



The President's Daily Brief

6 January 1972

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THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

6 January 1972

PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

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The North Vietnamese evidently are preparing to begin "phase two" of their dry season offensive in northern Laos. (Page 1)

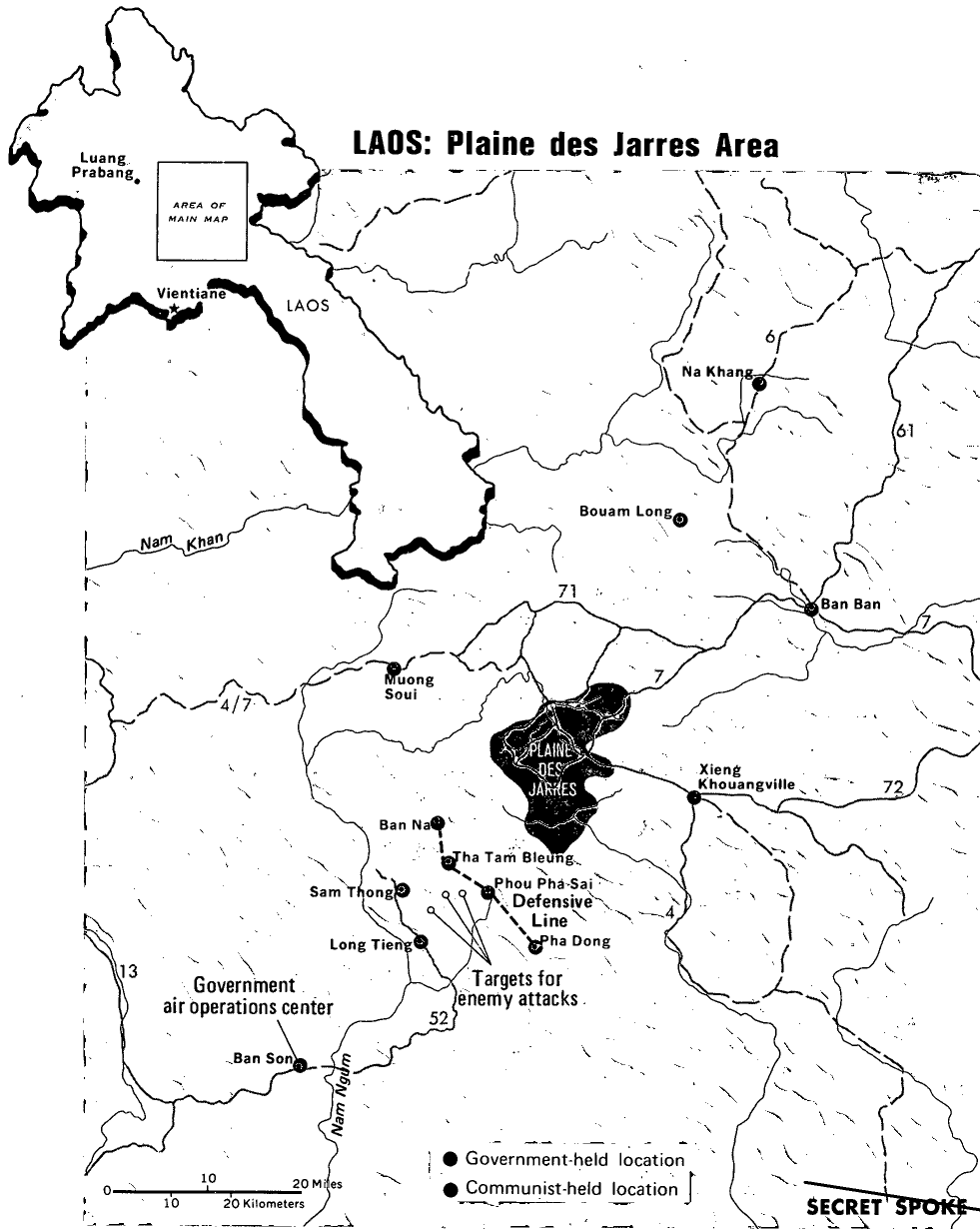
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[Redacted] Vietnam [Redacted] (Page 2)

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On Page 4 we discuss the recent reduction of Communist pressure in Cambodia.

London is still readying its forces for a hasty departure from Malta. (Page 5)

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LAOS

A North Vietnamese intercept refers to attacks planned for today as the opening of "phase two" of the dry season offensive. Various highpoints between Long Tieng and Tha Tam Bleung are cited as targets for battalion-sized attacks.

As in the past, there may be some slippage in the target date, but elements of the North Vietnamese 312th and 316th divisions, supported by the 866th Independent Regiment, are in position to strike at any time.

The government is continuing to redeploy its forces around Long Tieng. Additional facilities have been moved out of the Long Tieng valley, including some tactical navigation aids. Lao Air Force T-28s now are operating out of Vientiane, a move that significantly reduces their time over targets near Long Tieng. Two additional battalions from northwest Laos arrived in the Long Tieng area on Monday and have taken up defensive positions.

Some increase in enemy activity north of Luang Prabang, plus the continuing threat of new attacks in southern Laos, will make it difficult for the government to deploy additional units to the Long Tieng area.

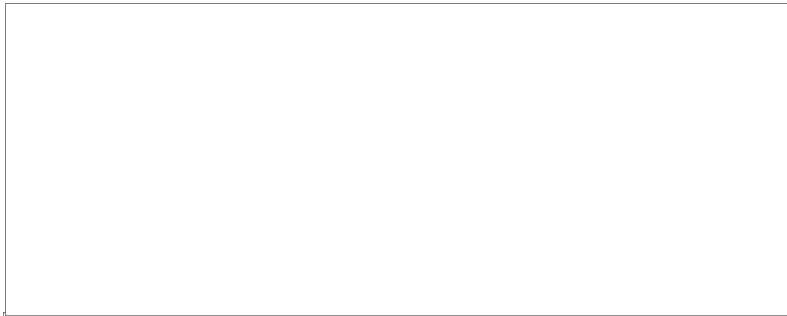
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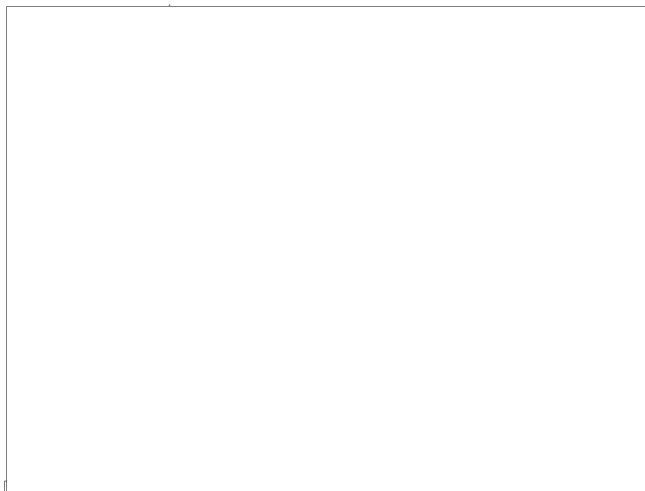
VIETNAM



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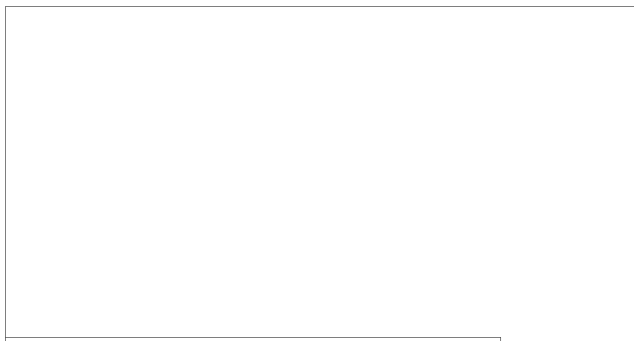
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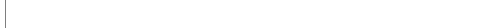
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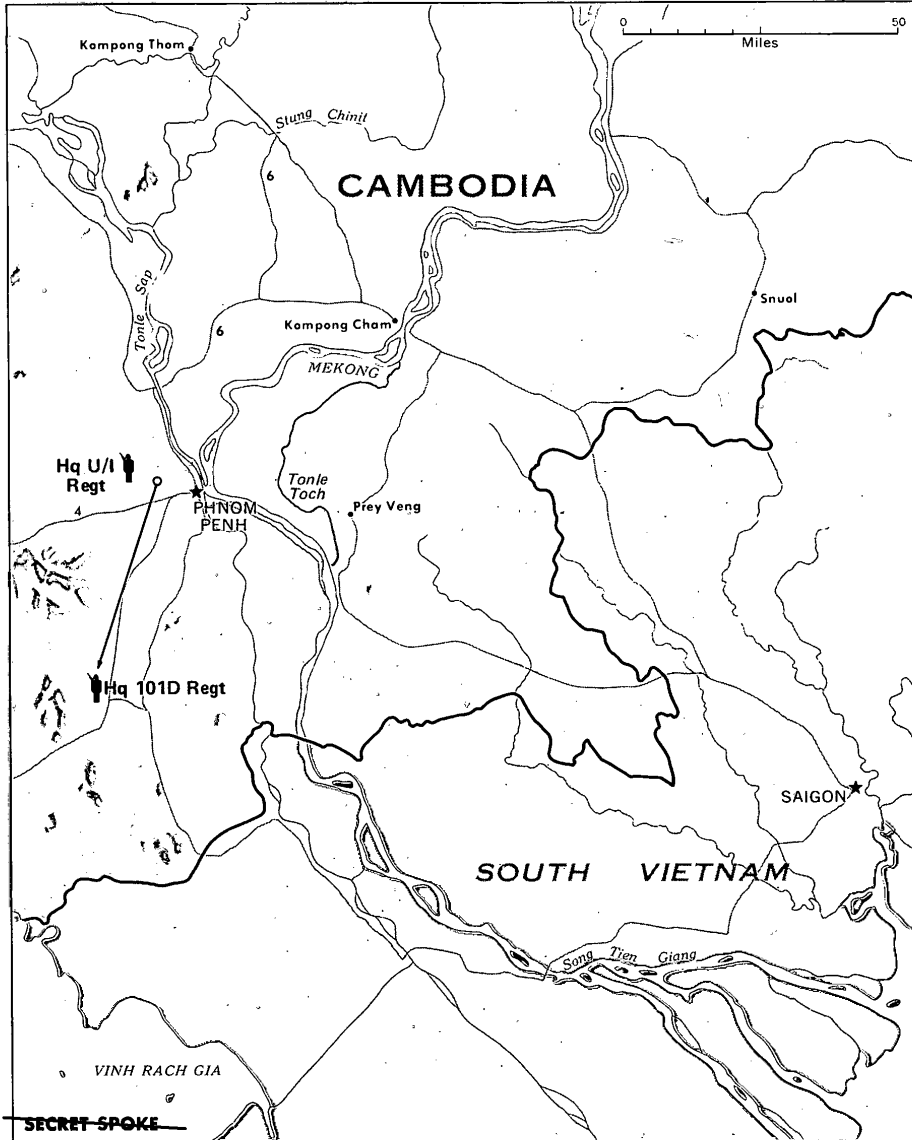
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CAMBODIA

The North Vietnamese [redacted] left the Phnom Penh area and by 4 January had moved some 40 miles to the south in western Takeo Province. This leaves [redacted] the Communist Phuoc Long Front within striking range of the capital's outer defenses.

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The pull-back from Phnom Penh apparently is part of a general reduction of enemy pressure throughout the country. The Communists have not attacked in strength any important government position for more than two weeks. Although they have conducted harassing attacks in the Tonle Toch region east of Phnom Penh and in several other areas, these seem designed to keep Cambodian Government troops away from Communist supply lines.

It is likely that the current lull in the fighting stems from the need for Communist troops to rest and refit after two months on the line, especially in the Route 6 and Phnom Penh areas. The Communists may also be trying to obtain as much of the current rice harvest as possible.

We expect that sooner or later the Communists will again accelerate their offensive in Cambodia. In last year's dry season campaign, they engaged in heavy combat during November and December, followed by three months of relatively low-keyed military activity. In April, they initiated a new round of sharp fighting along Route 4, and another during May and June in the Tonle Toch area.

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MALTA

Although Britain is being pressed in NATO to reopen negotiations with Malta with an increased financial offer, London is continuing to prepare for withdrawal of its forces. Maltese civilian employees have been given termination notices, and British officials have announced that the evacuation of military dependents, expected to begin Saturday, will be completed by 15 January.

The British apparently hope that the adverse economic effects of their withdrawal will put pressure on Mintoff to temper his demands. They may also be seeking other means to resolve the crisis, such as encouraging Mintoff's opponents.



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