



The President's Daily Brief

5 April 1971

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

5 April 1971

PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

On Page 1 we review the latest developments in East Pakistan and note Moscow's first official commentary on the situation.

Sporadic heavy fighting continues around Fire Support Base 6 in South Vietnam's central highlands. (Page 3)

The Jordanian Government is reported to have reached a new accord with the fedayeen to reduce tensions. (Page 4)

On Page 5 we review trends in Soviet military shipments to Egypt.

The military situation in northern Laos appears on Page 7.

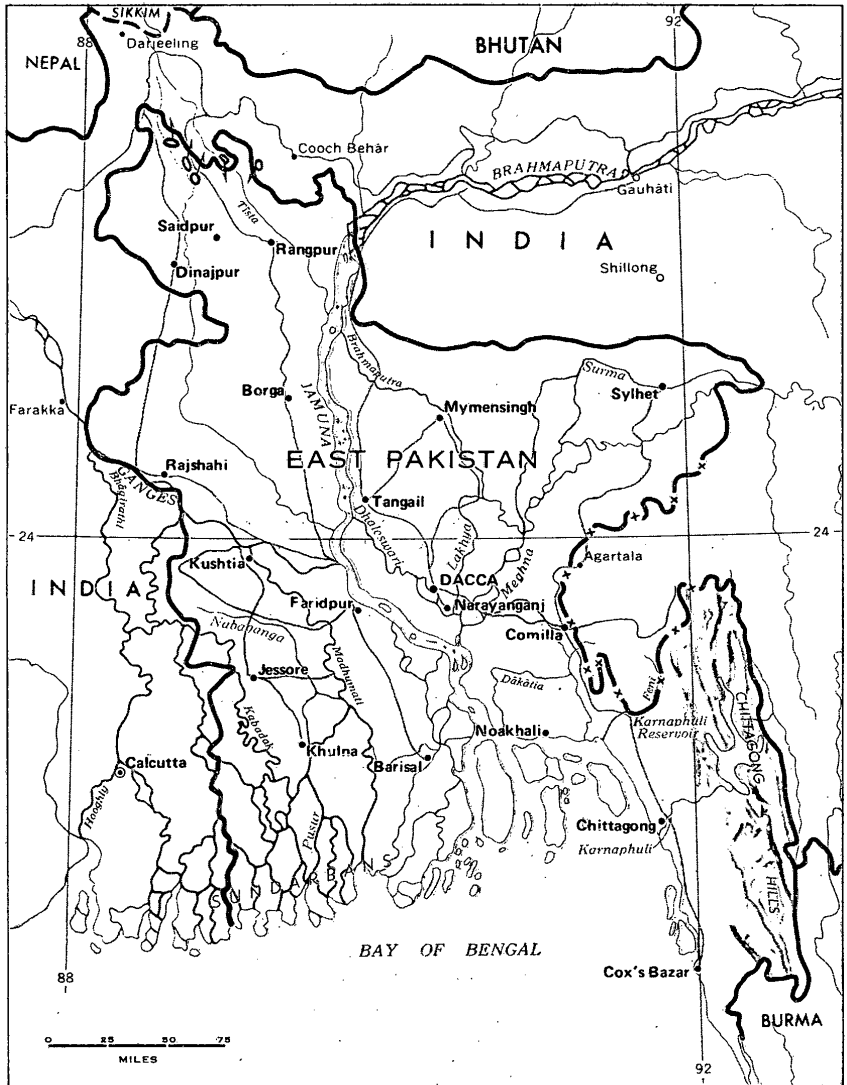
[Redacted] Soviets [Redacted]
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PAKISTAN

The army apparently still holds most of the major cities in East Pakistan. Traffic in Dacca is reported to be 80 percent below normal, however, and few shops are open.

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[redacted] estimates that 30 percent of the city's population has fled, although some residents are straggling back. Because of widespread disruption of transportation, the official foresees the possibility of famine eventually developing in food deficit areas.

A US official who visited Chittagong yesterday-- the first such visit permitted since the fighting broke out--reports seeing large fires burning and estimates that secessionists still hold nearly a third of the city. All but four of the Americans in Chittagong left by ship for Calcutta yesterday.

The first three Pakistan International Airways planeloads of American and British evacuees from Dacca flew to Karachi yesterday and early this morning. The flights are expected to continue for several days.

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Moscow has broken its official silence on developments in Pakistan by publicizing an "insistent appeal" from chief of state Podgorny to Yahya that deplores the continued violence and "extreme measures" used against the people of East Pakistan. Although the appeal is tacitly critical of Yahya's handling of the situation, it portrays the USSR as a concerned friend and neighbor whose interests, like Pakistan's, would be best served by a peaceful solution to the problem.

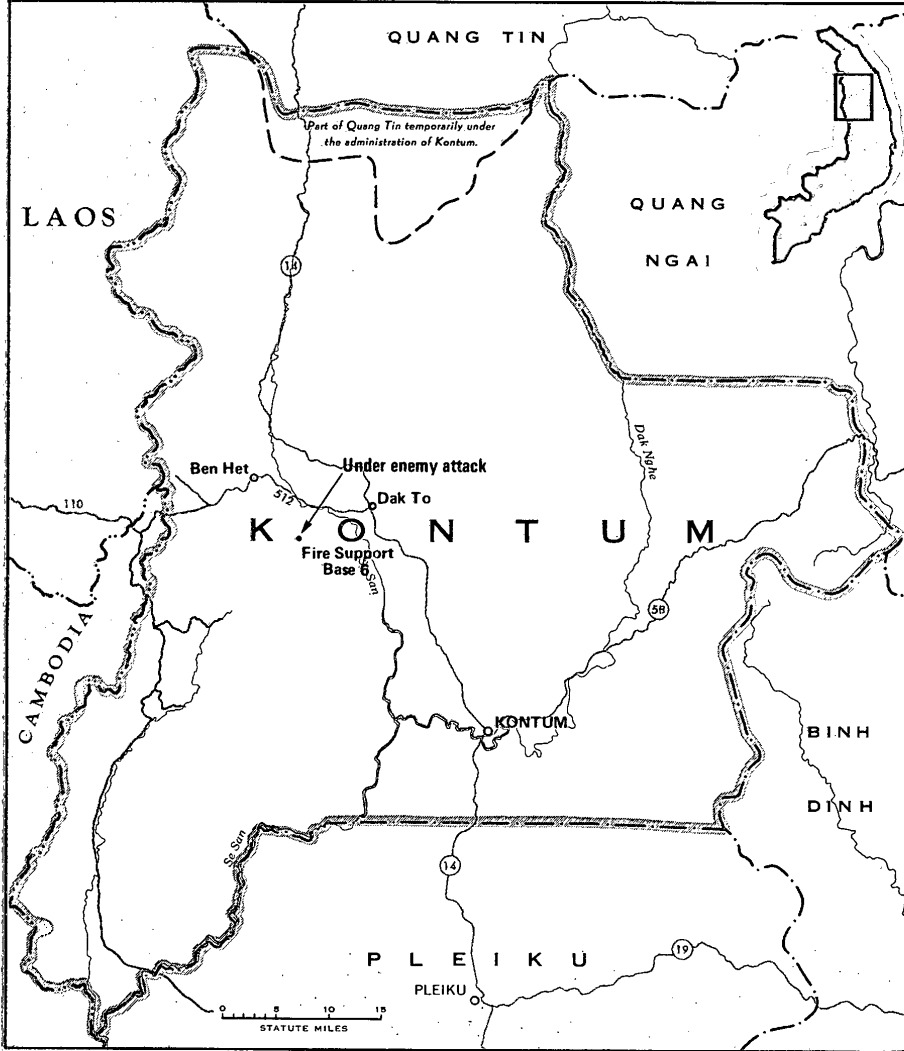
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Moscow's decision to publicize its sentiments suggests that it is prepared to risk the estrangement of Yahya should matters deteriorate further. Although Pakistan's official reaction is not yet known, at least one of the closely censored newspapers in West Pakistan has commented negatively and complained that the Soviet press is also taking an unfriendly line.

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KONTUM PROVINCE



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SOUTH VIETNAM

Sporadic heavy fighting continues in the central highlands around Fire Support Base 6 in Kontum Province. The base was overrun by the first major Communist assault on it last week, but the South Vietnamese counterattacked and regained control the next day. Since then the Communists have unsuccessfully mounted several new attacks.

The fighting in the highlands has been among the heaviest of the enemy's current spring campaign. The government troops claim to have inflicted severe losses on a North Vietnamese regiment with the help of air strikes, but they took substantial casualties themselves, including more than 100 troops missing. The presence of a second North Vietnamese regiment near Fire Support Base 6 raises the possibility that more heavy combat may be ahead.

A North Vietnamese campaign against one or more allied strongpoints in the central highlands has been a regular feature of the enemy's dry season military effort. The target this year is not far from two other bases--Ben Het and Dak To--which were besieged on earlier occasions.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY**JORDAN**

According to a Cairo radiobroadcast, Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) representatives in Amman issued a statement last night in which they undertook to remove surplus weapons and personnel from the city and discharge the remaining obligations of previous pacts with the Jordanian Government. Radio Amman had earlier indicated that government-fedayeen talks were in progress.

PLO chief Yasir Arafat, on the other hand, was reported early yesterday to be in a Syrian border town where, according to one press account, he appealed for sanctions against Jordan by the other Arab states. A press dispatch filed from Damascus immediately after Cairo radio's report of the new agreement carried a fedayeen spokesman's declaration that Palestinian resistance forces would make no more agreements with the Jordanian authorities "regardless of the consequences."

During the weekend King Husayn issued two statements underlining his determination to impose the government's authority throughout the country. Jordan sent an open letter defending its position to representatives of seven Arab states gathered in Cairo, but there is nothing to indicate that the group has yet convened.

Cairo's announcement of the new Amman agreement, and its silence on the scheduled Arab states conference, may indicate a desire to let the fighting die without significant outside action. If the PLO-controlled fedayeen forces in Jordan abide by the reported agreement and the army relaxes its pressure on guerrilla concentrations, it might be possible for the government to deal with any further terrorist and sabotage attacks by fedayeen radicals with a minimum of publicity.

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USSR-EGYPT

Press reports from Beirut over the weekend of a recent large-scale movement of Soviet military supplies to Egypt appear considerably exaggerated [redacted]

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[redacted] The only recent unusual Soviet military supply activity has been the movement of 32 cargo transport planes to Egypt. This airlift, begun on 4 March and apparently ended on 29 March [redacted]

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[redacted] While attention-getting, especially coming immediately on the heels of Sadat's visit to Moscow, and no doubt calculated to impress Cairo with Moscow's intention to continue and improve its support, the airlift could only deliver the amount of equipment one ship could carry.

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Now that the USSR has met Egypt's priority objective--a solid defense line along the canal and at major military installations--some of the materiel arriving is likely being used to flesh out the system by strengthening existing defenses in areas of secondary importance, such as coastal areas and southern Egypt. [redacted]

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Soviet military personnel strength has risen from 3,500 advisers at the start of 1970 to some 13,500 advisers, technicians, and operational military personnel at present.

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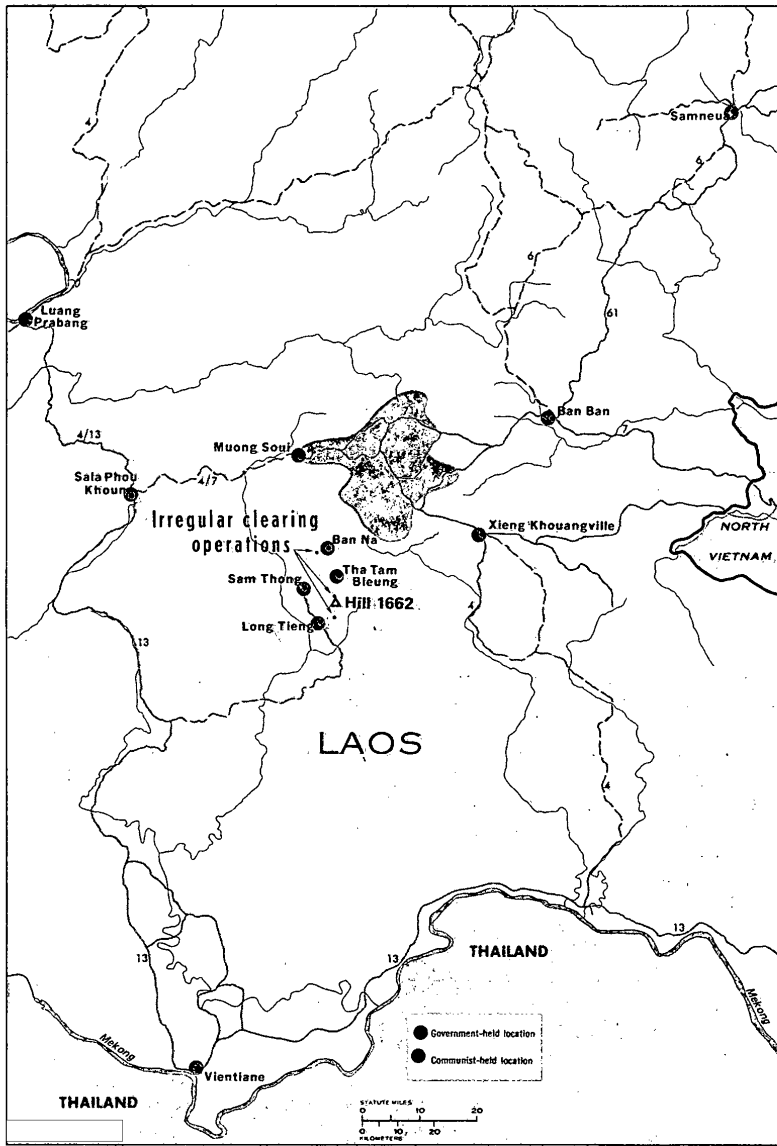
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NOTES

Laos: Government irregular operations designed to clear North Vietnamese forces from areas around Long Tieng encountered little new fighting over the weekend. The two battalions operating northeast of Long Tieng have regrouped near Hill 1662. A three-battalion force moving from the northwest to relieve the Ban Na artillery site continues to meet only light enemy resistance; two outposts of the site itself were attacked, however, and one position was abandoned. A third multibattalion clearing operation launched on 2 April is now sweeping between Sam Thong and Tha Tam Bleung, so far reporting no significant contact.

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West Germany - East Germany:

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