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25 April 1961

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN



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25 April 1961

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN

25 April 1961

DAILY BRIEF

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*France-Algeria: (Information available as of 0430 EST) The strength and impact of the French military insurrection appear to be weakening slightly in view of reports of gaps in its control in Algeria, the passing of another night without an attack on metropolitan France, and further vigorous counter-measures by Paris. While popular response in France to De Gaulle's appeal for support has been enthusiastic, [some of his supporters have expressed fears that the Communists stand to gain from the government's arming of citizens for local defense.] In Tunisia and Morocco, the governments have taken precautionary measures in an effort to confine the insurrection to Algeria.

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Laos: [Enemy forces, reportedly comprising three battalions, on 24 April attacked two government battalions about 20 miles east of Thakhek in central Laos. Details on the fighting are not yet available. A government paratroop battalion has been ordered to reinforce the units under attack. South of Vang Vieng, elements of the government force that withdrew from this key point on 23 April are continuing their move southward, but all units are not yet accounted for. New defensive positions are being developed about 50 miles north of Vientiane, to be manned by elements of the withdrawing force plus a battalion airlifted from Vientiane. The movement of the latter force, scheduled for completion on 25 April, will leave in Vientiane only one battalion of the special force designed by General Phoumi to ensure the security of the capital. North of Phou Khoun junction, government artillery fire on 24 April repulsed another in a series of enemy attacks that began on 22 April.] OK
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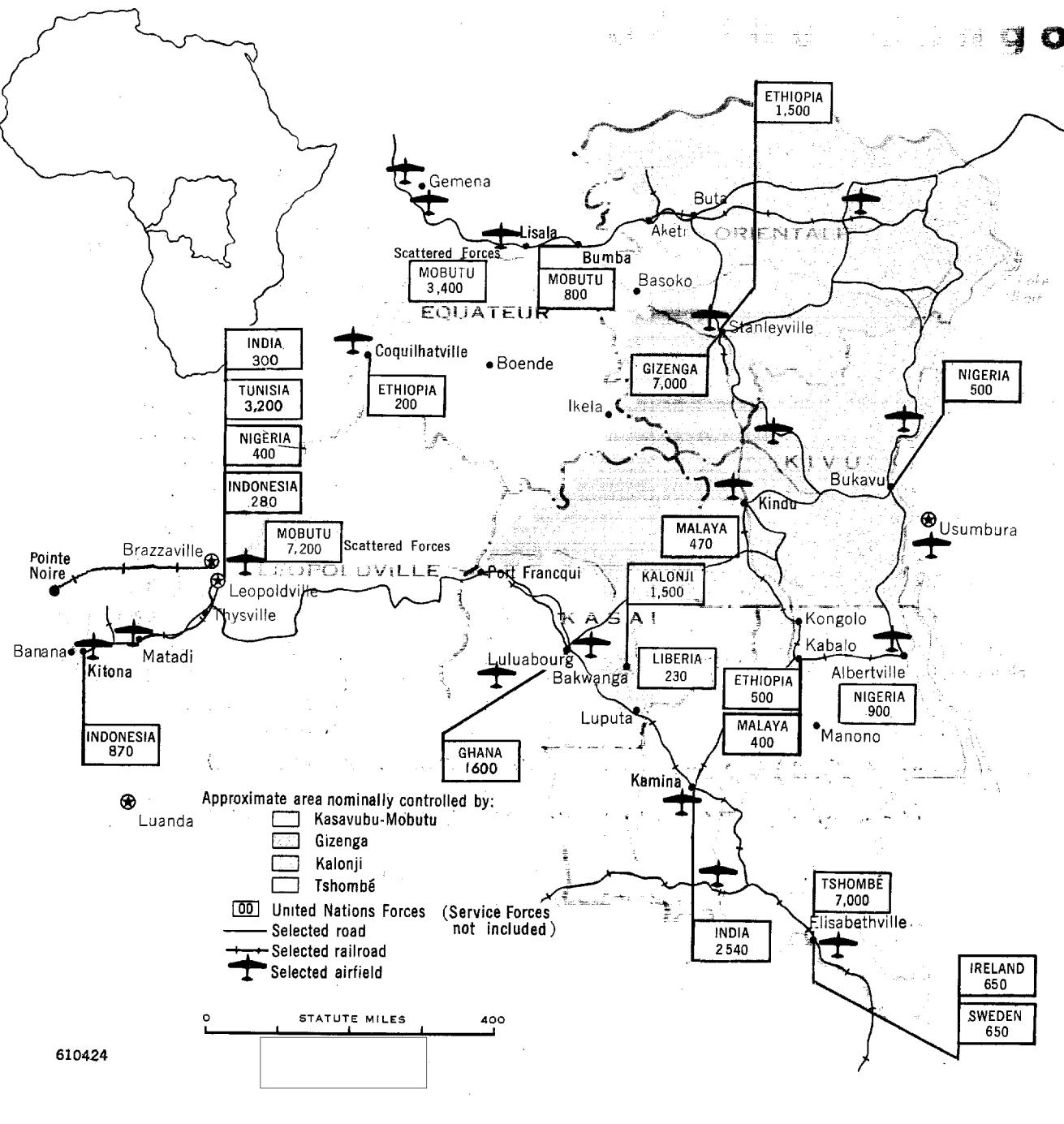
Soviet airlift operations into Laos continue. Nine Soviet IL-14s flew from Hanoi to Xieng Khouang and returned on both 23 and 24 April. [] (Map) []

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Congo: Ambassador Timberlake reports from Leopoldville that a compromise solution concerning the return of UN troops to Matadi now appears likely. Acting UN chief Abbas is meeting with Kasavubu to work out final details. Kasavubu has hitherto objected to the UN's proposal that Nigerian police be permitted to return to Matadi to establish a UN presence there.

The UN Command feels that another focus of military activity in the Congo is likely to be Kasai Province, where Kalonji's army is regarded as a "menace" and where the threat of Baluba depredations continues. An influx of Baluba tribesmen into Kivu Province from northern Katanga also brings a threat of new violence in Kivu.

(Backup, Page 4)

(Map) [Redacted]

Organization of American States (OAS): Costa Rican President Echandi has instructed his representative at the OAS to offer a resolution proposing asylum in Latin America for the prisoners captured last week by Castro's forces, and Colombian President Lleras has promised to support the resolution.

No

The Latin Americans would pledge that the asylees would not leave the territory of the state of asylum. Such a resolution would probably have widespread support among OAS members, who generally oppose capital punishment in connection with revolutionary activity. In Cuba, Fidel Castro stated in his 23 April speech that there will be no clemency for captured personnel of the 17 April landings unless the United States ceases its support of Cuban exiles.

(Backup, Page 6)

South Korea: There is evidence that certain South Korean Army leaders are considering a coup against the Chang Myon government. Two groups of officers, one led by former Rhee associate Yi Pom-sok and the other by Major General Pak Chong-hui, deputy commander of the South Korean Second Army, are believed to be making separate plans for a takeover and the

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[establishment of a military regime. Both groups of dissidents are reported to be waiting for the "right moment," when public disorders might require the army to intervene. US military observers believe that these groups lack adequate cohesiveness, organization, and support within the South Korean Army to take action at this time.]

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French Military Insurrection

The insurgent military leaders' control over Algeria now appears less widespread than some French officials privately conceded on 23 April.

[redacted] told a US embassy official that the government still controls most of the Oran area outside the city and its surrounding district, the Mers-el-Kebir naval base, the coastal city of Mostaganem, the area around Bone and the Tunisian frontier. According to press reports, naval and air force personnel in Algeria have refused to join the insurgents and nine fighter planes have escaped to France.

The Algiers junta is now disclaiming any intention of launching an attack on metropolitan France. Although the Paris government took even stronger security precautions against a possible paratroop assault on the night on 24-25 April than it did the previous night, the capability of the insurgents to launch such an attack appears to be diminishing--partly because they seem to have lost momentum and partly as a result of the government's vigorous emergency measures. [Initial government anxiety as to the reliability of the air force in metropolitan France has been admitted]

[redacted] re-tired air force general Pierre Gallois had swiftly formed a group of former pilots pledged to fight. Gallois reportedly claims to have warned dissident General Jouhaud in Algiers that any transport aircraft coming to France would be downed.

[redacted] the government also suspected the loyalty of a tank regiment near Paris whose vehicles were sabotaged by a group under De Gaulle's son-in-law, Colonel de Boissier.

[redacted] De Gaulle himself is reportedly pressing for a naval blockade and other strong steps against the dissidents, but is being advised

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[by the military first to initiate measures to wear down the insurgents. Some of these actions include the government's moves on 24 April to open judicial proceedings involving the death penalty or life imprisonment against participants in the revolt, initiation of a "financial blockade," and suspension of maritime traffic with Algeria.]

An estimated 10 million people--unprecedented in French history--participated on 24 April in a one-hour nationwide work stoppage called by the major labor unions to demonstrate their backing for the government.

[Free labor union officials, however, seem to be worried about being drawn into joint action with the Communists. Socialist party secretary-general Guy Mollet has [redacted] voiced the fear that the longer the tension lasts the more De Gaulle must depend on support from the political left and that the French Communist party would benefit from this. Mollet noted that, despite the government's effort to screen applicants when it began arming civilians, some Communists had been armed "unintentionally" and others were taking advantage of the situation to break out long-hidden arms caches.]

The Algerian rebel government in Tunis, affirming its determination to oppose by all means "the fascist generals," appealed on 24 April to "all people who value freedom" to take concrete measures against the generals' insurrection. FLN military units based in Tunisia have been placed on alert status. [redacted]

[redacted] all Tunisian security forces were also placed on immediate alert. [redacted] President Bourguiba subsequently informed a news correspondent that Tunisian police controls were particularly rigid in the area of the French base at Bizerte. Bourguiba is reported to fear that French units stationed either in Bizerte or in eastern Algeria may be encouraged to enter Tunisian territory. Publicly, however,

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Bourguiba has expressed confidence in De Gaulle. The possibility that the Algerian crisis may cause Bourguiba to postpone his visit to Canada and the United States has already been hinted in the Tunisian press.

In Morocco, the King is reported to be following Algerian developments closely and to have ordered rigorous border controls. Press reports of 24 April indicated that units of the Moroccan army had begun to move toward the Algerian border. Moroccan Foreign Minister Driss M'Hammedi also announced that he had instructed Morocco's delegate to the United Nations to confer with Secretary General Hammarskjold on the "serious threat" to peace in North Africa posed by the insurrection.

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The Situation in the Congo

Acting UN representative Abbas reportedly has flown to meet with Kasavubu at Coquilhatville, where Congolese leaders are meeting to discuss modification of the Congo's political structure along lines agreed upon at Tananarive. A compromise settlement on Matadi would end what has become a sterile dispute for Kasavubu, and build up some credit with the UN which Kasavubu might employ to advantage on such issues as obtaining the withdrawal of UN representative Dayal in the Congo.

Reports that Gizenga has been supplanted by rebel army commander Lundula in Stanleyville are unconfirmed. The absence of any new military activity in the area suggests that the cease-fire announced by General Mobutu on 16 April may be at least partially effective.

The American Embassy in Leopoldville observes that contrary to the views expressed by UN representative Dayal, the Congo Army can no longer be regarded as the principal source of disorders in the Congo.

In Katanga, President Tshombé--who hitherto has largely ignored criticism of his regime as pro-Belgian--has granted to a South African firm, General Mining and Finance Corporation, mineral rights in an area comprising 8,100 square miles south of Elisabethville. The grant is the first to a non-Belgian firm in recent years.

[redacted] Tshombé is "physically and emotionally tired" as a result of his concern over military operations in northern Katanga and factional maneuverings within his government. He reportedly is under treatment by two witch doctors brought to Katanga from Brazzaville.)

[redacted] representatives of pro-Gizenga youth groups in Leopoldville claim to have received assurances of support from the Indian contingent in Leopoldville for a coup against the Kasavubu government. Although Indian

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Officials in the Congo apparently have maintained contacts with Gizengist elements and may have indicated support for their objectives, any action taken outside the framework of UN operations would conflict sharply with New Delhi's publicly and privately expressed policy regarding the Congo. Nehru would not be likely to sanction the use of Indian troops in a coup attempt which would undercut UN efforts toward a Congo solution and increase the danger of direct intervention by the major powers.

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Costa Rican President Suggests OAS Move to Protect
Cuban Prisoners

Several Latin American presidents, including Frondizi of Argentina, Quadros of Brazil, and Lopez Mateos of Mexico-- have appealed to the Cuban Government for the lives of the prisoners captured last week, but the Costa Rican move is the first effort to use OAS machinery for this purpose. Costa Rican President Echandi apparently intends his resolution to be presented to the OAS Council, which is made up of ambassadors to the OAS from the 21 American republics.

Echandi may be seeking to demonstrate his strong anti-Castro sympathies to the people of Costa Rica while resisting their pressures to break relations with Cuba. In Costa Rica, perhaps to a greater degree than in any other Latin American country, initial sympathy for Castro's assumption of power in Cuba was rapidly dissipated as the informed public observed the evolution of his totalitarian regime. Nevertheless, Echandi has thus far refused to break diplomatic relations, claiming that his government lacks evidence of any flagrant Cuban violation of Costa Rica's national sovereignty and that the Costa Rican Embassy in Havana serves both a useful and a humanitarian purpose as a refuge for individuals opposing Castro.

The probability of full-scale public discussion of the Cuban problem at the Eleventh Inter-American Conference scheduled for 24 May in Quito has increased Latin American pressures on the Ecuadorian Government to postpone the meeting. [Ecuadorian President Velasco is reluctant to accept the postponement but now is resigned to the necessity of doing so, according to his foreign minister.]

The Panamanian foreign minister expressed an interest in inter-American action on Cuba on 19 April when he told a Latin American diplomat in Panama City that Soviet delivery of arms to Cuba represents an attack on all America and that "the American countries must join together to take urgent defense measures," While

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Panamanian President Chiari probably holds these opinions, he is motivated primarily by a desire to defend his own government against pro-Castro forces now agitating increasingly for revolution in Panama. It is unlikely that he feels secure enough to join any strong campaign against Cuba or to break relations with the Castro government.

On 24 April the Honduran Government of President Villeda Morales--who faces perhaps the most active pro-Castro forces in Central America but is personally a strong anti-Communist of the liberal left--broke diplomatic relations with Cuba until it "submits to the norms and discipline of the inter-American system." Seven other Latin American governments have previously broken or suspended relations with the Castro regime.

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Some South Korean Military Leaders Considering Coup

[Most of the dissidents identified as participants in the coup plans hold staff and rear-echelon positions, although their plans for seizing power have reportedly been discussed with some division commanders. Army Chief of Staff Lt. General Chang To-yong has been informed of the plotting but as yet appears not to have committed himself. According to one report he claims to lack necessary evidence to arrest Major General Pak Chong-hui and fears that such premature action might trigger a coup attempt by Pak's followers.]

[Those who support the coup claim to be concerned over the Chang government's lack of "stability and strength" and undoubtedly regret the loss of the privileged position enjoyed by the military under President Rhee. In the year following the overthrow of Rhee, many senior officers have been cashiered, a civilian committee has been established to investigate military affairs, and the press has freely criticized the armed forces.]

[Major General Pak Chong-hui is reported to have no definite plans for administering the government should his coup be successful. Pak has stated only that the military must hold power for at least five years before turning the government back to the civilian politicians. Yi Pom-sok, on the basis of his past actions and statements, probably would attempt to establish a dictatorship with himself as leader.]

[In the past, factionalism among the senior officers and the loyalty of the military to civilian authority have restrained any efforts to seize power. Military leaders probably still feel that a coup would have to be justified to the public as necessary "to save the country" from widespread domestic disorder and a breakdown of civilian police]

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[capabilities. Also, responsible leaders probably would hesitate to support such action unless they believed the new government could count on American support.]

[Some of the malcontents probably are capable of rash and violent action. However, an absence of widespread violence and civil disorder, and increasing police effectiveness are likely to inhibit those who might otherwise support a military takeover]

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