



The President's Daily Brief

8 June 1971

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

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PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

An operation to clear Communist forces from the southern and western parts of the Plaine des Jarres has been launched. (Page 1)

The three Soviet cosmonauts have begun their experiments aboard Salyut after transferring from Soyuz 11 early yesterday. (Page 2)

Sadat may be planning to move elderly Prime Minister Fawzi into the top vice presidential slot. (Page 3)

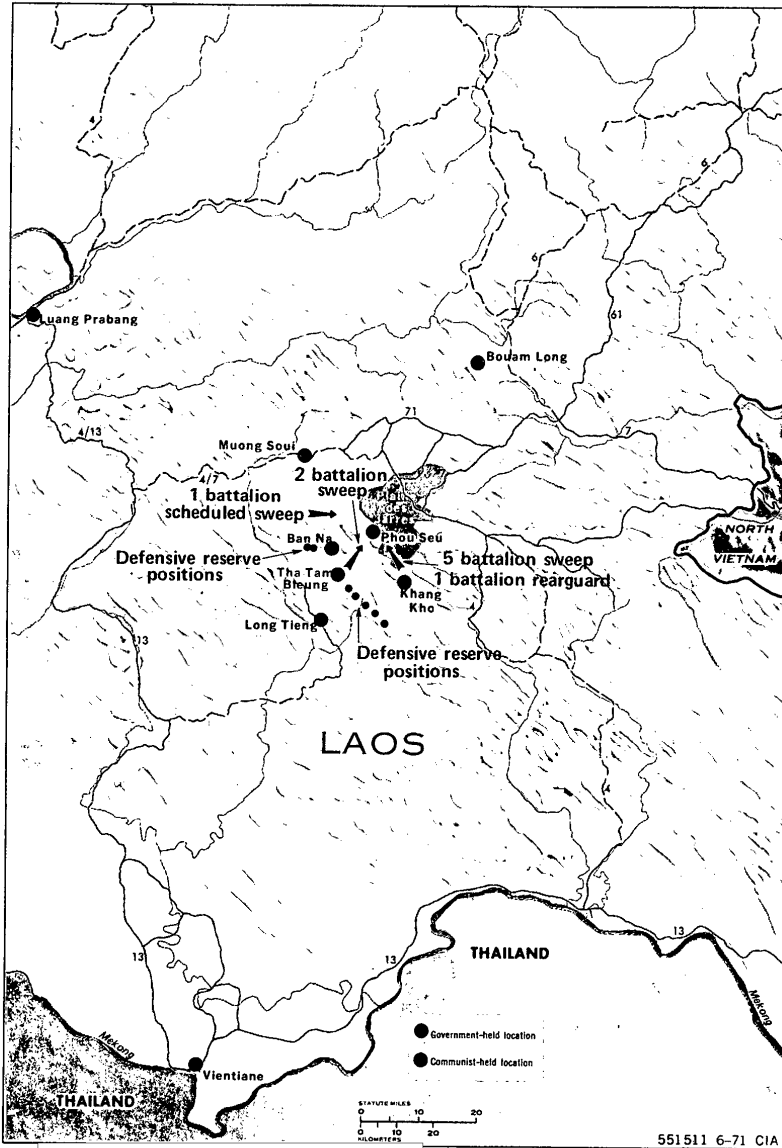
Egypt

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Northern Laos



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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY**LAOS**

General Vang Pao has launched an operation to clear Communist forces from the southern and western portions of the Plaine des Jarres. Five of his Meo and Lao irregular battalions are moving across the southern Plaine from Khang Kho toward Phou Seu, with another battalion providing rear guard security. Two others are moving toward Phou Seu from the Tha Tam Bleung area. A ninth battalion is scheduled to move eastward toward the Plaine from a base northwest of Ban Na. Seven more battalions are being held in defensive reserve positions north and east of Long Tieng. Total irregulars number some 4,000 men.

This operation is designed to make the Communists' position west of the Plaine untenable by capturing supplies in the southern and western portions of the Plaine and by taking the high ground overlooking the infiltration routes toward the Long Tieng complex. Vang Pao hopes thereby to forestall an offensive against Long Tieng when the dry season starts in the fall. Another purpose is to lessen Communist pressure against the guerrilla base at Bouam Long. Aside from the tactical considerations, Prime Minister Souvanna Phouma has been urging Vang Pao to undertake an offensive, presumably to take the sting out of recent Communist gains in southern Laos and to improve the government's bargaining position should peace talks begin.

The irregulars, meeting little enemy opposition, have destroyed several supply caches. They have moved relatively easily so far because Communist strength south and west of the Plaine has been reduced in the last month or so by the redeployment of at least four battalions of main-force troops to the Bouam Long region north of the Plaine. Remaining enemy units near the southern Plaine are believed to consist of four or five battalions, plus an armored unit. In addition, three more Communist battalions are in positions near Ban Na.

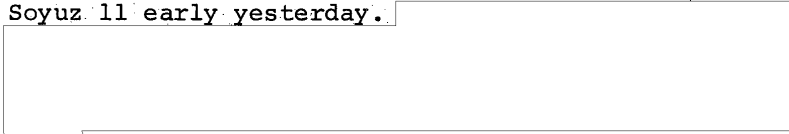
The recent reduction of enemy forces around the Long Tieng complex suggests either that the North Vietnamese want to ease the logistic problem of sustaining a large force west of the Plaine during the rainy season or do not place high priority on an early resumption of their Long Tieng offensive in the fall.

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USSR

The three cosmonauts have begun their program of experiments aboard Salyut after transferring from Soyuz 11 early yesterday.



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TASS described Salyut as the "first piloted scientific station," containing compartments equipped for scientific experiments and studies. The Soviets also announced several experiments to be carried out by the cosmonauts, including the checkout of Salyut, a study of the earth's atmosphere, and an investigation of the biomedical effects of manned space flights. The announcement suggested that data from some of the experiments on Salyut would be returned to earth aboard Soyuz 11.

There are as yet no indications as to how long the present mission will last. The abortive Soyuz 10 flight apparently was intended to last several weeks.

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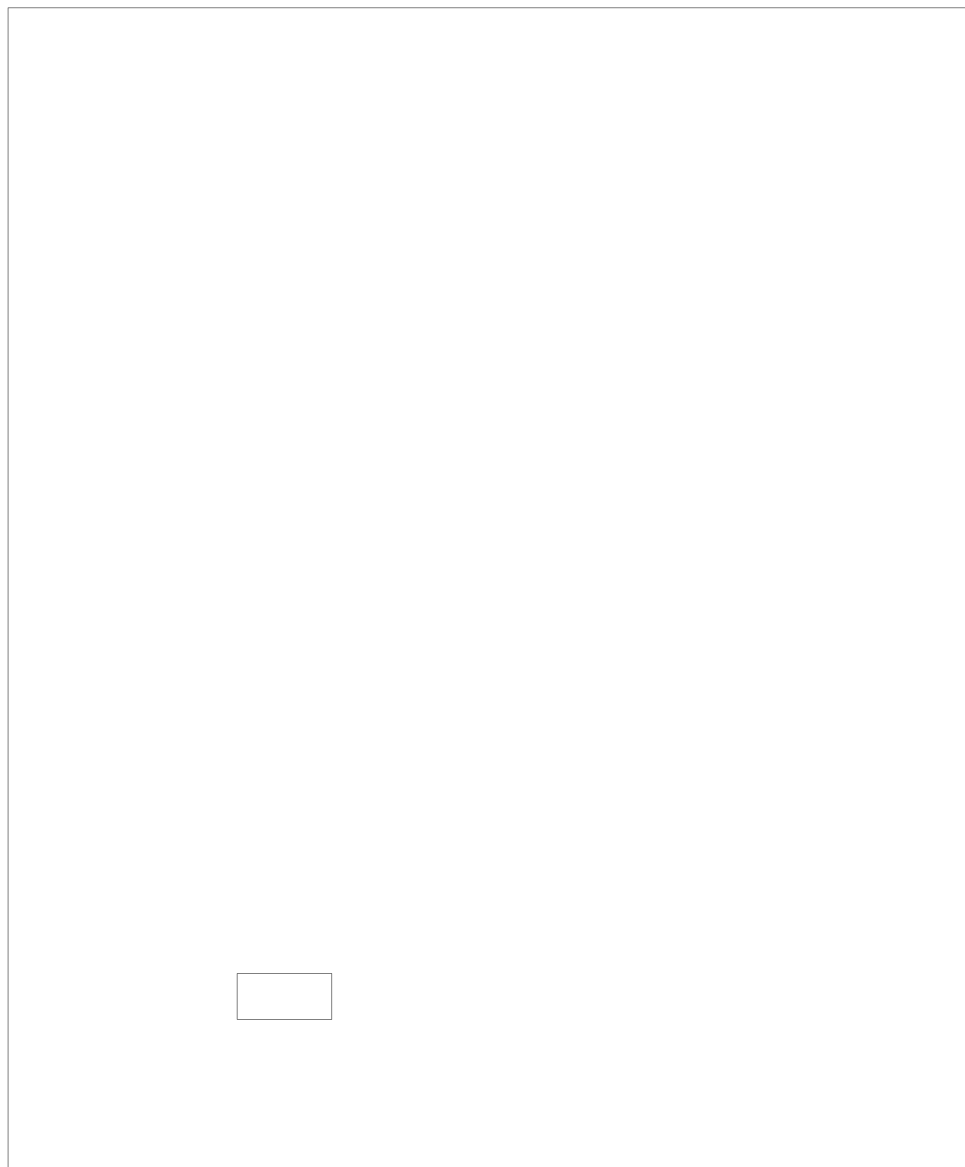
EGYPT

The US Interests Section has obtained information from "well informed sources" that President Sadat plans to move Prime Minister Mahmud Fawzi into the vacant vice presidential slot previously held by Ali Sabri. Fawzi would be replaced as prime minister by Abd al-Munim Qaysuni, a former deputy premier for finance and economy under Nasir. In another change, Deputy Premier for Industry and Trade Aziz Sidqi would be appointed secretary general of the Arab Socialist Union.

Ali Sabri's dismissal in early May made the remaining incumbent vice president, Husayn Shafii, Sadat's interim constitutional successor. Shafii is generally regarded as politically weak. It may be that Sadat intends to appoint the elderly but respected Fawzi to a rank of first vice president, over Shafii, as a way of ensuring that the vice presidential positions will not be used by persons maneuvering against him.

Qaysuni was known as a competent and effective technician of moderate political bent while he served under Nasir, but little is known of his activities during the Sadat administration. Sidqi is said to be reluctant to take the party post, suggesting that he may interpret it as a demotion. The Arab Socialist Union has been under heavy criticism since Sadat's purge of its top leadership last month.

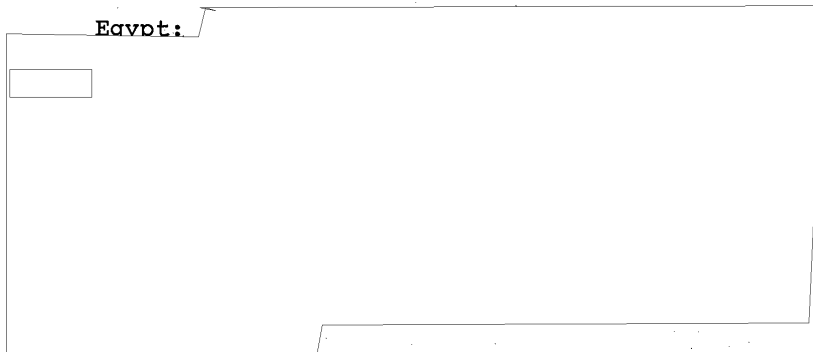
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NOTES



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USSR-Cuba: The Soviet submarine tender was sighted leaving Antilla yesterday afternoon. The tender had returned there over the weekend after escorting a Soviet E-II class nuclear-powered cruise missile submarine to sea. The submarine has not been detected since it submerged on 4 June.

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