak and Probable Trends Over the Next Few Months. U.S.I.B. SNIE 42-2-61.
31 May 1961.

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~~SECRET~~The Situation in Laos

[A reliable American observer with Vang Pao's troops estimates that from five to seven days will be required to reorganize and resupply these units following their withdrawal on 7 June from Pa Dong. The Meos were described as being somewhat disorganized but not panicky; some were observed carrying crew-served weapons up to 81-mm. mortars during the withdrawal. Four 75-mm. howitzers and four 4.2-inch mortars were left in position at Pa Dong. The observer believes that Vang Pao's estimate of casualties--10 killed and 30 wounded--is conservative.]

[The royal government in early June arrested five Buddhist monks who claimed they were going to Xieng Khouang to study. One had been promised a study tour in Moscow, one a tour in Communist China, and another a tour in North Vietnam. Other recent reports indicate the establishment in Xieng Khouang of a religious study institute and extensive Pathet Lao proselytization among the monks. The Pathet Lao have long recognized the pivotal role of the religious orders, coining the slogan, "Who rules the pagodas, rules Laos." Pagodas are the functional center of Lao villages, and the village abbot is often a more effective and respected figure than the headmen or remote royal government officials. Pathet Lao leader Phoumi Vongvichit, during his tenure as minister of religion in the short-lived coalition government following the 1957 unification accords, was instrumental in spreading Pathet Lao influence in key monasteries.]

[In a 7 June conversation with Ambassador Harriman which centered on the situation in Pa Dong, Soviet delegate Pushkin disclaimed any Soviet responsibility for the Pathet Lao attack on the Meo units. He reiterated Souvanna Phouma's assertion that FAL forces were dropped into this Pathet Lao area after the cease-fire was established and thus provoked Communist retaliation. While he stressed that the USSR adheres to the statement on Laos in the Vienna communiqué, Pushkin maintained that the question of the cease-fire was a two-sided matter, and that if a cease-fire were to be effective, Phoumi's forces]

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[would have to end unauthorized flights over the territory held by the Pathet Lao and Kong Le]

The Soviet delegate, while assuring Ambassador Harriman that "agreement will be reached" with Britain on instructions to the ICC, argued that the ICC should not be given powers "that do not flow from the task which faces us." This position reflects the USSR's determination to focus conference deliberations on the Soviet proposals of 17 May in order to offset Western demands that an effective control machinery must be an essential part of a Laotian political settlement. In his speech before the conference on 5 June, Pushkin charged that the Western position on instructions to the ICC was really designed to "predetermine" the powers of the commission before "all aspects of the Laotian problem had been discussed."

Airlift operations on 7 June involved a total of 16 sorties, of which probably 15 were into Laos. Although this is a considerable increase over those of the previous four days, it is still somewhat less than the level of operations carried out prior to 3 June. The AN-10 that arrived at Canton for the second time on 6 June returned to Peiping on 7 June and will probably continue on to Irkutsk. The four Soviet IL-2s that arrived at Canton on 6 June, presumably to meet the AN-10, returned to Hanoi on 7 June. The IL-14 that arrived at Hanoi from Moscow on 5 June left on 7 June, apparently returning to the USSR.

There are indications that a relatively large group of people are leaving North Vietnam aboard Soviet transports. The AN-12 that left from Haiphong on 3 June carried 23 passengers; the IL-18 that left there on 5 June carried 51 passengers. The AN-10 returned to Peiping from Canton on 7 June with 41 passengers, however, the passengers apparently disembarked at Peiping. Some Soviet and/or Chinese Communist technicians and advisers may be returning home from Laos and North Vietnam.

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~~SECRET~~North Vietnam's Food Shortage

The North Vietnamese Government admitted the seriousness of the situation in a communiqué of the Council of Ministers published in Hanoi on 14 May. Lamenting the state of North Vietnamese agriculture and admitting that insufficient attention had been given to the food problem, the communiqué sought to enlist popular cooperation by promising the peasants they could retain or sell privately grain produced in excess of government quotas.

[redacted]
[redacted] seed rice has been diverted for food consumption. Hanoi's reaction to the food problem reflects concern over performance of its recently organized cooperatives. [redacted]

[redacted] the cooperative system had been a failure because the people had simply stopped working? [redacted]

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Pressure on Panamanian Government to Break Relations
With Castro

[A group of Catholic students staged an organized demonstration on 2 June petitioning President Chiari to break relations with Cuba, to intercede on behalf of two Panamanian-born student leaders held by Castro, and to enforce the act outlawing communism in Panama. News media, more outspoken and influential in Panama than in many Latin American countries, are concentrating on anti-Communist, anti-Castro material, and business groups reportedly are trying to organize a commercial and industrial shutdown until Chiari severs relations. This general shutdown, now planned to start on Monday, 12 June, is said to be receiving widespread popular support.]

[Foreign Minister Solis has received Cuban diplomats coldly, warned them against continued interference in internal Panamanian affairs, and succeeded in having at least three of them, including the ambassador, withdrawn. Pro-Castro agitators are under surveillance, and several have been arrested for short periods.]

[The Panamanian Government has said that it maintains relations with Cuba primarily to offer asylum to Cubans seeking protection, but it probably sees the issue as a good bargaining point with the US.]

[the Cuban chargé in Panama had specific instructions to avoid any provocation that might cause a diplomatic break because Panama was an important transit point for travel of Cuban personnel.]

[The stand taken by the Republican party in its manifesto--which emphasized also Panama's need for social and economic reforms--is probably at least partially a political move by the party's effective head, Second Vice President Jose Bazan. He is a bitter enemy of Finance Minister Gilberto Arias, whose family wields great influence in Panamanian foreign policy, and Bazan may feel that by backing a break with Castro he will attract both US and conservative Panamanian approval of his presidential ambitions.]

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The Director of the Budget

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The Secretary of State

The Under Secretary of State

The Director, International Cooperation Administration

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The Deputy Under Secretary of State for Administration

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