

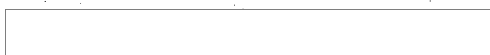


The President's Daily Brief

15 January 1972

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

15 January 1972

PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

Government forces in Laos still hope to reverse some of the Communist gains in the immediate Long Tieng area, but Prime Minister Souvanna has now authorized evacuation of the base, if necessary. (Page 1)

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[redacted] Pakistan. (Page 2) 25X1

The British remain pessimistic about the outcome of renewed negotiations with Malta. (Page 3)

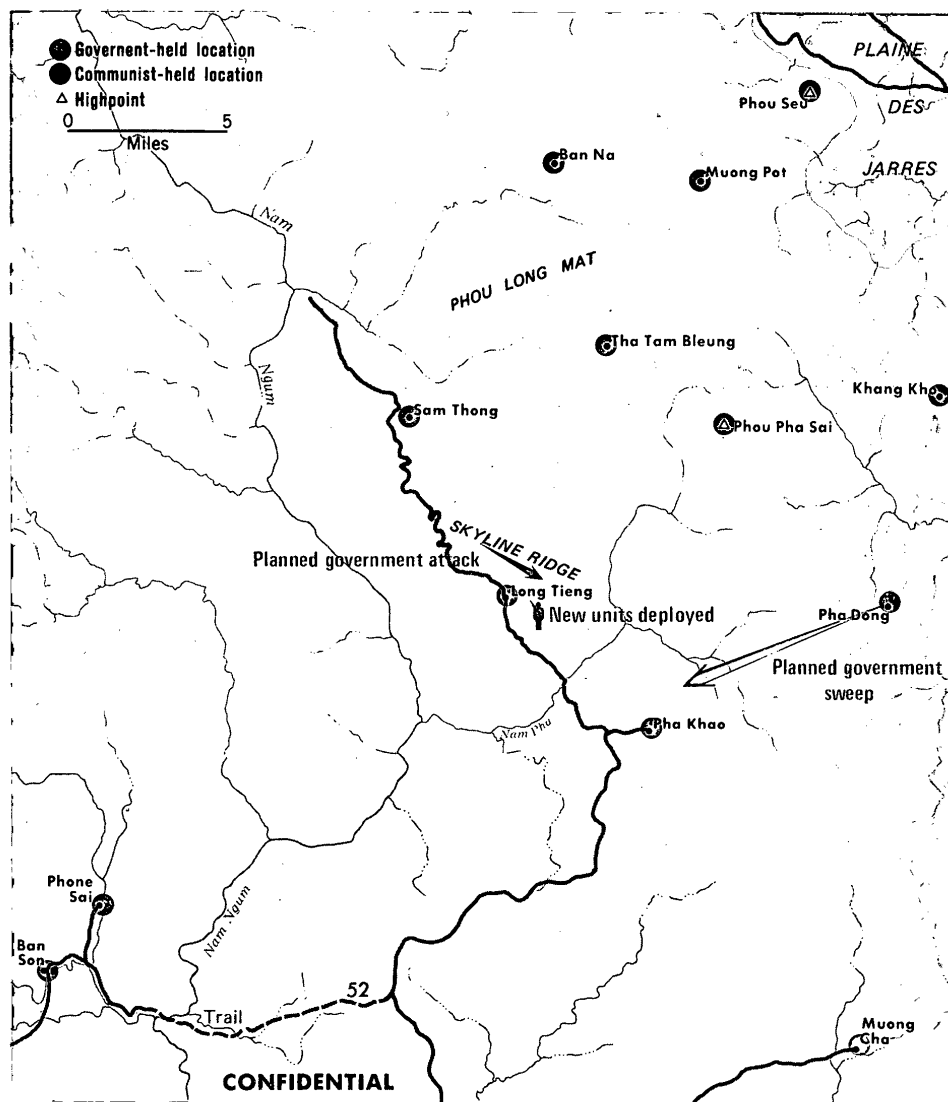
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Ghana's new rulers show little talent so far for running the country. (Page 5)

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LONG TIENG AREA



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LAOS

Government forces are making an effort to re-take Skyline Ridge overlooking Long Tieng. Four irregular battalions are being withdrawn from isolated positions in the Phou Long Mat - Tha Tam Bleung area and moved to the western end of the ridge, the only portion now in government hands. Together with irregular units already in Long Tieng, they plan to attack the North Vietnamese units now digging in on the east end. Late yesterday, government troops succeeded, despite heavy resistance, in reoccupying at least one position on the ridge.

The outcome of this effort will depend in large measure on the government's ability to move swiftly and on an early end of bad weather, which has been hampering close air support. The government's position in Long Tieng will quickly become untenable, however, if the North Vietnamese can strengthen their hold on the ridge. The Communists have already placed heavy machine guns and a field gun of unknown size on the ridge.

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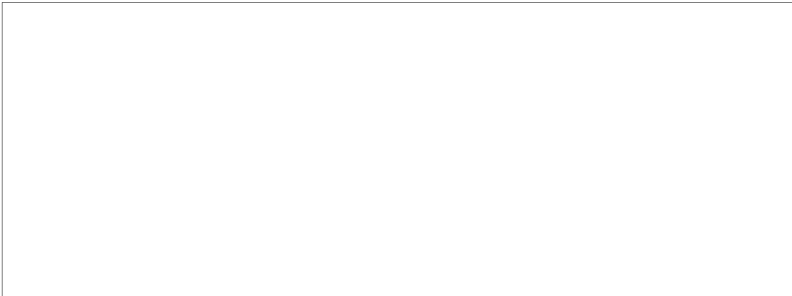
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The government is trying to pull some of its units closer to Long Tieng either to help defend the base or to screen a withdrawal to the southwest. Units from the Phou Pha Sai area have moved to Pha Dong and are to begin a sweep operation toward new positions seven miles southeast of Long Tieng. In addition, [redacted] battalions arrived in Long Tieng on 13 January and are moving into positions southeast of the valley.

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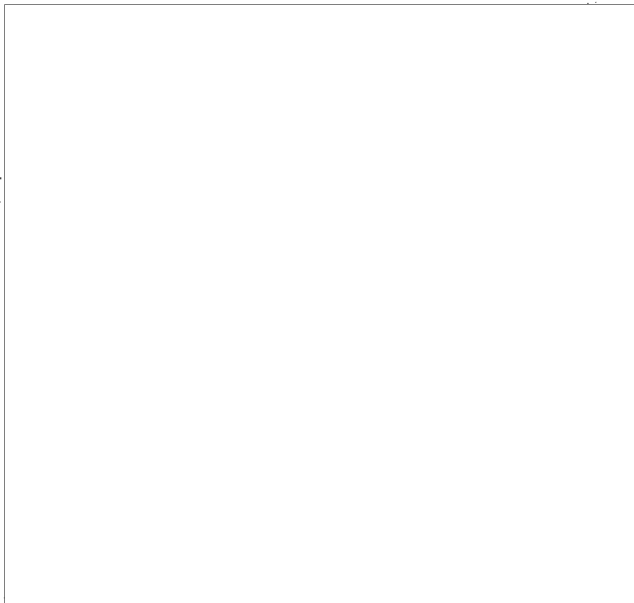
COMMUNIST CHINA - PAKISTAN



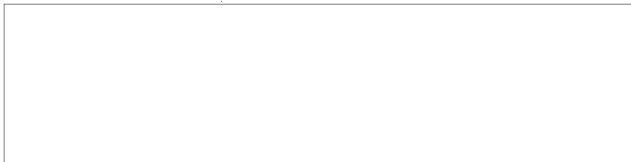
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MALTA-UK

The British have agreed to have Lord Carrington resume negotiations with Mintoff in Rome today. Before leaving Brussels, however, Carrington told a US official that he was not at all optimistic about the outcome. He added that, if the negotiations fail, Britain will want to go ahead with complete withdrawal from the island. In a similar comment, a cabinet minister told US officials in London on 13 January that Britain will not stay in Malta unless Mintoff does a "total turn around," implying that London will not put up with any more temporary settlements. The minister said that the fundamental issue is Mintoff's unreliability and the unlikelihood that any durable accord can be reached with him.

Despite this assessment, the British are willing to go along with the wishes of their NATO allies to increase NATO's offer to more than \$31 million annually when Valletta resumes talks with the UK. The British hope that this approach will clearly establish that failure of the negotiations is due to Mintoff's intractability and not to any British machinations.

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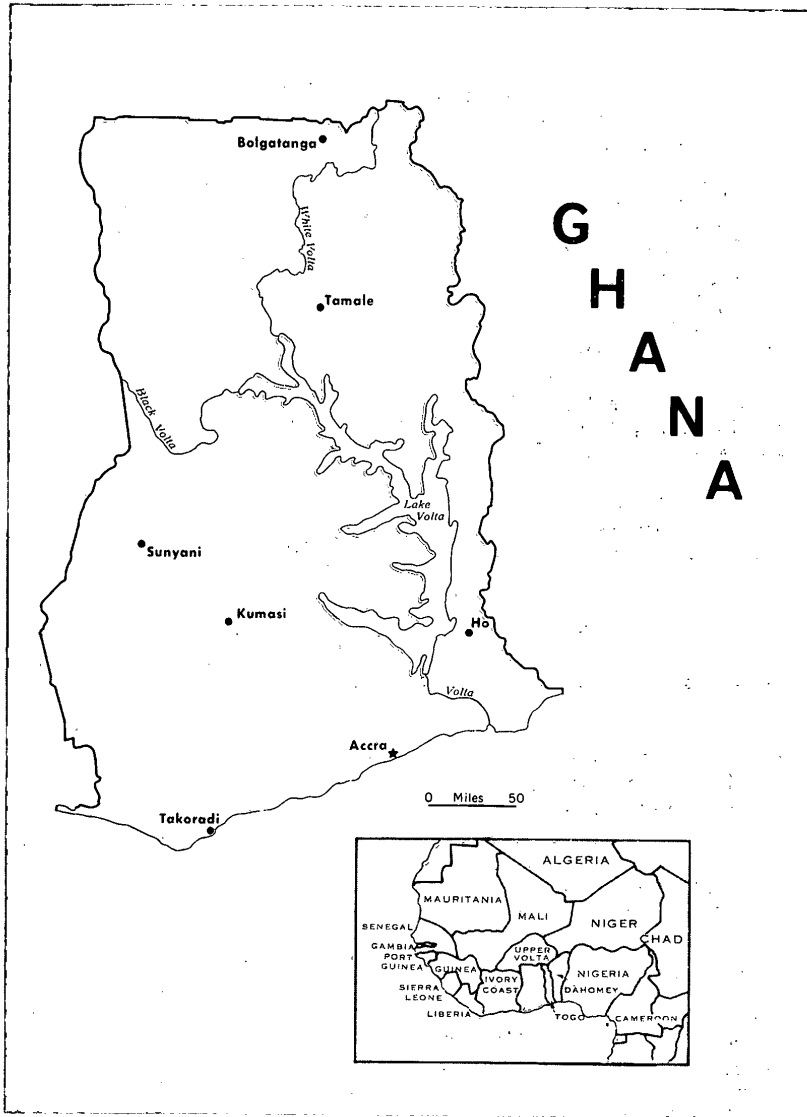
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GHANA

Lieutenant Colonel Acheampong has moved to consolidate his power by placing his supporters in the key military posts. He has not, however, taken steps to fill the membership of his National Redemption Council, which is to include representatives from all important interest groups. Acheampong has announced that the unpopular austerity measures of the ousted Busia regime will be either rescinded or reviewed, but he has as yet formulated no programs of his own.

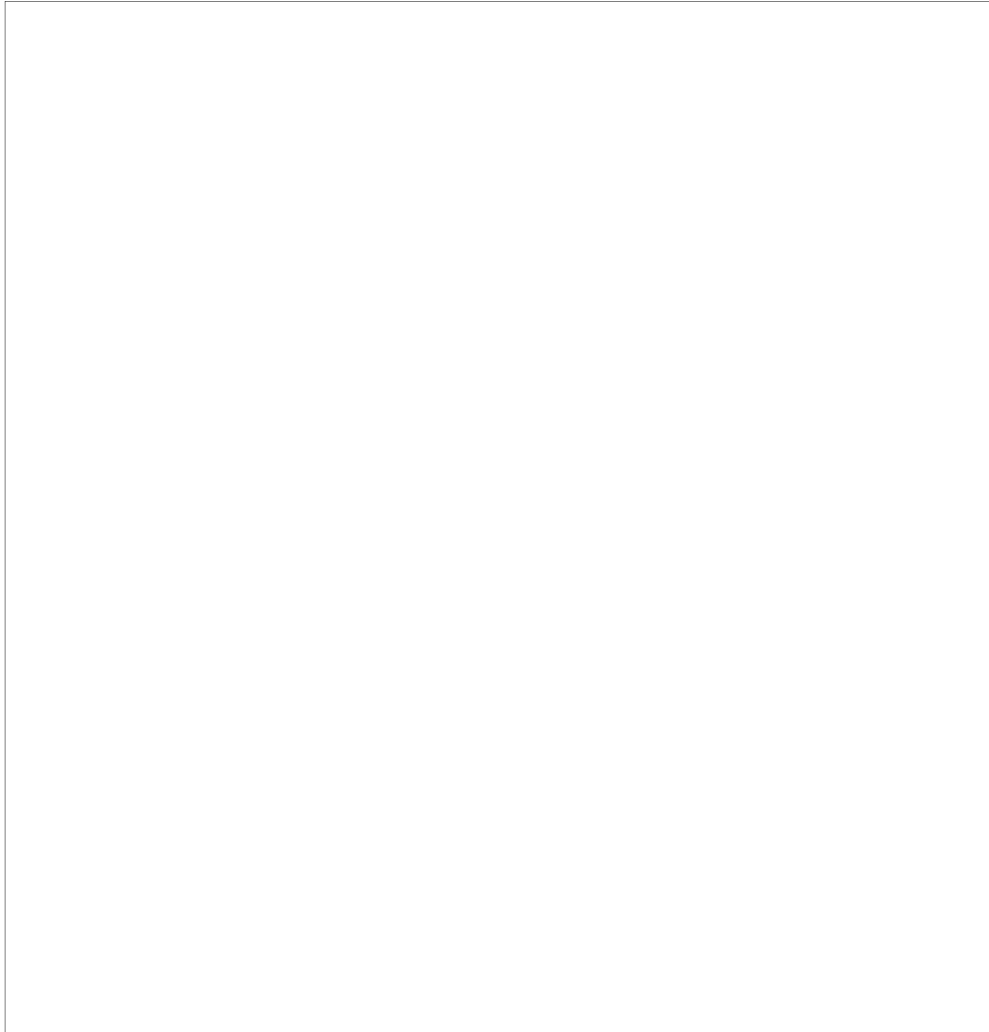
It seems obvious that the coup against Busia involved little planning for the future, and that Acheampong has little notion of what to do with the power he now holds. The obscure and uninspiring middle-level officers named to the National Redemption Council's executive appear to be united only by a common dissatisfaction with past promotions and with civilian interference with military perquisites. All share a woeful lack of governmental experience. Most of them, however, appear to be admirers of the US.

Former Prime Minister Busia left London for Ivory Coast. He has issued a statement urging Ghanaians to remove the "disgrace" in Accra

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NOTE

Indochina: Recent aerial photography and pilot sightings indicate that one and possibly two operational surface-to-air missile sites are located in the vicinity of Muong Nong, Laos. Previous SAM sites were restricted to areas close to the North Vietnam border and to Tchepone at the time of Lam Son 719 last spring. The establishment of a SAM site this far south confirms that the North Vietnamese will continue to challenge US aircraft over the logistics corridor. The Communists have also established several SAM sites close to the DMZ that can fire on US aircraft flying over northern South Vietnam.



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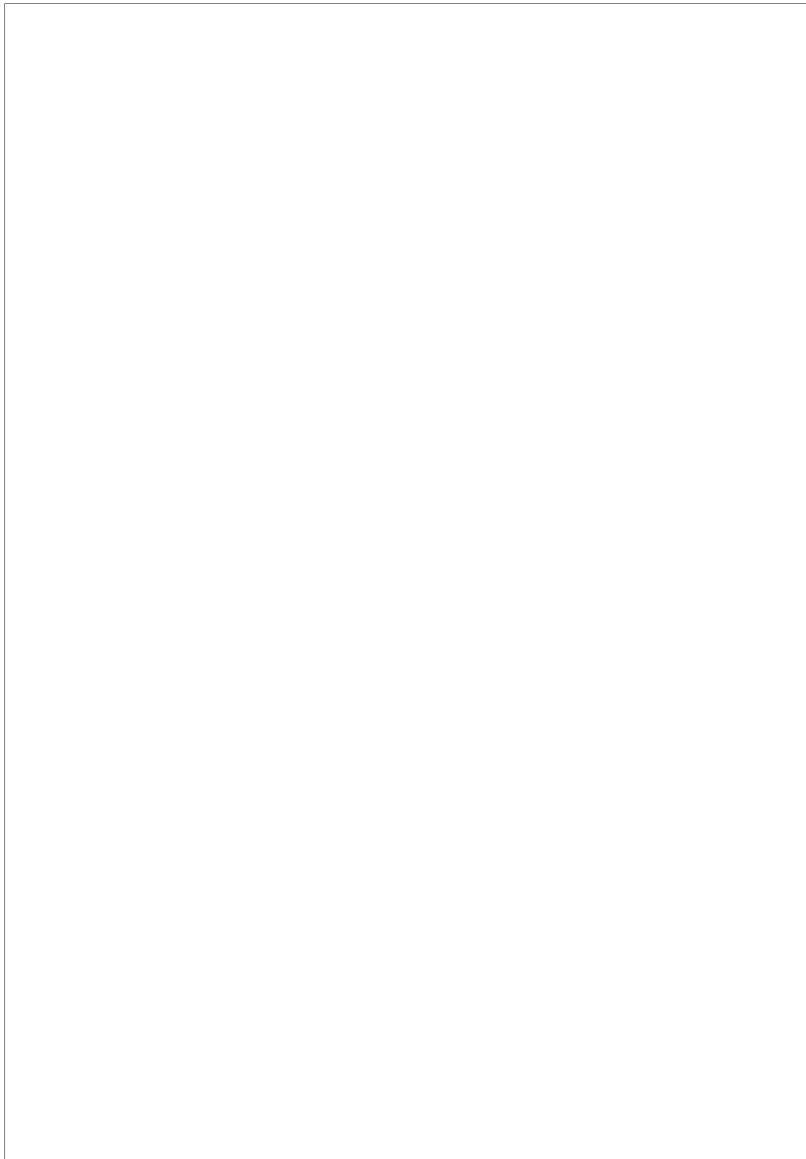
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