



*The President's Daily Brief*

28 March 1970

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

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PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

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Peking's statement against use of Thai troops in Laos is the strongest Chinese pronouncement on the Laotian situation since the early 1960s. (Page 2)

Pro-Sihanouk demonstrations in southeastern Cambodia have abated, but they already seem to have served one Communist purpose by forcing the government to thin out its forces along the border in order to help police provincial capitals. (Page 3)

In Laos, General Vang Pao's reinforced garrison at Long Tieng is beginning to push out from the immediate environs of the base. (Page 5)

The latest information on silo construction for the SS-9 ICBM is provided on Page 6.

At Annex [Redacted] Soviet [Redacted] Egypt.

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USSR-EGYPT-ISRAEL

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COMMUNIST CHINA

Peking's statement of 26 March in support of the Lao Communists is the strongest Chinese pronouncement on the Laotian situation since the early 1960s. The Foreign Ministry release condemned the use of Thai troops in Laos as a grave military adventure and war escalation. It went on to pledge that China would not sit idle in the face of expanded warfare in Laos and was prepared to share losses with the Laotian people.

*This warning is similar to Chinese statements of support to North Vietnam in 1965-- rhetoric which did not commit the Chinese to any course of action. The statement's principal purpose may be to play on Thai fears regarding Chinese intentions.*

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*In 1961, for example, the Chinese Foreign Minister specifically warned against introducing "SEATO forces" into Laos.*

The Chinese continue to maintain some 10,000-11,000 men in northern Laos in connection with their road-building project. These forces are composed solely of engineering units and support elements, including anti-aircraft battalions. There are no signs that Peking has begun preparations for the introduction of combat units into Laos. Recent communications alerts and possible troop movements in neighboring Yunnan Province appear to be related to the ongoing nationwide "war preparations" campaign rather than to events across the border.

*Nevertheless, recent developments in Indochina may be causing Peking to reassess US intentions in Southeast Asia. The Chinese have been devoting increased propaganda attention to alleged US activities in the area in the past few weeks, and they have not yet replied to the US proposal to meet in Warsaw between 1 and 3 April. It appears likely that they will put off the meeting, and when it does take place the Chinese may wish to discuss the Indochina situation rather than concentrating exclusively on the bilateral issues that have thus far been under consideration.*



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## CAMBODIA

A Cambodian intercept indicates that the situation in Kompong Cham Province, the scene of the most serious antigovernment demonstrations, has calmed down. But the message says Cambodian troops killed 22 and wounded over 70 when they fired into crowds yesterday morning.

*Circumstances surrounding the antigovernment outbreaks of the past two days strongly suggest the Communists are putting some muscle behind their support for Sihanouk's "liberation" program. It is significant that the first pro-Sihanouk demonstrations originated in towns in Kompong Cham, long an area of heavy Viet Cong influence and infiltration. Moreover, the demonstrations did not erupt until after Hanoi had declared its total backing for Sihanouk. The departure of most Vietnamese Communist diplomatic personnel from Phnom Penh on 27 March is an additional sign that the Communists intended to play rough.*

*The Communists have already gained one important immediate benefit with the pullback to defend several provincial capitals of troops positioned along the southeastern border. This shift will relax considerably Cambodian military pressures on Viet Cong units in that key area. Additionally, the demonstrations probably will rattle the confidence of some of the government's lukewarm supporters and, at the same time, lend some needed credibility to Sihanouk's claims that the people are still with him.*

*The army should be able to control the current unrest and check its spread to other areas, provided the Communists do not use their own troops to support pro-Sihanouk elements. At a minimum, the Communists probably will encourage increased activity by Cambodian insurgents operating along the eastern border.*

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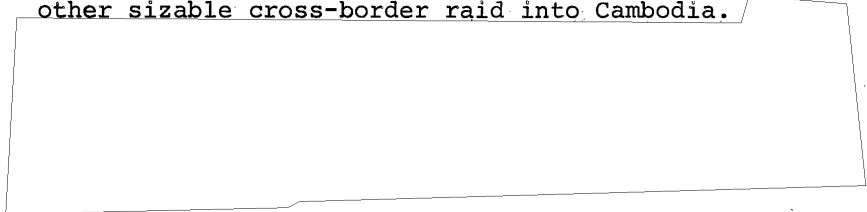
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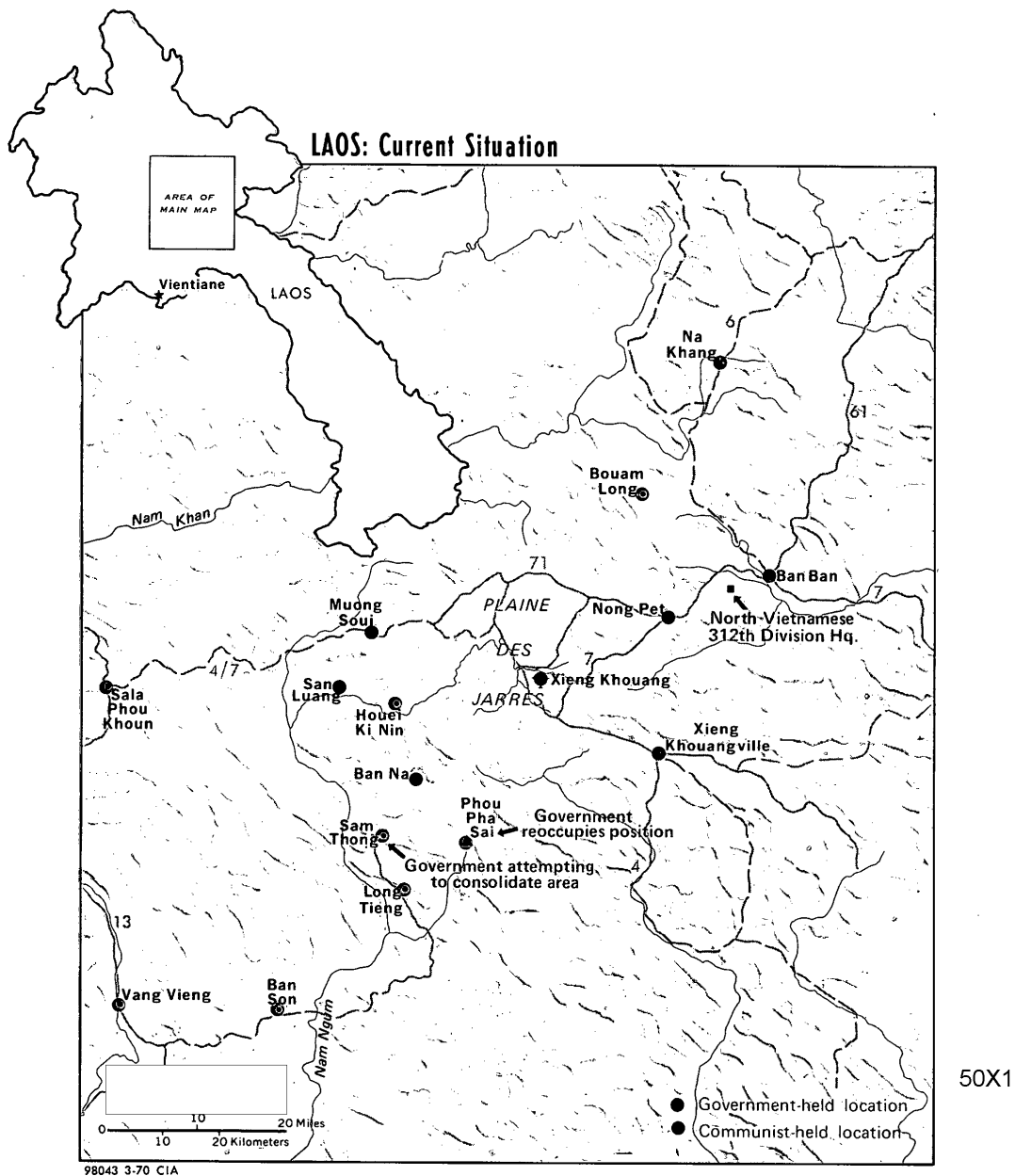
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South Vietnamese Army units have launched another sizable cross-border raid into Cambodia.

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*The South Vietnamese no doubt hope that through these cross-border raids, they can blunt enemy capabilities for future moves into the delta.*





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LAOS

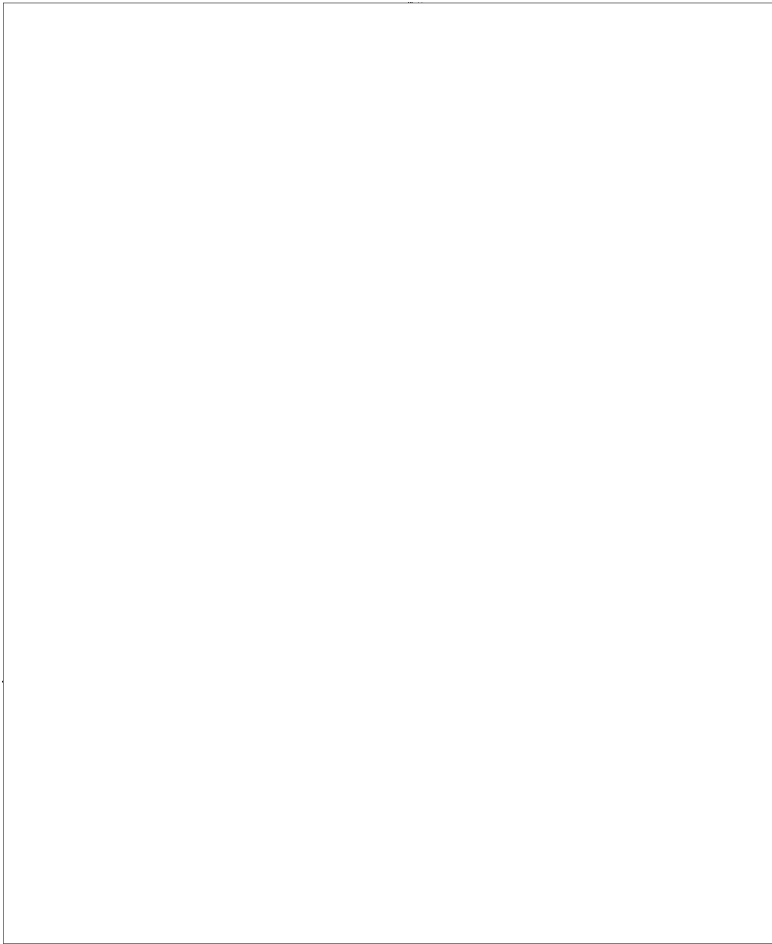
Government forces are trying to win for themselves a little elbow room around Long Tieng. They have reoccupied Phou Pha Sai, some ten miles north-east of the base. They are also beginning to send out patrols beyond Long Tieng's immediate defense perimeter in an attempt to clear the area of North Vietnamese forces. General Vang Pao, moreover, has troops ready to move into Sam Thong. He hopes to secure this area within the next few days.

*So far the Communists have not offered much resistance to these moves. This suggests they do not yet have enough troops in the area to deal with the freshly reinforced government garrison at Long Tieng.*

*Enemy communications indicate that only two North Vietnamese battalions are now within striking distance of Long Tieng, although four others are in the general area. With close to 4,000 government troops opposing the North Vietnamese, they will probably need to bring up more troops and supplies.*

*Two months of dry season weather remain; the Communists thus have plenty of time to reinforce with elements of the 312th Division. This unit, deployed generally to the east of the Plaine des Jarres, has not yet participated in the current offensive.*

The improving situation seems to have convinced even the cautious Lao Army chief, General Ouan, that Long Tieng can be held. Consequently he has ordered the airlift of three regular Lao Army battalions; one battalion from south Laos is expected to be flown in Monday.



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USSR

Satellite photography has disclosed one new group of six silos under construction for the SS-9 ICBM. Comparison with earlier photography shows that construction began on the new group last summer, bringing the total number of SS-9 groups started during 1969 to nine.

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NOTES

Lebanon: There has been more shooting between right-wing Christians and Palestinian commandos. Interior Minister Jumblatt/

has been given the unenviable assignment of trying to restore peace. If he fails, it will probably be the army's turn next, which could lead to considerably heavier casualties.

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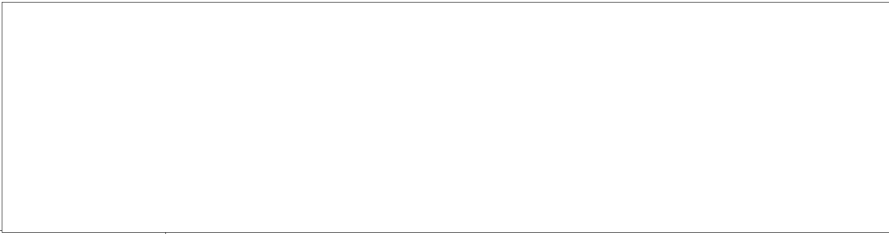
South Korea: Prime Minister Chong Il-kwon may be forced to step down as a result of the scandal that has been developing since the recent murder of his mistress. As yet, there is no evidence available that Chong is personally involved in the murder, and the authorities appear to be trying to downplay the affair in order to protect him. The scandal threatens to become a major one, however, as the mistress apparently was involved with a number of other highly placed officials and political figures.

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USSR-EGYPT



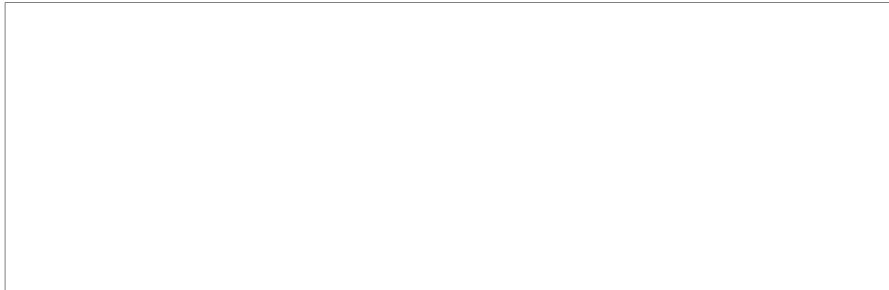
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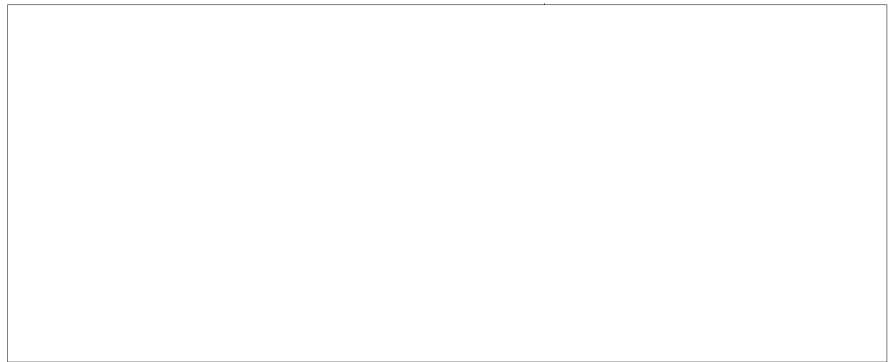
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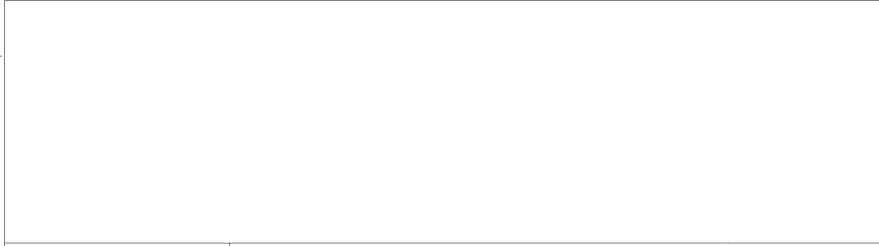
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