



The President's Daily Brief

1 May 1970

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

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PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

The Cambodian situation is discussed on *Page 1*.



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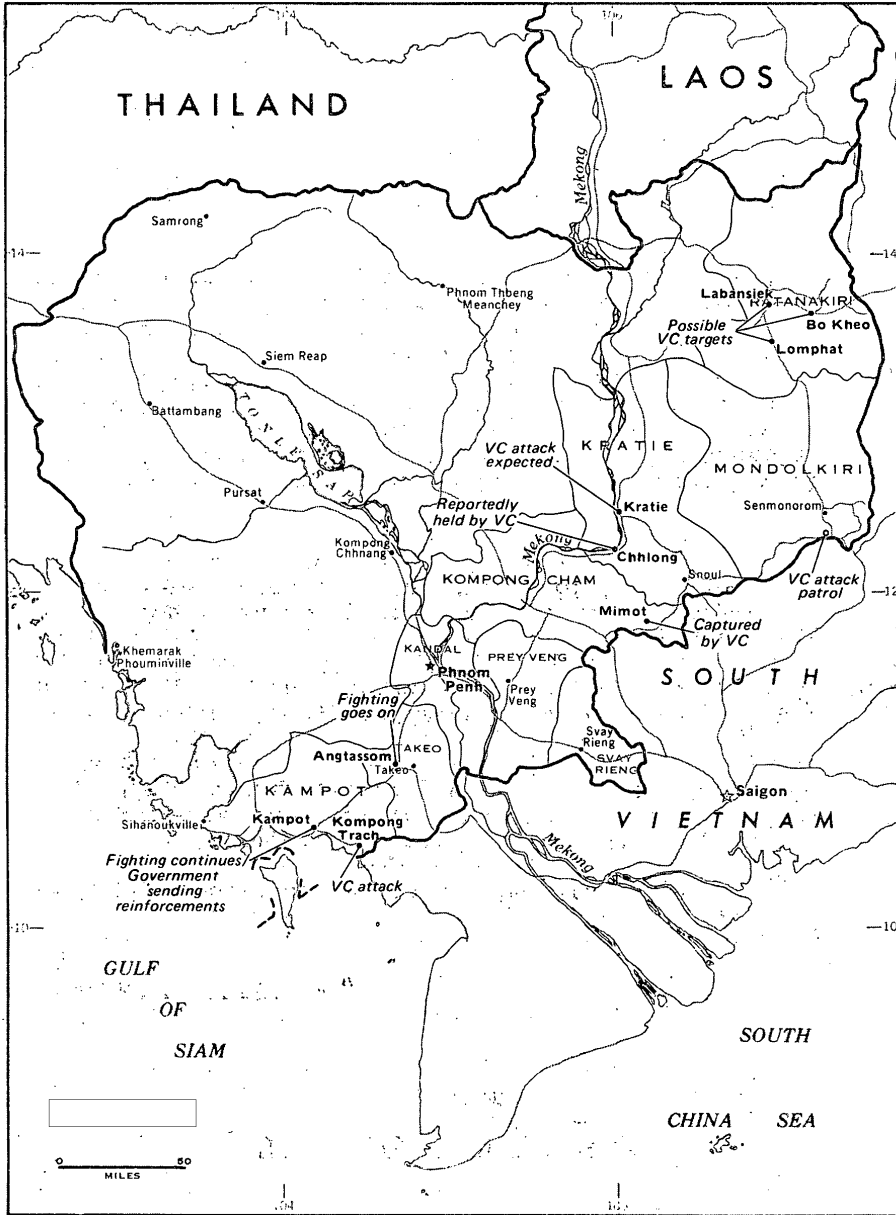
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In southern Laos, the Communists remain in control of Attopeu town. The government is planning counteractions. *(Page 4)*

The Malaysian Government is bracing for possible disturbances as the anniversary of last year's communal riots approaches. *(Page 5)*

CAMBODIA: Current Situation



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CAMBODIA

According to a fragmentary Cambodian Army message, Communist forces are now holding the Mekong River town of Chhlong, which has been contested for the past week. The loss of Chhlong and Communist interdiction of roads from Phnom Penh to the northeast provinces have spurred concern in the provincial capital of Kratie, where government forces are expecting an attack in the near future. Military and popular morale in the adjacent province of Kompong Cham also appears to have deteriorated following the Communists' capture of Mimot.

[Redacted]

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Phnom Penh has also disclosed that the Communists recently attacked several army outposts and patrols in Mondolkiri Province.

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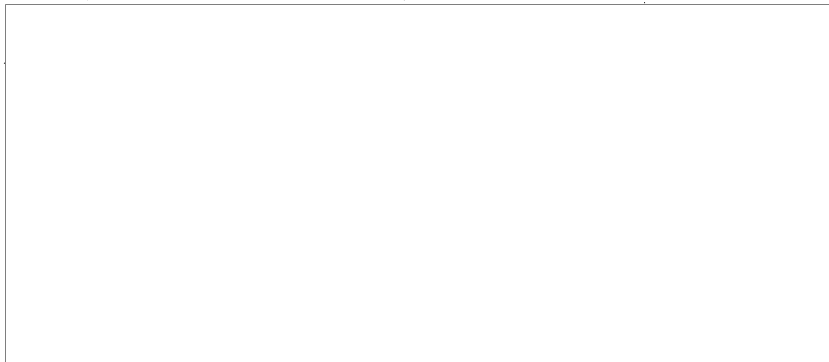
In the south, fighting continues around Kampot; the Communists also attacked a government battalion at Kompong Trach, to the east of Kampot, on 29 April. Three additional government battalions are being sent from Phnom Penh to the Kampot area to reinforce government defenses. The military situation at Angtassom in Takeo Province remains obscure. Press reports indicate that the Viet Cong have pinned down several paratroop battalions occupying the center of the town.

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On the international front, there has been some slippage in the date for the planned Asian conference on Cambodia. Although there has been no official announcement, Indonesian Foreign Minister Malik has told the press that the meeting will be postponed to mid-May from the originally announced 11 May. Yesterday the Indian Government made public its decision not to attend the conference.

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SOUTH VIETNAM

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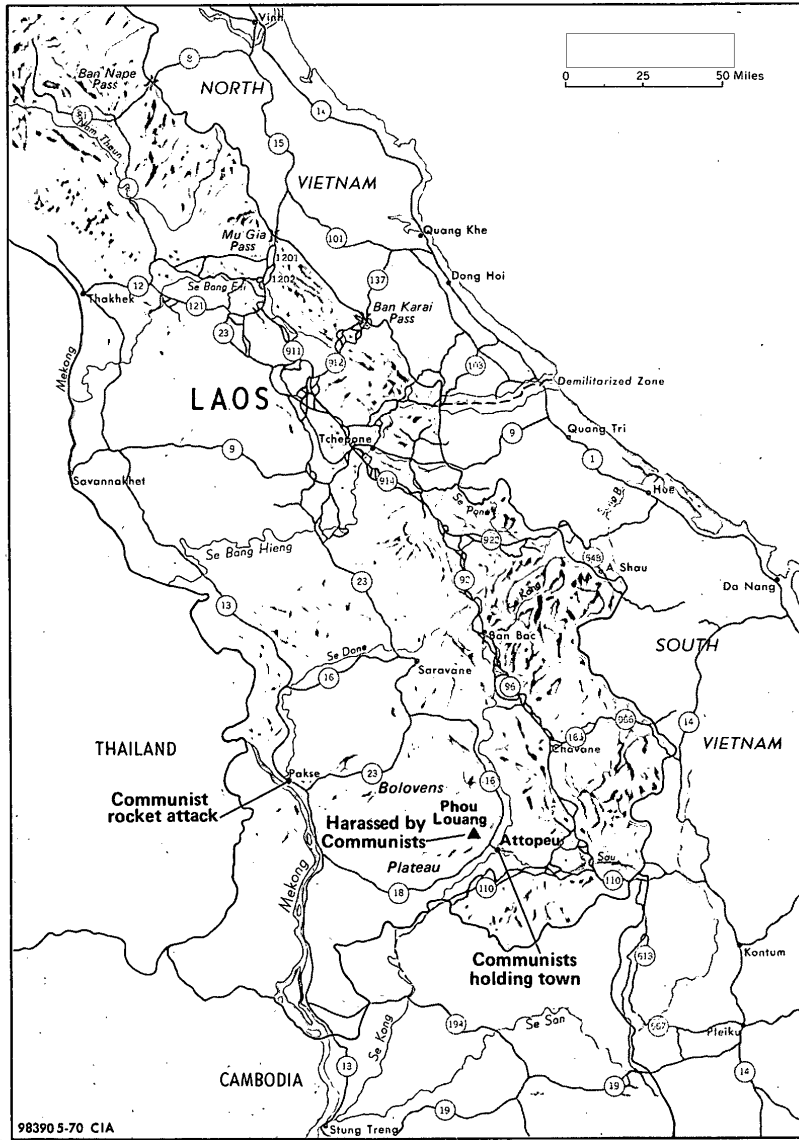
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Communist Military Activity



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LAOS

The Attopeu garrison commander, who abandoned the town in the early hours of 30 April, apparently has escaped with some 490 of the provincial capital's original 600-man defense force. General Phasouk, commander of the southern military region, has ordered air strikes against munitions dumps inside the town, which may result in additional civilian casualties. A government relief column is trying to retake a fire base overlooking Attopeu. Meanwhile, a neutralist army position some ten miles west of Attopeu was being harassed by the Communists on 30 April, according to an intercept. The Communists also made a rocket attack last night against the town of Pakse, on the Mekong River; the targets apparently were the regional military headquarters and a nearby airstrip, but there was no damage.

The identity and number of the enemy forces that attacked Attopeu are still not known. It is likely that both North Vietnamese and Pathet Lao units were involved, but in less than the regimental-size force claimed [redacted]. General Phasouk believes that substantial new enemy forces moved into the Bolovens area in recent weeks, but communications intelligence shows the addition of only one small North Vietnamese detachment.

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Phasouk is also claiming to his military colleagues that the attack on Attopeu was the first step in a new Communist offensive in southern Laos designed to secure the Se Kong River, Route 16, and sanctuaries in support of future enemy operations against Cambodia and South Vietnam. The Communists may want to use the Se Kong River more than they have in the past, but it would be more vulnerable to harassment than the already established supply channels toward Cambodia and South Vietnam via Routes 96 and 110.

Phasouk has used the Attopeu attack to urge the return of southern forces sent to bolster the Meo units in the north, where there has been an extended lull in the fighting. General Ouan, the Lao Armed Forces chief, supports this request and will recommend it to the prime minister,

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NOTE

Malaysia: As the 13 May anniversary of last year's postelection communal riots approaches, the government is casting a nervous eye on the Chinese and Malay communities. Premier Tunku Abdul Rahman and other officials, while trying hard to damp down inflammatory rumors of impending violence, are also drawing up contingency security measures. The organizational ability demonstrated by the Chinese-dominated Malayan Communist Party last month, when booby traps and pamphlets appeared throughout West Malaysia to mark the party's 40th anniversary, is adding to the government's apprehension.

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