



*The President's Daily Brief*

*17 December 1970*

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THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

17 December 1970

PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

Polish authorities have apparently restored order following two days of severe rioting and street fighting. (Page 1)

Yesterday's SALT meeting is discussed on Page 2.

The status of the Laotian Government's operation against Ban Ban is discussed on Page 3.

South Vietnamese and Cambodian battalions are continuing to move unopposed along Route 7. (Page 4)

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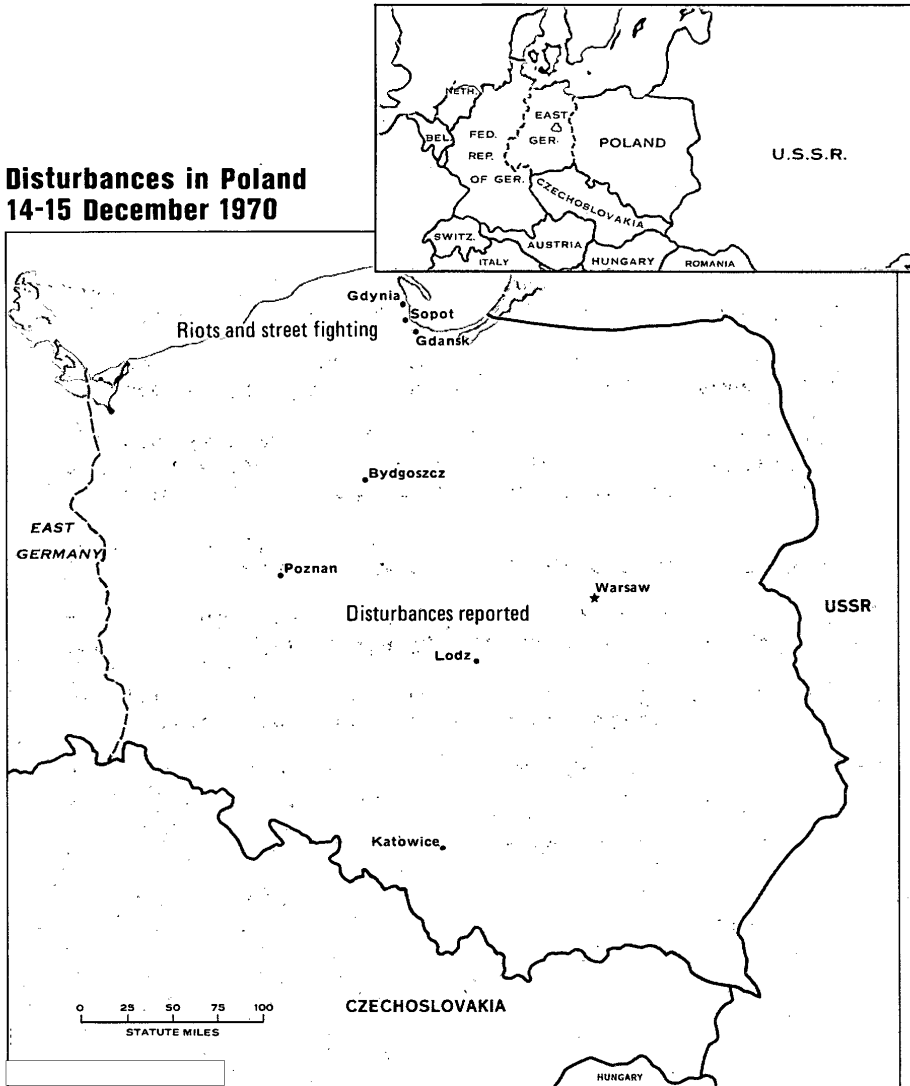
An accelerated logistics program is again underway in the Laotian panhandle. (Page 8)

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### Disturbances in Poland 14-15 December 1970



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POLAND

Authorities used severe measures to stop the rioting and street fighting in three coastal cities and to quell lesser disturbances in other urban areas. An official Polish radio statement acknowledged that police fired on mobs engaged in looting, arson, and destruction of public buildings in Gdansk, Gdynia, and Sopot. Troop reinforcements were sent from Warsaw

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Six persons are reported dead and 300 people, including 150 policemen injured.

A dusk to dawn curfew has been instituted in the coastal areas. The county government chief yesterday began urging people to return to work and decreed that shops should be opened during daylight hours.

*All reports indicate that the riots stem from dissatisfaction with the recent government price changes designed to reorient spending away from food items, especially meat, which are in short supply. Despite the reaction, the regime is unlikely to back off appreciably, primarily because the meat shortage is as real as the people's wrath.*

*Order appears restored, and strong security measures plus the usual stocking of stores with special Christmas foodstuffs should keep things under control for now. Tension will continue, however, at least until mid-1971. Until then, food supplies, especially meat, will remain in short supply. In these circumstances, small sparks could set off a repetition of the disturbances.*

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SALT

At yesterday's meeting, Ambassador Smith tabled the US's formal rejection of Moscow's position on forward based systems (FBS) and the Soviet proposal for an ABM-only agreement. Semenov's presentation was essentially a rehash of Moscow's views on these topics, and contained no new substantive elements. The next and final plenary meeting has been scheduled for tomorrow morning. Smith and Semenov agreed to resume the talks on 15 March in Vienna, after the upcoming break.

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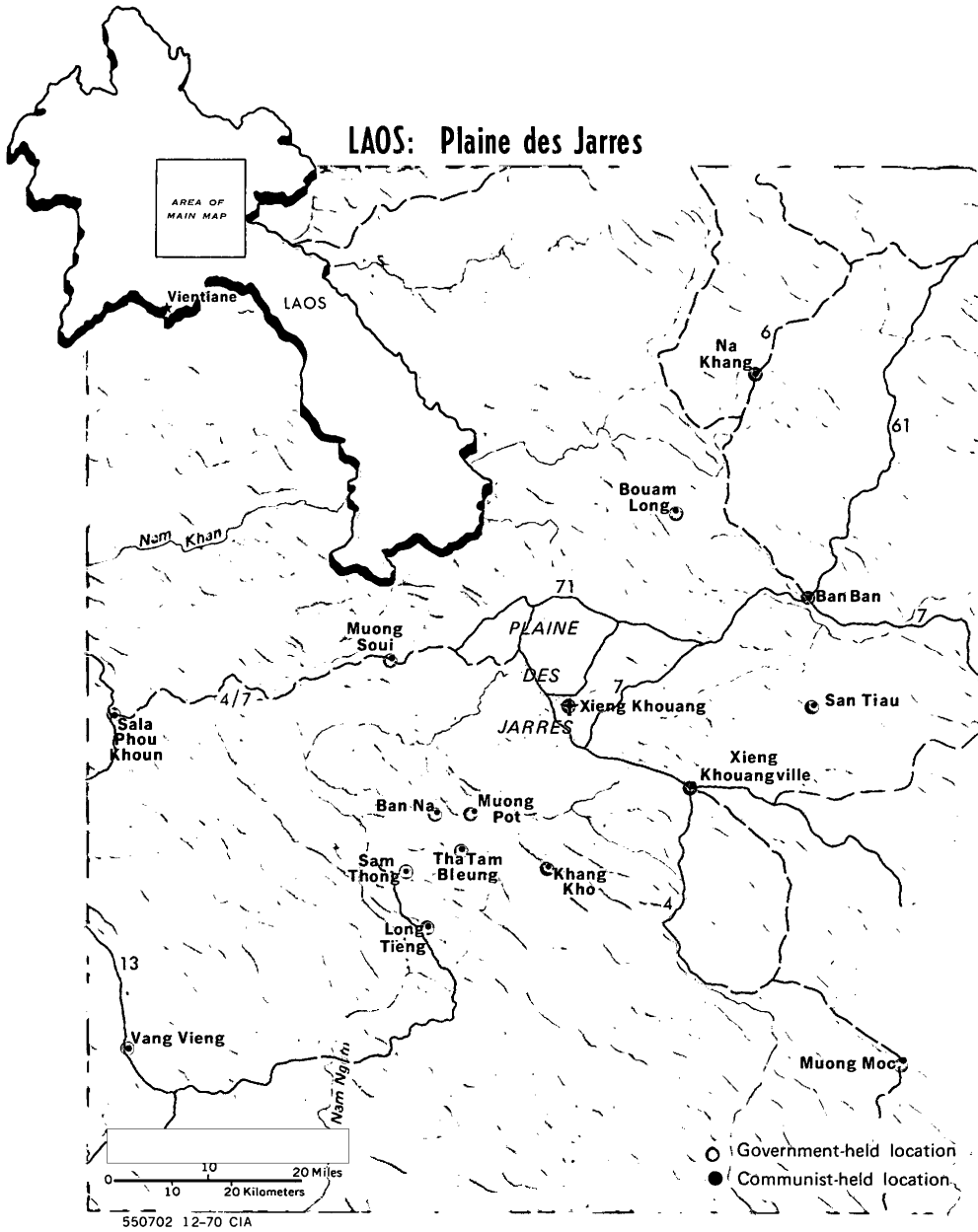
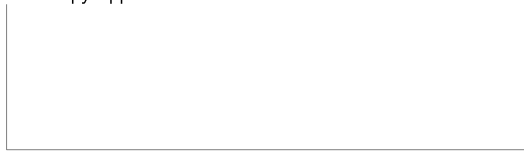


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## LAOS

*Since the government's operation against the Communists' logistic base at Ban Ban began on 27 November, more than 2,000 irregulars have succeeded in establishing positions about ten miles north and south of Ban Ban and have gained control of the airstrip at San Tiau. The government's forces have harassed North Vietnamese and Pathet Lao units in the area and have ambushed trucks on Route 61.*

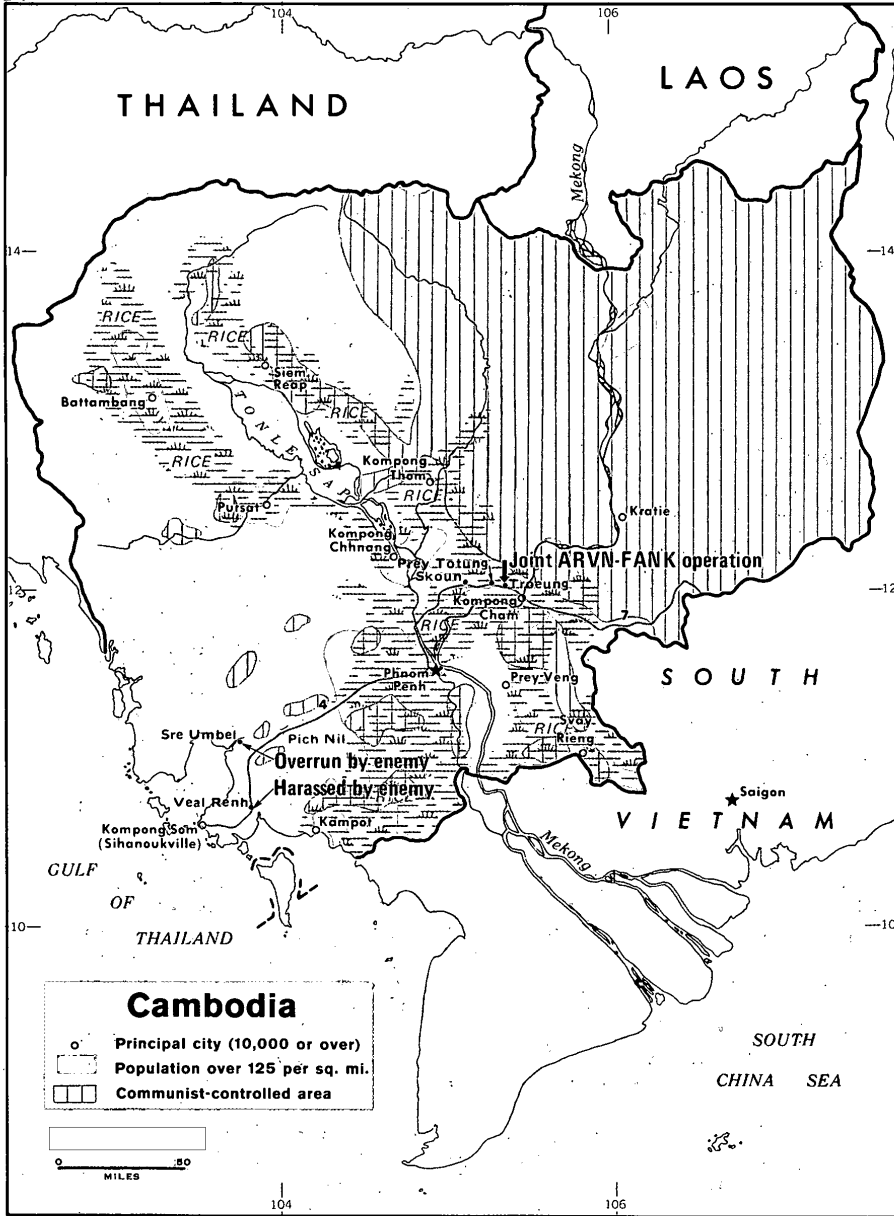
*Thus far, however, they have been unable to generate sustained drives toward the Ban Ban valley, through which flow the bulk of the supplies sustaining Communist units in the Plaine des Jarres area. Progress has been slowed by bad weather, which limits effective air support, and by sporadic skirmishes with enemy units. The Communists have recently intensified their opposition, scattering a 76-man government force northwest of Ban Ban and overrunning an outpost east of San Tiau.*

*The size of the Communist forces opposing the irregulars is not known, but they appear to consist largely of local security troops, logistics personnel, and artillery units. There is no evidence that the enemy has yet brought in major reinforcements, although small elements of the NVA 148th and 766th regiments may have been introduced.*

*Additional units of the 148th Regiment may be committed to the Ban Ban area in the coming weeks. Elements of this unit have been withdrawing from the western edge of the Plaine des Jarres, where they have been heavily engaged since last spring. Although the troops may have been pulled off the front line because of morale and supply problems, they could still be used against government forces in the Ban Ban area.*

*The pullback of the 148th has not greatly diminished the enemy threat west of the Plaine des Jarres, as elements of the 866th NVA Regiment have been sent in as replacements. During the transition, however, the Communists have been unable to exploit the reduction in government strength there brought about by the Ban Ban operation.*

### Current Situation



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## CAMBODIA

The three South Vietnamese paratroop battalions and several Cambodian battalions moved unopposed through the village of Troeung on 15 December, and are continuing to close the seven-mile gap between Troeung and Prey Totung. Simultaneously, six Cambodian battalions from Skoun are also converging on Prey Totung. The status of the five Cambodian battalions that were surrounded near Prey Totung is still not clear.

*Logistics problems may partially account for the Communists' failure to contest the South Vietnamese operations. One enemy message indicates that the Viet Cong 272nd Regiment, which participated in the fighting around Prey Totung, is having ammunition problems. Communist main force units remain within striking distance of Route 7, however.*

In the southwest, the Communists are continuing operations against government positions in the vicinity of Route 4. For the first time, enemy probing attacks have been reported against Veal Rinh, west of the Pich Nil Pass. Last week the Communists overran Sre Umbel, north of Route 4, and dispersed a nearby Cambodian battalion.

*This is the westernmost area of Communist operations to date against Route 4, which has now been closed for almost a month. Although Lon Nol has talked of a flanking operation against Communist units in the Pich Nil Pass area, there is no sign that the government plans an early move to reopen the road.*

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TURKEY

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SOUTH AFRICA - RHODESIA - ZAMBIA

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NOTES

Laos - South Vietnam: Intercepts indicate a heavy flow of southbound truck traffic in the Laotian panhandle. One important logistics unit in the southern panhandle has received as much as 400 tons of supplies in just two nights of transport activity. Most of the cargoes appear to be foodstuffs, explosives, and gasoline. Much of this initial flow is likely to be used in the panhandle to support logistics operations. The destination of the remainder is as yet unclear. This accelerated logistics program began on 5 December; as in past years, similar programs are likely to recur throughout the dry season.

Brazil:

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