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6 May 1961

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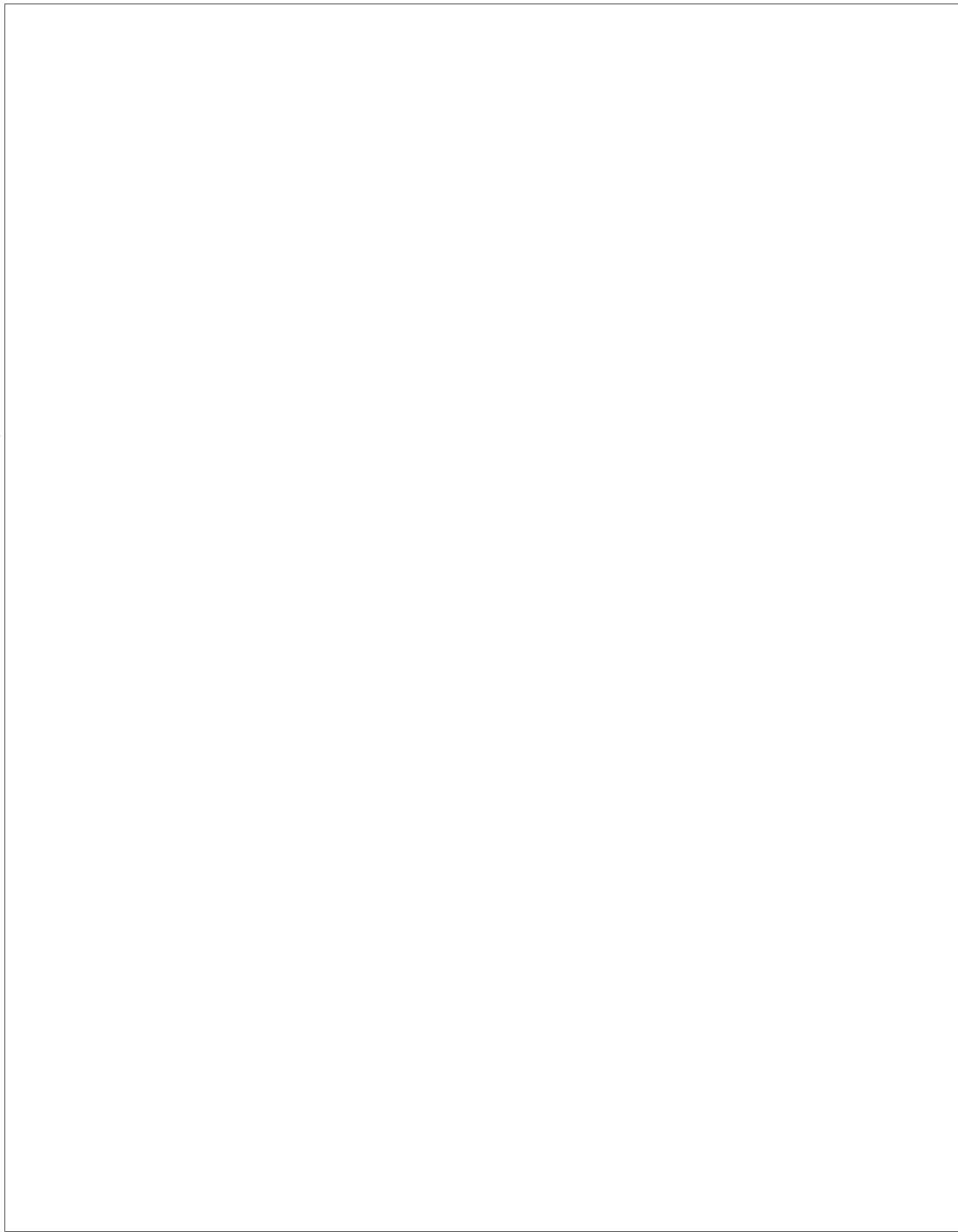
CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN



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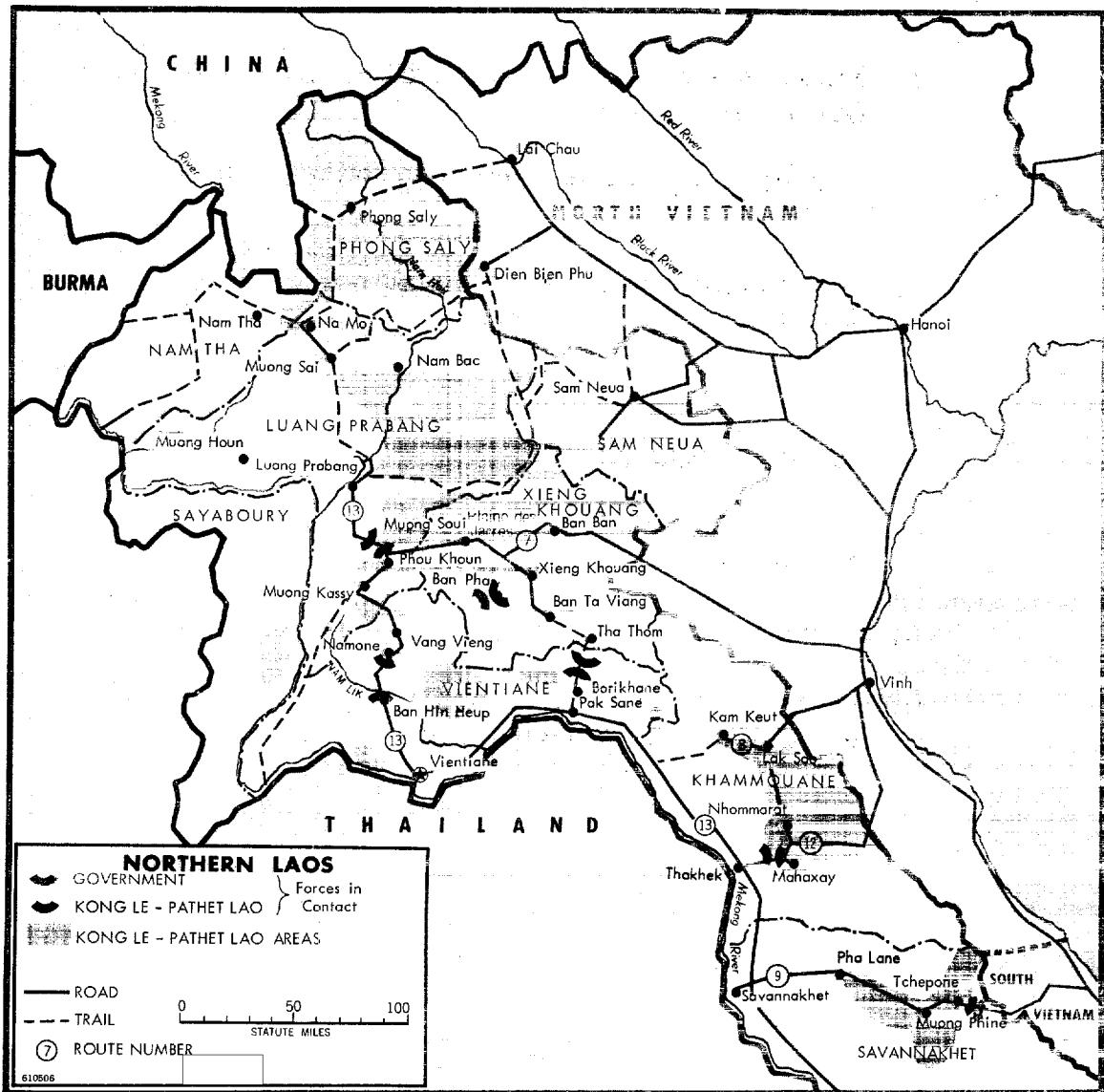
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DAILY BRIEF

Serah

Laos: [The cease-fire discussions held just north of the Nam Lik on 5 May between representatives of the Vientiane and Xieng Khouang factions were unproductive. General Phoumi states that the low-ranking enemy representatives apparently had no authority to make decisions except on local problems--such as access to water supply in the area--and he is convinced that they were a "second team." The enemy representatives claimed that because of poor communications another meeting would not be possible before 7 May.]

*The Vientiane government, meanwhile, has broadcast an offer to meet in Luang Prabang at any time between 6 and 10 May with leaders of the opposing party for discussions aimed at a "general reconciliation." This offer may merely be intended to give an impression of reasonableness toward Souvanna's proposal for political talks on the assumption that Luang Prabang is unacceptable as a site. It could, however, represent a modification of the government's professed opposition to political talks prior to the Geneva conference, in line with King Savang's preference for an internal settlement.

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[The military situation is generally quiet, with only scattered activity reported. About 150 South Vietnamese troops are reported to have moved about 7 miles into southern Laos in what is described as primarily a defensive maneuver to provide fallback positions for the Laotian garrison retreating from Tchepone.]

[Soviet airlift operations into Laos continue.]

[] (Backup, Page 1) (Map)

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Congo: [Leopoldville's Foreign Minister Bomboko--the dominant figure at the Coquilhatville political conference--apparently hopes to enlist UN support to disarm Tshombé's troops, and subsequently himself move against Gizenga, according to the American Embassy in Leopoldville.] There are indications that the Leopoldville group may reconvene parliament--a move long sought by Gizenga--as a means of securing Gizenga's attendance at the current talks. Leopoldville government leaders, who are still keeping Tshombé under detention, apparently regard the present conference at Coquilhatville as crucial to the Congo's future and have no plans to defer outstanding issues to a subsequent meeting.

Belgian Foreign Minister Spaak, who is also minister of African affairs in the new cabinet, will seek to build up the Leopoldville government at Tshombé's expense and to weed out some of the more blatant Belgian supporters of Tshombé in Katanga. Because of strong right-wing sentiment in Belgium, however, he would be reluctant to see a general exodus of Belgian settlers from Katanga at the IIN's insistence.

(Backup, Page 4)

Communist China: [Demonstrating an extreme sensitivity to any suggestion that Communist China needs American help in its present difficulties, Premier Chou En-lai rejected an offer, extended by Burmese Premier U Nu in April, of some 300,000 tons of wheat from private American sources on favorable terms. Chou admitted that the purchase of Canadian and Australian grain for hard currency was placing a heavy strain on China, but declined to consider a proposal that would have permitted payment for the American wheat in Chinese Communist currency. The Chinese premier [] he was naive in dealing with the Americans and was being used by them in a scheme to make propaganda capital out of Communist China's food shortages. China, Chou added, could take care of itself.]

North - South Korea: North Korea has offered to throw open its borders and pay the bills for a wide variety of visitors from South Korea. On 4 May Pyongyang issued a statement endorsing a proposal for North-South contacts it said had been

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made the same day by a group of South Korean students. Pyongyang invited the students to come North and offered to provide "freedom of travel" and living facilities. Virtually every segment of the South Korean population was promised similar treatment in this offer, which Pyongyang undoubtedly expects Seoul to denounce. Although the bulk of South Korean political and student leaders probably will reject Pyongyang's offer, public interest in reunification has been growing since April of last year. [redacted] (Backup, Page 5)

Iraq: [redacted] Members of Moslem extremist groups are said to be planning to assassinate Prime Minister Qasim sometime this month, [redacted]

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[redacted] Among Qasim's most vocal critics have been Iraq religious leaders, who have consistently opposed his past reliance on the Communists for support and the suppression of rightist religious political parties.

[redacted] Moslem religious fanatics are more prone to desperate action to achieve their ends than are Arab nationalist elements. [redacted] (Backup, Page 6)

Libya: [redacted] The reorganization of Prime Minister Uthman's cabinet on 4 May appears aimed at heading off a new governmental crisis over graft and corruption among top officials. Members of the Uthman government have in their six months of power managed to find "legal" as well as sub rosa means for extracting large sums from several Western-owned oil companies. Although the pro-Western minister of foreign affairs has been replaced by an experienced diplomat who has also been favorably disposed toward the West, the composition of the revised cabinet as a whole suggests a continuation of the gradual trend in Libya toward nationalist and neutralist policies. [redacted] (Backup, Page 7)

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Iran: Confirmation by the Shah of reports that Ali Amini has been appointed prime minister to replace Sharif-Emami, who resigned on 4 May, would indicate an intent to appease elements which have called for reform and an attempt to quiet demonstrations which have been going on in Tehran since 2 May. [Amini, recognized as a conservative opponent of the Shah, would have the support of General Bakhtiar, who has been engaged in his own planning for a possible removal of the Shah.] Amini would probably attempt a moderate reformist program, but his success would depend on the extent to which the Shah is willing to support him against the ultra-conservatives, who would oppose any reforms threatening their interests. General Bakhtiar also talked to the Shah on 5 May and is a possible choice for prime minister, but he is reported to be reluctant to accept the post.

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[] Pha Lane, east of Savanna-khet on Route 9, was still in government hands as of 1600 hours on 5 May, contrary to an earlier Laotian Army report that the town had fallen. North of Pak Sane, a government battalion initiated a limited-objective attack on 5 May to improve its position. No other military activity in Laos has been reported.

[] a group of about 100 Vietnamese special forces personnel is being assembled for possible covert missions in Laos along Route 9. One or two reconnaissance teams composed of such troops disguised as civilians are already operating in the Tchepone district. [] as of 4 May Laotian Army troops still held four posts on Route 9 between Tchepone and the Vietnamese border.

TASS has characterized the cease-fire discussions of 5 May as "unofficial negotiations" on the location of the permanent armistice talks. It said the first meeting scheduled had not taken place because the Vientiane delegation did not go to Namone in accordance with Souvanna's proposal.

[] In discussing French policy on Laos at Geneva, [] Paris favors having the conference limited to the Laotian problem, with all substantive decisions being unanimous. [] the goal of the conference should be to seek a peaceful solution, but if the conference failed, other steps, as noted in the SEATO resolution, would []

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[have to be taken. The French prefer to see a government of national union formed in Laos before the conference, but the spokesman admitted this seemed an increasingly remote possibility.]

[] working level believes it is impossible to prevent the bloc from gaining some advantages from the conference because the West has "played its hand too badly for too long." [] it is unrealistic to hope to postpone the consideration of the formation of a new Laotian government, preferably under Souvanna with Pathet Lao representation. The British are encouraging the Laotian government to accept Souvanna's invitation to political talks now in Laos. While agreeing on the need for being prepared to take "vigorous action" if either the conference or the cease-fire breaks down, London is opposed to measures of readiness which they fear might wreck the negotiations, such as a troop build-up in Thailand or a "conspicuous" increase in US military support. London thinks any commission resulting from the conference must be truly neutral, such as a supervisory commission composed of one Western power, one Communist power, plus Cambodia, Burma, and India.]

In a 3 May discussion with UK Ambassador Roberts, Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister Pushkin suggested that Sihanouk's withdrawal of support for the conference was caused by the United States. However, he pointed out that he saw no reason why the conference could not proceed on schedule inasmuch as it was being convened at the invitation of the UK and the USSR. A Chinese Communist government statement of 4 May implied that Ambassador Harriman's trip to Laos was for the purpose of instigating the King of Laos to denounce Sihanouk's proposal for the conference.

The Communists are also voicing suspicion over the Lao-tian King's call for a National Assembly session on 11 May. Hanoi characterizes this development as a move by the US and Vientiane to "cook up" a new government rather than join with Souvanna Phouma in the effort to form a coalition

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government and agree on a Laotian delegation to the Geneva conference.

[Note: Henceforth, airlift statistics reported in the Central Intelligence Bulletin will be computed on the following basis; 100 percent of all Soviet and North Vietnamese flights scheduled into Laos less known cancellations, plus 50 percent of all Soviet and North Vietnamese transports scheduled for flights within North Vietnam. The latter category is considered to be associated with the airlift. Airlift tonnages, when reported, will be computed on the basis of 2.25 tons per IL-14 sortie and 1.5 tons per LI-2 sortie.]

[On 4 May, 15 transports were involved in airlift operations-- 12 Soviet and 3 North Vietnamese. Of this number, 4 Soviet LI-2s were reflected flying round-trip from Hanoi to Xieng Khouang.]

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~~CONFIDENTIAL~~The Situation in the Congo

According to press reports, Tshombé has been advised that he will not be released until he has guaranteed the participation of Katanga deputies in parliament. In April, elements of the Congo Army nominally loyal to Gizenga reportedly agreed to recognize General Mobutu's authority in return for a reconvening of parliament as desired by Gizenga.

Bomboko may regard a reconvening of parliament as the price which Leopoldville must pay to secure Gizenga's participation in negotiations aimed at reuniting the Congo. The American Embassy in Leopoldville reports that Gizenga has "made long strides" in the past three weeks to increase his parliamentary support. Gizenga appears assured of the support of over 40 deputies of the 136-man lower chamber--a bloc comparable to that controlled by Lumumba during his period as premier.

Spaak has to contend with powerful rightist elements in the cabinet which are hostile to any course which might appear to be sacrificing Belgian interests. An aggressive supporter of a vigorous pro-Katanga policy, former Defense Minister Gilson has been retained in the cabinet as minister of interior as a concession to the rightist elements among the Social Christians. Another "flight" of Belgians from the Congo would have grave repercussions on public opinion and seriously weaken Spaak's position as foreign minister.

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~~CONFIDENTIAL~~North Korea Seeks Contacts With the South

[The Seoul University league for national unification which Pyongyang states proposed North-South student talks, claims to have affiliated organizations on a number of South Korean campuses but probably speaks for only a small minority of leftist-inclined students. However, the failure of the "April revolution" of 1960 to provide anticipated economic improvements has increased public interest in reunification as a solution for the country's ills.]

Aware of this interest, North Korea is conducting an intensive propaganda campaign around the reunification theme. Boasting of its economic progress in the past few years, Pyongyang bombards the South with offers of economic assistance and calls for a wide range of contacts as preliminary steps toward reunification. Pyongyang has sought to make Seoul responsible, in the eyes of the Southern population, for thwarting these overtures.

Responsible South Korean government and opposition leaders have been strongly opposed to any form of exchange with the Communists and probably prefer to avoid any initiative on reunification. Last November, however, the Chang Myon government showed some willingness to take a more flexible position toward North-South contacts in order to convince the public it was moving in a reasonable manner to satisfy desires for reunification.

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Moslem Extremists Plan Assassination of Qasim

[Iraq's Moslem activist elements are divided into three groupings--the Islamic and Tahrir parties and the Moslem Brotherhood. Qasim has opposed all three and only the Islamic party received legal recognition following an appeal to the Iraqi courts. Vigorously anti-Communist, the party has been subjected to continued harassment by Qasim; its leaders were arrested last November and released in mid-March. Party branches have been closed. It is extremely conservative and a product of the traditional feudal stratified society of Iraq. The Tahrir is similar to the Islamic party--ultraconservative and religiously inclined. The strength of this clandestine group is untested.]

[The Moslem Brotherhood, often referred to as the Ikhwan, has an ideology based on the thesis that the Holy Koran and Traditions of the Prophet Muhammad have established for all time the most perfect guidance in every situation of private and public life. The Moslem Brotherhood believes these precepts should replace constitutional, administrative, and economic patterns copied from the West. Founded in Egypt in 1929, the movement extends throughout the Arab states. Because it clashes with Nasir's secular policies, the Egyptian Ikhwan was dissolved by Nasir in January 1954. The following October radical members attempted to assassinate him.]

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[Redacted]
Libyan Cabinet Shake-Up

Three of the six new cabinet appointees were drawn from the House of Deputies' Committee on Finance and Economy, the body which would have been most likely to attack the executive branch effectively on the corruption issue. These appointments are presumably a continuation of Uthman's maneuvers to fragment the opposition in the House of Deputies which brought about the fall of the Kubar government last October. The charges then centered on bribes and other irregularities in the government's handling of the costly Fezzan road project. In spite of the past scandal, both he and King Idris are insistent that construction of the Fezzan road be continued by the same Libyan firm and on much the same basis as originally planned.]

The government is also extremely vulnerable because of the crudity of the favors granted by top officials in response to bribes from a few of the many Western-owned oil companies operating in Libya. In March, for example, the government unexpectedly opened several concession areas, accepted the applications of two companies which had paved the way with appropriate largesse, and immediately closed the bidding. In a more open and "legal" fashion, federal officials have worked with Libyan provincial governments to obtain large special payments from companies in connection with pipeline rights-of-way. Public resentment has rapidly increased and tends to be directed against the Western oil industry as well as against venal Libyan officials.] [Redacted]

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The Scientific Adviser to the President

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The Director, Office of Civil and Defense Mobilization

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Chief of Staff, United States Air Force

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