



The President's Daily Brief

18 July 1970

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

18 July 1970

PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

The Cambodian commander at Kirirom claims the situation there has stabilized. (Page 1)

On Page 2 we note further signs of increased Communist military capability in the Lao panhandle and northern South Vietnam.

A Pathet Lao spokesman, discussing possible peace talks with Souvanna, made no mention of the usual Communist demand for a complete US bombing halt before negotiations can begin. (Page 3)

The communiqué issued at the conclusion of Nasir's visit gives little hint of what specific decisions the Russians and the Egyptians reached. (Page 4)

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The Chilean presidential election campaign is brought up to date on Page 6.

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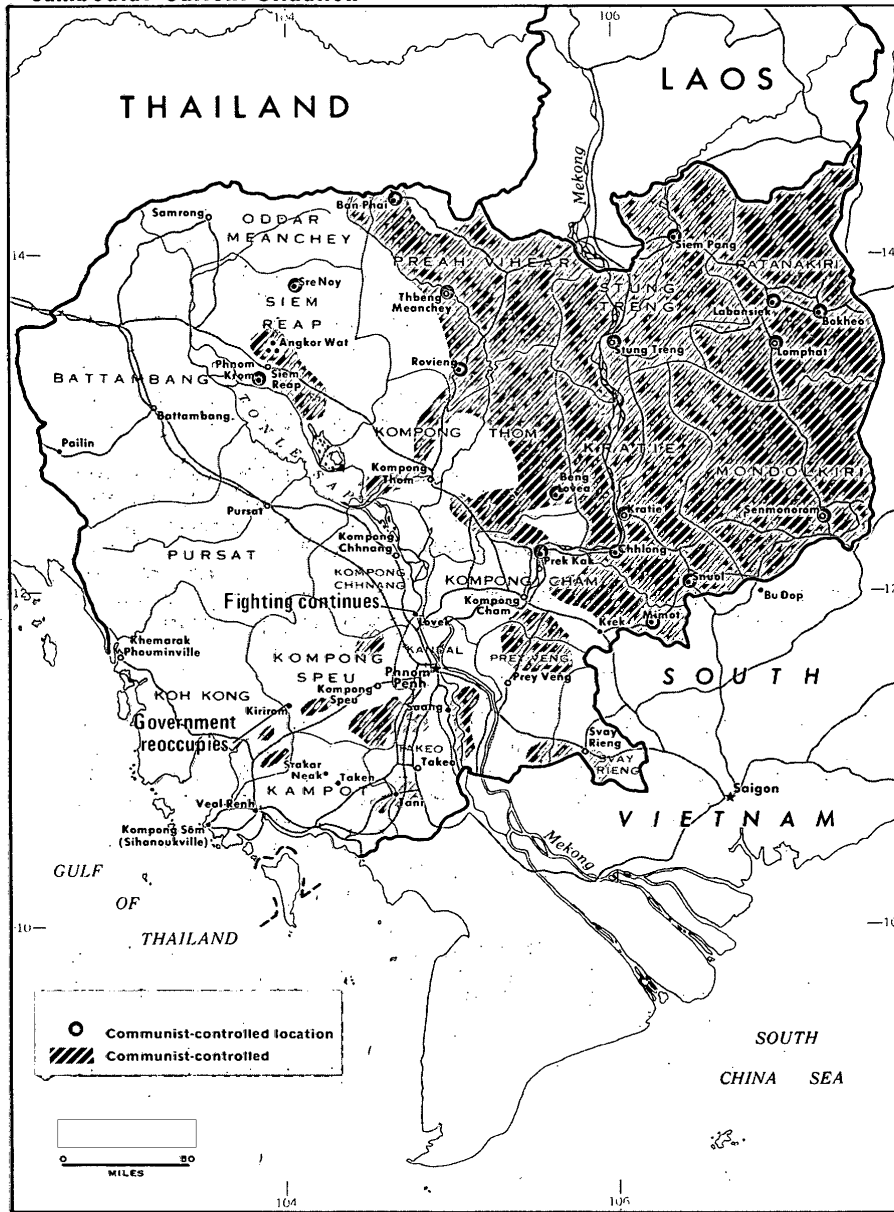
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Cambodia: Current Situation



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CAMBODIA

The week-long fight for Kirirom tapered off yesterday, and the commander of the government forces at Kirirom claims that the situation has stabilized. Four government battalions moved into the center of the town, and four others have been deployed nearby. Enemy troops apparently slipped away during a lull in the fighting when government forces ran out of ammunition. Some 250 Communist troops, however, are believed to remain in the area.

There were renewed attacks on the Lovek ordnance depot, northwest of Phnom Penh. A Cambodian Army message reported that on 16 July an additional 300 Communist troops were heading toward Lovek to join enemy forces already deployed around the depot. The government garrison at Lovek probably can again count on heavy air strikes to help it maintain its position.

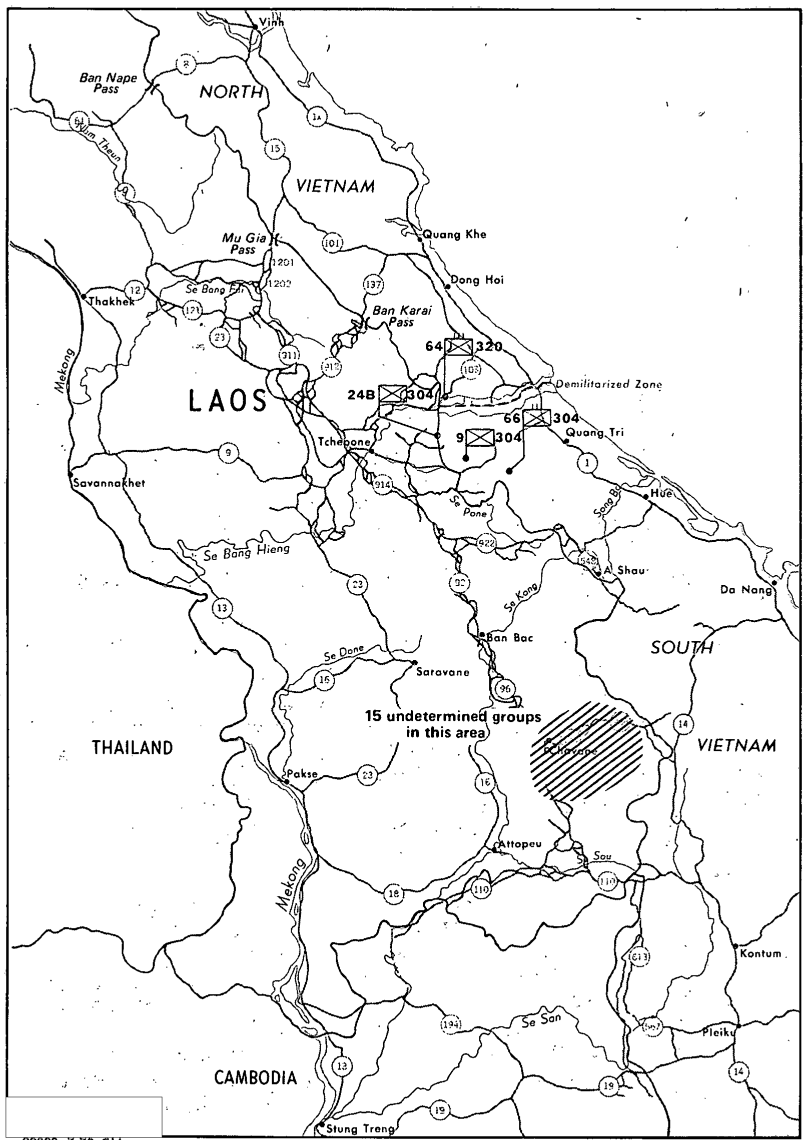
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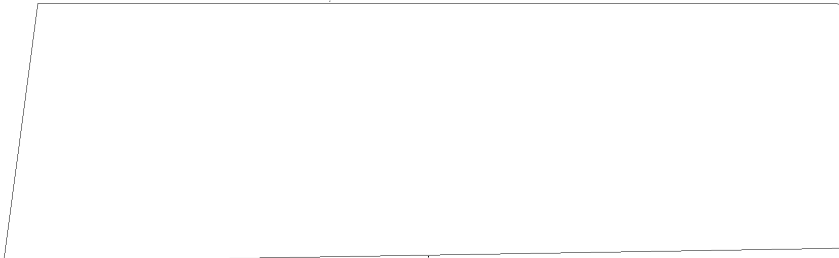
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NORTH VIETNAM - LAOS

Signs of increased Communist military capability in the Lao panhandle and northern South Vietnam continue to appear. The President's Daily Brief of 9 July noted the presence in the panhandle of 15 unidentified groups of men, perhaps as much as a division of North Vietnamese troops. Since then, the following bits and pieces have turned up:

--The 304th Division, which has been rotating regiments in and out of the DMZ area for the past three years, now has moved all three of its regiments to the vicinity of the western DMZ.

--The 320th Division, which is based far to the north, has also sent one of its regiments to the DMZ.



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We still cannot put this picture together with any confidence. We have no good idea what direction the mysterious 15 groups which were discussed last week are moving. One bit of negative intelligence does not make the problem any easier: these groups probably cannot be equated with the North Vietnamese Second Division as had been thought by some analysts. All the major headquarters of this division are still in South Vietnam.

In sum, although it is fairly clear that the Communists are stronger in the area than they were a month ago, the way they intend to use this strength is still by no means clear.

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LAOS

According to Pathet Lao spokesman Soth Pethrasy, a high-ranking messenger from Souphanouvong is expected to arrive shortly in Vientiane to discuss "points of view which might lead to a peaceful settlement." Soth asserted that if an agreement to talk were reached between Souvanna and the Pathet Lao envoy, the ensuing negotiations would be the most important between the Lao factions since 1961 and would be regarded by the Communists as a "summit meeting."

Soth omitted mention of the usual Communist demand that a total halt in US bombing be a precondition for a discussion of the issues. Instead, he said that a termination of the bombing could be one of the two main questions to be dealt with during the formal negotiations. The second would be the composition of the coalition government. He thought that the Communists wanted only four ministerial seats and would expect equal representation for the neutralists. Soth stressed that the Pathet Lao anticipated negotiations without foreign intervention and wanted no part of a larger Indochina settlement involving the US and the North Vietnamese.

If the Communists do intend to make a bid for negotiations along these lines, Souvanna can be expected to work for a forthcoming response on the part of the Laotian Government. The accuracy of Soth's information will be in doubt, however, until the arrival of Souphanouvong's messenger.

Nothing in Soth's comments notes the North Vietnamese attitude, but if a representative comes, the package he brings will obviously have their blessing. If what Soth describes as the Pathet Lao position is accurate, it represents a significant change in Hanoi's previous insistence on a bombing halt.

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USSR-EGYPT

The communiqué issued at the conclusion of Nasir's visit to Moscow yesterday was primarily a recapitulation of previously stated positions and gave little hint of what specific decisions were reached. It did say, however, that the two sides discussed "means and methods for achieving a peaceful settlement" in the Middle East and that they agreed "to continue their coordination in this direction."

The declaration couched in standard terms both sides' commitment to a political settlement based on the November 1967 Security Council Resolution and Israeli withdrawal from all the occupied territories. The Soviets also reiterated their readiness to provide the Arabs with "necessary aid" for the struggle against Israel.

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FRANCE - COMMUNIST CHINA

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CHILE

In the course of his fourth try for the presidency, Salvador Allende, the Marxist candidate, is basing his campaign on a combination of anti-Americanism and promises of a sharp turn to the left. In recent speeches, Allende has charged that "American imperialism" is the one enemy of Latin America and has said that his government would join Castro's in launching the "Latin American Revolution." To this end, he would respect the principle of nonintervention in the affairs of other states only to the extent that other governments "reflect the will of the majority."

Allende's campaign views have become more openly Marxist than in his previous tries for the presidency. He calculates that a strong pitch to leftist sentiments will appeal to the many Chileans who are dissatisfied with the slow pace of reform under the present Christian Democratic government of Eduardo Frei.

With six weeks to go before the election of 4 September, conservative Jorge Alessandri seems to hold a narrow lead. There are no reliable polls on which to base predictions, however. Both Allende and Radomiro Tomic, the candidate of the Christian Democratic government, are running strong campaigns.

The election will go to the Congress if no candidate wins an outright majority. Either Tomic or Allende could try to strike a deal with the other's supporters to win the presidency by vote of the Congress if either were to run even a close second in the popular poll.

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COMMUNIST CHINA

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NOTES

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Jordan: At least one extremist fedayeen group already has disregarded the recent agreement with Husayn.

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