



The President's Daily Brief

19 February 1971
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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

19 February 1971

PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

Enemy forces are digging in at a road junction southwest of Tchepone in order to counter South Vietnamese attacks. (Page 1)

The arrest in the Canal Zone of a Panamanian official on a narcotics charge has produced a strong reaction from the Panamanian Government. (Page 2)

[Redacted]

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[Redacted]

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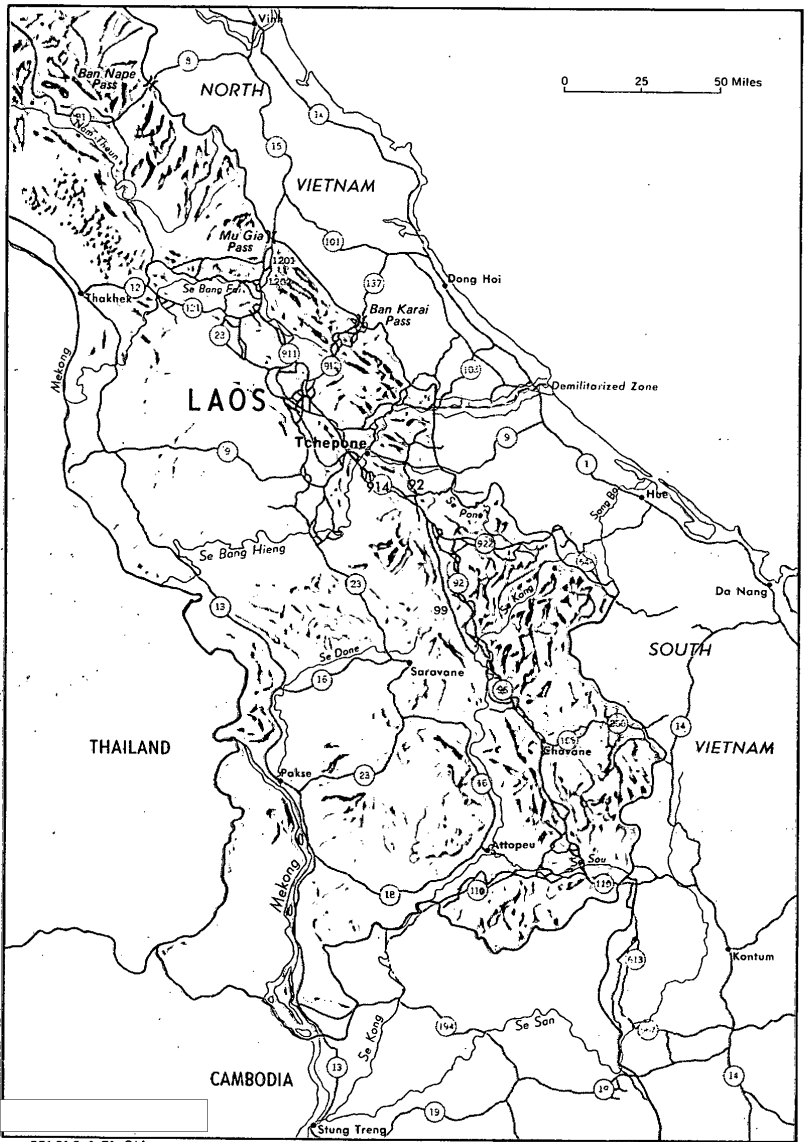
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VIETNAM-LAOS

North Vietnamese forces southwest of Tchepone near the intersection of Routes 92 and 914 have been urgently digging in to counter South Vietnamese attacks,

[redacted]

A strong enemy effort to defend this area makes sense in view of the great importance of Routes 92 and 914 to the Communist supply system. The bulk of the material destined for Communist forces in South Vietnam and Cambodia moves over them.

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As of 16 February, [redacted] no slowdown in Hanoi's transportation effort.

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[redacted] large numbers of vehicles had been moving through the area.

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[redacted]

some storage facilities in the southern Lao panhandle are nearly full and [redacted] enemy units are having trouble unloading vehicles because so many have been arriving each night.

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PANAMA

The arrest in the Canal Zone on 6 February of a Panamanian official on a narcotics charge has produced a strong reaction from the Panamanian Government. It has publicly demanded that the official be returned to Panamanian authorities.

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The arrested official, Him Gonzalez, was chief air controller at Panama City's international airport.

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The government may well feel obliged to take additional action in response to the US decision to fly him to Texas tomorrow to face trial. Other US organizations in Panama could face punitive action, and strongman Torrijos may be tempted to allow students to take to the streets in protest.

Economic constraints could temper Panama's reaction; President Lakas and other officials are urging restraint. The government currently is arranging a loan through a New York investment firm to alleviate serious budgetary difficulties. Large-scale demonstrations would jeopardize this loan and risk the loss of tourist revenue from pre-Lent activities in the next few days. Even if Torrijos accepts Lakas' advice, however, a spontaneous eruption is possible when the US action becomes public knowledge.

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LIBYA-USSR

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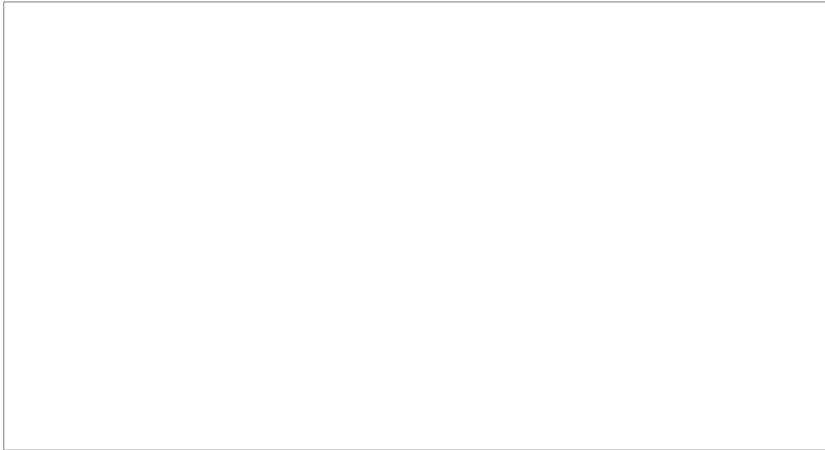
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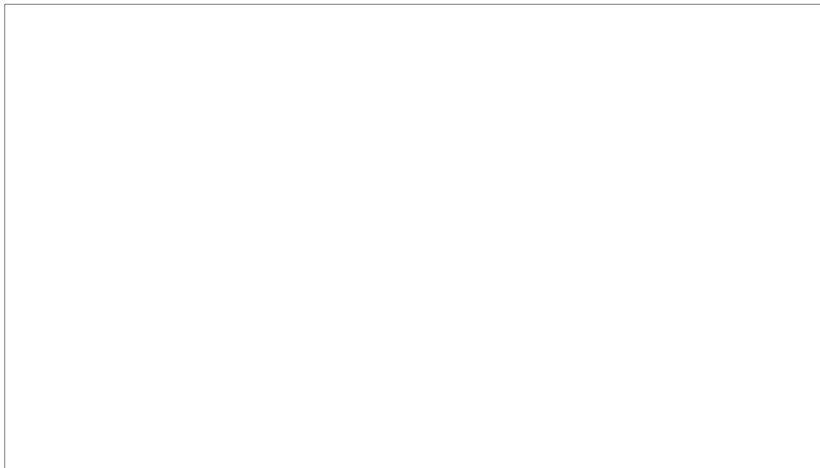
Singapore-USSR: A Soviet maritime mission will visit Singapore, beginning 24 February. All members of the delegation appear to be civilian and the visit ostensibly is to discuss only Soviet commercial use of Singapore's harbors. Following a flurry of rumors last October, Lee Kuan Yew denied that the Soviets would be permitted use of the island's naval base. Lee recently renewed assurances to Foreign Secretary Douglas-Home that there would be "full consultations" before making a final decision on whether to grant any facilities to the USSR.

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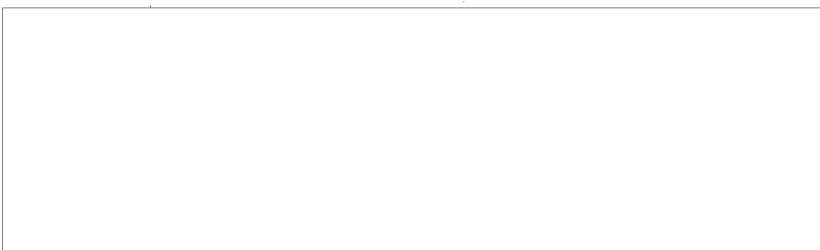
EGYPT-ISRAEL



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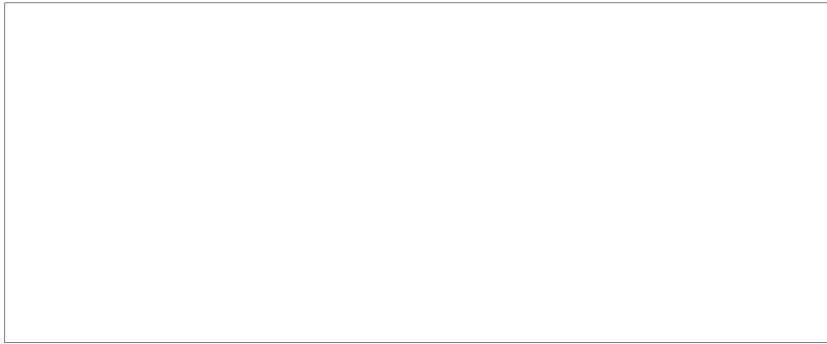
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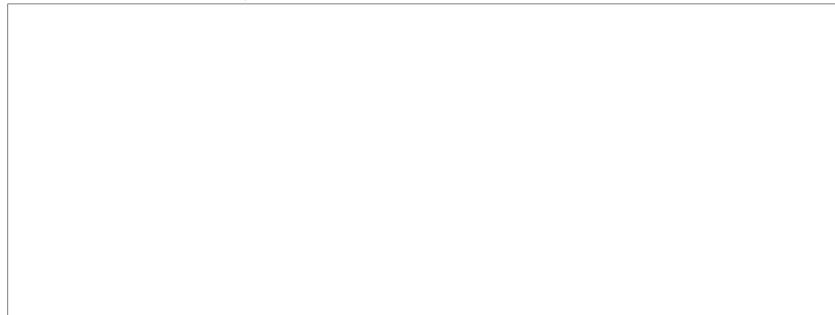
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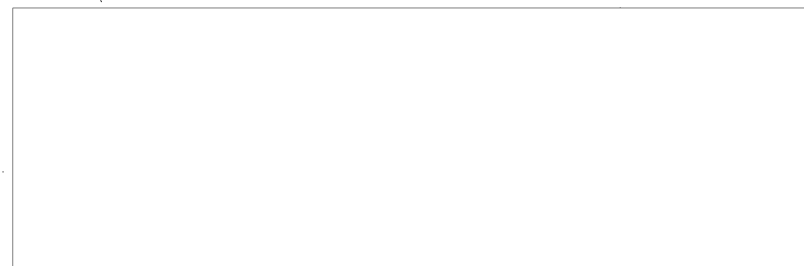
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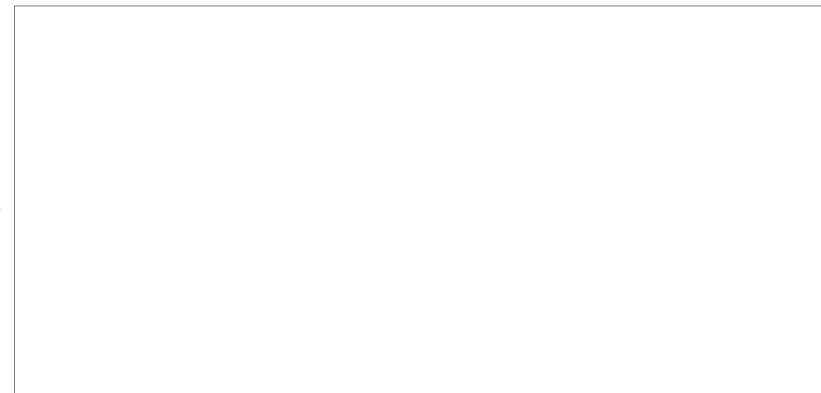
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