



The President's Daily Brief

11 June 1971

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THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

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PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

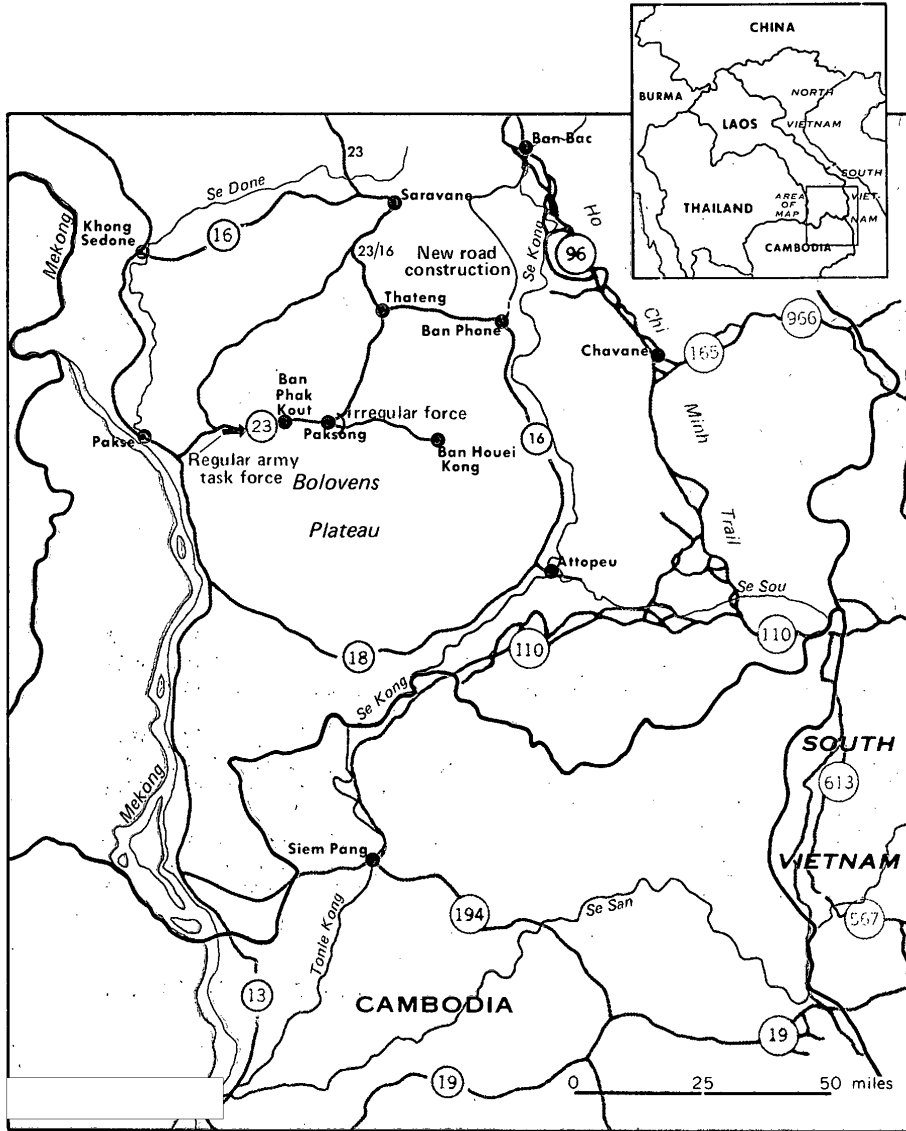
In the Laos panhandle, a government operation aimed at retaking positions on the Bolovens Plateau has suffered a setback. (Page 1)

Satellite photography shows that construction work on the Soviet Kama River Truck Plant is proceeding rapidly. (Page 2)

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551533 6-71 CIA

- Communist-held location
- Government held location

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LAOS

A government operation launched on Wednesday to retake key portions of the western Bolovens Plateau has run into serious problems. Lead elements of a multibattalion regular army task force moving eastward along Route 23 toward Ban Phak Kout were hit hard yesterday by North Vietnamese shelling followed by a ground attack that is reported to have been led by two tanks. The Lao Army units were dispersed and are trying to regroup around their command post on Route 23.

Enemy resistance to this operation is likely to continue to be stiff as the Communists are dug in along Route 23 and hold key high ground positions. There are at least two main-force enemy regiments and six combat battalions with armor and artillery support in the general vicinity of the Bolovens.

Holding the Bolovens is of key importance to the North Vietnamese in protecting their infiltration corridors into Cambodia and South Vietnam. There is some evidence suggesting that during the next dry season they plan to increase the use of the western infiltration corridor--Routes 23 and 16. Recent aerial photography indicates that they have begun improvements on the long unused section of Route 16 between Ban Phone and Attopeu and are building a new road to link the staging areas at Ban Bac with Route 16.

In northern Laos, elements of Vang Pao's irregular task forces operating on the southern and western edges of the Plaine des Jarres have met little enemy resistance. They have discovered several enemy supply caches and claim to have destroyed or captured some mortars and recoilless rifles and substantial amounts of ammunition, food, and sundry supplies.

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USSR

Satellite photography shows that basic construction work on facilities to house and service the Kama River Truck Plant is proceeding rapidly. Since the fall of 1969 when work began on the \$3- to \$5-billion project, construction has been noted over a 40-square-mile area in which six large plants will be located: forge; foundry; pressing and stamping; engine, gear and transmission; tooling and repair; and assembly. By mid-May, foundations had been built for production buildings covering 2,000,000 square feet, more than ten percent of which is under roof. Analysis of photography supports Soviet claims that over \$75 million was spent on construction of this project in 1970 and that close to half a billion dollars will be invested this year.

The Soviets say they expect the complex to begin production, principally of heavy-duty trucks for inter-city freight, by 1974; sometime after 1975 it is to achieve a capacity of 150,000 annually. This output would exceed current US production of similar trucks by about one quarter.

As we reported in The President's Daily Brief of 28 May, the Soviets have signed a protocol with Mack Truck under which the US firm would act as principal consultant for engineering services and for equipment purchased from the West. Renault has also agreed to some participation, apparently to provide the pressing and stamping shop.

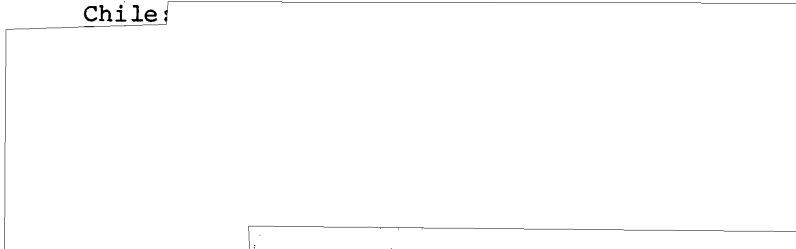
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NOTES

USSR-Cuba: The Soviet submarine tender that left Antilla on Monday is now some 500 miles north-east of Puerto Rico and appears headed for Northern Fleet waters. The E-II class cruise missile nuclear submarine that left on 4 June has not been seen since then, although it could be accompanying the tender on the homeward voyage.

Bolivia: Leftist government officials, determined to eliminate US influence in Bolivia, have launched a campaign to achieve the ouster of US military advisers just as they did to get the Peace Corps expelled. The Bolivian military apparently does not consider the Military Assistance Program vital enough to warrant a confrontation with the left, and President Torres has already indicated to Ambassador Siracusa that there is waning interest in the mission's functions in view of the phasing out of the military assistance program.

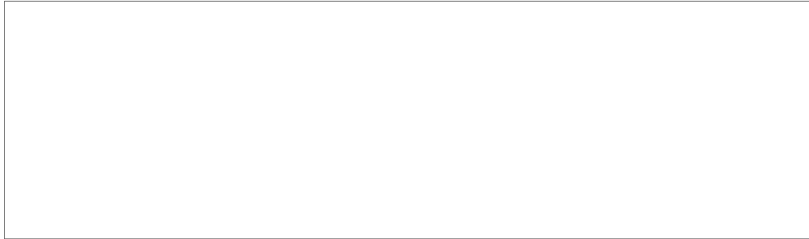
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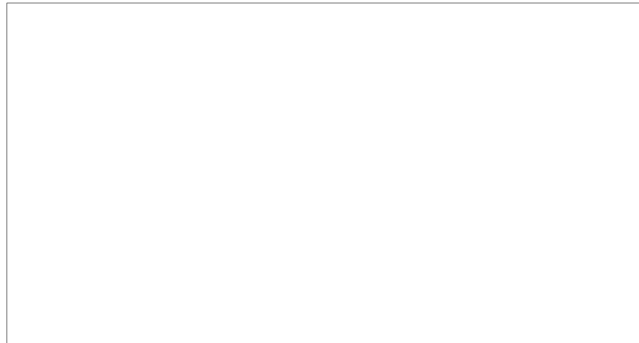
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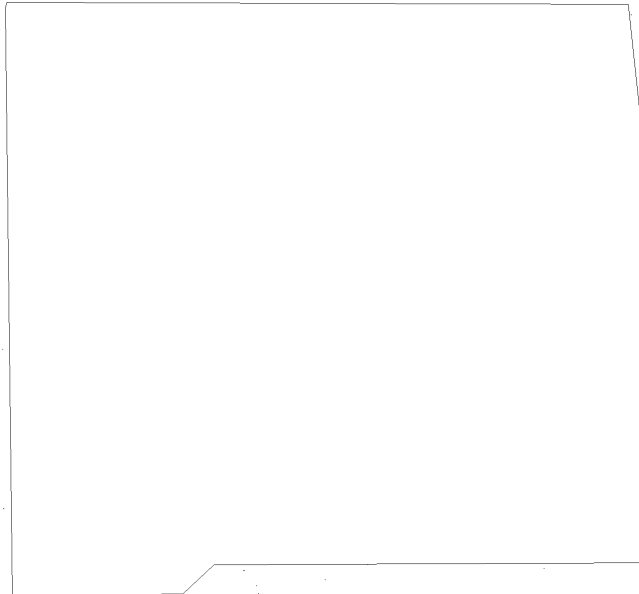
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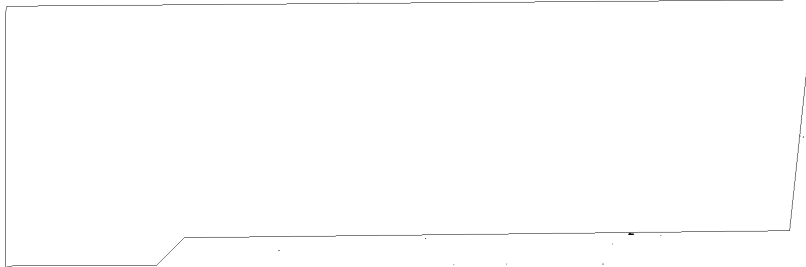
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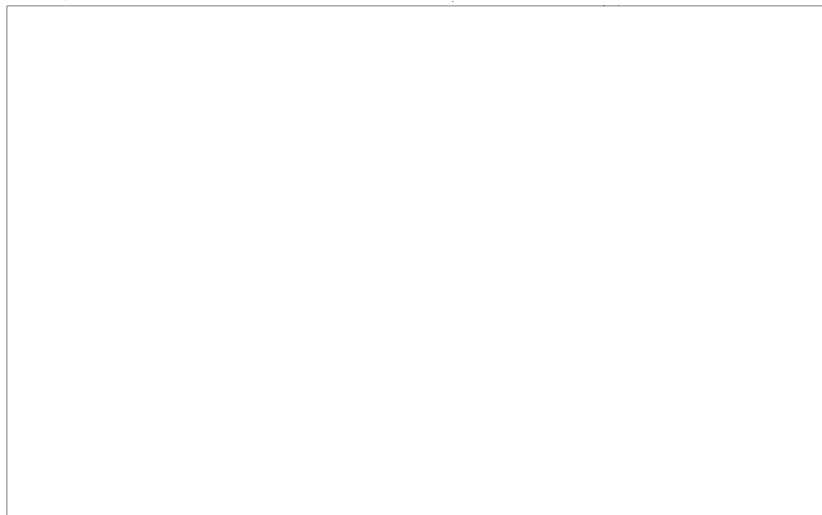
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