



*The President's Daily Brief*

*20 March 1970*

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*Top Secret*

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*FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY*

THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

20 March 1970

PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

The new Cambodian regime is consolidating its position and has launched a free-swinging campaign to discredit Sihanouk. (Page 1)

In Laos, the Communists have resumed their offensive against government forces blocking the approaches to Long Tieng. The government, for its part, is bringing in reinforcements to Long Tieng itself. (Page 2)

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Israeli aircraft meanwhile continue to bomb Egyptian targets elsewhere almost daily, but they have avoided strikes close to Cairo for over a month now. (Page 4)

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The Greek Government is going to considerable lengths to squash allegations that it was involved in the assassination of the former Cypriot interior minister. (Page 6)

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CAMBODIA

The new regime is moving quickly to consolidate its position. Yesterday the National Assembly granted "full power" to Prime Minister Lon Nol, declared a national emergency, and suspended a number of constitutional articles for six months. These last actions give the government broad powers of arrest and prohibit public assemblies. One of the few remaining pro-Sihanouk ministers in the cabinet has resigned; the foreign minister, who also is held to be a Sihanouk man, has been replaced as well.

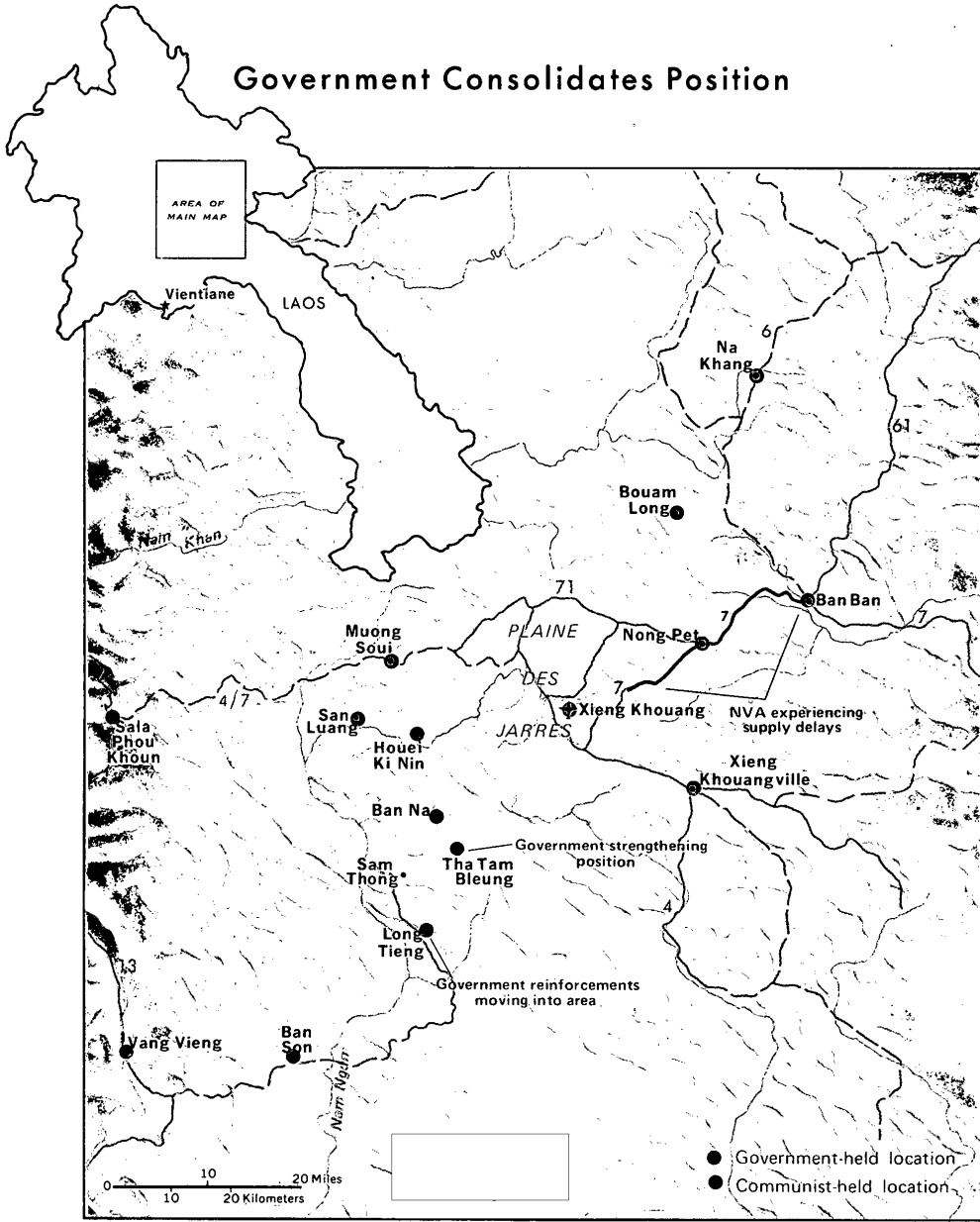
The government also has launched a public campaign, led by Acting Chief of State Cheng Heng, to denigrate Sihanouk. The Prince has been charged with supplying arms to Cambodia's enemies and his entourage has been criticized for corruption. The armed forces have been notified that Sihanouk has been dismissed as commander in chief for betraying the constitution and the nation. The army was ordered to crush any possible subsequent action by Sihanouk to resume power.

The country is generally quiet, although demonstrations against Vietnamese and Chinese communities have been reported in some provincial towns. Provincial officials are climbing on the bandwagon and sending in pledges of loyalty to the government. No significant military clashes have been reported between Cambodian and Vietnamese Communist units along the eastern border, nor is there any evidence of major withdrawals of Communist units.

Sihanouk remains in Peking, where he is being accorded full diplomatic honors as a chief of state. He still has made no comment on his ouster.

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### Government Consolidates Position



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LAOS

The enemy has renewed its attempts to sweep government forces from areas blocking the approaches to Long Tieng. Late on 19 March the enemy launched a heavy attack south of Tha Tam Bleung, forcing government troops to withdraw from the area. Government forces have also evacuated Ban Na to the north.

At the same time, the government is attempting to strengthen its position in the immediate Long Tieng area. The airlift of three guerrilla battalions from south Laos is under way and advance elements have already taken up defensive positions midway between Sam Thong and Long Tieng. In addition, newly arrived long-range artillery pieces have been deployed in positions to destroy enemy rocket launching sites in the hills immediately north of the base.

The deteriorating military situation and Prime Minister Souvanna's apparent willingness to pursue the Communists' peace proposal of 6 March are contributing to political unrest in south Laos.

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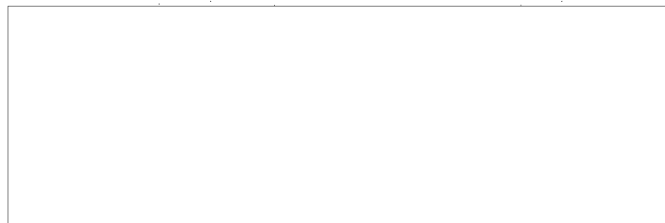
*These rightist malcontents seem to be maneuvering for the return of Phoumi Nosavan, who has been in Thai exile since an abortive coup in 1965. Discredited in most areas of the country, Phoumi's support appears to be limited to the south. Phoumi is anathema to the Vientiane-based Sananikone clan and the rightist military leaders in the capital.*

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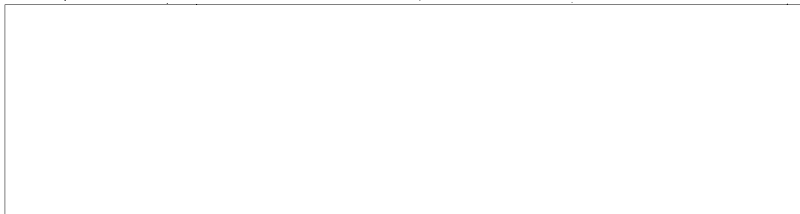
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ISRAEL - ARAB STATES

Israeli aircraft continue to bomb Egyptian targets elsewhere almost daily, but they have avoided strikes close to Cairo for over a month now. The last strike near Cairo was the misdirected attack on a civilian factory on 12 February. The closest the Israelis have come since then was an attack on an SA-2 site 20 miles west of Cairo on 26 February.

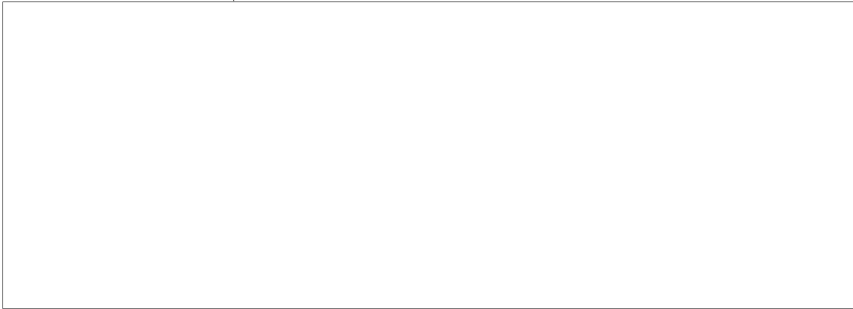
*Israel's reasons for shying away from the Cairo area are not entirely clear. The repercussions from the bombing error may be a factor, and weather conditions have occasionally been poor. The Israelis could also be trying to conserve their aircraft and may be marking time pending a US decision on further sales.*

These latter considerations may help explain why the Israelis are not using their aircraft on the other cease-fire lines. In response to increased Syrian harassment in the Golan Heights area, Israel is using helicopter-borne commando raids rather than air strikes. In Jordan and Lebanon it is retaliating for fedayeen attacks with artillery and cross-border ground raids.

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EAST GERMANY - WEST GERMANY



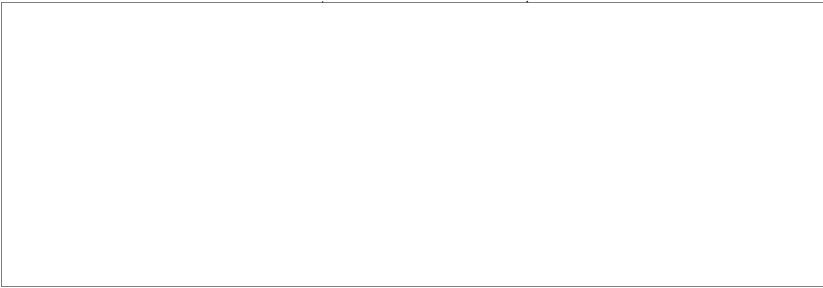
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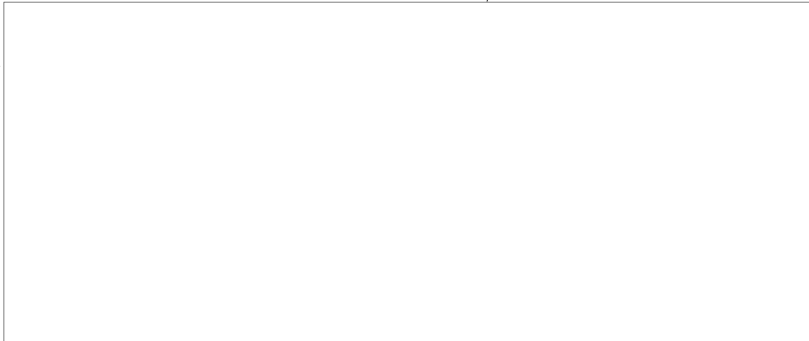


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NOTES

Greece-Cyprus: Prime Minister Papadopoulos is going to considerable lengths to squash allegations that he and his government are involved in the assassination of former minister Georkatzis. Among other things, he is sending high-ranking army officers to Cyprus to assist in the investigation of the attempted murder of President Makarios and the death of Georkatzis. Also, he issued a public statement in the name of his government condemning violence in general and that in Cyprus in particular. It demanded that the criminals be caught and punished "in an exemplary way."

Libya: [redacted] the Grand Mufti of Libya, the most important religious leader in the country, has been under house arrest since 12 March. The Grand Mufti is one of the closest advisers to Prime Minister Qaddafi, and his detention may be part of a move by dissenters in the Revolutionary Command Council to curb Qaddafi--particularly his pro-Egyptian policies.

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[redacted]

Italy: Former premier Fanfani threw in the sponge yesterday, and now President Saragat may ask caretaker Premier Rumor to make another try at putting together a new coalition government.

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