



# *The President's Daily Brief*

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CABLE TO PRESIDENT

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LAOS-VIETNAM

Another indication that Hanoi is planning to make a stronger stand against the South Vietnamese incursion into Laos has turned up in a message of 12 February, sent by North Vietnam's top military policy body to all military units in the area of the South Vietnamese operation. One garbled sentence suggests that enemy units along Route 9 are to evade advancing South Vietnamese forces, protect storage areas, and hide whatever materials and equipment they can. But the message contains one passage that ~~suggests that Communist forces are organizing~~ calls for creation of conditions that will enable Communist forces to "advance forward and smash to smite<sup>h</sup> the adventurist military plot of the enemy." It concludes with an appeal to "exert every effort to accomplish the mission of defending the Ho Chi Minh Trail."

Ground contact between South Vietnamese and Communist forces has picked up, according to  enemy intercepts. One intercept says that the South Vietnamese have seized Ban Dong, a major crossroads half way between the border and Tchepone. Other enemy messages ~~relate~~<sup>tell of</sup> problems caused the Communists by the advancing South Vietnamese and ~~of~~<sup>of</sup> casualties caused by air strikes. Elements of the North Vietnamese 64th Regiment, which remain in the vicinity of Ban Dong, have ~~been~~ launched artillery attacks on allied positions and one message claims that a South Vietnamese force has been encircled and that further strikes are ~~being~~ being planned.

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The North Vietnamese are trying hard to maintain the momentum of their transportation "offensive," which thus far has achieved "outstanding results" ~~according to a message on 11 February from~~ ~~the~~ according to a message on 11 February from a way station on the ~~the~~ infiltration pipeline. ~~According to a message on~~ A 12 February message says that the accelerated supply effort will continue during February and that vehicles will move both day and night, the second mention of such unusual daylight vehicle activity since 5 February. There is also evidence ~~that~~ that the North Vietnamese are taking more elaborate air defense measures and that they are involved in a special effort to keep damaged vehicles in service.

The North Vietnamese are beginning to experience difficulties in the western DMZ <sup>area</sup> north of Route 9 because of allied ground and air operations.

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vehicles were not able to cross the Se Ban Hieng River. The same day, another AAA battalion was forced to withdraw from its positions and leave vehicles behind because of ~~the~~ "damage" from an air strike. In the same area an infantry battalion reported that it was out of ammunition and ~~the~~ a river transportation battalion lost communications after ground contact with allied forces.

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COMMUNIST CHINA - LAOS

~~The~~ The Chinese ~~Communist~~ Communists issued a new government statement yesterday pledging to take "all effective measures" to aid their Indochinese allies. It contained familiar references to rear-base support for North Vietnam but referred to the Laos operation in terms of a "menace to China" and warned that the Chinese "will not remain indifferent to it."

The suggestion that the allied operations pose a threat to China itself is an escalation of ~~the~~ Chinese rhetoric regarding the war. This formulation was avoided by Peking during the allied incursions into ~~Cambodia~~ Cambodia last spring and has been absent from Chinese ~~the~~ propaganda for several years. Nevertheless, the government statement and other authoritative comment on the situation in Indochina since the beginning of the month has generally placed Chinese "assistance" in terms of rear base support.

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The Chinese concluded an agreement yesterday for economic and military aid to North Vietnam over and above that provided for ~~the~~ by the annual ~~aid~~ aid pact signed last fall.

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LAOS

A second and more destructive shelling of Long Tieng took place less than 24 hours after the rocket attack launched against it yesterday. <sup>and rocket</sup> Mortar rounds ruined the Air America installation early this morning and caused extensive material damage within the American compound. One American was wounded, but not seriously. Ammunition and gasoline supplies were not hit, and the air strip was undamaged.

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