

17 April 1961

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN



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DAILY BRIEF

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Laos: Government forces on 15 April evacuated Nhommarat, 28 miles northeast of Thakhek, after receiving enemy 105 mm. howitzer and 120 mm. mortar fire. On the previous day, an attempted government attack eastward from the town had been repulsed by heavy enemy mortar fire. Recently arrived reinforcements have brought the government's strength in this area to over 1,000 men, but the troops' morale is low and their quality poor. Nhommarat was the government's key blocking position against the threat of an attack on the Mekong River port town of Thakhek.

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An enemy force estimated at two battalions has taken the strongpoint at Ban Pha, about 15 miles southwest of Xieng Khouang town.

the attack was executed by a combined Pathet Lao - Vietnamese force. However, Meo guerrilla forces still hold the high ground in the area.

(Backup, Page 1) (Map)

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Congo-Ghana General Alexander, the British national who heads the Ghanaian armed forces, told the American ambassador in Accra on 14 April that the arms which recently arrived in Ghana aboard a Soviet ship were destined for Gizenga. Alexander said Nkrumah told him he had been forced to yield to bloc pressure to provide a base for air shipments of the arms to Stanleyville. Nkrumah reportedly promised that the equipment would not be sent to the Congo as long as UN forces were there; however, Alexander stated he had little faith in these assurances, since he believed the bloc could bring sufficient pressure on Accra to force completion of the operation. Alexander said the IL-18s and Britannias based in Accra could make the direct flight to Orientale, although there is no corroboration of his statement that aviation fuel for the return trip is available in Stanleyville.

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of Backup*

Cuba: The Castro regime has reacted with alarm to the bombing of three Cuban airfields on 15 April--mobilizing the 200,000-man Revolutionary Militia and making charges at the UN General Assembly of "direct US aggression." This alarm seems to derive not only from the actual military damage but also from the new indication of mounting disaffection in Cuba's regular military forces. The events of 15 April will further reduce the air force's already low combat potential, at least until the return to Cuba of air force personnel now being trained in bloc countries. Castro now must rely even more heavily upon the Revolutionary Militia on the assumption that it is the only politically dependable military arm of his government.

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*The anti-Castro Cuban Revolutionary Council has announced that an invasion of Cuba has been carried out by Cuban liberation forces. A Cuban radio station reports that an invasion force landed in the central Cuban province of Matanzas and that militia forces there have called for reinforcements.

*USSR: An ICBM test vehicle was launched from Tyura Tam at approximately 1359 GMT (0859 EST) on 15 April. The launching is considered to have been generally successful in that the vehicle succeeded in reaching the Kamchatka Peninsula. Preliminary analysis indicates that the vehicle

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impacted some 60 to 70 nautical miles from the usual impact area. The Soviet range-instrumentation ships were not involved in the operation; they appear to have begun their return voyage to Petropavlovsk the morning of 14 April.

This is the ninth test shot this year of probable ICBMs from Tyura Tam. Four of these were failures. The total of generally successful test ICBM launchings to date is 33.

USSR: The firing of the three top leaders in the Soviet Republic of Tadzhikistan, announced in Moscow on 16 April, is the most severe shake-up in any republic since Khrushchev last January undertook a campaign to purge the party and government bureaucracies of corrupt and incompetent officials. The presence of party presidium member Frol Kozlov, Khrushchev's second-in-command, to oversee the Tadzhik shake-up dramatizes the seriousness with which the regime views the problem of corruption, which is widespread throughout the Soviet Union. All three Tadzhik officials were charged with fraud and falsification of agricultural reports and were expelled from the party. This is the heaviest punishment of officials at this level in the current campaign. Previously two members of the presidium of the Communist party of the Soviet Union and a number of the party's central committee members were demoted, but they apparently remained party members. The campaign, now in its sixteenth week, is the most extensive since Khrushchev came to power and presages a substantial turnover in members of the new central committee to be elected at the party congress next October. OK

South Korea: [Failure of the Chang Myon government to meet extravagant public expectations is largely responsible for the widespread feeling of dissatisfaction and hopelessness among South Koreans on the first anniversary of the April revolution. The lack of an acceptable leader to replace Chang will favor] OK

government efforts to maintain control during the anniversary period, 19 to 26 April. The government plans to have 2,000 mobile police ready for action in Seoul on 19 April, with another 1,000 available from nearby on 30 minutes' notice. The capabilities of the police have appreciably improved but they have not as yet had to face a large-scale mob bent on violence. The military are alerted to support the police if necessary. Scattered acts of violence are likely and could result in a serious clash between demonstrators and security forces.)

(Backup, Page 3)

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Bolivia: President Victor Paz Estenssoro is continuing his policy, initiated with the declaration of a state of siege on 21 February, of cracking down on the opposition. He took advantage of student rioting against the government on 10 and 11 April to arrest the ranking members of the Trotskyite and orthodox Communist parties in Bolivia. A Communist attempt to gain control of the national labor movement--which represents critically important economic, political, and civilian militia strength--has been expected at the congress of Bolivia's Worker Confederation scheduled to open in May. Paz' move was probably undertaken to reduce the Communists' chances.

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Situation in Laos

Pathet Lao leader Prince Souphanouvong now seems to be stipulating that a future coalition government must not contain either Phoumi or Boun Oum. On 11 and 13 April Peiping broadcast statements attributed to Souphanouvong in which he said he was willing to enter a coalition with the "legal government" and could agree to admission of "rebel elements who submitted," but that both Phoumi and Boun Oum were specifically excluded from this category as "hopeless rebels and traitors."

A Pathet Lao request for military equipment from the North Vietnamese

"Make a special check concerning the 57 mm. gun and the mine detectors we requested from the Vietnam brethren. Request another 82 mm. gun." The 82 mm. gun referred to is probably a mortar.

Soviet airlift operations into Laos continue to be scheduled. On 14 April, twelve sorties were flown to Xieng Khouang--six by IL-14s and six by LI-2s. The twelve sorties scheduled for Xieng Khouang on 15 April apparently were canceled because of adverse weather. Only one IL-14 was noted active on that date, and it is believed to have returned to Hanoi shortly after take-off without completing its mission.

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Situation in the Congo

[General Alexander told the American ambassador that he is going to the Congo on Tuesday and that he hopes to include Stanleyville in his itinerary. He said that in compliance with Nkrumah's request, he intends to leave a radio transmitter-receiver there in order to establish a direct link between Gizenga and Accra. He stated that the traffic on this link would go through his office and that he would monitor it.]

In the Congo various reports indicate that Congolese efforts to find a solution to the country's political problems are losing momentum. According to the American Embassy in Leopoldville, the Congolese in the capital are disillusioned as a result of the failure to follow up on the Tananarive conference; they also feel frustrated by their lack of success in arranging a meeting with Gizenga. Meanwhile, the Ileo government, preoccupied with its conflict with the UN, has failed to give any direction in internal affairs, and factionalism within the government apparently is increasing.

President Tshombé's regime in Elisabethville apparently is badly split. Interior Minister Munongo is continuing his efforts to gain effective control of the government by obtaining the prime ministership. Munongo reportedly threatened to set up an autonomous state in his tribal area--which includes important mining centers--unless Tshombé appointed four of his supporters to the cabinet. The Belgian-controlled mining company in Katanga apparently plans to create several lucrative "administrative" positions for the dissatisfied politicians in an effort to maintain political stability in the province. []

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South Korean Unrest

{The revolution which overthrew Syngman Rhee last April failed to produce a leader capable of rallying the support and confidence of a majority of South Koreans. Prime Minister Chang Myon is not a dynamic leader, and his administration has failed to curtail effectively the graft, nepotism, and political factionalism associated with the old regime. As a result there is a growing polarization between older, conservative leaders who accept such practices and younger, educated Koreans who realize that graft and corruption must be reduced if the country is to progress.]

{The Chang administration is probably most vulnerable for its failure to convince the public that it is making an optimum effort to improve economic conditions. Those actions which it has taken--adoption of a realistic unitary exchange rate, conclusion of the new American aid agreement, implementation of more realistic public utility rates, and steps to modernize the electric power industry--were necessary and will be beneficial in the long run. Their immediate effect, however, has been to increase the burden on a population afflicted by rising consumer costs, electricity shortages, and unemployment. About 2,000,000 out of a 10,000,000-man work force are out of work or under-employed. The initial impact of the new National Construction Service, the most hopeful program to date for providing immediate work for those in need, has been dulled by the "politics-as-usual" manner in which necessary funds are appropriated.]

{The lack of an effective alternative to the Chang administration, the absence of an emotional issue, and the loyalty of the military to civil authority militate against any major attempt to oust the government in the immediate future. The government's confidence is indicated by its willingness to allow student organizations to sponsor a major rally in Seoul on 19 April with the city providing assistance in the background. However, the possibility of violent incidents will remain, as demonstrations continue throughout the country.]

{Anti-American sentiment which has begun to develop, probably will be inhibited by the negotiation of an agreement}

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[concerning the status of United States forces in South Korea. However, the implementation of further stringent economic and political reforms could stimulate renewed anti-American criticism.]

{Some right-wing elements are known to be awaiting the opportunity to seize power. There also have been increasing indications of efforts by leftist groups, in some instances presumably Communist, to organize students and young intellectuals. Ko Chong-hun, a national-socialist - type demagogue, is attempting to attract student support by advocating exchanges with North Korea and the adoption of Communist tactics to defeat Communism. Ko, a personable and shrewd opportunist, may have contacts with Pyongyang.}

{The Chang government is aware of the subversive danger and is taking steps to tighten internal security. Although some action is necessary, the administration has a tendency to revert to the repressive tactics of the Rhee regime. A pending amendment to the National Security Law was so loosely drawn that even administration parliamentary support for the measure is divided. Should the regime be forced from office, the prospects are that it would be succeeded by an even less capable conservative government, which in turn would probably generate mounting public support for union with the Communist North.}

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Bolivian President Cracking Down on Political Opposition

The Paz administration has been giving major attention to the economy since its inauguration last August. Many of the original supporters of the sweeping 1952 revolution, which gave Paz his first term of office from 1952 to 1956, have been alienated by the economic stagnation of the last several years. Paz stated some weeks ago that the critical time would be the period from March through May--when his economic program would be initiated but not yet showing results. Central to his economic program is the rehabilitation of the tin mines of the nationalized Mine Corporation of Bolivia (COMIBOL)--on which the country's export earnings depend.

To rehabilitate the tin mines, a plan has been developed utilizing aid from West Germany, the United States, and the Inter-American Development Bank. West Germany is now reconsidering its participation as a result of an initial report by German technicians which indicated that the mine problem was more extensive than they had anticipated. Paz has indicated previously that he has made plans to use Soviet economic aid for other aspects of the economy. Bolivian plans were drafted in February to utilize the \$150,000,000 credit which the USSR offered to Bolivia in late 1960.

President Paz faces a serious political problem in COMIBOL's tin mines. The government party, the Nationalist Revolutionary Movement (MNR), is opposed by both Communists and members of the Authentic MNR, a right-wing splinter of Paz' MNR. According to a survey in February 1961 by the American Embassy in La Paz, Communists and Trotskyites control unions in mines accounting for 34 percent of the COMIBOL labor force and 44 percent of tin production. The Authentic MNR controls 31 percent of the COMIBOL labor force and 44 percent of tin production.

During February and March Paz arrested and exiled a significant number of Authentic MNR members and several leftist

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extremists, including the leader of the majority faction of the Trotskyites. Ten Communists--the leader of the minority faction of Trotskyites and the ranking orthodox Communists--were reportedly arrested on 13 April. Student rioting against the government provided the occasion for the arrests, although the riots apparently resulted from violence against the students and one student killing by members of the undisciplined civilian militia, who are not identified as either Communists or rightist opposition party members.

Paz has not yet acted against opposition union leaders in the mines--where most workers are armed--apparently because he feels unable to do so. In late March Paz' emissaries to key mines dominated by Communist and Authentic MNR members narrowly escaped being killed.

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