



The President's Daily Brief

5 July 1971

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

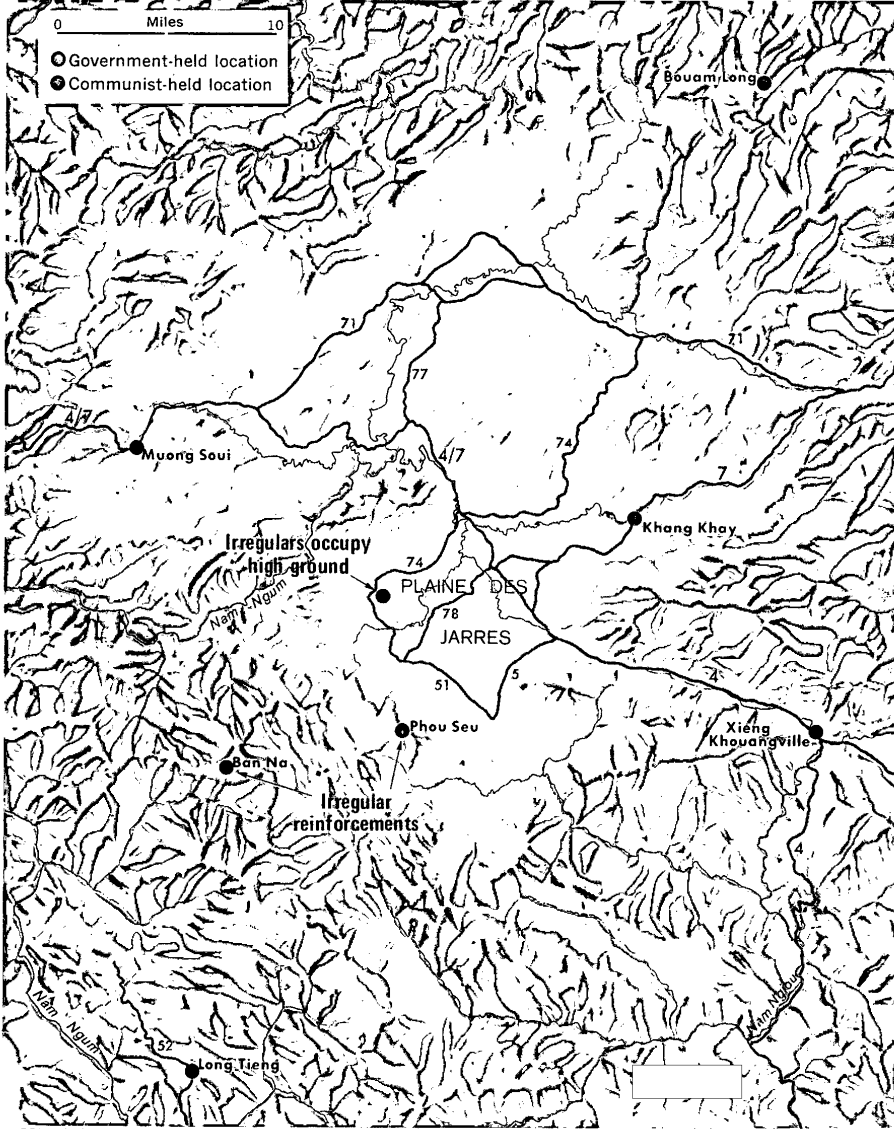
Irregular forces in Laos continued their advance across the Plaine des Jarres over the weekend.
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The French say they will not join in any bloc-to-bloc talks on mutual and balanced force reductions.
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South Africa and France have reached an agreement that will permit the South Africans to manufacture Mirage aircraft. (Page 3)

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LAOS: PLAINE DES JARRES AREA



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LAOS

Irregular forces continued their advance across the Plaine des Jarres over the weekend. One battalion moved from the hills to the west on 2 July and secured five positions on the high ground dominating the northwest portion of the Plaine without meeting any opposition. South of this area, a 450-man irregular battalion was airlifted on the same day from Long Tieng to reinforce other units holding the Phou Seu ridge. Additional reinforcements have also been moved to Ban Na.

In the past few days, there has been little Communist opposition to irregular search and destroy operations on and around the Plaine. The irregulars now control almost all of the Plaine, with enemy forces holding only the northeast fringe in the Khang Khay region.

Action has also been light north of the Plaine. Irregular units conducting clearing operations in the vicinity of Bouam Long have made no contact with enemy elements for three days, and commanders at Bouam Long believe that the Communists have withdrawn from their earlier siege positions around that base.

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FRANCE-NATO

France intends to tell its NATO allies this week that it will not join in any bloc-to-bloc negotiations on mutual and balanced force reductions, according to a French embassy official in Washington. Paris will add, however, that its position is still open on discussions of military questions in a more general forum such as a Conference on European Security.

Paris is concerned about the potential military consequences of force reductions in addition to being opposed to bloc-to-bloc negotiations. The French will nevertheless continue their own bilateral explorations, and will still participate in NATO discussions of MBFR.

France also will be among several allies which plan to meet and discuss the effect of the SALT talks on their own interests following the regular US briefing of NATO on Tuesday. Many Europeans who have long been uneasy about Soviet demands for including forward based nuclear systems in SALT now anticipate that these systems might be included in MBFR talks, and wish to consult among themselves on the interrelationships.

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SOUTH AFRICA - FRANCE

The two countries have signed an agreement that will permit South Africa to produce basic elements of Mirage III fighters and Mirage F-1 interceptors, according to press reports. Aircraft engines and various sophisticated components, however, will have to be imported from France for several years. Initial production of the Mirage IIIs is not expected until 1973, and F-1 production presumably will not take place until the mid-Seventies.

South Africa has long sought self-sufficiency in arms production, particularly after the UN arms embargo was imposed in 1963. The country has since produced small arms, light infantry weapons, armored cars, and jet trainers. It will also participate in the production of a surface-to-air missile system developed by France.

A French Defense Ministry official recently stated that France will sell a "complement" of Mirages to South Africa. Earlier there were reports that the proposed deal involved 36 aircraft, an order that would about double the number of South Africa's Mirages.

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