



The President's Daily Brief

30 March 1970

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

30 March 1970

PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

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South Vietnamese forces have made another cross-border foray into Cambodia. (Page 2)

The situation in Cambodia's Kompong Cham Province remains tense, but there have been no further pro-Sihanouk demonstrations. (Page 4)

The North Vietnamese are strengthening their forces in the Long Tieng area of Laos; government forces there continue to harass the enemy with aggressive patrolling. (Page 5)

The Soviets

[Redacted]

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The Sudanese Government is moving, with some caution, against the dissident Ansar sect. (Page 7)

Notes on Lebanon and East Germany are provided on Page 8.

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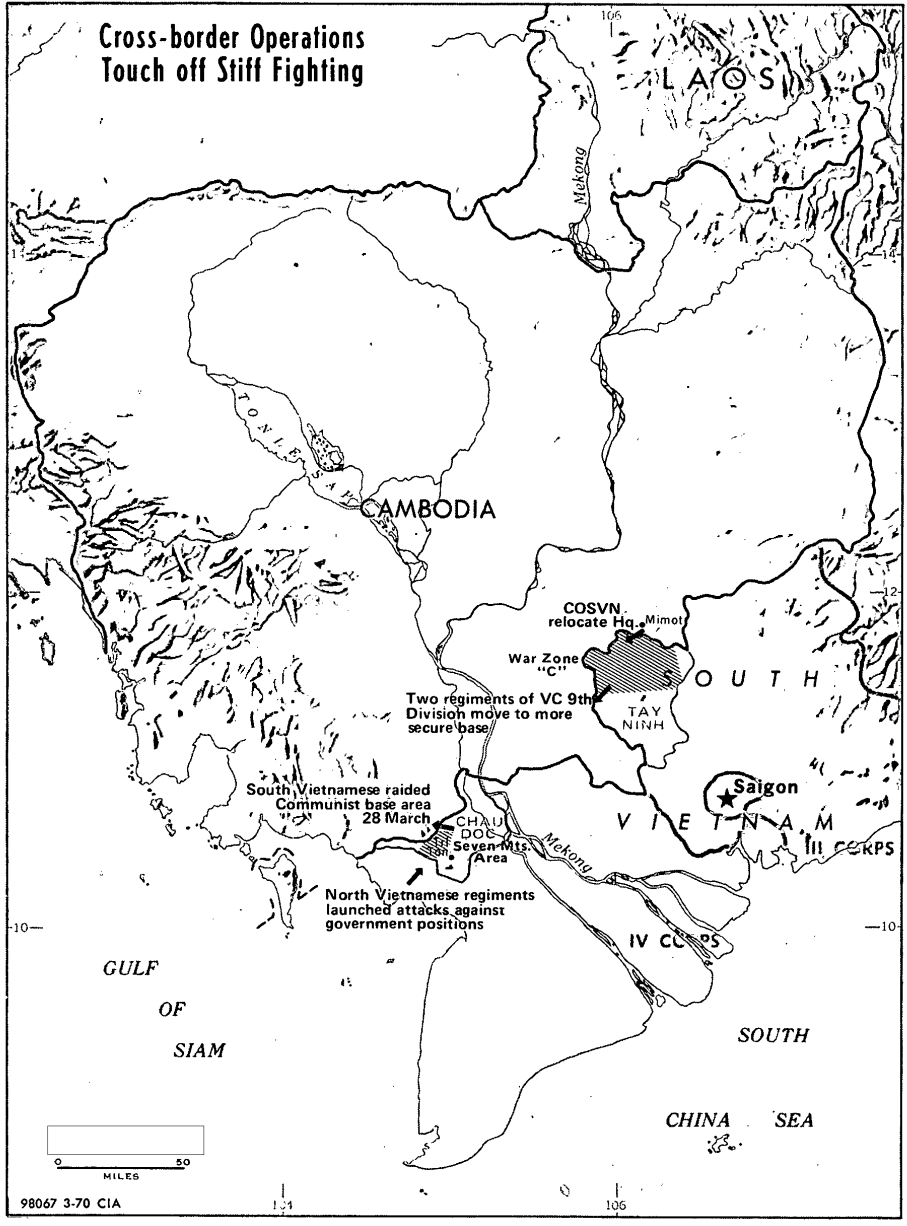
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SOUTH VIETNAM - CAMBODIA

South Vietnamese ranger, armored, and air units on Saturday launched another raid from Chau Doc Province against a Communist base area in Cambodia. Forty-two enemy troops were killed in contrast to South Vietnamese losses of four killed and 35 wounded. This was the second strike in as many days against this particular Communist redoubt, and the third confirmed cross-border foray from the delta since the ouster of Sihanouk on 18 March.

In response, the Communists have become more aggressive in the border area and have made some precautionary moves to avoid entrapment. Over the weekend, elements of two North Vietnamese regiments launched a series of coordinated attacks against government positions in the Seven Mountains area of Chau Doc Province, including the district town of Tri Ton. A US combat base along the Cambodian border in northern III Corps also came under heavy attack this weekend.

Communications intelligence indicates that the senior Communist authority in South Vietnam (COSVN) relocated its headquarters complex and several supporting intelligence components last week from a main base area in the Mimot region of Cambodia to a secondary base in South Vietnam's Tay Ninh Province. In addition, elements of two regiments of the Viet Cong 9th Division recently moved from their Cambodian sanctuary in War Zone C along the Cambodian border to a more secure base area in western Tay Ninh Province.

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Numerous indications point to enemy plans for a "highpoint" of activity throughout much of South Vietnam on the night of 31 March - 1 April. Any attacks that materialize probably will be spearheaded by local force units and consist mainly of shellings, sapper raids, and acts of terrorism against pacification and Vietnamization targets.

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CAMBODIA

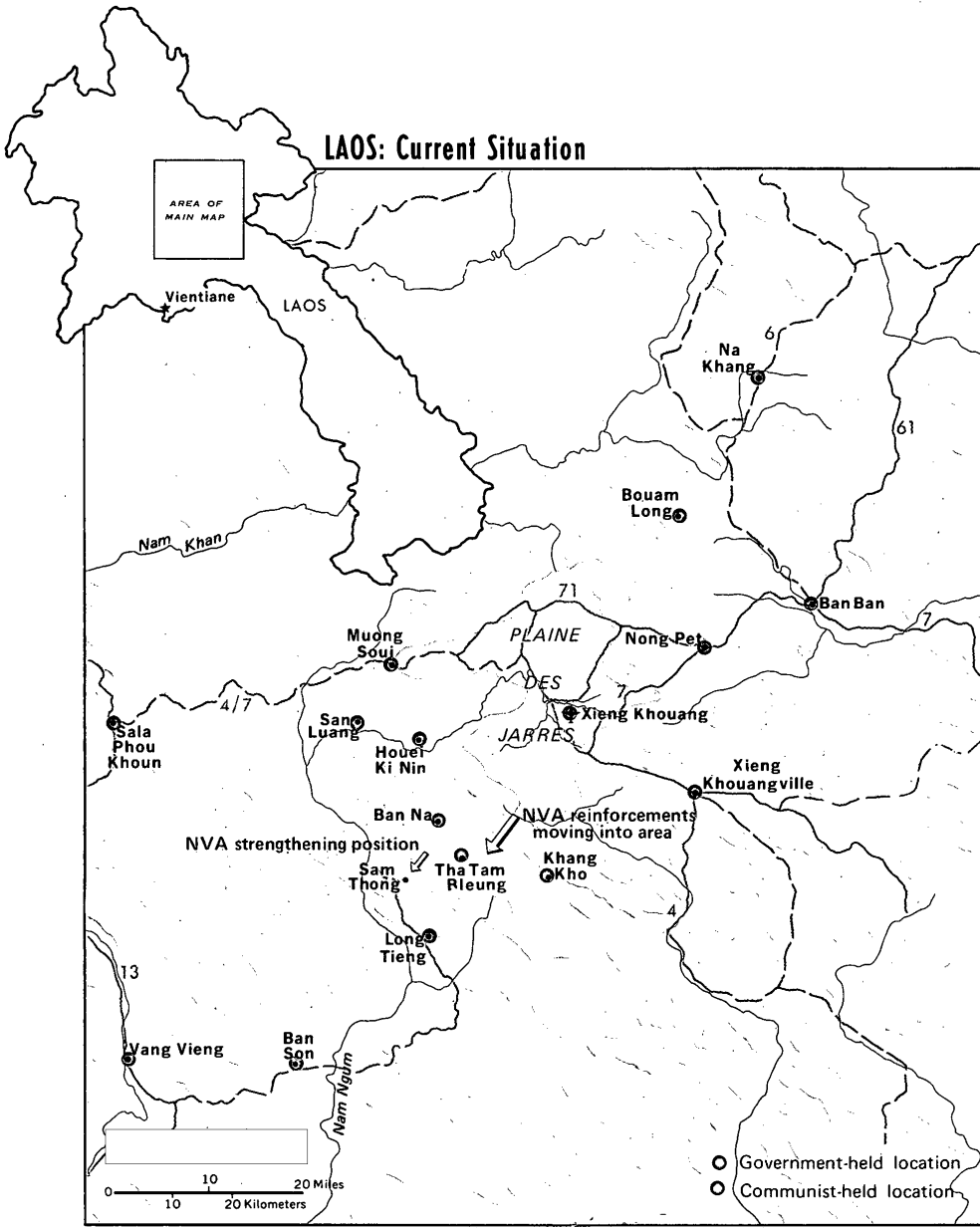
There have been no new pro-Sihanouk demonstrations in Kompong Cham Province, but an intercepted police message of 28 March said there is "strong rebellion" in almost every district there and that local officials had fled from their respective areas following last week's outbursts. The message also stated that demonstrators had seized large amounts of weapons and that some appeared to have received additional arms from the Viet Cong. Local French and British businessmen in the area also believe that more trouble lies ahead, even though the government still controls the town of Kompong Cham. One government official said that about 1,000 persons were arrested following the demonstrations last week, many of them Vietnamese.

In Phnom Penh, the government is keeping up a barrage of information and propaganda broadcasts to rally popular support and to counter Sihanouk's statements from Peking. Prime Minister Lon Nol has ordered all province and subprovince governors to stay close to local military commanders so that "each problem" can be handled rapidly and cooperatively. In a further effort to improve security in the countryside, the government has launched a program to create armed student commando battalions in each province.

There has been one serious clash between Cambodian and Vietnamese Communist military forces on the eastern border, but there is no reliable evidence to confirm government statements that sizable numbers of Viet Cong troops have attacked government forces some 30 miles southeast of Phnom Penh.

Meanwhile, North Vietnam has issued another official statement in support of Sihanouk. Hanoi's statement attempted to allay fears among Cambodians that to support Sihanouk now would be tantamount to a Communist takeover. It asserted that the "militant solidarity" among the people of Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos would guarantee that they could all develop "in accordance with their own ways."

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LAOS

Additional North Vietnamese troops are moving into the Long Tieng area. According to an intercept, elements of at least two battalions are being sent from the Plaine des Jarres to reinforce enemy units operating near Long Tieng. New North Vietnamese radio terminals have been identified in the area in recent days.

The government continues its aggressive patrolling, supported by air strikes and long-range artillery. On 28 March government troops pushed into an enemy staging area about three miles northeast of the Long Tieng airstrip and killed over 30 North Vietnamese troops.

Intercepts show that the enemy is also having difficulties in securing the Sam Thong area. One recent message revealed the movement of additional North Vietnamese troops into positions north of the village in an attempt to block advancing government forces.

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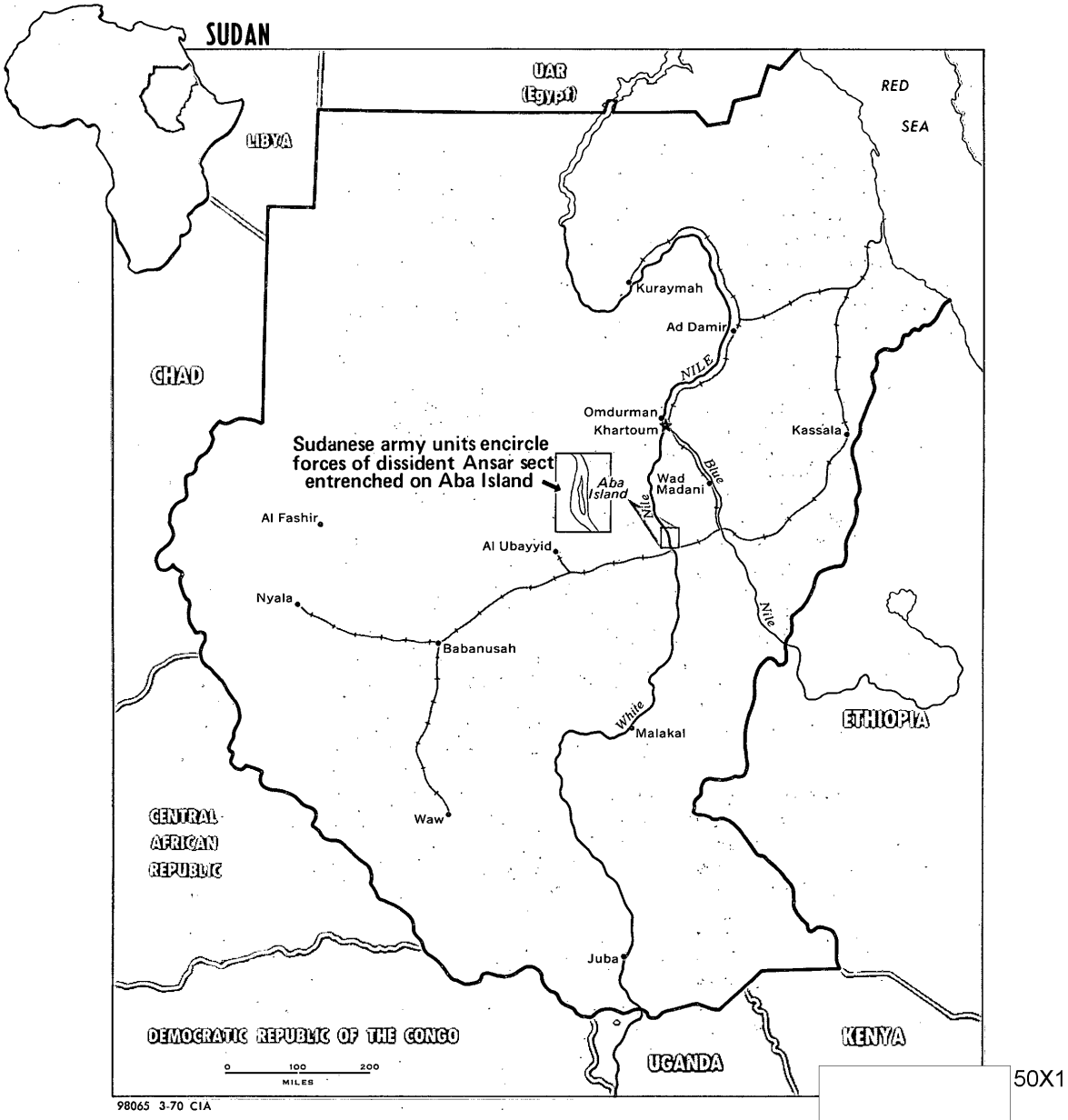
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SUDAN

Tribesmen of the dissident Ansar sect last week harassed President Numayri while he was touring the provinces, and one may have tried to kill him. The government's military leaders subsequently ordered a move against the Ansar stronghold on Aba Island, in the White Nile about 150 miles south of the capital, and the arrest of the sect's leader, the Imam al-Hadi al-Mahdi.

Army units have now surrounded the island, but the government apparently is hesitant to move against it in force. The fighting thus far has been limited largely to mortar and small arms fire, although there may have been one air strike against the island.

A government attack against the Ansar stronghold would pose formidable problems for the regime. At least one third of the Sudan's 26,000 ground forces currently are tied down in the southern provinces, where Negro tribal elements have been carrying out armed terrorism against the Arab-dominated Khartoum governments for the past 15 years. For their part, the 10-20,000 fairly well-armed Ansar tribesmen would put up stiff resistance to any attempt by the Sudanese forces to occupy the island. Numayri is also concerned about possible armed action by Ansar sympathizers throughout the country and the questionable loyalty of the Ansars among his own forces in operations against the Imam.

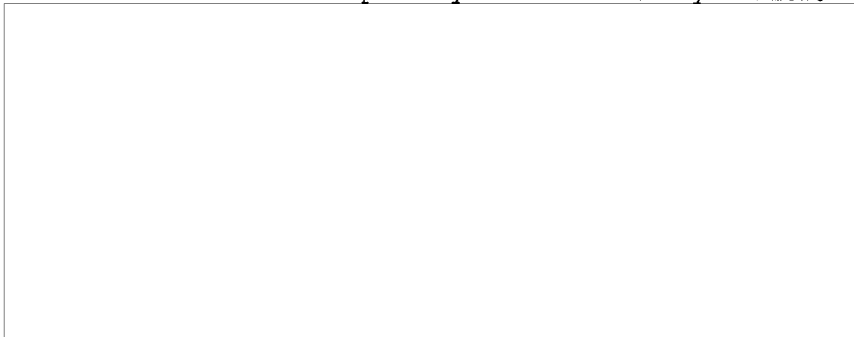
Since the coup of May 1969, the Imam has been actively opposed to the ruling Revolutionary Council despite government efforts at reconciliation. Among the Imam's principal conditions for an accommodation with the government are removal of Communists and pro-Nasirists from key official posts and the establishment of a more broadly based government including Ansar representation.

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NOTES

Lebanon: There have been no serious incidents since Friday, when a cease-fire was arranged at a meeting of government, Phalanges, and commando leaders. The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine apparently was not included, however. It has claimed credit for the harmless explosion near the US Embassy on Saturday night, asserting that this action was in response to the embassy's attempt "to foment communal strife and to destroy the fedayeen movement" in Lebanon. Similar allegations have been made by Minister of Interior Jumblatt and the Lebanese left-wing press.

East Germany: The party secretariat met last week to hear testimony on the pro-Brandt demonstrations in Erfurt, and middle-level officials are concerned about the disciplinary action that may follow.



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