

The President's Daily Brief

5 January 1972



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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

New Delhi may soon upgrade its representation in Hanoi to an embassy as a gesture of displeasure over US support for Pakistan. (Page 1)

According to Ambassador Swank, Sirik Matak's relations with Cambodian Prime Minister Lon Nol have improved. (Page 2)

In Laos, the North Vietnamese have resumed their attacks on Long Tieng. (Page 3)

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INDIA

An announcement raising the Indian consulate-general in Hanoi to an embassy will be made "within a few days," [redacted]

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[redacted] two years ago [redacted] New Delhi had decided in principle to raise the level of its representation in North Vietnam to counter big power, particularly Chinese, influence there and to encourage Hanoi to follow an independent course in international relations. It was decided at that time to move only when the "situation was ripe."

Several recent reports have indicated that Prime Minister Gandhi has been seeking ways to show her displeasure over US support for Pakistan. Mrs. Gandhi may also hope that this step would prompt socialist countries to recognize Bangladesh.

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CAMBODIA

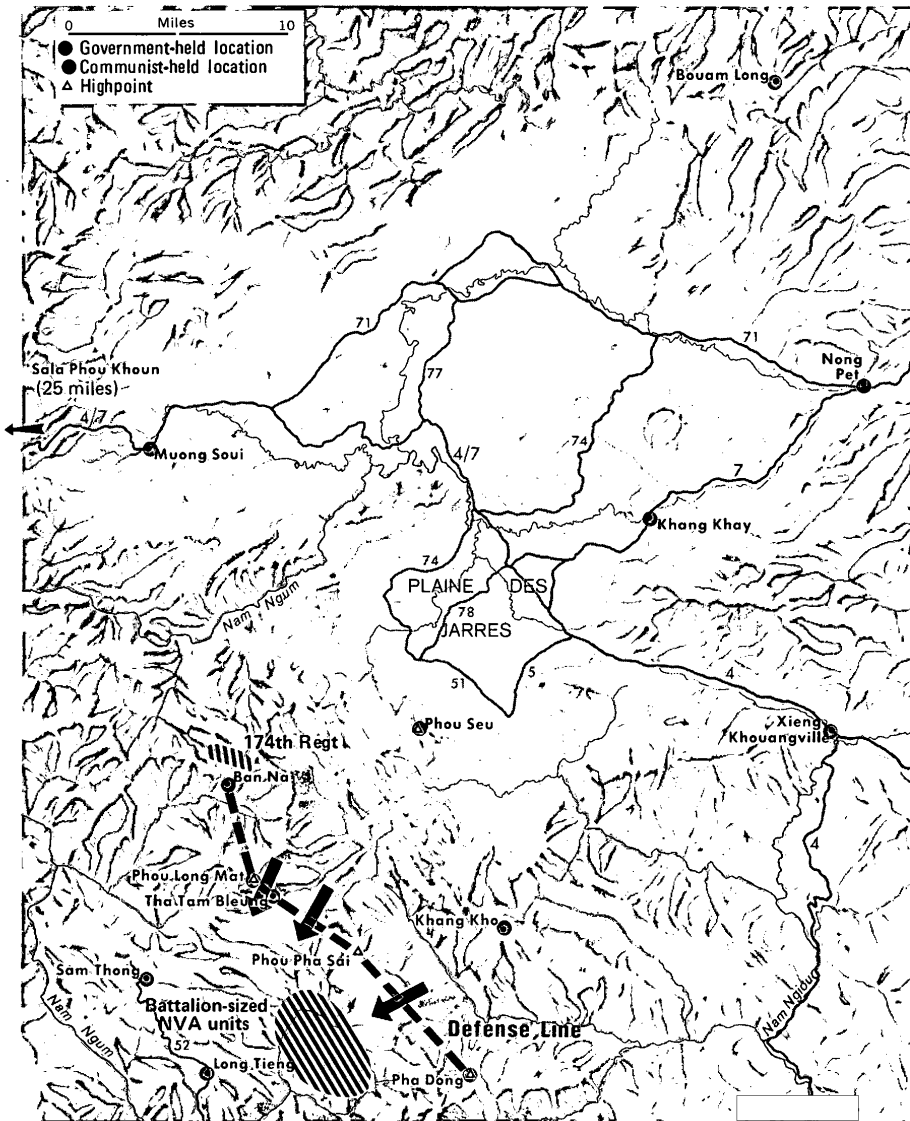
Ambassador Swank reports that Sirik Matak's relations with Lon Nol have improved considerably, and that the two leaders seem to have reached a modus vivendi for the time being. Matak told the ambassador on Monday that both he and the army general staff were delighted with Lon Nol's pleased reaction to the President's most recent letter and to his apparent receptiveness to US suggestions for administrative reforms in the army. Matak stated that he believes the prime minister is now reconciled to a military force level of 220,000 men.

Although Matak was still somewhat skeptical regarding the good bill of [redacted] health recently given Lon Nol, he said that the important thing is for him to get adequate rest and leave details to others.

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Matak claimed that the political atmosphere is showing signs of stabilizing as memory of the recent military reverses on Route 6 recedes. He made no mention of any cabinet changes in the near future, other than the anticipated resignation of Finance Minister Sok Chhong on the valid grounds of ill health.

LAOS: PLAINE DES JARRES AREA



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NOTES

Laos: After a hiatus of two days, the North Vietnamese have resumed their attacks on Long Tieng and its immediate defenses. Last night they again shelled the base with the 130-mm. field guns, and at the same time overran an outpost three miles north of Sam Thong. Radio direction finding indicates that several North Vietnamese battalions have filtered through the defense line between Phou Long Mat and Pha Dong. Elements of the 174th Regiment remain in position around Ban Na. To the west, Pathet Lao and dissident Neutralist forces on 3 January overran a government outpost some ten miles east of Sala Phou Khoun at the junction of Routes 7 and 13. There is, however, no evidence that main force North Vietnamese units have moved westward along Route 7.

Ecuador: With the campaign for general elections in June officially opening on Friday, a number of military plotters have indicated that they might move against the Velasco government soon. The expected early return from exile of Assad Bucaram, a widely popular potential candidate, might stir rightists to move.

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The divergence and disunity among the plotters may enable President Velasco to finish his term, however, and he might even call off the elections and continue to rule with dictatorial powers as he has since June 1970.

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