



The President's Daily Brief

31 August 1970

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THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

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PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

[Redacted]

Egypt
(Page 1)

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The fedayeen fear that the Jordanian Government is seeking to crush their movement. (Page 2)

In South Vietnam, an upsurge in military action has begun, marking the Communist anniversaries between 28 August and 4 September. (Page 3)

Fighting in Cambodia remained light, but the Communists continue to be active in the Phnom Penh area. (Page 4)

President Pompidou would like to visit Peking next year. (Page 5)

The most recent Soviet test of the modified SS-13 ICBM is noted on Page 6.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY



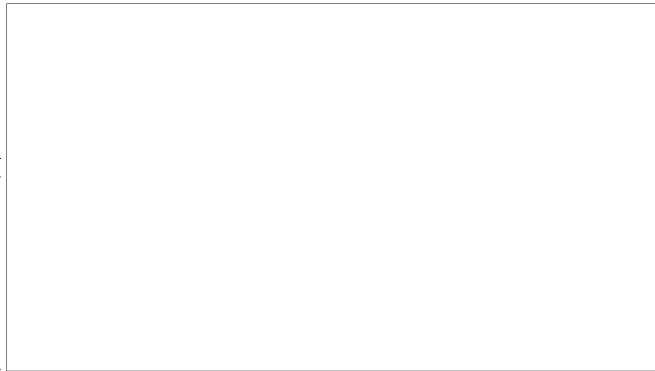
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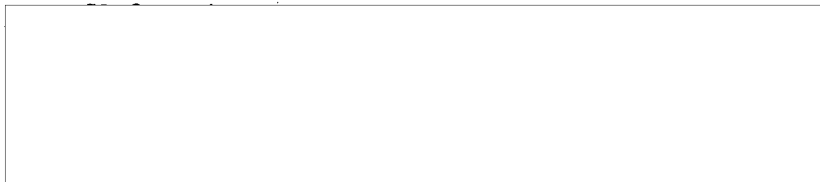
EGYPT-ISRAEL



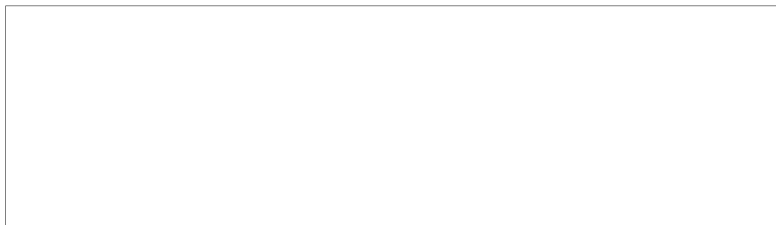
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JORDAN

Fedayeen leaders charged yesterday that the Jordanian Army had launched a widescale attack against fedayeen units with tanks and heavy artillery. An outburst of firing broke out in Amman again last evening, following the clashes on Friday and Saturday in which three commandos were killed.

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In a hard-hitting radio speech before the incidents yesterday, King Husayn dismissed as unfounded commando charges that the movement of army units was part of a plan to crush the commandos. He claimed the transfers were necessary for the protection of the country. The King warned the fedayeen, however, that he would no longer tolerate their insults and accusations. He said that he had refrained from replying to past attacks because he did not want to move against others involved in the battle against Israel. Husayn warned that the situation had now changed and the country could not be diverted from the struggle to achieve a peaceful settlement of the Arab-Israeli war.

Despite the harsh words, both the fedayeen and the Jordanian Government apparently still want to keep the situation from getting out of control. The government has announced it will meet with fedayeen leaders today to determine the cause of the incidents of the last few days.

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SOUTH VIETNAM

Communist forces are intensifying their military action in widely separated districts, with 60 shellings--the greatest number recorded in four months--occurring on 30 August. Most of the shellings were in the government's Military Region 2 and in the lower delta provinces of Military Region 4. According to press reports, more than 200 soldiers and civilians were killed or wounded.

The Communists have been planning for this upsurge for some time in order to mark several important Communist anniversaries that occur between 28 August and 4 September, including the first anniversary of the death of Ho Chi Minh.

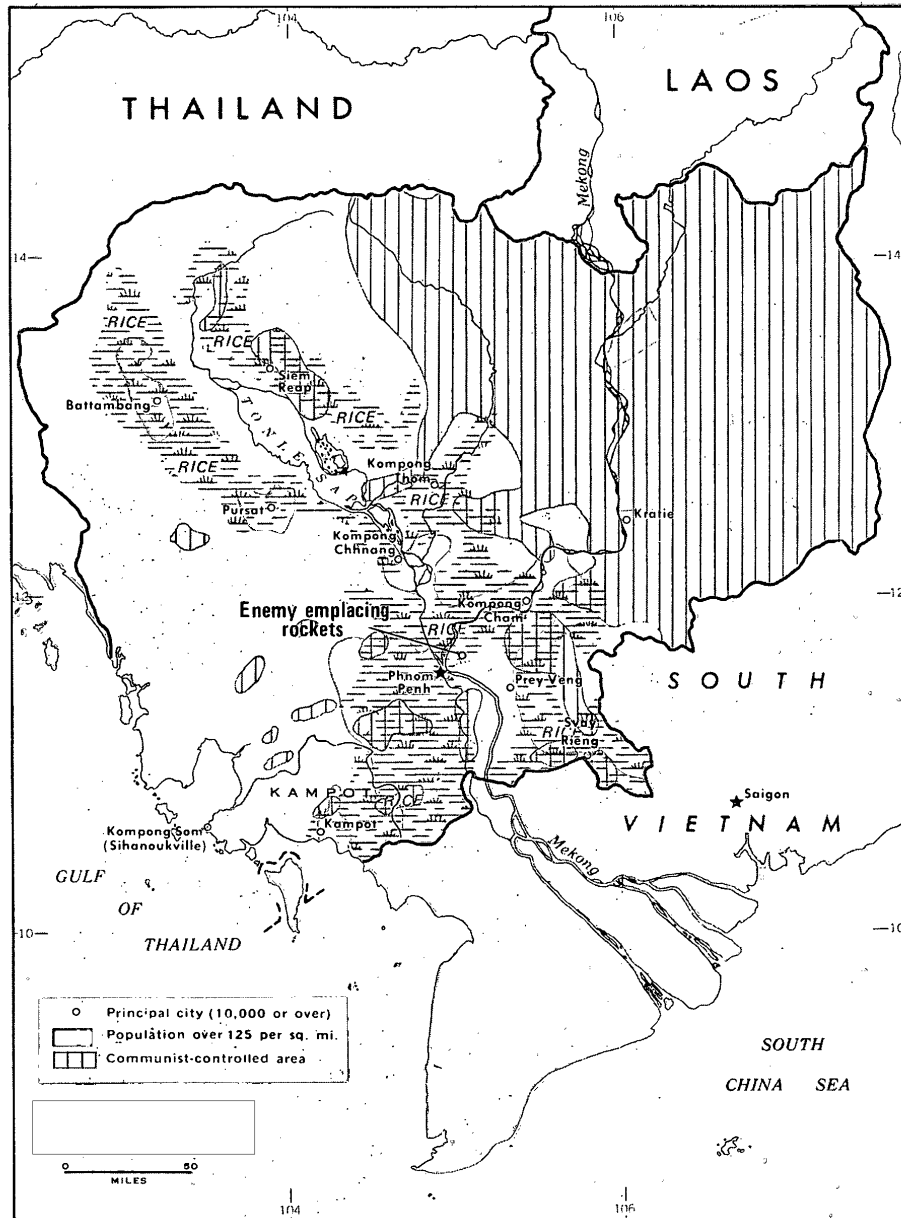
In conjunction with the shellings, Communist terrorists and local forces increased their harassment of the civilian populace. Ground combat between military units remained at a relatively low level throughout the country, however. Major Communist forces were not committed, except for some artillery and sapper units.

* * *

The Senate elections were conducted quietly on 30 August, in spite of the increased Communist activity. The Communists made no concerted effort to disrupt the elections, although a few incidents were directed against polling places in various parts of the country.

Voter interest in this year's contest was relatively low. Still unofficial figures indicate about 65 percent of the registered voters went to the polls. In the Senate elections in 1967, 83 percent turned out.

CAMBODIA: Current Situation



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CAMBODIA

The Communists have been increasing their activity in the Phnom Penh area over the past two weeks, but no additional fighting has been reported there since 29 August.

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[redacted] the Communists are emplacing Soviet-made 122-mm. rockets about 10-12 miles northeast of Phnom Penh, possibly within range of the city. Although Phnom Penh has been free from harassment so far, the Communists could probably hit it with rocket or mortar fire.

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Communist forces--half of them ethnic Cambodians--are reportedly moving freely in the rural areas of Kampot Province propagandizing and recruiting villagers. [redacted] their success has been somewhat limited because of the peasants' fear of government reprisals should the Communists leave the area. In one instance, however, the Communists were able to overrun a village when its self-defense force refused to fight because its commander, a National Assembly deputy, had failed to pay them and had not provided promised weapons.

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Prime Minister Lon Nol told an Asian journalist that the government can rely on the solid support of only about half of the Cambodian Army, because its rapid expansion brought in recruits who probably still admire and respect Prince Sihanouk. Lon Nol asserted that there has been no dissension within the army thus far, but suggested that trouble could break out if the troops were to suffer a major defeat.

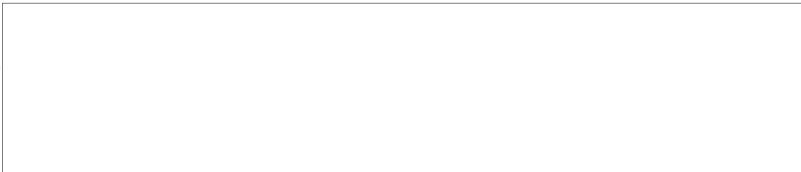
In the past, government leaders have only grudgingly admitted that Sihanouk retained some support in the countryside. They have argued that his identification with the Communists has largely dissipated his once considerable popularity. Lon Nol's recent remarks indicate the government may be ready to admit it has a problem because of popular support for the Communists.

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FRANCE - COMMUNIST CHINA



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Pompidou may see the Far East and Southeast Asia as a promising sphere for action at this point. Paris has long coveted a role in the Far East and Southeast Asia as evidenced by its recognition of China in 1964 and its continuing efforts to participate in any Southeast Asian settlement. An active French role in European detente efforts has been challenged temporarily by Bonn and in the Middle East by the US cease-fire initiative. The French may have been encouraged to seek expanded Sino-French ties by the warm reception accorded Bettencourt during his July trip.

There is no indication yet that the Chinese have agreed to a Pompidou visit, but Peking probably sees value in warmer ties with Paris. The Chinese are currently attempting to better relations with a number of states as part of an effort to circumscribe the influence of the "superpowers." Moreover, both Peking and Paris are interested in expanding economic ties.

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USSR

The Soviets launched a modified SS-13 ICBM from Plesetsk on 29 August. As in a similar test conducted earlier this month, the missile flew a distance of only 1,100 miles in what was probably a reduced-range test of the system.

This was the eighth firing of the modified SS-13 since testing began in January 1970, and the second launch to a reduced range. We cannot be certain about the precise nature of the modifications currently being tested, but they probably involve a new re-entry vehicle and, possibly, alterations to the missile itself.

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