



The President's Daily Brief

9 January 1970



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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

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Chinese	(Page 1)

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North Vietnamese troops are moving into position to launch a major counterattack against the Plaine des Jarres. In southern Laos, the Communists have hit the town of Pakse with rockets. (Page 3)

In a talk with Ambassador Beam on Wednesday, Foreign Minister Gromyko relayed the Kremlin's views on several matters of joint concern. (Page 4)

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COMMUNIST CHINA

The atmosphere at yesterday's meeting in Warsaw was brisk and businesslike. The Chinese chargé made a pro forma declaration that responsibility for the frigid state of Sino-US relations rested with Washington, but there were no polemics. The Chinese accepted US proposals that subsequent meetings alternate between the embassies of the two countries and that discussions be conducted in English and Chinese exclusively.

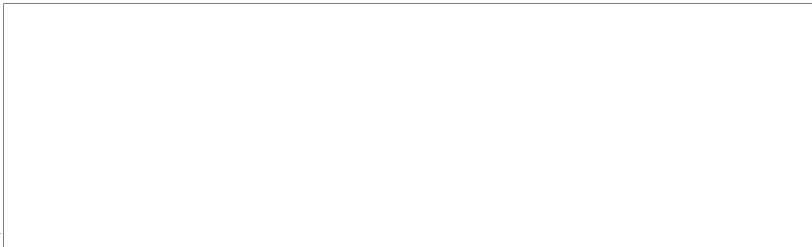
Yesterday's meeting was somewhat more formal than that of 11 December, but the Chinese apparently are remaining flexible and are clearly interested in hearing what the US will have to say on 20 January.

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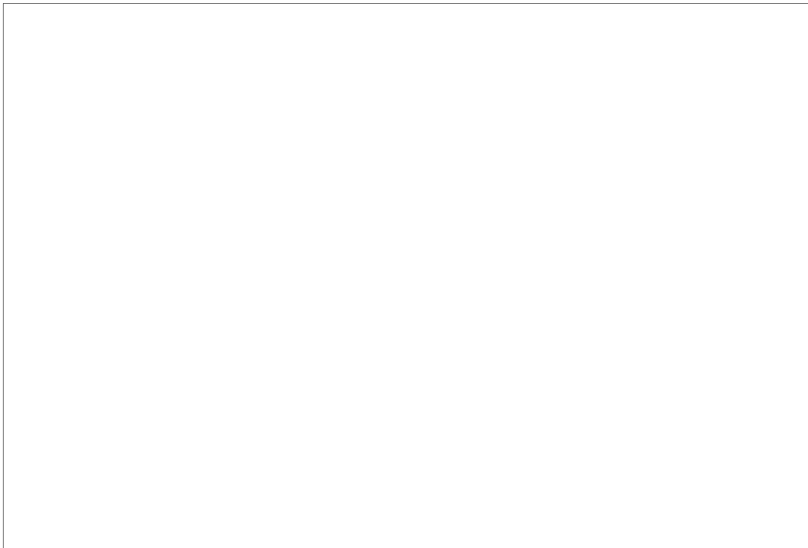


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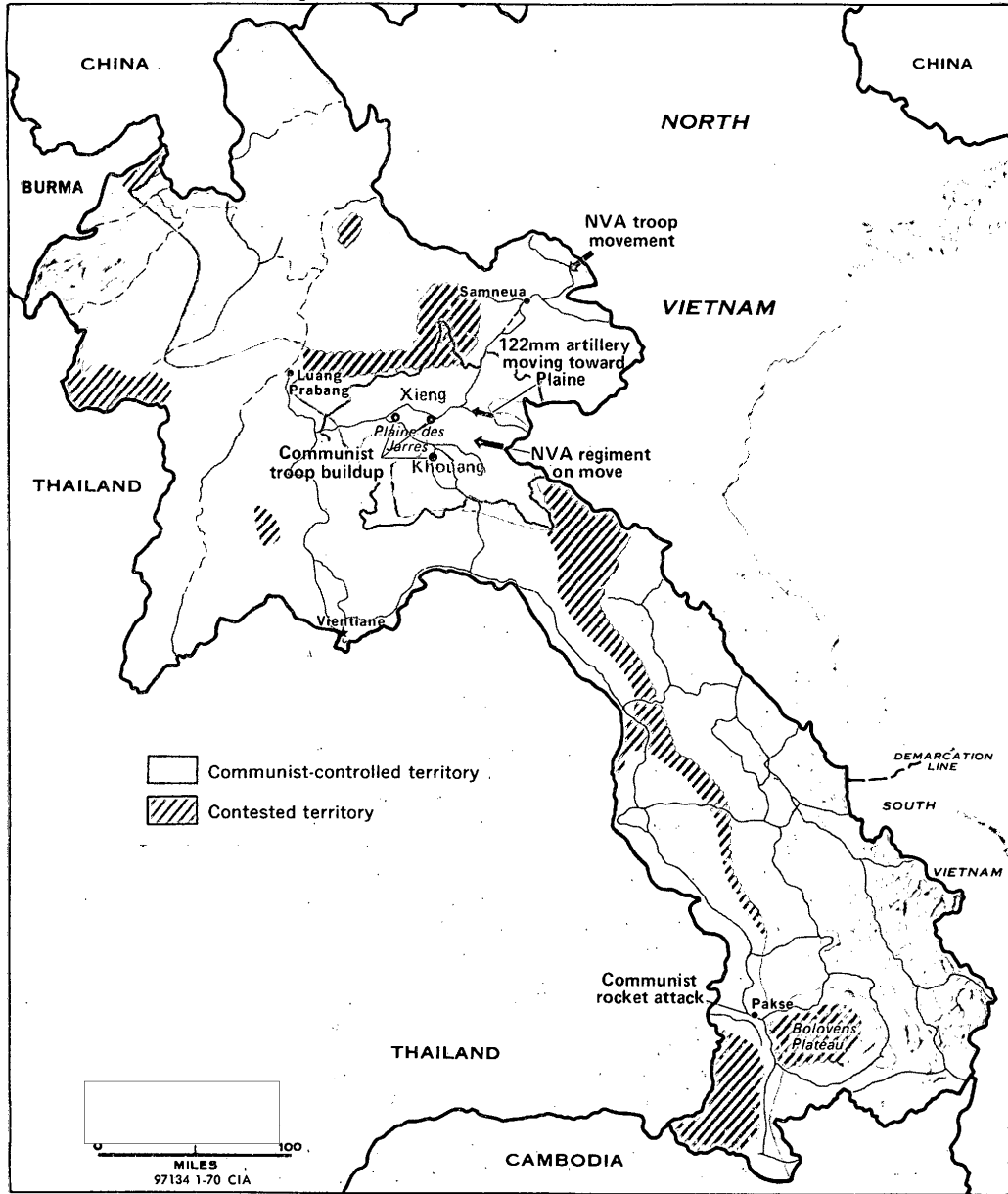
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North Vietnamese Readying Counterattack Against the Plaine des Jarres



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LAOS

The North Vietnamese are moving into position to launch a major counterattack against government forces in the Plaine des Jarres. There are reports of widespread enemy troop deployments along the periphery of the Plaine, including a regiment of the 312th Division, which has been safeguarding supply trails in eastern Xieng Khouang Province. There are also indications that a convoy of long-range artillery is moving toward a forward staging area. A North Vietnamese command operating near the Plaine has increased its tactical readiness, suggesting a higher level of combat in the near future.

The North Vietnamese may have recently infiltrated another combat regiment into north Laos. A village official in northeast Laos near the North Vietnam border claims large numbers of troops crossed the border on foot in late December headed for the Plaine des Jarres.

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The enemy soon will have the capacity to launch concerted ground assaults on several fronts, possibly at the same time. The fate of the outmanned government guerrillas under such circumstances would depend heavily on the level and timeliness of air support.

In southern Laos, Communist forces yesterday launched a limited rocket attack against the town of Pakse. There were no US casualties.

The fact that the shelling was not followed by a ground assault suggests that the Communists, smarting from their losses in the north, were more interested in a psychological blow than further territorial inroads at this time.

The attack also serves as a reminder to Vientiane of the enemy's ability to stir up the military situation with little notice. The Communists may hope that this incident will deter the government from moving additional troops from this area to augment the defense of the Plaine des Jarres.

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SOVIET UNION

In a conversation with Ambassador Beam in Moscow on 7 January, Foreign Minister Gromyko relayed the Kremlin's views on several matters of joint concern. On the question of a European security conference, Gromyko said that US and Canadian participation was "clear" provided that both German states would also be included. He implied that the US was opposing the conference by insisting that the proposed agenda include issues, such as balanced force reductions, that have long been in dispute.

On the Middle East, Gromyko said that Moscow was prepared to continue bilateral and four-power talks, but implied that progress toward a settlement depended on a change of attitudes and policies in Washington and Tel Aviv, not in Moscow. He said recent US proposals were one-sided and claimed that it was "hard to understand" US encouragement of the Israelis since the situation might again get out of hand.

Touching briefly on the recent strategic arms limitation talks, Gromyko said that Moscow has not yet drawn any firm conclusions regarding the US position and that the next phase of SALT would presumably deal with some of the more basic issues.

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NOTE

Peru: The Velasco government promulgated a law last week limiting participation in the information media to native-born Peruvians residing in the country and restricting press freedom where state security or the honor or privacy of individuals is concerned. Opposition has been quick in coming from both pro and antigovernment publishers and politicians; the fight, in fact, is being led by Lima's foremost newspaper, normally a strong backer of the government. The tone of a government communiqué issued Wednesday, which denounced this opposition as a "counterrevolutionary maneuver" and a "conspiracy," suggests that continued criticism may result in arrests based on a provision in the law establishing a one-year prison term for media offenses "prejudicial to state security."

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