

The President's Daily Brief

23 July 1971



47

50X1

~~Top Secret~~

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

23 July 1971

PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

In the Sudan, General Numayri's countercoup against the forces that ousted him earlier this week appears to be successful. *(Page 1)*

Growing dissatisfaction in Japan with Sato's handling of China policy and economic relations with the US is causing speculation that the prime minister may resign later this year. *(Page 2)*

In South Vietnam, Thieu is widely reported to be applying pressure on provincial officials to endorse his own candidacy for re-election and to prevent Ky from qualifying *(Page 3)*; signs persist that the Communists plan another round of heightened military activity which could begin any time. *(Page 4)*

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

SUDAN

Forces loyal to General Numayri were successful yesterday in a move to topple the Communist-affiliated junta that had ousted Numayri on 19 July. After his supporters regained control of the radio and television stations, Numayri took to the air to announce that his government had been restored and to call on the armed forces and citizenry to begin an all-out search for Communists. Khartoum, which had been the scene of tank and small-arms fire during the day, was quiet by nightfall except for scattered shooting.

The countercoup got under way in Khartoum shortly after the Libyan Government's action early yesterday to force a BOAC airliner carrying two members of the just-installed anti-Numayri government to land at Benghazi. Libyan authorities removed the two men--Babakr al-Nur Uthman, the designated chairman of the new junta, and Faruq Hamdallah--from the aircraft, and presumably have them in custody. Middle East news sources report that Major Hashim al-Atta, who led the coup and acted as the junta's chief spokesman, has now been arrested and that the "traitors" will soon be brought before military courts.

Numayri's chances of making his counter-coup stick will be improved by the fact that his opponents had so little time to consolidate their power. In pleading for a round-up of Communists, Numayri is proceeding with a course he has followed since last fall when he began dismissing party members and supporters--including the leaders of this week's coup--from the cabinet and other government posts.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

JAPAN

Former foreign minister Ohira, leader of one of the factions in the ruling Liberal Democratic Party and one of the principal aspirants to succeed Sato, told Ambassador Meyer on 20 July that the prime minister would probably step down following Diet ratification of the Okinawan reversion agreement late this fall. Other party leaders are also weakening in their support for the prime minister, whose unprecedented fourth consecutive term does not actually end until November 1972.

Criticism of Sato's rule has stemmed from his cautious China policy and from growing economic frictions with the US. The dissatisfaction was sharply intensified by the loss of face Sato suffered when President Nixon announced his coming trip to China. Sato had been claiming that he was in close consultation with Washington on the China issue.

The prime minister now faces a dilemma: on the one hand his flexibility on China is limited by the close political and economic ties his right-wing supporters have with Taiwan; on the other, party rivals are prepared to abandon his ship if it appears to be foundering over the China issue.

Ohira speculated that whoever succeeds Sato would have to call general elections promptly to seek a popular mandate. He claimed that the Liberal Democrats would suffer a "substantial" loss of strength in the Diet. Ohira maintained that a basic change in the party's political practices in such elections was required, with a shift from "bribing" special interest groups to winning over the electorate with popular, well-defined programs.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

SOUTH VIETNAM

Reports

[redacted] support opposition claims that President Thieu's campaign organization has already collected over 400 signed endorsements from the 550 provincial councilors, often with the help of the powerful province chiefs. In Military Region 3, surrounding the capital, all but one of the 93 provincial councilors have endorsed Thieu.

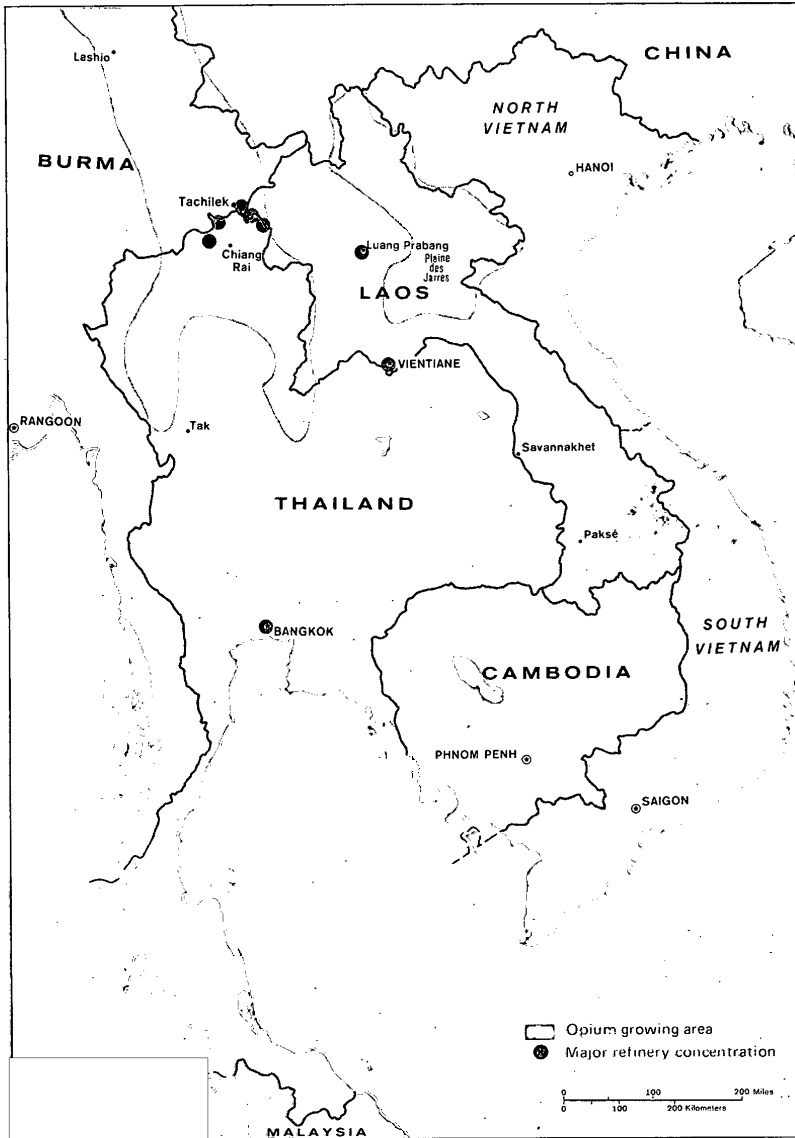
50X1
50X1

Many provincial councilors who have not signed for Thieu are reluctant to endorse Ky, according to the reports; this is especially true of supporters of the militant An Quang Buddhists. Contrary to the claim of a Ky organizer that the vice president now has the necessary 100 endorsements to file for the presidential contest, [redacted] asserts that Ky had only 24 two days ago, and that some of these still need validation by province chiefs.

50X1

Thieu appears to have authorized the application of pressures at the local level by the province chiefs, although he may not always be aware of the tactics used. Since the chiefs have the authority to fire provincial councilors, their powers of persuasion are strong. The reports also indicate that Saigon has made it clear to some province chiefs that their futures depend on getting the endorsements.

Southeast Asia Opium Production



551688 7-71 CIA

50X1

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

NOTES

South Vietnam: There continue to be indications that the current lull in military activity will soon be broken by another of the Communists' periodic surges of activity.

50X1

[redacted] Communist initiatives in the southern provinces are likely to be more limited than in the north--as they have been in the summer campaign thus far--but a few selected targets there may come under attack or harassment.

Southeast Asia: [redacted] opium refineries in the main producing area of northeast Burma near Tachilek had ceased production of heroin and morphine as of late June, after being ordered to do so by the government under pressure from the US and UN. There are indications, however, that some refineries are moving to more inaccessible sectors in the Burma-Laos-Thai border region, and it seems unlikely that the government's orders will be enforced for any extended period or will result in any significant reduction in heroin exports from the tri-border area.

50X1
50X1

Top Secret