

The President's Daily Brief

14 December 1970

46



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THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

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PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

Cambodian Government positions on Route 7 came under heavy Communist pressure over the weekend. (Page 1)

In Laos, the Communists appear to be planning action against the government drive on Ban Ban. (Page 2)

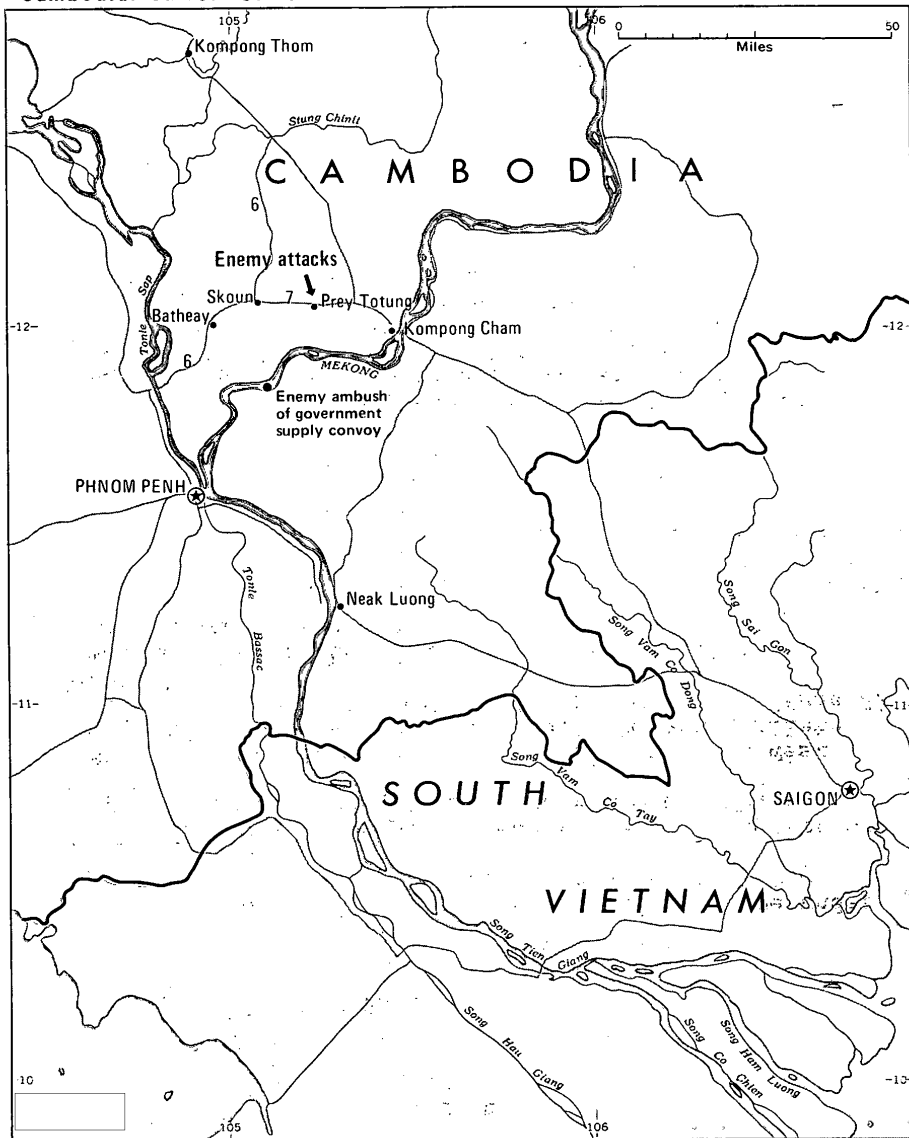


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The four Soviet ships are moving from Antilla toward Havana. (Page 4)

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Cambodia: Current Situation



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CAMBODIA

Government positions on Route 7 were struck over the weekend by a series of Communist attacks centered on the town of Prey Totung. The attacks began early on 12 December against the town's outlying defenses on the east, and fighting seesawed between this area and the town throughout the weekend, with fairly heavy casualties on both sides. As of late yesterday the Communists were reported to be holding some parts of Prey Totung.

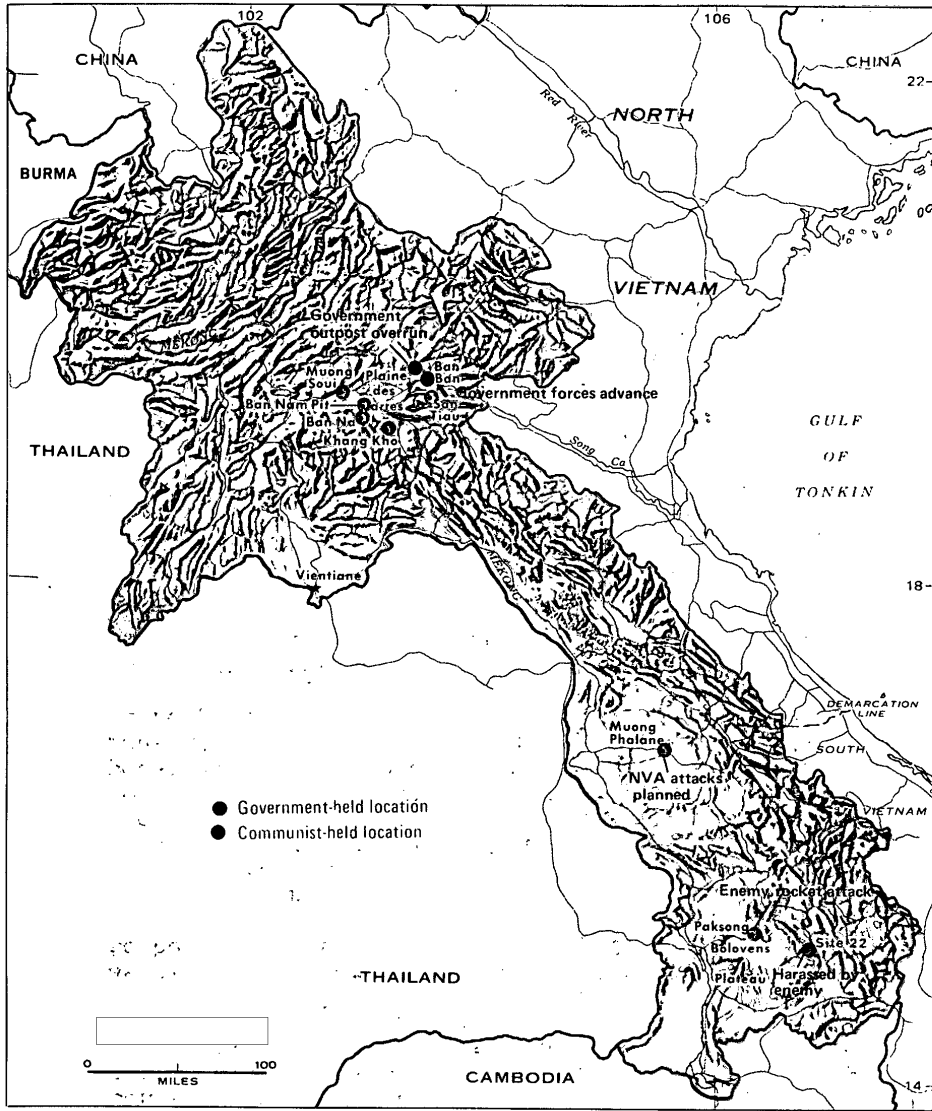
[redacted] South Vietnamese forces are scheduled to begin their planned clearing operation along Route 7 today, in conjunction with Cambodian troops. Three Vietnamese airborne battalions and three artillery batteries--possibly to be joined later by two Marine battalions already stationed at Neak Luong--are to land at Kompong Cham airfield and begin moving westward on the highway into enemy-controlled areas. Six Cambodian battalions are to move eastward from Skoun and effect a link-up with the South Vietnamese.

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As many as six Communist main force regiments are believed to be in the general Kompong Cham - Skoun area. The Cambodian Government has committed about 30 battalions to this area, including those in the Chenla road operation north of Skoun.

In other actions over the weekend, a government force retook the town of Batheay on Route 6. On the other hand, an 18-boat convoy, carrying 75 tons of rice, fuel, and ammunition to resupply Kompong Cham city, was ambushed on the Mekong 25 miles north of Phnom Penh and forced to turn back.

LAOS: Current Situation



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LAOS

Recent North Vietnamese intercepts suggest that the Communists are preparing counterattacks against the government irregulars moving on their supply base at Ban Ban from the north. The messages report extensively on the irregulars' movements and contain orders to bring in weapons "to strike the enemy."

Until now, government guerrillas converging on Ban Ban from both the north and the south have encountered almost no significant resistance. An irregular outpost about nine miles northwest of Ban Ban was overrun late last week, however, in what may have been the opening move in enemy plans to stiffen opposition. Two columns of the irregulars moving from the south are now within about ten miles of their objective.

West of the Plaine des Jarres, messages from elements of the North Vietnamese 174th Regiment talk of challenging government control at Muong Soui, which irregulars took about two months ago. Other intercepts passed by elements of the 174 southwest of the Plaine refer to planned mortar attacks on one of the outposts blocking access to the government guerrilla base at Ban Na, and to impending attacks around Khang Kho, a guerrilla staging area.

In the panhandle, North Vietnamese messages have referred to possible attacks on government positions in the Muong Phalane area to occur on 18 and 19 December. The town of Paksong, farther south, was the target during the weekend of enemy rockets for the first time since early spring.

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NOTE

USSR-Cuba: The Soviet guided-missile frigate, F-class diesel submarine, submarine tender, and oiler left Antilla in northeastern Cuba on Saturday



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The two nuclear submarine support barges and rescue tug in Cienfuegos were joined last week by a small Nyryat-class diving tender. A unit of this type had arrived in Havana from the USSR in late November.

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