



The President's Daily Brief

13 March 1970



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PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

A captured document offers some insight into the Communist program in the Mekong Delta. (Page 1)

In Laos, Vang Pao is still holding on, but Souvanna is ready to talk peace. (Page 2)

[Redacted] Cambodia. (Page 4) 50X1 50X1

[Redacted]

The Brazilian Government will ransom the Japanese consul [Redacted]

[Redacted] (Page 6) 50X1

Peking [Redacted] (Page 7)

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY**SOUTH VIETNAM**

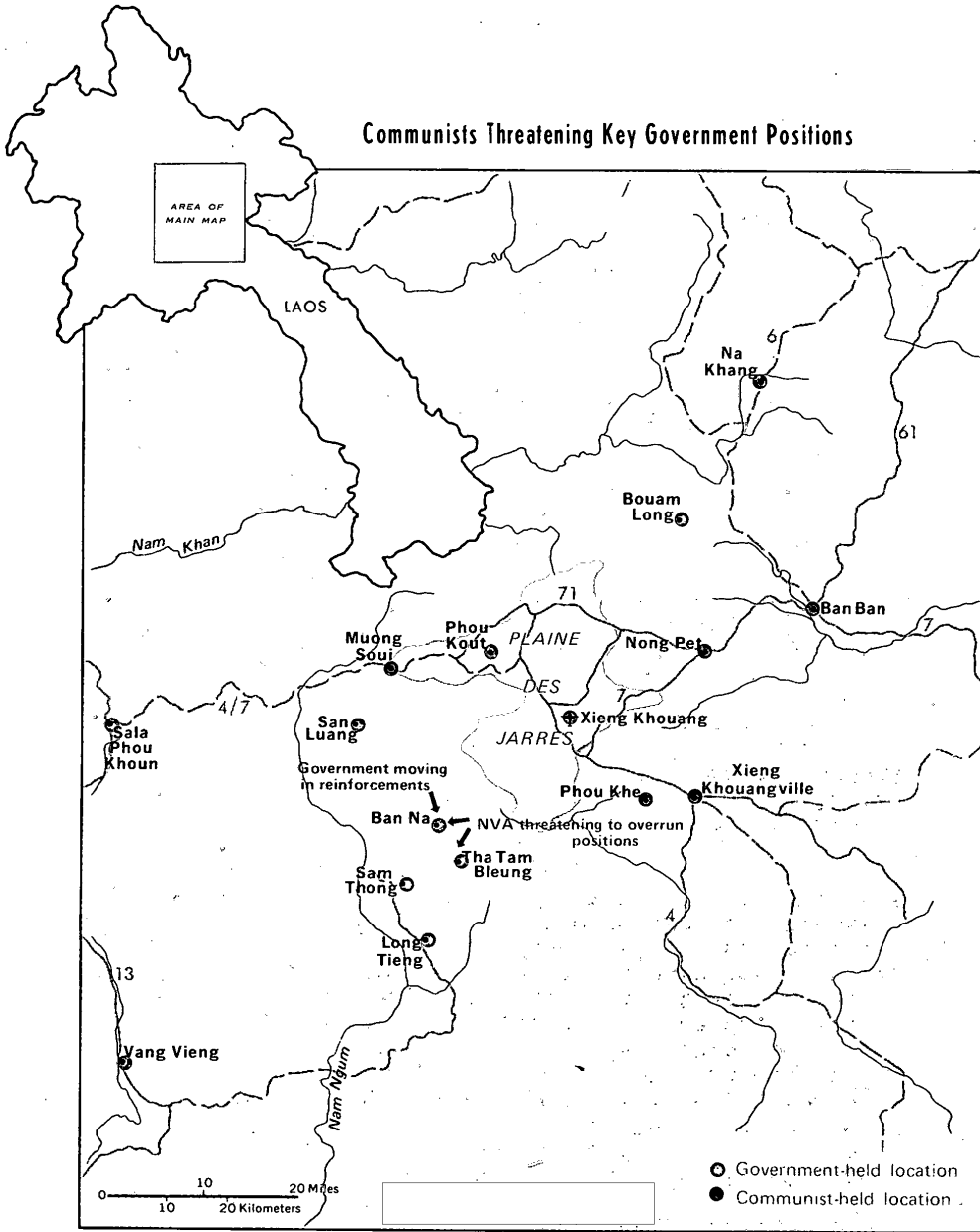
A recently captured document, sent in February by the top Communist headquarters in South Vietnam (COSVN) to the two major Viet Cong regional commands in the Mekong Delta, gives some insight into the long-range Communist program there. The document frankly acknowledges that the many problems encountered by the Viet Cong in IV Corps since the latter part of 1968 persuaded the Communist leadership to send regular North Vietnamese troops into the delta last year. These troops had orders to attack the government pacification program and also to help rebuild local Viet Cong units. In addition, the reinforcements were to prepare to take control of the civilian population in the delta in the event a political solution is found to the war.

The document urges local commanders to avoid large operations that might result in heavy losses. It does not, however, rule out sharp assaults against selected rural outposts and towns and occasional stiff opposition to South Vietnamese sweep operations, such as have occurred in the delta recently.

One of the directive's main purposes apparently is to remind the Viet Cong that North Vietnamese reinforcements are not cannon fodder to be expended quickly in a few impressive battles. The Communists apparently hope to rebuild their strength in the delta countryside gradually by scoring a series of successes in relatively small actions over a period of perhaps many months, keeping open a wide range of military and political options.

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Communists Threatening Key Government Positions



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LAOS

The most immediate threat from Communist forces appears to be directed at Ban Na, an important link in General Vang Pao's defense line. Early on 12 March, enemy forces overran a government defensive position less than a mile from the main outpost. Vang Pao's reaction was to airlift three more battalions into Ban Na. The government force there, thus augmented, is a little more than 700 troops.

We cannot be certain how many Communists have moved into the Ban Na area, but intercepted communications indicate that at least two battalions of the formidable North Vietnamese 316th Division are involved.

An intercepted enemy message indicated that an ammunition shipment probably destined for North Vietnamese forces in this area exploded recently while moving across the Plaine des Jarres. This may explain in part why the enemy has not yet launched an attack against the main outpost at Ban Na. Another message was a request for 122-mm. ammunition fuses, suggesting that the North Vietnamese may have moved some of their long-range artillery into position to support the Ban Na operation.

Another key outpost is threatened. Intercepted communications reveal that at least two companies of the 316th Division are moving into position to attack Tha Tam Bleung, about eight miles south of Ban Na. On 12 March a North Vietnamese reconnaissance element was in the area looking for locations to emplace rockets, presumably to support a coming attack.

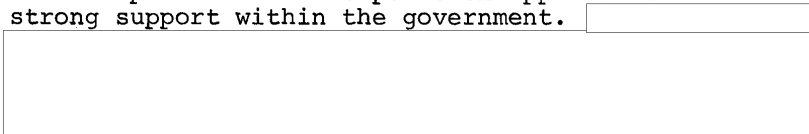
Should the enemy break through at Ban Na and Tha Tam Bleung, the main blocking positions between the Plaine and Long Tieng, Vang Pao's headquarters would be under a significantly increased threat. Communists could move artillery and rockets within range of the Meo community between Sam Thong and Long Tieng. Such a development probably would prompt Meo leaders to begin thinking seriously about evacuating the civilians from the area--a move that would be a blow to the morale of Vang Pao's already tired Meo army.

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In a press interview yesterday, Prime Minister Souvanna stated that his government is prepared to agree to a cease-fire, but he said that there could be no bombing halt before North Vietnam withdraws its troops. Souvanna's position appears to have strong support within the government.



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In Moscow, meanwhile, the Soviets are working on a reply to President Nixon's proposal for consultations under the terms of the Geneva Accords.

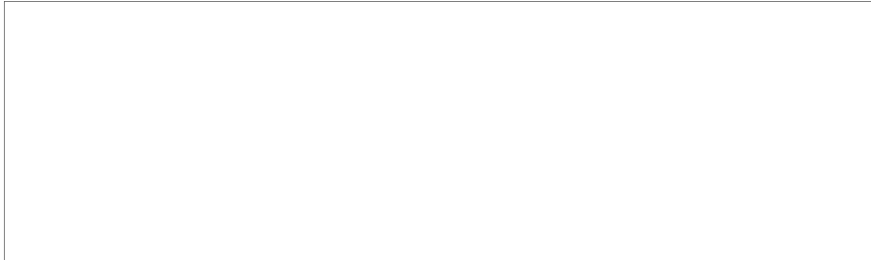


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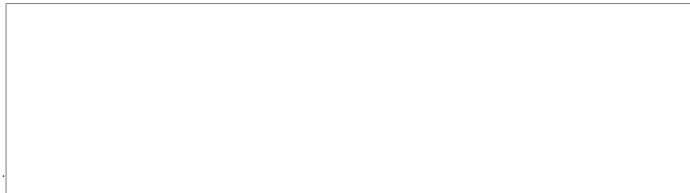
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CAMBODIA

Phnom Penh is maintaining its tough attitude toward the Vietnamese Communists. Deputy Prime Minister Matak told a press conference yesterday that the government had expressed regret over the violent demonstrations against their embassies, but also had insisted that the Communists honor earlier assurances that they would withdraw their troops from Cambodia. Matak also said that until their troops departed his government was suspending its agreement to sell rice to the Viet Cong.



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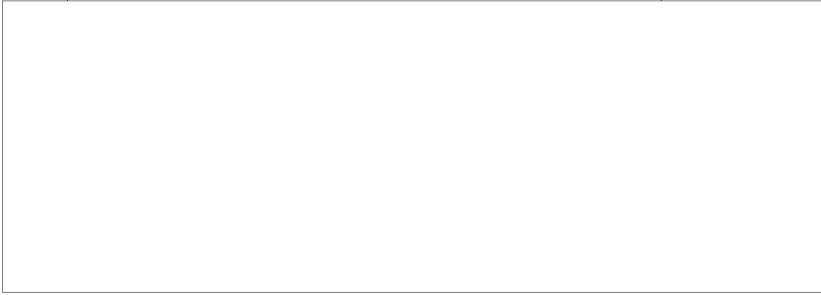
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The first Vietnamese Communist reaction to the attacks was contained in an official Hanoi news agency statement of 12 March. In a relatively restrained protest, Hanoi attributed the attacks to "saboteurs" and sought assurances against any repetition of the violence.

The Communists probably are content for now with Sihanouk's initial sharp denunciation of the attacks and are hoping for opportunities to discuss developments with him directly in Moscow or Peking.

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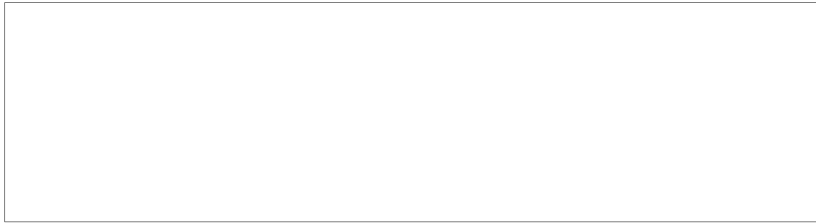
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BRAZIL

Late press reports state the government will ransom the Japanese consul general, Nabuo Okuchi, by releasing five "political prisoners" and by not taking reprisals against terrorists who remain in Brazilian jails.

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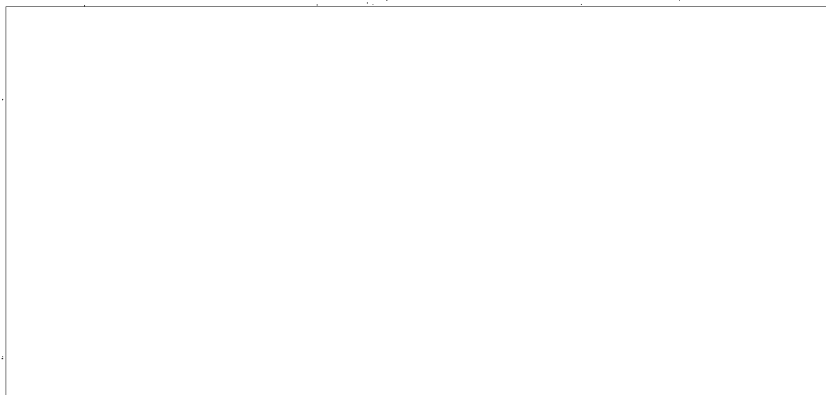
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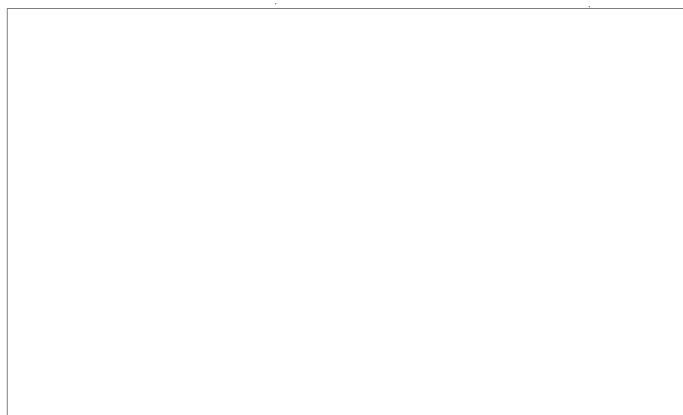
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COMMUNIST CHINA



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NOTES

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Israel-Lebanon: U Thant's suggestion last week that UN observers be stationed along the border between Lebanon and Israel found no favor with either nation. President Hilu remains negative, but could go along if Israel would accept observers on its territory and if Israel would recognize the border as the line established by the armistice of 1949 rather than as a mere cease-fire frontier. Israeli leaders cannot swallow either condition.

Turkey: Prime Minister Demirel's attempt for a vote of confidence on Saturday could be a real cliff-hanger, but the chances appear slightly better than even that he will make it. Should he fail to get the 226 votes required for a bare majority, he will be faced with three options. He can go with a minority, he can form a coalition, or he can call for new elections. Although opposition parties do not favor them, elections would provide Demirel the only sure way to force dissidents in his Justice Party out of the National Assembly.

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Turkey: [redacted] a radical youth group in Ankara plans to march on a US installation following a major rally scheduled for Saturday afternoon. An attack on the USIS building on 6 March followed a similar rally. The forthcoming demonstration could also degenerate into harassment of individual Americans or their property.

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Trinidad: Yesterday's press reports about Black Power demonstrators confronting the East Indian sugar cane workers seem now to have been somewhat exaggerated. [redacted]

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[redacted] the demonstration formed up with a minimum of fuss early in the morning and was orderly and quiet.

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