



The President's Daily Brief

29 July 1970

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THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

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PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

The current situation in Cambodia is discussed on Page 1.

A Pathet Lao delegation is expected to arrive in Vientiane on Friday for talks with Souvanna Phouma, but there are no signs that the Communist negotiating position has softened. (Page 2)

Jordan [redacted] the UAR [redacted] muzzled fedayeen broadcasting facilities. (Page 3)

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[redacted] Soviets [redacted] (Page 4)

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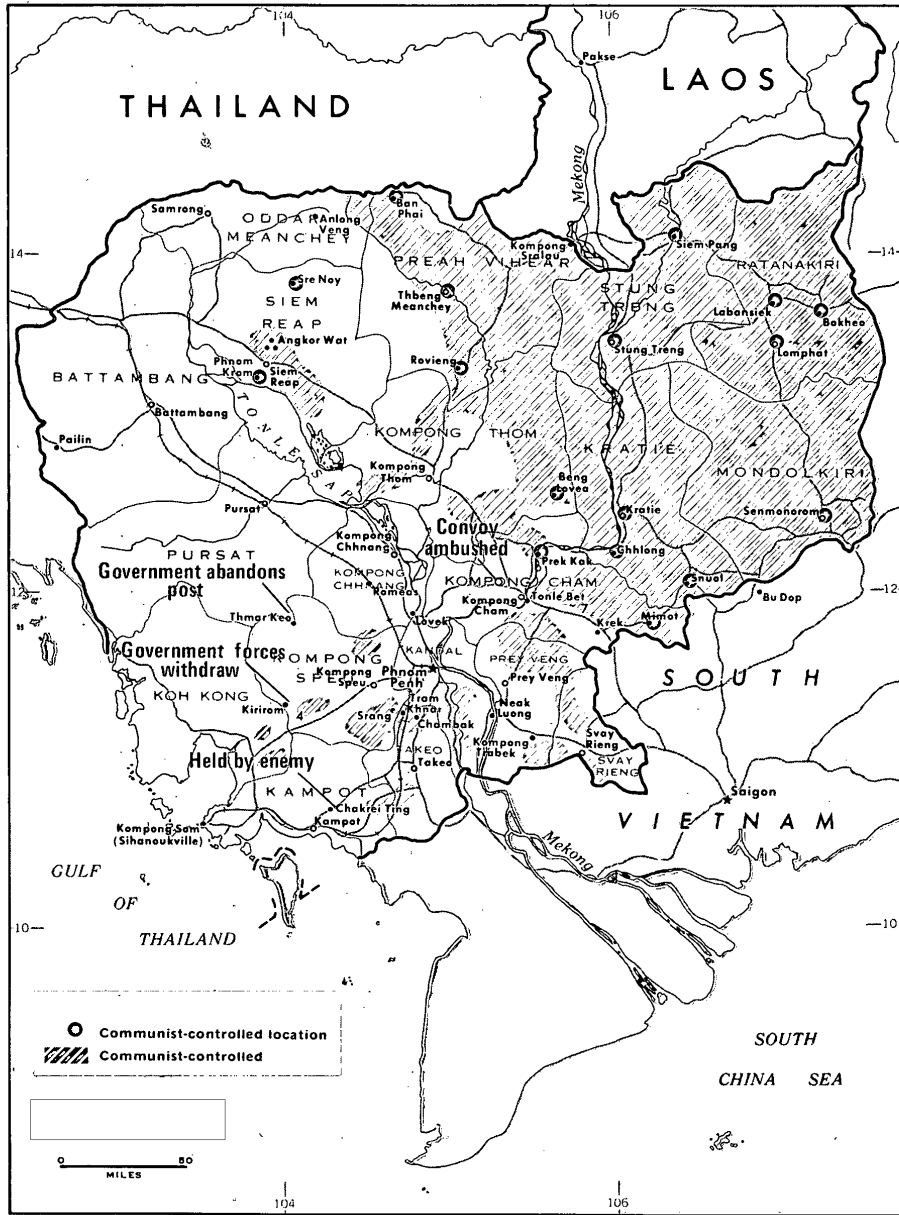
The warming trend in Chinese - North Korean relations has not resolved all their differences. (Page 5)

In Panama, General Torrijos appears to be backing out of his promise to extend a US military base agreement. (Page 6)

Last week 13 European countries agreed in principle to form a unified space organization. (Page 6)

The upcoming presidential elections in Lebanon are discussed at annex.

Cambodia: Current Situation



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CAMBODIA

Government forces were driven from their positions at Kirirom yesterday and headed south toward Route 4. The retreat probably is only temporary, however, and new government efforts to retake the resort town are likely to be launched soon.

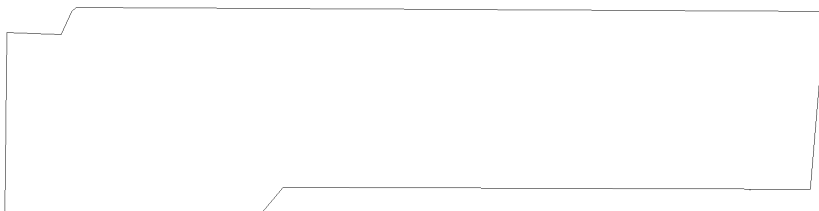
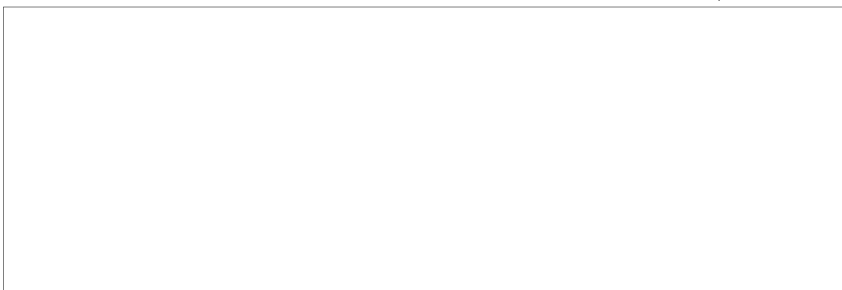
The government also has pulled out of its command post at Thmar Keo, northwest of Kompong Speu city. Most of the villagers living in the sparsely populated area around the post reportedly are Cambodian Communists or sympathizers.

Yesterday a government spokesman announced that Cambodian troops, with the help of South Vietnamese infantrymen, recaptured the cement factory at Chakrei Ting, in the southern coastal province of Kampot. Earlier reports indicated that the government battalion defending the plant withdrew southward toward Kampot city on 27 July, after being overwhelmed by a large enemy force.

In the only other significant military action, the Communists ambushed a 14-truck government convoy yesterday on Route 7, north of Kompong Cham city. South Vietnamese units moving along Route 7 have engaged the enemy 20 miles southeast of Kompong Cham city and claim to have killed 19 enemy troops.

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LAOS

[redacted] a Communist delegation led by Souk Vongsak will arrive in Vientiane on 31 July for talks with Souvanna Phouma. Souk was a minister in the Vientiane coalition government until 1964.

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There are no indications that Souk will offer any fundamental change in the Pathet Lao negotiating position. Indeed, Pathet Lao spokesmen in a number of capitals during the past week have been taking a rather negative position in referring to the prospects for talks. The Laotian Communist delegate in Hanoi characterized Souk's trip to see Souvanna as only a "good will gesture" and dismissed the idea that there has been any change in the Pathet Lao toward a settlement. Soviet press accounts of interviews with Pathet Lao officials in Paris and Vientiane have reiterated the usual line that no meaningful talks can begin until all US bombing in Laos has stopped.

These suggestions of inflexibility in the Communist attitude may be only an effort to stake out a position from which the bargaining can begin. On the other hand, Hanoi may have no intention of arranging for genuine negotiations at this time and may only be seeking to stage some extended discussions which will serve to restrict Vientiane's freedom of action.

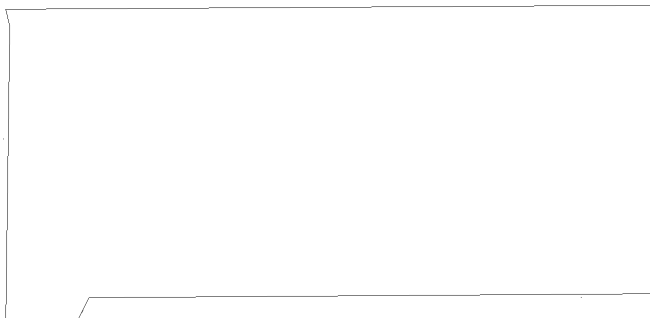
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JORDAN-UAR-FEDAYEEN



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Egypt also has moved to curb the Palestine guerrillas. Yesterday Cairo police closed the offices of both the Voice of Palestine and the Voice of Fatah, probably in reaction to fedayeen criticism of Nasir's acceptance of the US peace proposals and to a fedayeen demonstration in Amman Monday in which Nasir was called a coward. Similar demonstrations occurred again yesterday.

The crackdown reflects Nasir's sensitivity to Arab criticism of his acceptance of the US peace initiative. The fedayeen facilities are used primarily for broadcasting anti-Israeli propaganda

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but they have on occasion been used for attacking Arab regimes considered to be anti-fedayeen. Although a government spokesman indicated that the closure is only temporary, he gave no idea of when the fedayeen would be allowed to resume broadcasting.

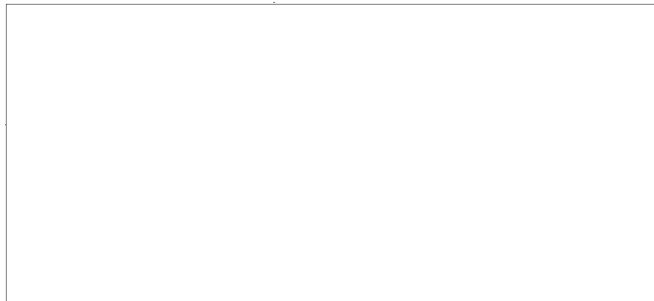
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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY**COMMUNIST CHINA - NORTH KOREA**

Despite improved relations between China and North Korea, continuing differences between the two were evident in their observance of the 17th anniversary of the Korean War armistice on Monday. The Chinese barely touched on bilateral matters and focused more on broad topics of more immediate concern to Peking. The Chinese used the occasion to criticize US "peace frauds" in Indochina and to condemn the US for flouting the Geneva agreements. Peking also continued to emphasize the need for an Asian-wide "union" against the US, Japan, and, indirectly, the USSR.

The North Koreans, on the other hand, stuck to matters close to home. The head of a high-ranking military delegation visiting Peking, for example, compared the present situation on the Korean peninsula to that existing on the eve of the Korean War. Chinese official statements appeared to play down the possibility of an imminent crisis in Korea and stuck to the standard, vague pledges of support for North Korea if the US "reimposes" war.

Peking's restraint on Korean issues reflects its policy of discouraging North Korean military "adventures," while Pyongyang's failure to condemn the Soviets is a clear indication that North Korea intends to maintain an independent position in the Sino-Soviet dispute. Even though Pyongyang has not received any major military deliveries from the USSR in over a year, it does not want to ruin its chances of extracting aid from both Moscow and Peking.

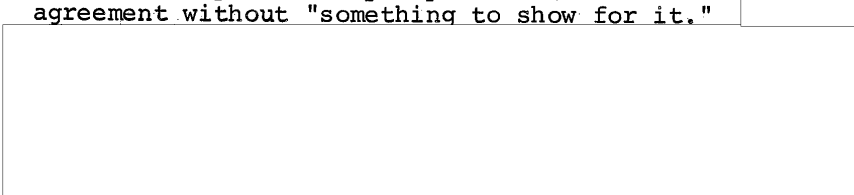
The Korean military delegation now in Peking probably is asking for military hardware (such as tanks, patrol craft, and jet aircraft) no longer being received from the Soviets and the bargaining promises to be difficult. Peking may furnish some military aid but only in return for North Korea's support for China's Asian "united front" scheme and more cooperation in the Sino-Soviet dispute. Even with such backing, however, the Chinese will limit arms aid to Korea because of their own mounting domestic defense needs.

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NOTES

Panama: General Torrijos may default on his oral commitment to General Westmoreland to extend the Rio Hato base agreement, which expires on 23 August. Rio Hato is used as a training area and air base and is the only US military installation in Panama except for the Canal Zone itself. Torrijos, using a thinly veiled threat of anti-US student agitation, recently told Ambassador Sayre that it would be politically impossible to extend the agreement without "something to show for it."

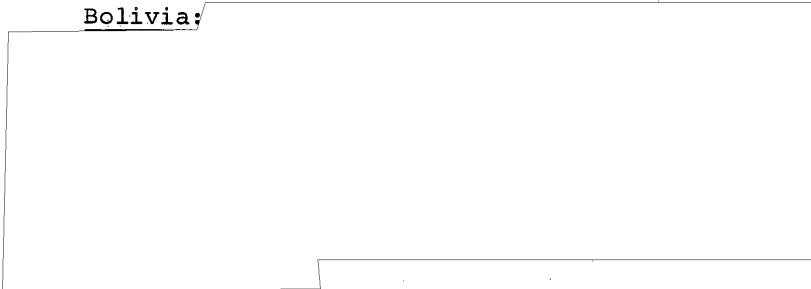
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Western Europe: Space ministers of 13 European countries agreed in principle last week to form a "European NASA" to replace three multilateral European space organizations. They also decided to send a delegation headed by Theo Lefevre, the Belgian science minister, to Washington to discuss European participation in US space programs. The meeting was a bench mark in the development of a genuine European approach to space but some familiar problems remain. France reserved its position on the institutional arrangements for the new organization, and France, Germany, and Belgium refuse to make financial commitments beyond 1971.

Bolivia:



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LEBANON

Fuad Shihab, who was president from 1958-64, is the best bet to be named president in the election which will probably occur within the next week or so. Shihab, who has not yet formally announced his candidacy, has the public support of the Parliamentary Democratic Front, a loose, mainly Muslim grouping that has a narrow majority in the 99-member Chamber of Deputies that elects the president. Former president Chamoun and right-wing Phalange Party leader Jumayyil are also potential contenders, but their chances would depend on making deals with individual Democratic Front members to cross over in the secret ballot. They must also agree themselves on which one should be the beneficiary of support from the large Maronite Christian group in the chamber that strongly opposes Shihab for his alleged pro-Muslim tendencies.

The basic issue in the election is Lebanese policy toward other Arab countries. Shihab, like the other contenders, is a Maronite Christian, the eastern-rite Catholic group to which most Lebanese Christians belong. According to the National Covenant of 1943 which apportioned political power between the Muslims and Christians, the next president must be a Christian. Shihab's supporters are generally pro-Nasir, however, and urge closer ties between Lebanon and its Arab neighbors. The opposition wants to maintain Lebanon's traditional detachment from the infighting of Arab politics.

Shihab is more willing than either Chamoun or Jumayyil to accept increased Lebanese involvement in the Arab world, but he is basically a moderate. He would try to contain pressure from militants who want the government to cooperate closely with the fedayeen or to take an active pro-Nasir line on Arab matters. Although Shihab would be faced with competing pressures, and might waver as he balanced them, he is a former army commander in chief and still has heavy influence in the army

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The fedayeen problem has been kept out of the election thus far. The potential candidates are aware that it is explosive and as the next president each would be faced with the same problem as outgoing President Hilu: maintaining enough control over the commandos to prevent Lebanon from becoming another Jordan.

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