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DCS/P

16 March 1961

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN



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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN

16 March 1961

DAILY BRIEF

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Laos: The failure of the 14-15 March talks between Souvanna Phouma and a delegation of the Vientiane regime makes it clear that an early political solution of the Laotian crisis is unlikely. Souvanna's insistence on a 14-nation conference as a prerequisite to any settlement for Laos is in sharp contrast to the flexibility that he evidenced in exploring solutions with General Phoumi last week, and is almost certainly conditioned by the uniformly negative reaction of the bloc to the communiqué he issued with Phoumi.

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Indicating that the Communists foresee the possibility of a long struggle in Laos, Peiping on 14 March broadcast a Pathet Lao order of the day calling on Laotians to prepare for a "protracted war of resistance."
(Backup, Page 1)

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[Hammaraskjold told an American official on 14 March that he is thinking of sending Dayal back to the Congo around the first of April. However, he thought that he might install three]

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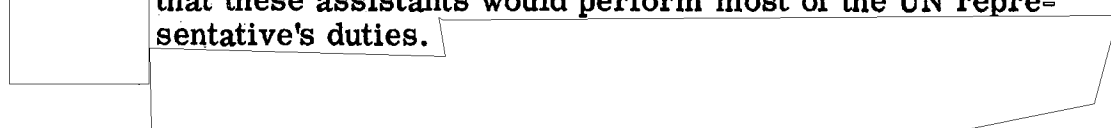
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[African assistants in Leopoldville before Dayal's return and that these assistants would perform most of the UN representative's duties.



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France-Algeria: The French Government announced yesterday it is ready to begin official political negotiations with the Algerian rebels. The meeting of leaders of the rebel provisional Algerian government, which began in Tunis on 14 March and will probably continue through this week, reportedly is assessing the results of secret preliminary contacts with the French. Both the French and the rebels have attempted to keep secret the content of these talks, held in Geneva, but reports indicate that some progress was made on the status of the French minority and arrangements for a transitional government. The problems of implementing a tacit cease-fire agreement, which Paris appears willing to accept, and determining sovereignty over the Sahara are likely to be especially difficult points during negotiations. (CONFIDENTIAL) (Backup, Page 5)

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Union of South Africa: South Africa's decision on 15 March not to seek admittance to the Commonwealth as a republic, and thus in effect to withdraw from that organization following severe condemnation of Pretoria's racial policies, will probably have little immediate effect on the Union's domestic affairs. The English-speaking minority--some forty percent of South Africa's whites--have been politically handcuffed in recent years and are not likely to provoke significant disorders. An eventual loss of the five-percent tariff preference would not affect more than about eight percent of South Africa's total trade. However, Pretoria's action is another major step in the Union's virtual withdrawal from the outside world. Its impact, moreover, may be greater in international African and Asian circles, where the concept of the Commonwealth as a multiracial club will be strengthened. Prime Minister Welensky of the Rhodesian

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DAILY BRIEF

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Situation in the Congo

[redacted] Hammarskjold apparently feels that Dayal's return to the Congo is necessitated by the "question of Indian prestige"; ultimately, however, he hopes to have an African at the head of the operation, with another African and an Asian as deputies. He has stated that Makki Abbas, his interim representative in Leopoldville, is popular with the Congolese--a view which was confirmed by Congolese Foreign Minister Bomboko in Leopoldville. However, Abbas is to return to his post as executive secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa in a few weeks.]

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With the exception of Joseph Ileo, whose job as prime minister in the Leopoldville regime apparently was abolished, the participants at the Tananarive conference reportedly are well satisfied with the "Confederation of Central African States" proposed in the conference's final resolution. The Congolese apparently have decided to wait until the confederation's constituent states have been formed before determining its structure. So far four such states, in addition to the eight proposed at the conference, have been proclaimed. Three of the twelve are in Leopoldville Province, and Kasai and Katanga contain two each. Another state reportedly has been formed from parts of Leopoldville, Equateur, and Kasai provinces. In addition, an Orientale "government-in-exile" and the remainder of Equateur have joined the confederation as separate entities. This process of fragmentation is likely to continue. Although this trend is derived from the tribalism which has made the larger political groupings unrealistic, the resulting states almost certainly will be highly unstable.

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Taleb Sahbani, secretary general of the Tunisian foreign secretariat, left Tunis on 13 March for Brussels, where he is to be Hammarskjold's representative in talks with the Belgian Government.

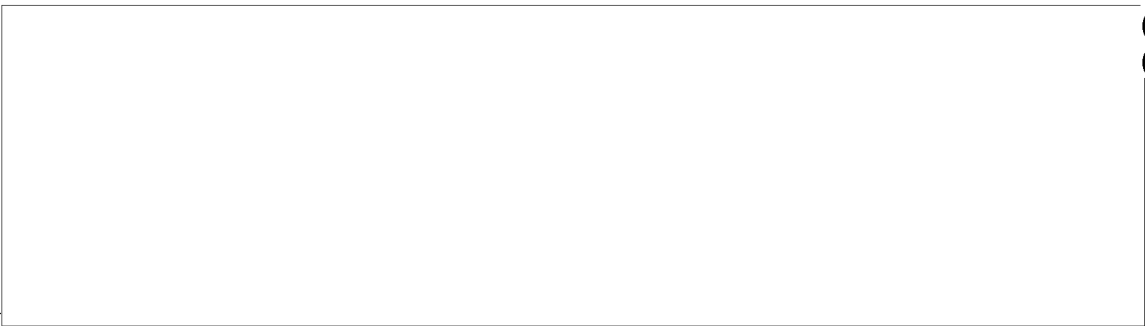
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the timing of his mission is unfortunate, since Belgium is in the midst of an election campaign and cannot be expected to take new initiatives before the formation of a new government.

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