

*The President's Daily Brief*

*24 November 1971*

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*FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY*

THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

24 November 1971

PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

Developments in the Indian-Pakistani confrontation along the borders of East Pakistan are reported on *Page 1*.

On *Page 2* we comment on the Soviet party central committee's two-day session, including its minimal changes of the composition of top leadership bodies.

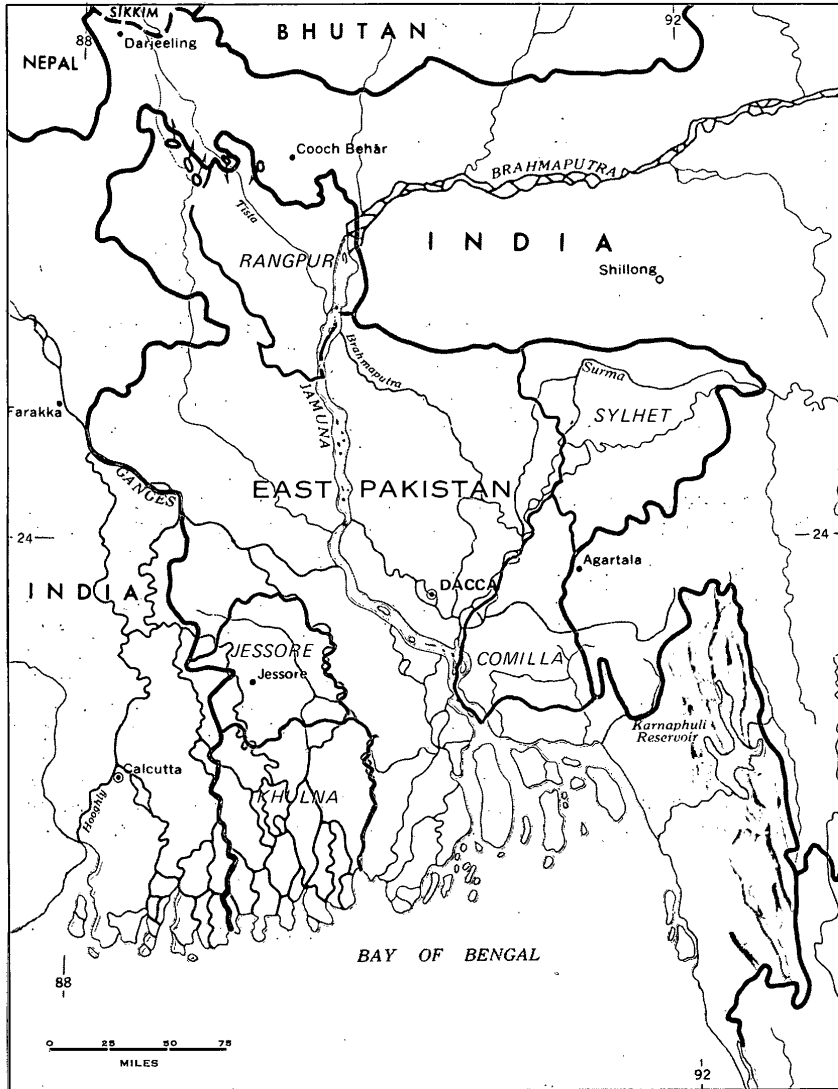
The latest satellite photography shows no additional silos of the new type at ICBM complexes, but provides some further details on silo construction. (*Page 3*)

Recent photography also shows the Chinese Communists have installed missile tubes in their G-class submarine. (*Page 4*)

The Communists' seasonal logistics push through the Laos panhandle is now under way. (*Page 5*)

At Annex, we present an appraisal of Communist intentions in Indochina during the coming winter months.

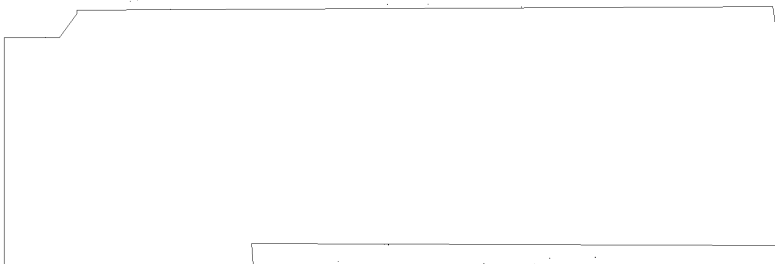
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**INDIA-PAKISTAN**

Both Indian and Pakistani radio broadcasts are reporting continued fighting along the borders of East Pakistan in Jessore and Sylhet districts. Their claims are contradictory, however, and the degree of Indian Army participation remains unclear. The Pakistanis say that Indian troops are spearheading the drives and have launched a new offensive into Comilla District. The Indians insist that the Mukti Bahini alone are conducting the campaigns and are scoring new successes in Rangpur and Khulna districts. Indian leaders are still denying adamantly that Indian troops have crossed the border.



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In a meeting with Ambassador Farland yesterday, President Yahya Khan, while "visibly tense," indicated that he was not yet prepared to take the border issue before the UN Security Council and would not do so, in any event, for the next several days.

*Yahya seems to be still casting about for a way out of his dilemma in East Pakistan. He has summoned both the Bengali governor of the East and leading West Pakistani politician Z. A. Bhutto for talks allegedly intended to speed up the formation of a civilian government. It is unlikely, however, that the guerrillas will settle for any 11th-hour solution short of immediate, full independence.*

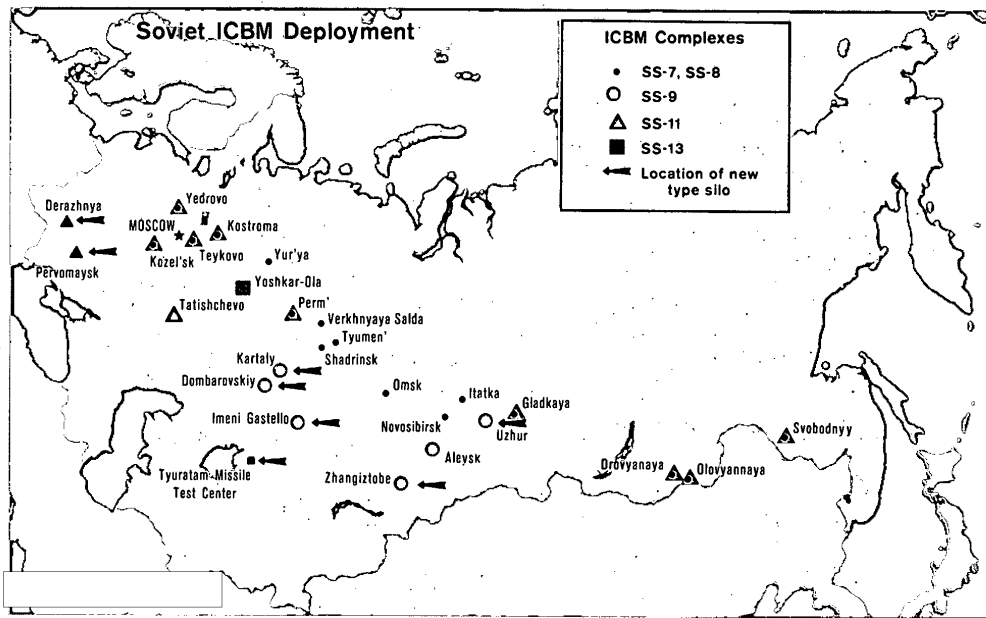
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## USSR

*The party central committee, in its two-day session in Moscow, made minimal changes in the composition of the top ruling bodies. Mikhail Solomentsev, who replaced Gennady Voronov as premier of the Russian Republic last July, was elevated to candidate membership in the politburo and was, at the same time, released from his former job on the party secretariat. Voronov, however, was not removed from the politburo despite the fact that he now holds an insignificant post which does not warrant representation on the top policy-making body.*

*Voronov may owe his present reprieve at least partly to the efforts of his politburo colleagues to keep Brezhnev from completely dominating the decision-making process. Over the years, Brezhnev has been able to put his own supporters into the politburo and secretariat and to maneuver critics, such as Voronov and Aleksandr Shelepin, into positions of little power. Matters have stopped there, however, and no one has been removed from the politburo since Brezhnev became party chief in 1964.*

*The central committee approved the five-year plan, accepted last month by the politburo, and discussed a report by Brezhnev on recent conduct of foreign policy, but the terse announcements gave no details of either of these plenum activities. Some indication of the thrust of Brezhnev's remarks may be reflected in the Supreme Soviet session which opens today. The main business of the session will be the adoption of the five-year plan and next year's plan and budget.*



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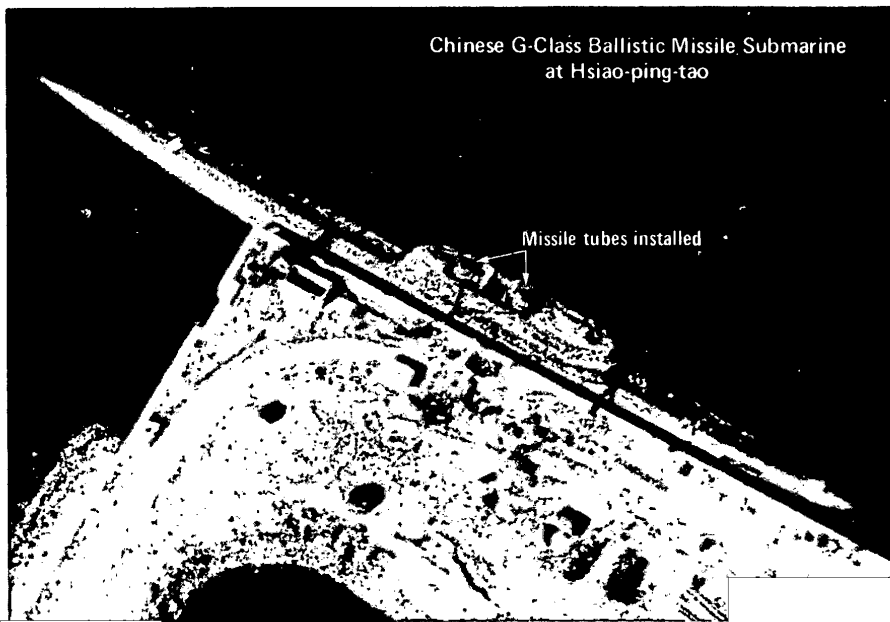
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USSR

The latest satellite photography shows no additional new-type missile silos or test corings at ICBM complexes. The current total of new-type silos at SS-9 installations remains 25--five each at five complexes. There are still six groups, each with 11 new-type silos, under construction at Derazhnya and Pervomaysk where SS-11s are deployed (along with a few MRBMs and IRBMs). However, what appear to be extra large silo liner segments, seen earlier near one of the silos at Derazhnya, are now seen at one silo in each group of the new-type silos at both Derazhnya and Pervomaysk. In addition, extra large segments have been seen near three silos at the SS-9 complexes--two at one complex and one at another.

*No new groups of ICBM silos are known to have been started since March 1971. The last silos filling out the groups begun earlier were started in July 1971.*



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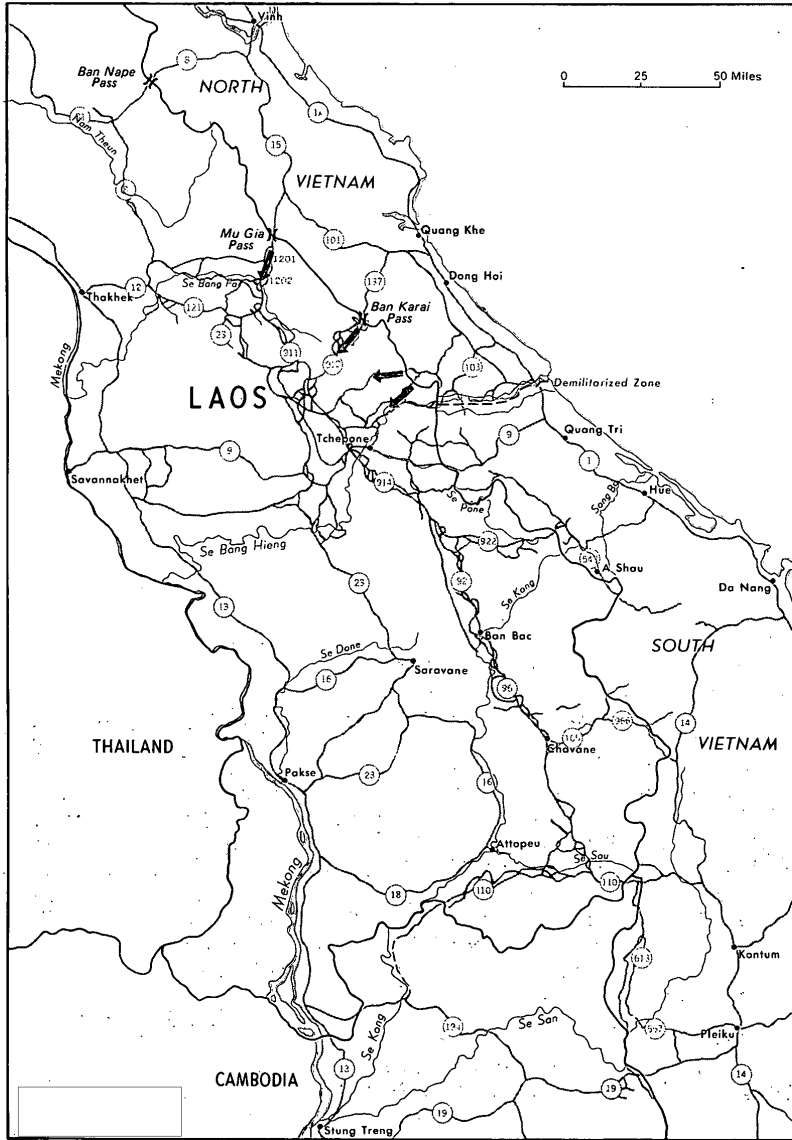
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COMMUNIST CHINA

Recent photography of the Hsiao-ping-tao naval base in northeast China shows that new missile tubes have been installed in China's G-class ballistic missile submarine.

*China assembled its only G-class submarine between 1962 and 1964 from components supplied by the USSR. No missiles for the submarine have ever been observed and the original missile tubes--presumably designed for Soviet missiles--were removed between late 1968 and early 1969. Observation of the G-class early this year suggested that additional modifications were under way. The installation of new missile tubes indicates that Peking is seeking to develop a submarine launched ballistic missile system, and suggests that the G-class submarine is intended to serve as a test platform for such a missile.*

Increased Truck Activity



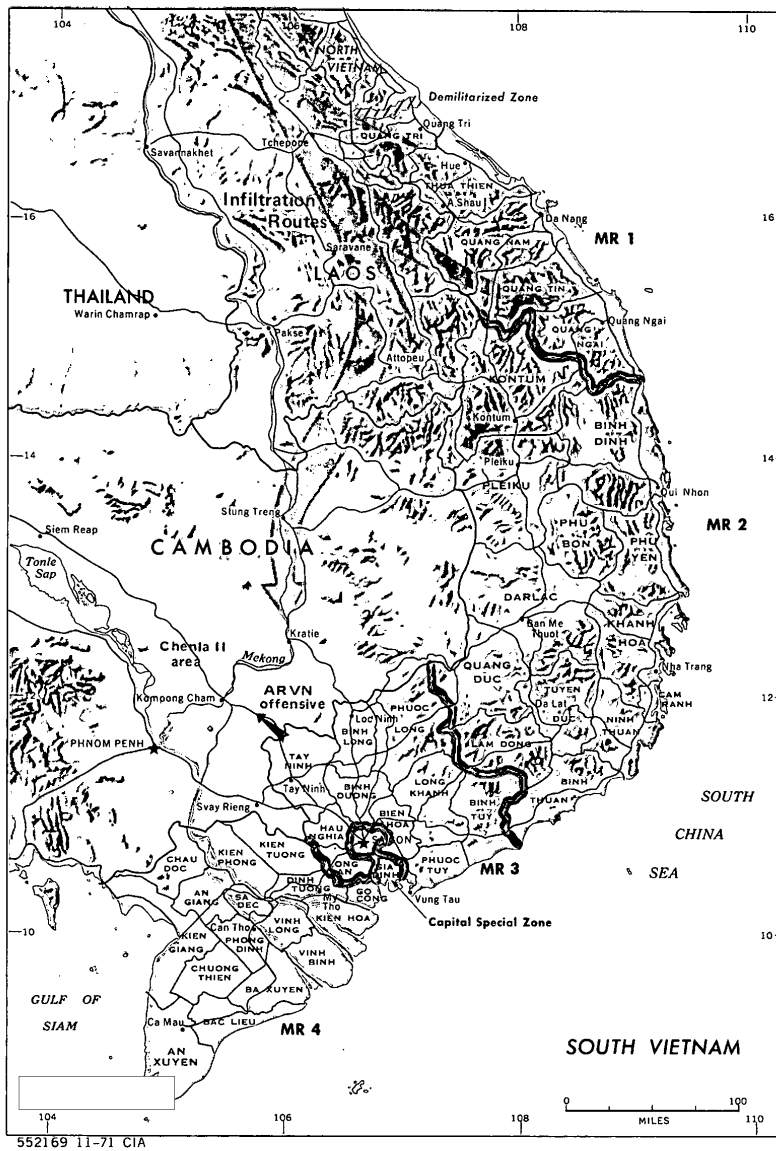
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NOTE

Indochina: The Communists have begun their annual logistics push in the Laotian panhandle. [redacted] of truck traffic doubled in the past week, reaching the highest level since the end of the last dry season. Most of the traffic currently is concentrated from the passes where the roads enter from North Vietnam south to Tchepone. With the panhandle roadnet generally in excellent condition, and with good weather continuing, we should expect to see truck activity increase and spread southward during the coming weeks. Last year the logistics "offensive" also began about this time.

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COMMUNIST INTENTIONS IN INDOCHINA  
(WINTER 1971-1972)

*The beginning of the dry season finds the Indochinese Communists concerned about their declining ability to expand international support of their cause. They have lost the propaganda initiative to the US with President Nixon's announcement of planned visits to Peking and Moscow. They are now continually in need of reassurance of the loyalty of the USSR and China and edgy about the possibility of a great-power settlement of the Indochina war "behind their backs." The seven-point peace plan they offered last summer not only has so far failed to put the US on the defensive, but, to Hanoi, it appears that pressures on the US for an accommodation on Communist terms have actually declined. In the military sphere, the Communists have been unable to exploit the large-scale withdrawals of US troops from Vietnam.*

*The Communists are not without resources, however. Their building of a major military threat to Phnom Penh strengthens our belief that the Communists intend to try for some significant psychological gains during this dry season. They would hope to project an image of strength, capability, and determination to fight in Indochina, regardless of US air and material support for their enemies. They clearly would use the impact of any spectacular victory to press their cause for total US withdrawal from the area.*

Cambodia: The First Thrust

*Hanoi may believe Cambodia will yield the most lucrative psychological and military gains in the immediate weeks to come. The North Vietnamese seem to reason that a series of defeats inflicted on friendly forces in this theater, where operations are still relatively easy for the Communists and where world press coverage is plentiful, would impact hard against US policy not only on Cambodia but also on Vietnam.*

*Battlefield reports during the recent Communist attacks on the Chenla II forces north of Phnom Penh indicated that enemy troops were fighting with a ferocity inconsistent with the military objective of inhibiting future Cambodian advance toward Communist base areas and supply routes in northeastern Cambodia. The Communist troops may have been trying to administer a serious drubbing to their opponents in order to shatter the Cambodian Government's morale while simultaneously drawing a press reaction that would play up their continued strength and prowess.*

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The subsequent movement of at least two--and possibly three--enemy main force regiments into a position directly threatening Phnom Penh smacks largely of a move designed for psychological effect. The Communists really have little to gain militarily from an assault on the city, but for public impact penetration of the capital or even an extended siege would almost certainly attract much attention from the world press. The chances of a successful Communist attack into Phnom Penh will decline the longer the Cambodians have to prepare defenses. Nonetheless, the Communists still appear to be in a good position to maintain for some time a credible threat to the capital, at a relatively cheap military cost. Aerial observers report the enemy is preparing fortified positions not far from the city.

In the immediate future at least, the offensive of South Vietnamese units in eastern Cambodia around Route 7 will not relieve the Communist pressure on Phnom Penh. Enemy units near the city were not drawn from areas of eastern Cambodia where the ARVN will be operating. It is possible, however, that the South Vietnamese attack will draw to the east the 9th North Vietnamese Division from its operations against Cambodian troops in the Chenla II area. Some Cambodian units could then be freed for use around Phnom Penh.

South Vietnam: A Harder Nut to Crack

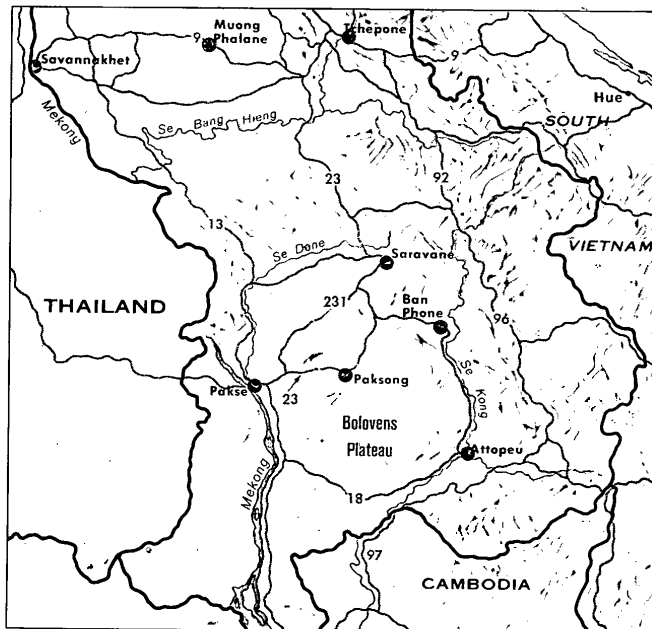
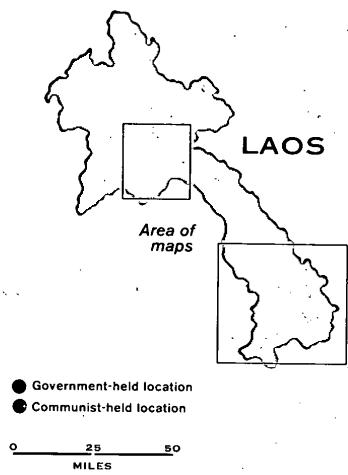
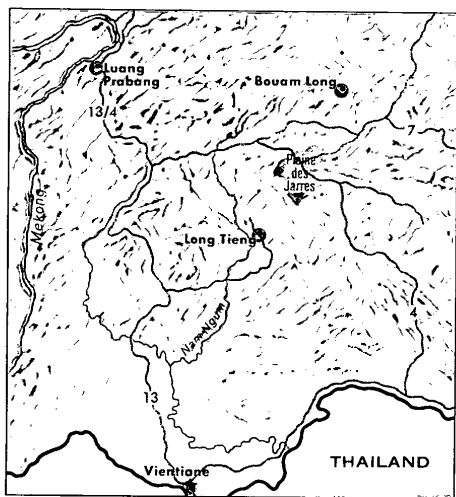
The Communists probably anticipated that the South Vietnamese would move into Cambodia to help take the pressure off friendly forces. There is some evidence [redacted] that the Communists believe this move will open opportunities for them to attack in the Military Region 3 area around Saigon. Such opportunities are restricted, however, to the border areas of Military Regions 1, 2, and 3. Communist elements, moving mostly from border sanctuaries, can still concentrate in multiregimental strength and enjoy the advantage of short, relatively secure supply lines for limited operations. In the past, Communist operations in the border areas--primarily sieges of friendly military strongpoints--have often been depicted by much of the world press as reflecting continuing enemy strength and resoluteness, without regard for the fact that such operations have had little enduring impact on the security of South Vietnam. A Communist campaign in the border sectors should be expected again during the coming dry season, particularly in the early months of 1972 when the weather favors such military operations in Military Regions 1 and 2, and when supplies and replacements coming through the Lao panhandle will be in place.

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The allies received a foretaste of the border foray strategy last month when the enemy attacked with two divisions in the Krek - Tay Ninh Province border area. They hoped, according to a wide variety of sources, to score a victory over reacting South Vietnamese forces that would severely undercut claims of success for Vietnamization. Instead, the Communists took a notable beating and the South Vietnamese seem to have emerged from the fray with increased confidence. These two divisions must now hold off the new South Vietnamese venture into Cambodia.

Aside from military actions, a terrorist action of low cost but high psychological value against a target such as the US Embassy or MACV military headquarters cannot be ruled out at any point.

Laos

The North Vietnamese regard control of the Plaine des Jarres as the keystone of their strategy in north Laos, and they have expended considerable effort to prevent permanent erosion of their control. Since the Communists do not now hold the Plaine they will almost certainly attempt to recapture it. The Communists are now moving men and supplies toward this area. The build-up is considerably larger this year than last, probably because the government has more forces at its disposal in stronger positions and because in contrast to the last dry season the North Vietnamese must regain the Plaine before they can push toward Long Tieng.

The chances are better than even that the Communists will also hit hard in the next few months in the Bolovens area of south Laos. The government has made substantial gains there during the rainy season, retaking Saravane, Paksong, and now the logistics center at Ban Phone. The Communists will almost certainly try to get these towns back, both to forestall further government inroads into the infiltration corridor and to open an alternate supply route along the eastern edge of the Bolovens. In the eastern panhandle there is evidence that Hanoi fears another substantial ground incursion into the corridor this year by allied ground forces and is strengthening its forces in the area to meet such a challenge.

The Balance Sheet

However much Hanoi may be convinced that it must show Communist military muscle, its means for doing so are slimmer than in the past. Troop replacements for Communist forces in Cambodia and South



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*Vietnam have not fully kept pace with attrition during the past year. Overall, the enemy faces the coming dry season with troop strength perhaps five to ten percent below last year when its operations, by military standards, failed to make significant, lasting gains in South Vietnam. Communist forces are still feeling a severe supply pinch. US ground force strength is of course rapidly declining but by contrast, the supplies, manpower, morale, and combat readiness of friendly forces in Indochina, on the whole, are slightly improved over last year.*

*If Hanoi does achieve some sort of military victory, the North Vietnamese will want to exploit it in the political sphere. With Le Duc Tho heading back to Paris it seems certain that the North Vietnamese plan to try to refocus Western attention on their demands. We have noticed some hints that a new political formula might be forthcoming in Paris, but recent propaganda statements from Hanoi so far leave the regime committed to the seven points. In public, the North Vietnamese have recently been more explicit about their demands for a complete termination of every type of American military involvement in Indochina--a position that takes them back to some of their harder-line periods of the past. If they could pull off a few ostentatious military successes, there would be even more reason to expect them to continue to hold a hard negotiating position.*

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