



The President's Daily Brief

12 May 1970

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

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PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

[redacted] Cambodia [redacted] (Page 1)

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In Laos, government and Communist forces continue to jockey for position. (Page 3)

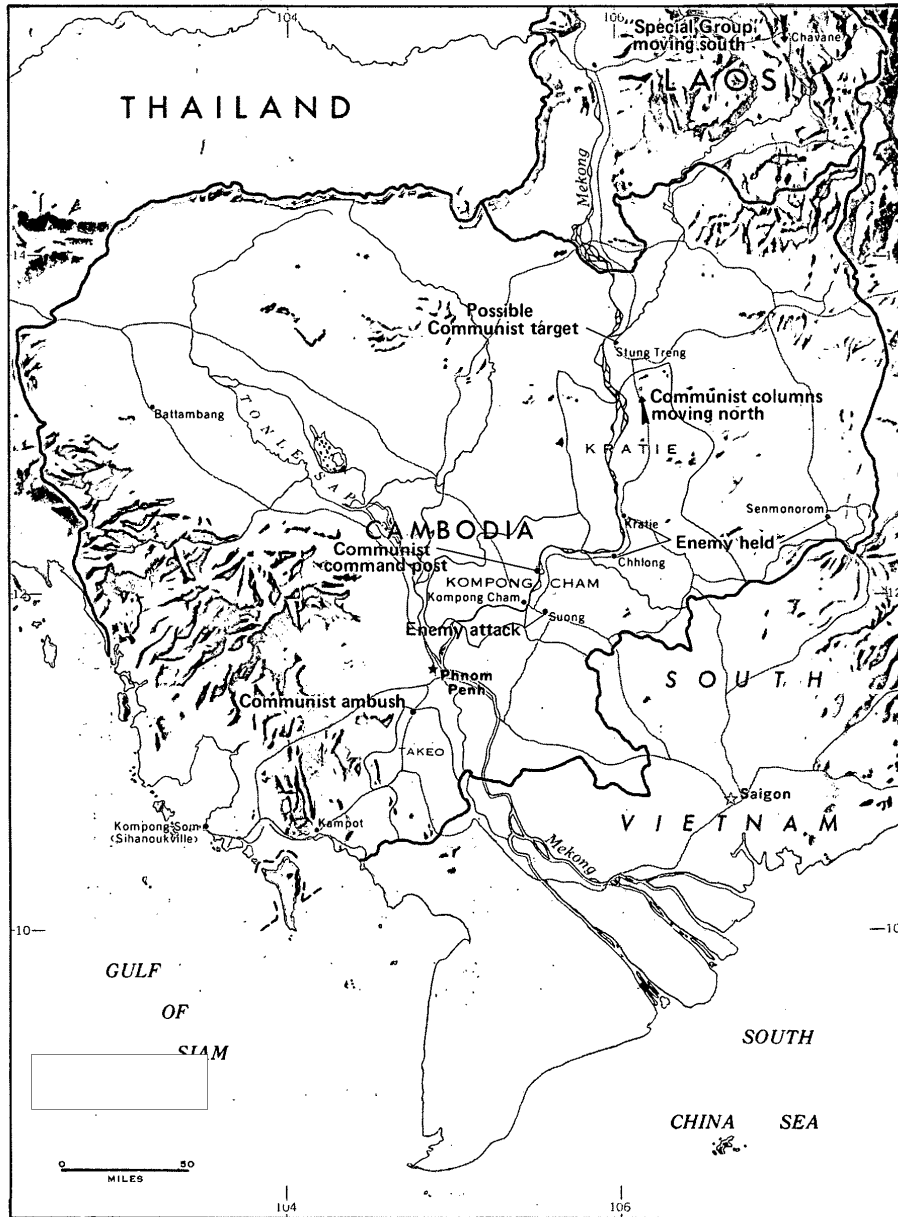
[redacted] Iran [redacted] (Page 4)

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The French propose to smooth the way toward European detente. (Page 5)

Israel sends troops into Lebanon to punish guerrillas. (Page 6)

Cambodia: Current Situation

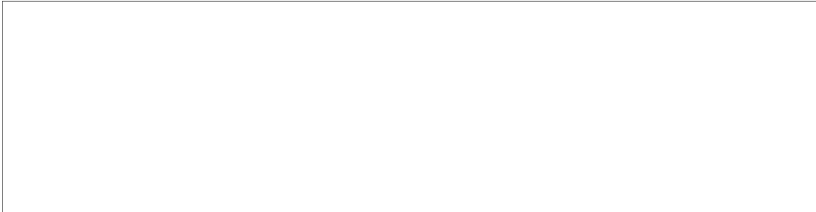


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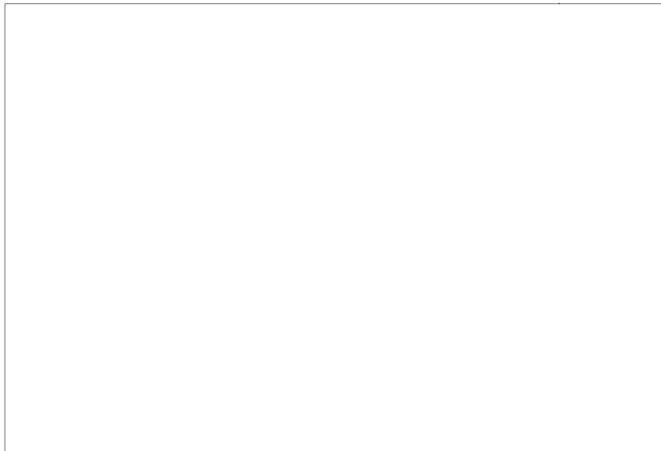
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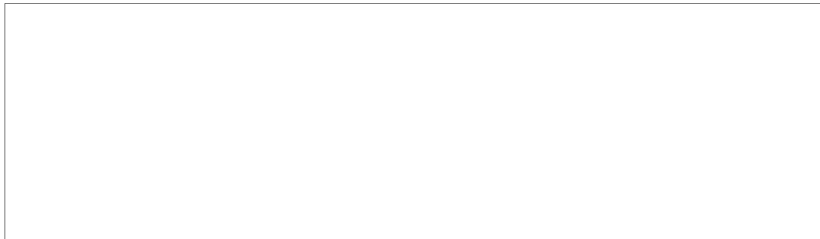
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On the military front, the Communists ambushed a government army munitions convoy in northern Takeo Province yesterday, routing elements of a newly formed battalion and capturing at least one truck-load of munitions.

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The Communists have been capturing substantial quantities of Cambodian arms and ammunition during the past month.

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Cambodian troops had lost more than 5,000 weapons. This figure does not include the substantial losses that probably were suffered as a consequence of the fall of Kratie and Senmonorom.

In Kompong Cham Province, the government's base at Suong was attacked yesterday, and the town of Kompong Cham reportedly was hit by Communist artillery fire. Some Communist forces may have established a command post in this province on the west side of the Mekong River.

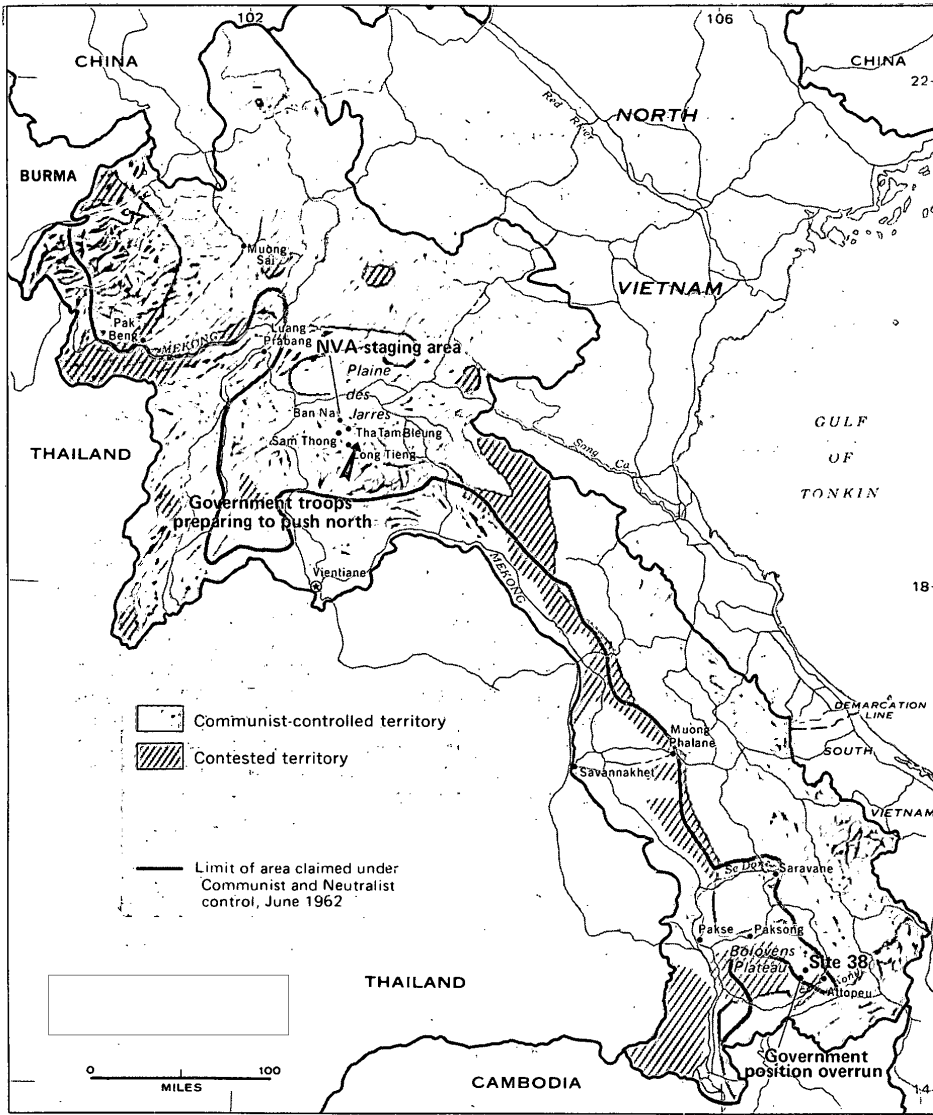
In the adjacent province of Kratie, two columns of Communist troops are reported moving north, and local commanders think they may be preparing to attack government forces holding the northern provincial capital of Stung Treng. Several government battalions have been ordered to block the enemy columns. Panicky government forces are reporting Chinese Communist and Pathet Lao troops near Chhlong, but there is no evidence to support the use of such troops in Cambodia. Communications intelligence indicates that elements of two Viet Cong regiments have been operating in and north of this area.

* * *

Communications intelligence also discloses that a group of "very special persons" has been moving southward through the Communist infiltration corridor in Laos since early April. Unusual security precautions have been taken, and unusual administrative arrangements have been made for this group. On 30 April, the group was near Chavane and heading toward the Laos - Cambodia - South Vietnam tri-border area. References to "guests" and "friends" suggest the group is not composed of North Vietnamese personnel. It appears to include three persons of particularly high rank, and it is possible they are the leading leftist cabinet ministers of Sihanouk's new government. Sihanouk recently claimed they were in "liberated areas."

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Laos: Current Situation



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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY**LAOS**

Communist forces took another step yesterday toward clearing government guerrillas from the southeastern edge of the Bolovens Plateau by capturing a lightly defended position there. The enemy also probed site 38--the main government base in the area. Elements of the regular Lao Army battalion that bolted from their positions defending the guerrilla base overlooking Attopeu have straggled into the village of Paksong.

The situation at Saravane is somewhat brighter following visits there by southern leader Sisouk na Champassak and regional military commander General Phasouk. They were able to quiet, at least temporarily, the panic that was leading to the wholesale evacuation of the town despite the apparent absence of any immediate Communist threat.

In the north, General Vang Pao's forces are continuing to push the enemy back toward the Plaine des Jarres. With some 1,300 government troops now occupying the hills immediately north of Tha Tam Bleung, Vang Pao plans to strike an enemy staging area near Ban Na.

The guerrillas may run into considerable enemy opposition if they push into this area, however. The North Vietnamese have been rotating fresh troops into forward positions near Ban Na, and there are indications in communications intelligence that the enemy recently has moved 85-mm. artillery pieces into the area.

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FRANCE-EUROPE

In an apparent effort to reverse the seeming decline of their influence in the process of European detente, the French have surfaced a scheme that will facilitate Willy Brandt's talks with East Europeans--especially the Poles. Under the French proposal, the occupying powers would announce that, if a West German - Polish border agreement is concluded, they will confirm it in any future peace treaty. This announcement would satisfy the Polish desire for a binding recognition of their border and also would meet the West German position that, under the Potsdam agreement and other agreements, German borders must be endorsed in a general peace treaty.

The French last week outlined their idea to visiting Polish Foreign Minister Jedrychowski. In a speech last Saturday, Polish party leader Gomulka asked in effect that the four powers publicly declare their support for a Bonn-Warsaw accord, thus implicitly endorsing the French suggestion. Paris plans to present this proposal to the US and UK in Bonn this week.

German opposition critics of Brandt's policies have been hoping that France and perhaps the US would impose restraints on his negotiations with the East. The French proposal, especially if supported by the US, seems likely to throw cold water on such hopes.

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NOTE

Israel-Lebanon: After repeated warnings, Israel sent an armored force into Lebanon to neutralize the guerrilla positions on Mount Hermon. Early this morning, reports from press sources and radio broadcasts indicated the Israeli units had fought with regular Lebanese forces. The most important long-term effect of this invasion may be its disruptive influence on Lebanese politics.

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