



*The President's Daily Brief*

*13 February 1971*

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*FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY*

THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

13 February 1971

PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

There are further signs that the Communists may soon stiffen their resistance to South Vietnamese operations in southern Laos. (Page 1)

In northern Laos, there is a growing concentration of Communist forces west of the Plaine des Jarres. (Page 2)

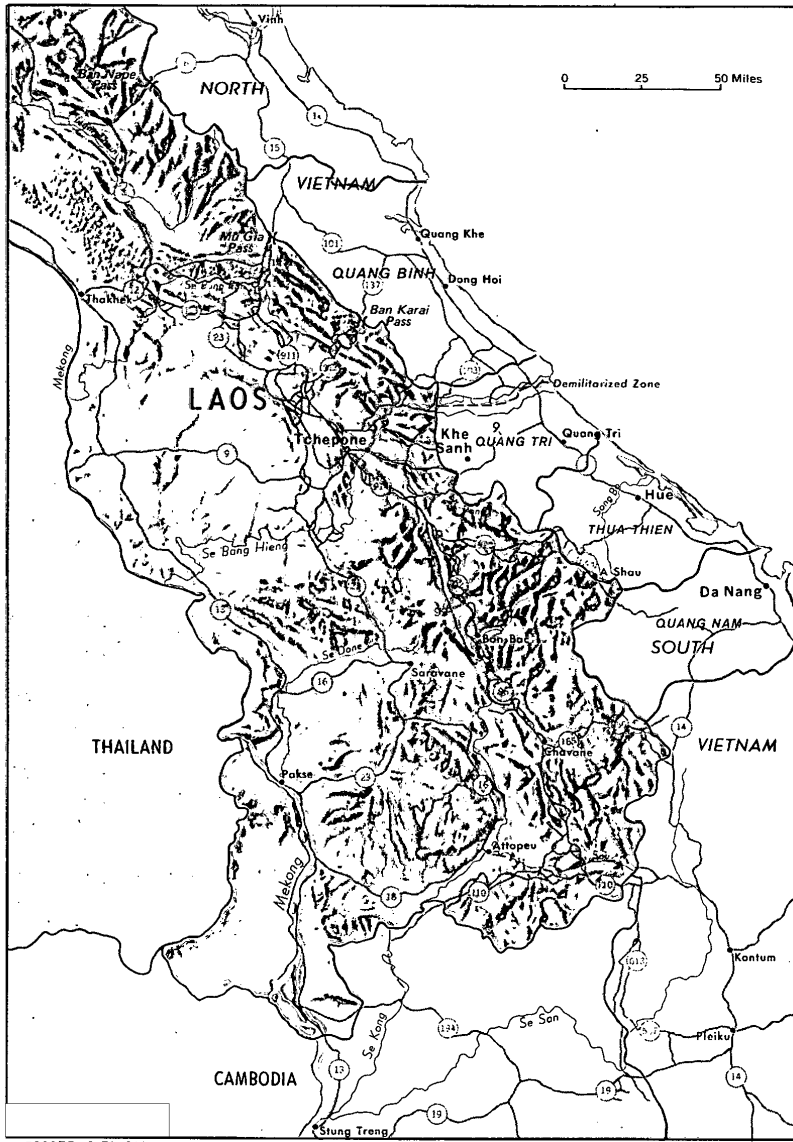


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Peking's current attitude toward allied cross-border operations in Indochina suggests no change in its desire to avoid military involvement. (Page 4)

No early cabinet changes in the Cambodian cabinet seem likely to ensue from Lon Nol's illness. (Page 5)

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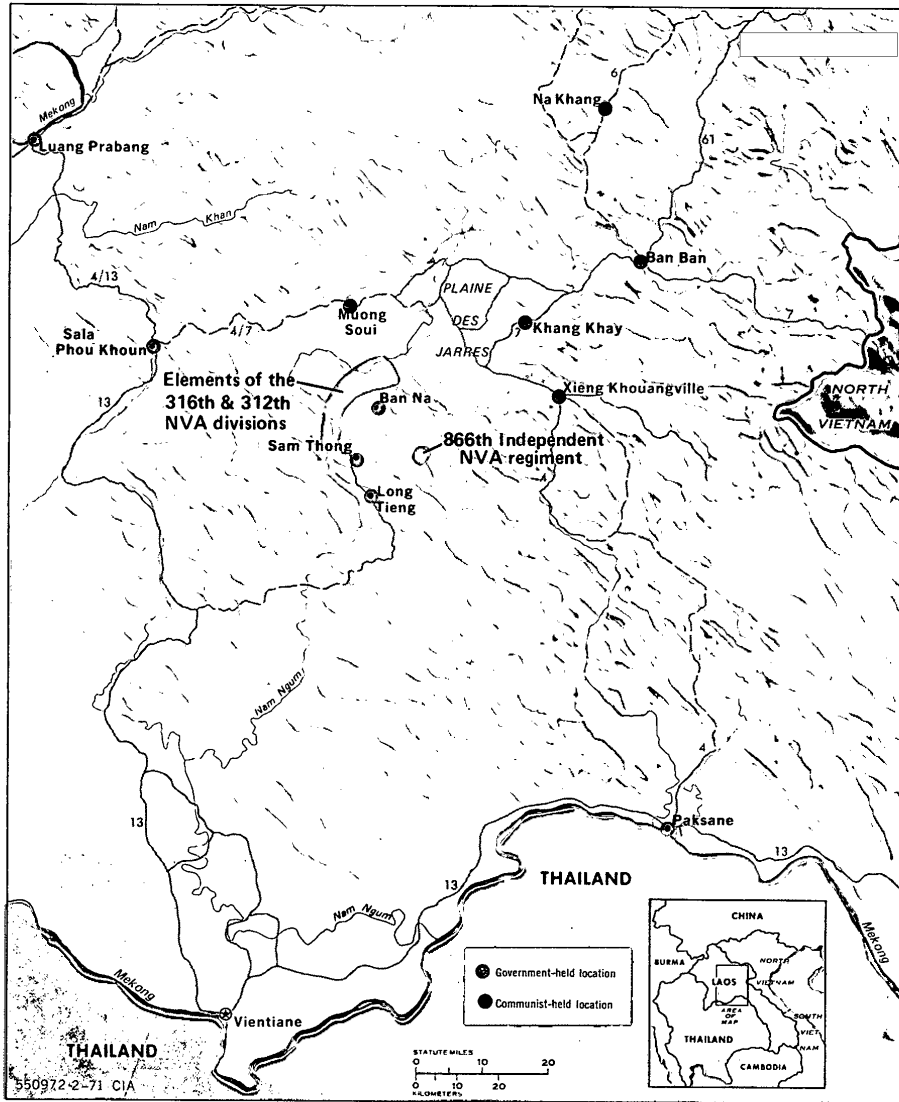
LAOS-VIETNAM

Communist units are making vigorous preparations for both defensive and offensive actions as the South Vietnamese push into Laos nears more sensitive areas. Enemy units south of Route 9 have been preparing ambush sites on routes they expect the South Vietnamese to use, according to intercepts, and many units have orders to "mobilize to strike the enemy." Communist forces well to the west of Tchepone and to the south of Khe Sanh, as well as some in southernmost North Vietnam, have been put on special combat alert against possible allied ground or air attacks.

*In addition to the continuing indications that enemy resistance in the panhandle may soon stiffen, there is further evidence that Communist forces in South Vietnam may become more active in the hope of hindering the cross-border operations. Elements of two artillery regiments and at least three infantry regiments have been coordinating attack plans against allied troops just south of the Demilitarized Zone and appear responsible for recent shellings and ambushes north of Route 9. Recent intercepts indicate that the Communists may become more active against targets around Da Nang, and the Viet Cong radio has publicly called for the people in Hue and adjacent rural areas to "increase attacks" on the government in response to the move into Laos.*

**PROBABLE DEPLOYMENT OF NVA FORCES**

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## LAOS

There is a growing concentration of North Vietnamese forces southwest of the Plaine des Jarres. Most of the units are from the 316th Division, but more elements of the 312th, which only recently entered from North Vietnam, are also arriving in the area; they are deployed generally in an arc to the west of Ban Na. In the past few days, one regiment from the 316th and a battalion from a second one have shifted farther south and are now about five miles from Sam Thong, where a sapper battalion has been operating. In addition, elements of an independent regiment located east of Ban Na have moved closer to the key government installation at Long Tieng, which was struck by five 122-mm. rockets early today, without significant effect.

*The southward shifts are further evidence that the Communists are trying to skirt Ban Na and prepare for early strikes around Sam Thong and Long Tieng. Enemy intercepts have indicated that harassments or siege tactics were more likely than a direct assault against Ban Na, which contains artillery emplacements supporting the Long Tieng - Sam Thong complex. The Ban Na base is in an exposed position and Communist shellings and heavy machine gun fire from the hills surrounding the airstrip have been creating difficulties for the government's aerial resupply operations.*

*Neutralization of Ban Na would give the Communists much greater freedom to position their forces against the Long Tieng complex. Communist intercepts suggest that they intend to conduct attacks and "create disorders" around Long Tieng in an effort to keep the irregulars pinned down while additional large Communist units move into the area.*

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LAOS

[Redacted]

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COMMUNIST CHINA - LAOS

A Communist [redacted] official [redacted]

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[redacted] has told [redacted]

[redacted] that direct intervention by China is unlikely if allied operations from South Vietnam are restricted to southern Laos and Cambodia. [redacted]

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[redacted] however, the official implied that any ground move into northern Laos--specifically above the 17th parallel--might be considered a direct threat to China, thus raising the possibility that Chinese troops might be brought into the conflict.

[redacted]

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*Peking has throughout the Indochina conflict shown a concern for the protection of its own border, and the official's comments are generally consistent with this attitude. His remarks about the 17th parallel may be a means of conveying China's sensitivity regarding areas near its border, rather than a hard and fast demarcation that would automatically trigger Chinese intervention if the line were crossed.*

*Peking has had ample time to consider the implications of allied moves in southern Laos; it almost certainly has expected them for some time. Peking has adopted a measured reaction to recent developments and has avoided a high degree of belligerence. Although Chinese propaganda has been heavy, none of Peking's pronouncements suggests that it views the situation with immediate alarm. China's propaganda seems designed to dramatize its concern as well as its eagerness to throw its public support behind Hanoi.*



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CAMBODIA

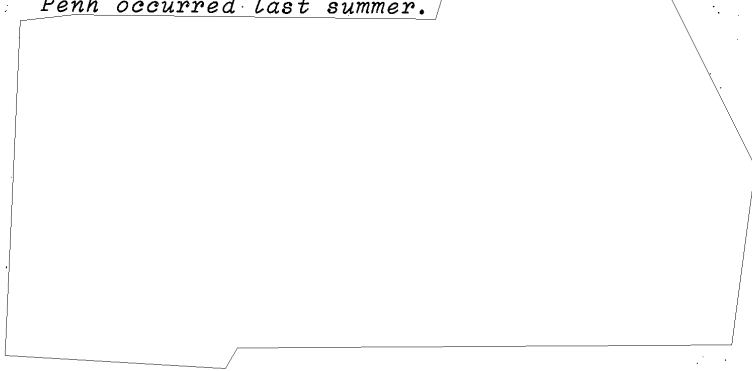
Lon Nol, shortly after becoming ill, told Acting Premier Matak and Deputy Chief of Staff Sak Sutsakhan that he did not want to make any ministerial changes for at least the next three months.

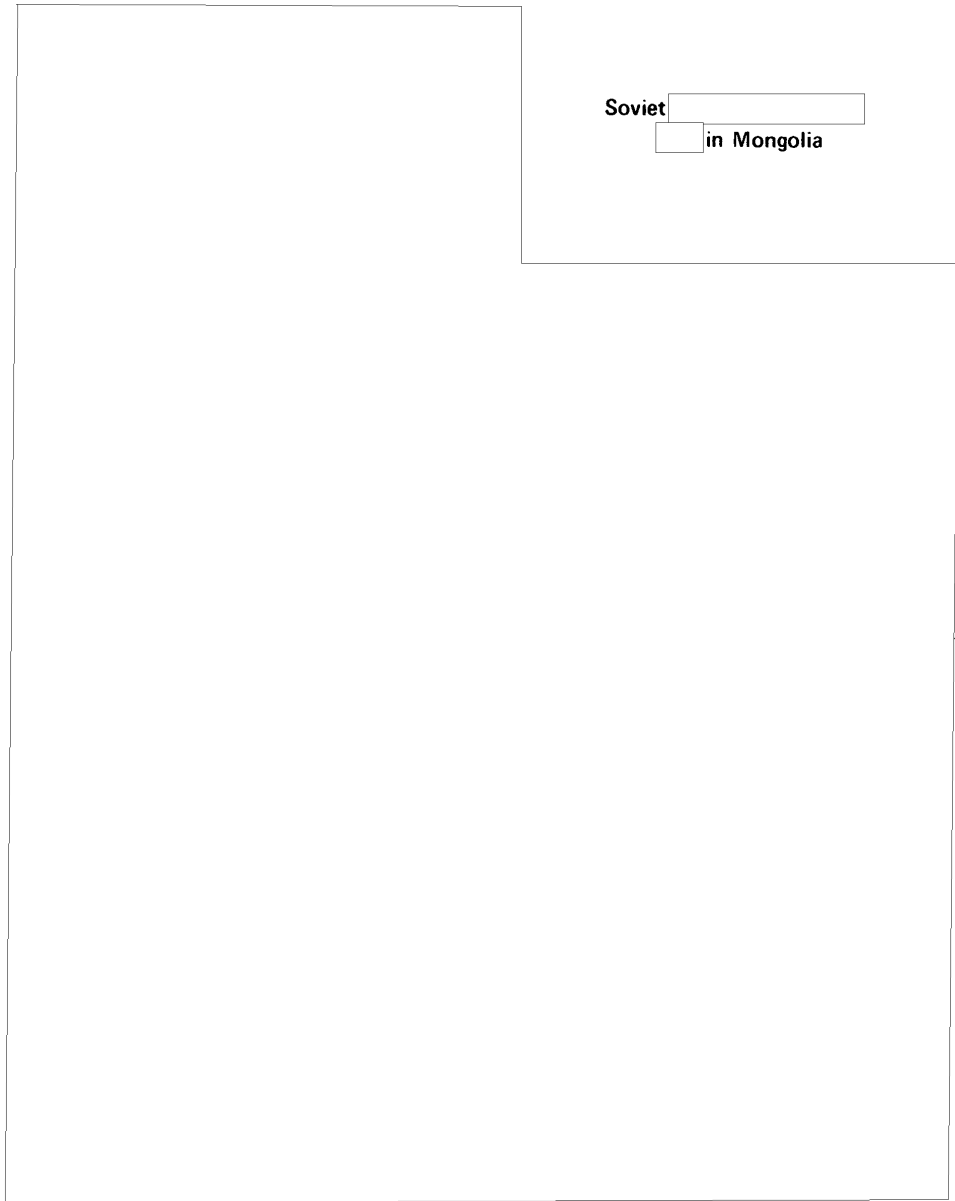
he indicated that he considered cabinet stability necessary in order to maintain national unity.

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*The last major cabinet reshuffle in Phnom Penh occurred last summer.*

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Soviet [redacted]  
[redacted] in Mongolia

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NOTES

Communist China:

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[Redacted]

USSR-China:

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[Redacted]

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USSR: A prototype of the new swing-wing bomber--  
designated KAZ-A--

[Redacted]

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With  
its test program apparently proceeding smoothly, the  
aircraft is expected to be ready for operational serv-  
ice during the 1974-76 period.

USSR: The Soviets appear to be transferring  
a Y-class ballistic missile submarine from the At-  
lantic to the Pacific Fleet. This would give the  
Soviets four of these units in the Pacific and en-  
able them to maintain one unit continuously on, or  
en route to, missile patrol off the US West Coast.

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