

*The President's Daily Brief*

*30 April 1970*

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*FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY*

THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

30 April 1970

PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

Our assessment of the Cambodian situation appears on *page 1*.

The Communists in Laos have moved against targets in the south. (*Page 3*)

The second wave of the spring offensive is shaping up in South Vietnam. (*Page 5*)

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## CAMBODIA

*The military situation is far from settled but a number of things appear to be a good deal clearer than they were in the weeks immediately following Sihanouk's downfall. On the military front, the Communists have moved rapidly to drive Cambodian forces inland away from Communist border bases--this has now been largely accomplished--and they have created trouble for the Cambodians in the interior. This process is continuing and involves two kinds of activities. Communists have threatened or harassed a series of major Cambodian towns, among them Snoul and Mimot in the north, and Svay Rieng, Takeo, Kampot, and Kep in the south. Except for Mimot, all of these towns are still in Cambodian hands. In addition, Communists have harassed the major roads, rail lines, and waterways leading from Phnom Penh to the eastern region.*

*These actions could give the Communists control over a wide swath of Cambodian territory where they can get foodstuffs and recruits, where they can set up a Sihanouk liberation government, and finally where they can move their bases back away from now threatened border sanctuaries.*

*To date, although there has been some wavering in Phnom Penh, the Communists have not succeeded in shaking the resolve of the Lon Nol government. If anything, Lon Nol and Matak are more determined than ever. The prospect of US material assistance obviously has been extremely important.*

*It is significant, however, how much the Communists have achieved, at least in a tactical sense, with the expenditure of relatively few resources. Most significantly, the enemy has not used any of its main force units in operations in Cambodia since the fall of Sihanouk; the enemy has not needed them.*

(continued)

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The government military post at Mimot in Kompong Cham Province was taken by enemy troops on 27 April

[redacted]; almost all of the government defenders were either killed or captured. Meanwhile, an employee of the French plantation at Mimot has told US officials that a fleet of 50 trucks and a substantial amount of Cambodian currency were left behind when the plantation was evacuated.

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The region near the port city of Kampot came under Communist harassment for the first time yesterday. Few details are available, but the government claims fighting there is continuing. The action in the Kampot area is the most southwesterly extension of Communist military activity to date.

Recently available information indicates that the Communists have been attacking truck convoys between Phnom Penh and the provincial capital of Svay Rieng. One convoy was immobilized and another was forced to return to Svay Rieng on 26 April. The Communists also overran a government outpost six miles north of Svay Rieng on 27 April, suggesting that they may be closing in on the town itself.

The large-scale allied sweep operation launched into the "Parrot's Beak" area of Svay Rieng yesterday may compel some Viet Cong elements to move deeper into the Cambodian interior.

[redacted]  
[redacted]

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The long drawn-out fighting near the town of Angtassom in Takeo Province is continuing. Government forces apparently have removed Communist roadblocks between Angtassom and Phnom Penh.

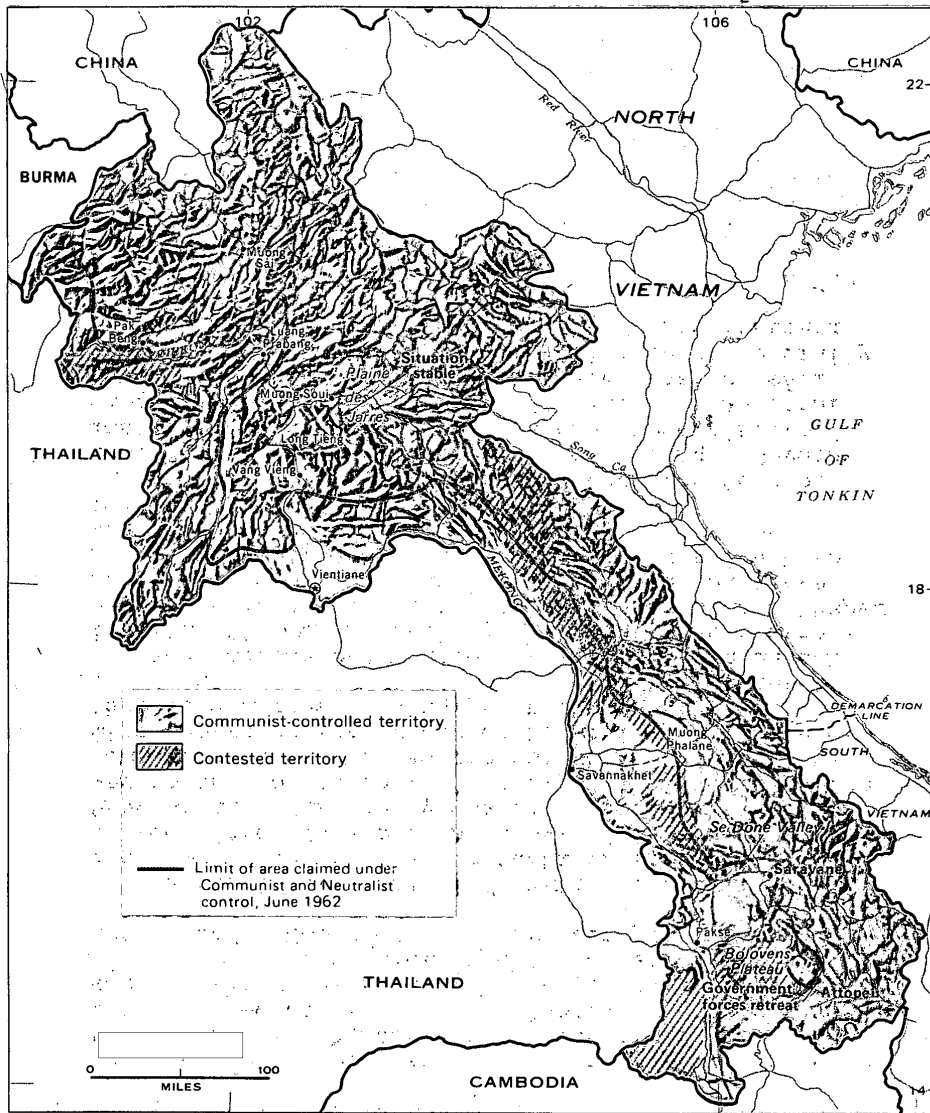
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### Laos: Current Situation



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LAOS

[redacted] the commander of the 600-man government force in the provincial capital of Attopeu decided to abandon the town following a heavy mortar attack. Casualties were reported to be very heavy. One unconfirmed report states that the town had been attacked by a regimental-size North Vietnamese force but this may reflect the customary exaggerated claims of Lao army officers.

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*Although the military importance of Attopeu is minimal, its loss will be a severe political and psychological setback to the government. Along with the city of Saravane, which is just northeast of the Bolovens Plateau, Attopeu has long figured prominently in the war of nerves in southern Laos. It has been attacked before, but the Communists have never made a substantial effort to capture it; they have clearly had the capability to do so, however.*

There have been reports circulating in southern Laos for the past month that local Communist forces intended to break the lull in military activity in the panhandle. [redacted]

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[redacted]

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*The Communists have not mounted a major offensive in this area of Laos since early 1968, when North Vietnamese forces recaptured the Se Done Valley and virtually surrounded the provincial capitals of Saravane and Attopeu. Major North Vietnamese elements withdrew from the Bolovens Plateau area during the last rainy season.*

*The attacks may have been designed to forestall any additional deployments of government forces from the panhandle to northern Laos. They could also have been the result of some breakdown in local arrangements which some of the regular army commanders in the Bolovens area have established with the Communists.*

(continued)

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*It is too early to determine whether the attack on Attapeu is the harbinger of an important shift in Communist strategy in Laos or represents only the kind of sporadic flareup that has occurred in the south in past years. At a minimum, it is a fresh reminder of the extreme fragility of the government's position in all of southern Laos, and of the relative ease with which North Vietnamese troops can move westward out of the infiltration corridor to strike at a time and place of their own choosing.*

The military situation in the north has remained essentially stable during the past 24 hours.

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SOUTH VIETNAM

There are mounting signs that the second round of the Communists' spring offensive will begin soon, most likely during the first week of May. [redacted]

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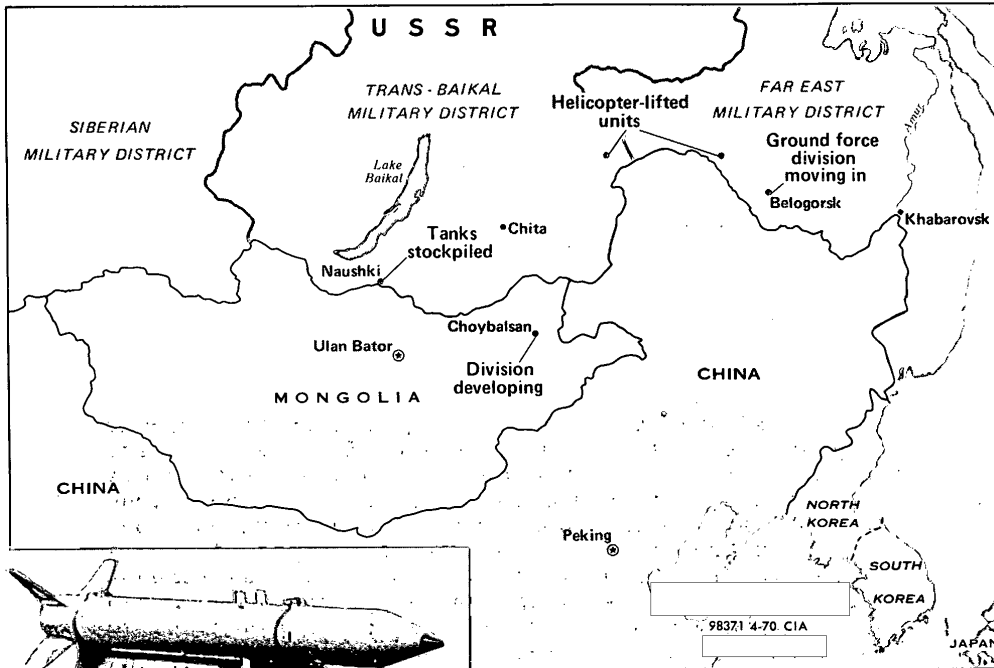
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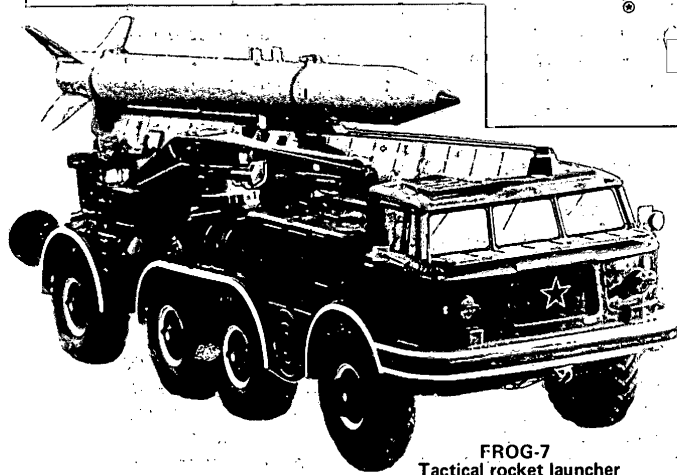
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### Soviet Buildup Continues on Sino-Soviet Border



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FROG-7  
Tactical rocket launcher

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NOTES

USSR-China: Recent satellite photography shows that the Soviets are continuing in a deliberate fashion to move men and equipment to the Sino-Soviet border. There were 277 tanks--almost enough for a division--seen stockpiled near Naushki, in the Trans-Baikal Military District. Division-level equipment and more than 650 tents observed at Choybalsan indicates that the number of divisions in Mongolia has been increased to three.

USSR:

[Redacted]

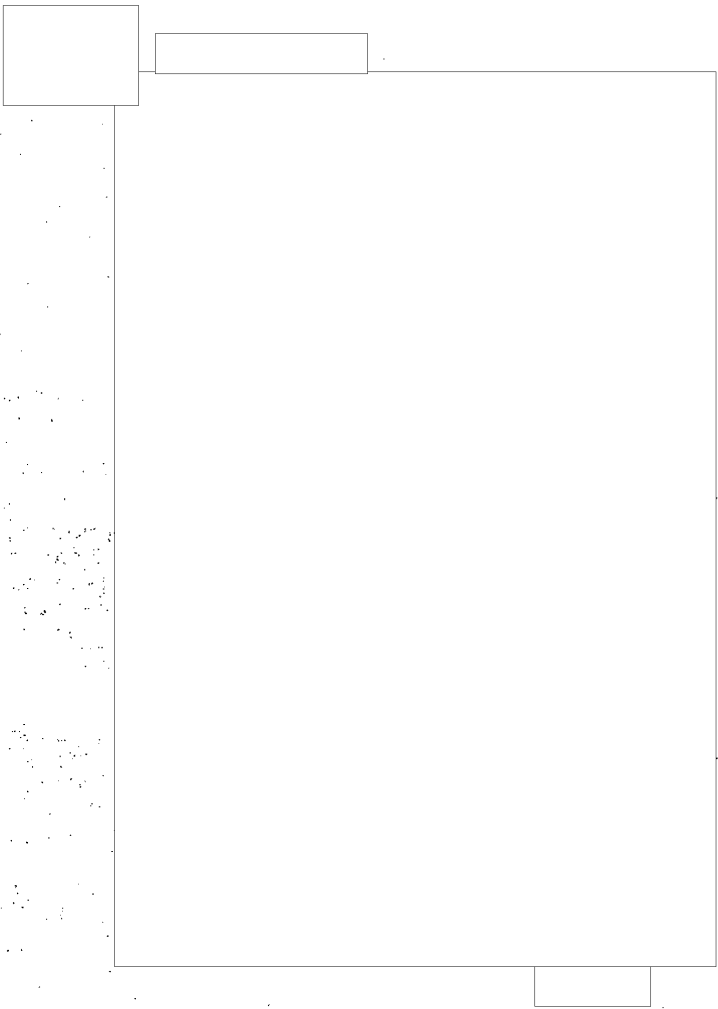
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**Guatemala:**

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