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21 October 1966

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN

CURRENT INTELLIGENCE
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*Laos: General Ma is making a bid to regain his post as tactical air force commander from which he was recently removed.

Early on 21 October T-28 aircraft, possibly based at Savannakhet and reportedly under the command of General Ma, bombed Royal Lao Army headquarters at Vientiane. Several hours prior to the bombing two companies of infantry under Colonel Bounleut Saycocie took over the Savannakhet airfield.

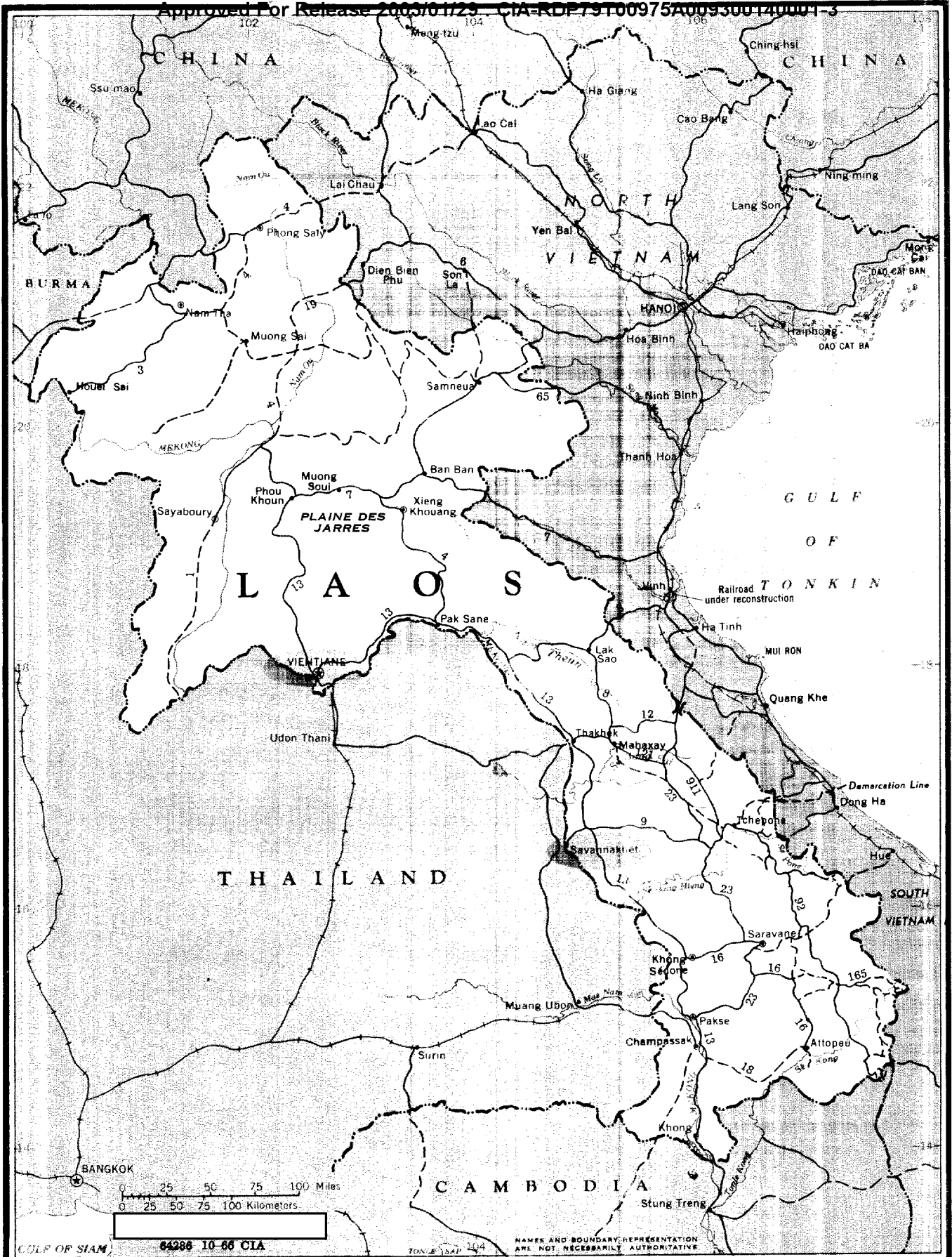
General Ma clashed with the General Staff last spring over control of the T-28 air force, and recently was removed tentatively from command.

General Ma has received no support from other general officers and his next move is unclear.

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*Vietnam: (Information as of 4:30 AM EDT)

South Vietnamese Political Developments: Premier Ky is continuing his efforts to paper over the cabinet crisis until he returns from the Manila Conference.

Ky told a press conference yesterday that civilian Deputy Premier Nguyen Luu Vien, one of the disaffected ministers, will act as premier while he is in Manila. This move is apparently intended to demonstrate that the split is not as serious as reported in western press.

Meanwhile, Ky reportedly has accepted the resignation of economy minister Thanh, while Deputy Premier Vien's resignation will be accepted upon Ky's return next week. The status of the other cabinet dissidents will probably also be clarified at that time.

Press reports indicate that influential elements of the populace outside the government are beginning to react to the cabinet crisis. The Saigon University Students Union has held a press conference to protest the "police state regime." Some members of the constituent assembly and the Peoples-Army Council are also reported to be openly aligning with either the northern or southern factions involved in the crisis.

The national congress of the Unified Buddhist Association is scheduled to open today in Saigon. The congress will probably provide a test of strength between the Tri Quang militants and the moderate Buddhist leader Tam Chau, whose job as chairman of the Institute is at stake.

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NOTES

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USSR-Guinea: [Redacted]

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[Redacted] Guinean pilots began an accelerated, six-month aviation training program in the USSR last spring under a modest military aid agreement signed in mid-1965. Under this and a 1960 agreement, the USSR has previously delivered small naval craft, armor, ground forces equipment, and noncombat aircraft. [Redacted]

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South Korea - North Korea: Following an abnormal period of inactivity, there has been an upsurge of violence by North Korean agents against South Korean troops stationed along the Demilitarized Zone. The character of recent Communist activity suggests that the agents' missions have been changed from intelligence collection and subversion to harassment, perhaps designed to test the effectiveness of ROK troops recently deployed along the zone. It does not seem intended to embarrass the government before President Johnson's visit. [Redacted]

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*Brazil: President Castello Branco's recessing of the defiant Brazilian Congress on 20 October is likely to increase political turmoil. Castello Branco's action came after the lower house president and some opposition party members defied his orders unseating six congressmen and revoking their political rights for ten years. Opposition congressmen were attempting yesterday to convene a rump session of Congress. The President is expected to act soon against a number of other federal deputies and possibly two to four senators.

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