

*The President's Daily Brief*

*20 October 1971*

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

20 October 1971

PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

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India

(Page 1)

The Soviets reaffirm their support for a political settlement between India and Pakistan but put the onus for preventing armed conflict on the West Pakistanis. (Page 2)

New evidence strengthens the likelihood that the unsettled leadership situation in Peking stems from a controversy over heir-designate Lin Piao's political position. (Page 3)

In Laos, an irregular task force engaged in clearing operations on the Bolovens Plateau remains stalled by determined North Vietnamese resistance. (Page 4)

At least some of the Soviet naval units in the mid-Atlantic may be heading back toward the USSR. (Page 5)

[Redacted] Soviets

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(Page 5)

The Turks have admitted that opium planting during the 1971-72 season could result in a significant increase over this year's bumper crop. (Page 6)



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INDIA-PAKISTAN

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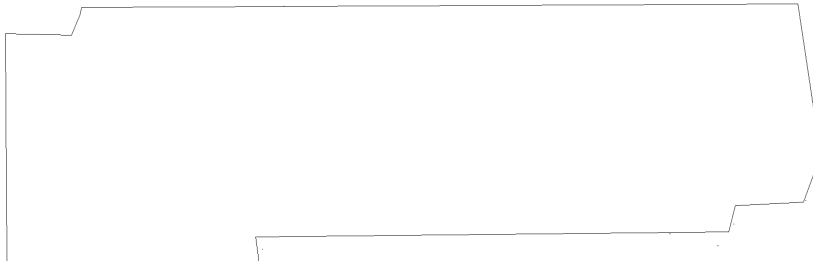
**FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY**

**USSR-INDIA-PAKISTAN**

Foreign Minister Gromyko told Ambassador Beam on Monday that the USSR would continue working for a political settlement between India and Pakistan. He expressed pessimism, however, that President Yahya would make the hard decisions necessary for such a settlement. In contrast, he exhibited confidence that the Indians "could be relied on to act responsibly." Gromyko said that President Podgorny had stressed the danger of a military conflict to both Yahya and Indian President Giri during their recent stay in Iran.

*There was no indication from Gromyko that Podgorny had offered to mediate, and presumably his remarks were made after he had received Podgorny's report on his talks.*

Gromyko's discussion with Beam reflected the USSR's commitment to India to press for the release and return to political activity of East Pakistani leader Mujibur Rahman and the safe return of Pakistani refugees. He was lukewarm about the idea of mutual troop withdrawals from the Indo-Pakistani borders, saying it would not end the situation. When Beam stated that the US had proposed to India a cessation of cross-border guerrilla activities, Gromyko implied that the Soviets viewed such activity as justified on the part of the Mukti Bahini, who were merely defending hearth and home against a "great terror."



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*The Soviet position seems designed to increase Western pressure on Yahya. Moscow's support for India reduces its leverage in Pakistan, and to a certain extent the USSR must depend on the West to exert influence in Islamabad. As for India, we doubt that the Soviets are as confident of New Delhi's peaceful intentions as they assert.*

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

COMMUNIST CHINA

[redacted] a controversy over heir-designate Lin Piao's political position may be at the root of the unsettled leadership situation in Peking.

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--The latest issue of China Pictorial--which features Mao Tse-tung and Lin Piao together on its front cover is unavailable in the capital.

--The display at Peking airport of the recently published set of colored photographs of Mao does not include those showing him with Lin, although the full set is on display at several other locations in the capital.

--The guidance provided by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs protocol department concerning toasts addressed to Chinese leaders at a recent Romanian banquet in Peking omitted any reference to Lin.

*Similar guidance apparently was also provided a visiting Turkish delegation and appears to follow a decision taken approximately two weeks ago to halt the customary New China News Agency reporting of toasts to Mao and Lin by foreign visitors.*

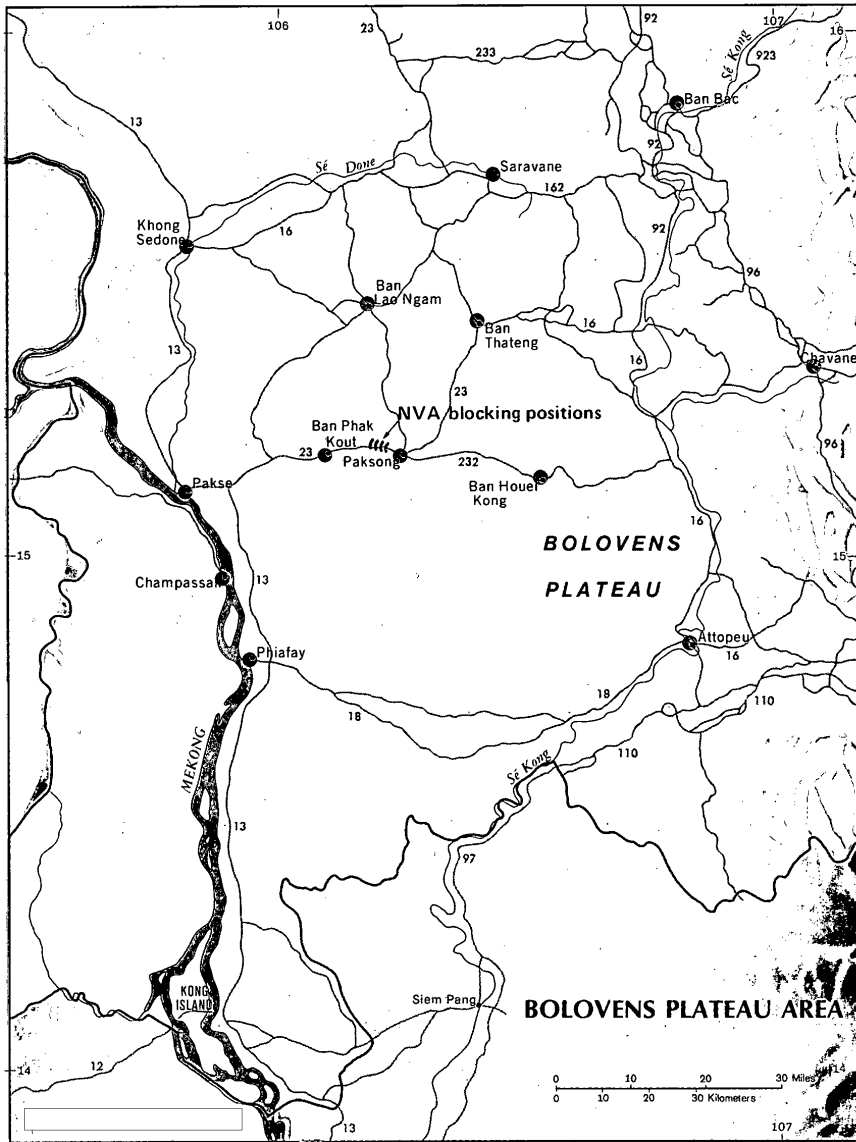
*These alterations in Peking's hagiology, together with the absence of incantations to Lin's political rectitude in domestic propaganda over the past two weeks, point to an effort to downplay Lin that goes beyond what would be required if his problem were purely physical.*

\* \* \*

The general standdown of Chinese military aircraft, first noted on 13 September, is continuing. Defensive patrols have been conducted in the Taiwan Strait area over the past two days, and flights of fighters from three air training schools were reported [redacted]

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[redacted] no resumption of normal levels of activity from operational fighter and bomber bases has been noted, however, and military transport flights have remained at extremely low levels.



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- Government-held location
- Communist-held location

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**FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY**

**LAOS**

A four-battalion irregular task force engaged in clearing operations on the Bolovens Plateau remains stalled by determined North Vietnamese resistance on Route 23 some four miles west of Paksong. Government commanders and US observers believe that the Communists are prepared for a stiff defense of their positions.

In Paksong town, a Lao Army task force consisting of three army battalions is continuing its efforts to improve its defensive positions. Manpower shortages, however, are limiting the ability of the task force to patrol aggressively and are creating morale problems.

*Paksong town will remain vulnerable to any determined North Vietnamese assault as long as Route 23 remains blocked. The Communists' tenacious defense and their recent introduction of heavy machine guns into the Paksong area suggest that they will try to retake the town in the near future. Intercepts from elements of the 9th NVA Regiment--the principal Communist unit near Paksong--indicate that some 410 new troops are expected soon. This is the first clear evidence that unit-size replacement groups are being sent to make up the substantial losses we believe the regiment suffered during the three months of fighting in the area. The Communists had earlier shifted elements of three combat battalions from other areas of the Bolovens Plateau closer to Paksong.*



**FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY**

**NOTES**

USSR-Cuba: At least some of the Soviet naval units in the mid-Atlantic may be heading back toward the USSR. Two destroyers and the oiler have been on a northeasterly course for the past day or so. The cruiser, the third destroyer, and the tanker appear to be lingering between the US east coast and the Azores. The E-II submarine is also in the mid-Atlantic, but its present course and destination cannot be confirmed.

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Two F-class diesel attack submarines were also spotted on the surface some 250 miles west of the tanker about dusk yesterday.

USSR:

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USSR:

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*FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY*

Turkey: Foreign Minister Olcay has admitted that opium planting during the 1971-72 season, the last year in which it will be legal, could result in a significant increase over this year's bumper crop. Olcay said he was concerned that this might affect relations with the United States and promised Ambassador Handley that he would take up the matter with Prime Minister Erim. Licenses already granted to plant poppies next year have reached 100,000 and 50,000 more will be handed out shortly. This will represent a two-thirds increase over 1970-71. At the same time, the 1971 illicit opium crop is estimated to be well over the 40 metric tons needed annually to meet the demand of the US heroin market. Illegal stocks held in private Turkish hands after two bumper years would be adequate to supply the US market for several years beyond 1972, giving opium traffickers more than enough time to arrange alternative sources of supply.

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