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3 March 1961

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN



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State Dept. review completed

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France-Algeria: Tunisian President Bourguiba now seems convinced that De Gaulle has decided all aspects of colonialism must disappear from Algeria, even to the point of full independence. Bourguiba reportedly went from Paris to Rabat determined to induce rebel premier Ferhat Abbas to respond to De Gaulle's overtures. Bourguiba is presumably aware that some rebel leaders are distrustful of negotiations with France. Previous reports have raised the question whether all rebel military commanders would comply with orders to end the fighting, should such orders be given by the provisional Algerian government in the course of negotiations with De Gaulle. The 1 March joint communiqué issued by Abbas, Bourguiba, and King Hassan of Morocco declaring that the way is now open to direct negotiations for Algerian independence in a North African framework suggests that Tunisia and Morocco desire to have some role in French-rebel negotiations.

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*Laos: Souvanna Phouma, who returned to Phnom Penh on 1 March after a week in northern Laos, is reported to have reached a decision with his supporters in Pathet Lao - held territory that a 14-power conference is the only means to a peaceful solution of

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(the Laotian crisis.)

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[redacted] General Phoumi, meanwhile, says he still hopes to confer with Souvanna, but is proceeding with separate plans to revamp the Boun Oum government regardless of Souvanna's attitude toward accepting a post.

[redacted] Souvanna is reported to have found the Kong Le - Pathet Lao troops "extremely well organized," with high morale, and actively recruiting new personnel. The Plaine des Jarres area held by these troops is said to have been completely brought under the Communist way of life; Communist slogans and leftist youth groups are prominent throughout the area.

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RECENT REPORTS AND ESTIMATES

(Available during the preceding week)

Probable Communist Reactions to Certain US Courses of Action With Respect to Laos. U. S. I. B. SNIE 58-61.21 February 1961. 0036778. [redacted]

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Prospects for Iran: Stability of the Shah's Regime, the Role of the Military, the Economy, and Foreign Policy Toward US and USSR. U. S. I. B. NIE 34-61. 28 February 1961. [redacted]

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Comparison of Capital Investment in the US and the USSR, 1950-59. Bibliography, graphs, tables. O. R. R. CIA/RR ER 61-7. 57pp. February 1961. [redacted]

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[Redacted]

De Gaulle - Bourguiba Talks

[One of De Gaulle's major objectives in inviting Bourguiba to visit Paris was to convince the Tunisian President of his willingness to negotiate a settlement of the Algerian war and to have this impression conveyed to the leaders of the provisional Algerian government. De Gaulle probably hoped thereby to strengthen the moderate wing of the rebel movement and encourage steps toward negotiations on terms acceptable to France. De Gaulle has in the past indicated that he will insist on guarantees for the Europeans in Algeria and for certain French economic interests and military base rights.]

[Following his Paris conversation with De Gaulle, Bourguiba told Ambassador Averill Harriman in Rabat he believed there was no longer any real difficulty on the French side. He said De Gaulle understood the necessity of preventing a recurrence of the stalemate last June when preliminary talks failed to settle even matters of protocol. Bourguiba is optimistic that De Gaulle will free rebel leader Ben Bella and give sympathetic consideration to the release of political prisoners detained by the French in Algeria.]

[In an effort to move the rebels to negotiations, Bourguiba has broadcast to the Algerians in Tunisia stressing his conviction of the genuineness of De Gaulle's intentions. Bourguiba apparently has in mind, however, that negotiations could fail because of the inability of the moderate leaders to control all factions of the rebel movement. Some 15,000 to 20,000 rebel fighters operate in Algeria with only a minimum of coordination and control by the rebel government in Tunis. If these forces object to a moderate settlement and continue military and terrorist activities, De Gaulle might halt political negotiations.]

[In another report on the Bourguiba - De Gaulle conversation, Habib Bourguiba, Jr., recently nominated as Tunisian ambassador to the US, said that De Gaulle "silenced" French Premier Debré, whose statements had nearly prevented the Bourguiba - De Gaulle meeting. Debré, while on a visit to the Sahara, said in a public statement that France intended to remain there.]

[Redacted]

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According to Bourguiba, Jr., Debré also made difficulties during Tunisian Secretary of State for Information Masmoudi's earlier trips to Paris to arrange the Bourguiba - De Gaulle meeting.

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