



The President's Daily Brief

4 April 1972

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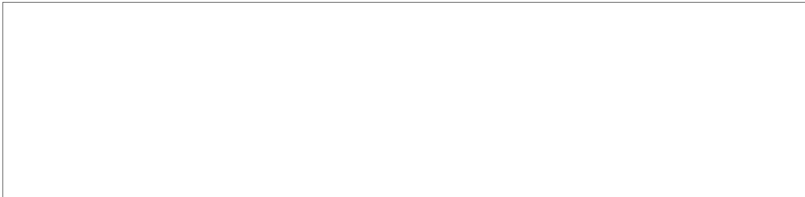
FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

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PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

South Vietnamese forces in Quang Tri Province are regrouping to defend the provincial capital. (Page 1)

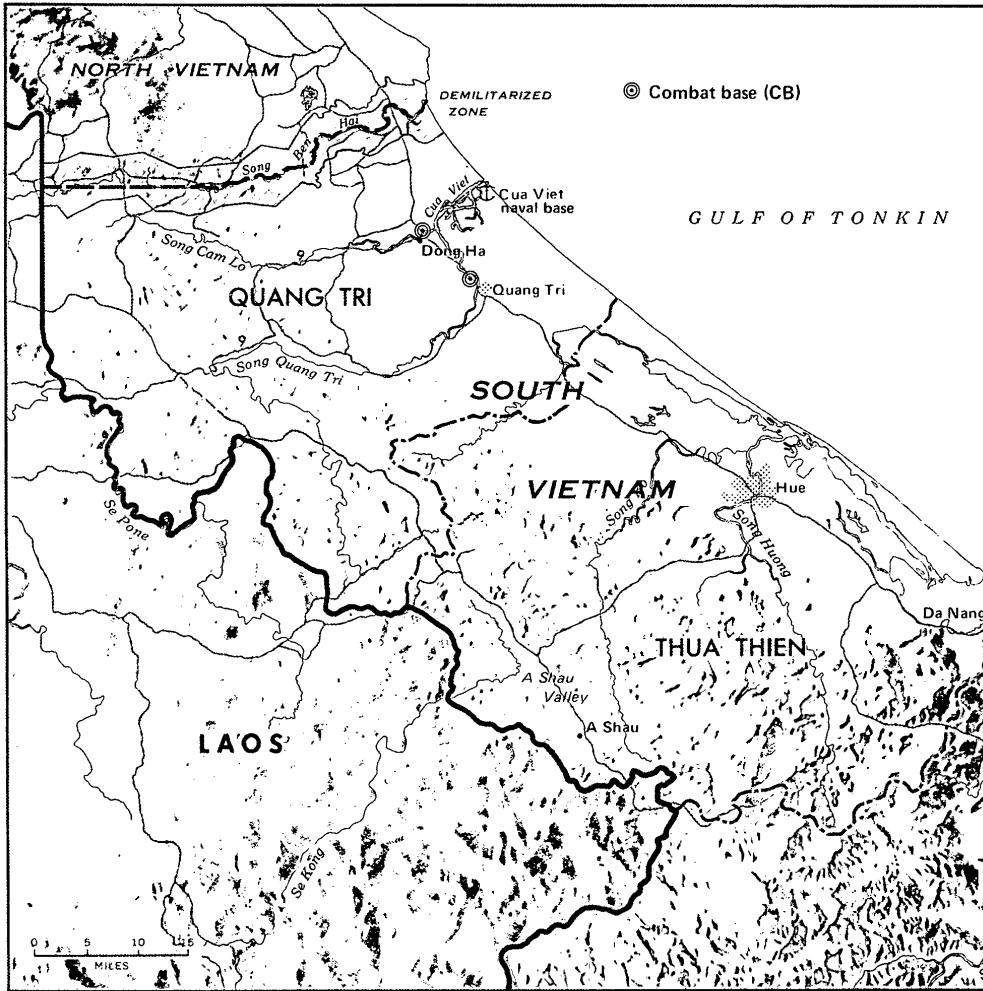


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Inadequate food distribution and labor unrest are causing serious difficulties in Bangladesh. (Page 5)



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VIETNAM

South Vietnamese forces in Quang Tri Province are regrouping to defend the provincial capital. The South Vietnamese are apparently counting on elements of their 3rd Division to coordinate the defense with reinforcements reported to be en route from the south. Dong Ha and Quang Tri combat bases are the only remaining allied strongpoints north of Quang Tri city, and Dong Ha has been hit hard by enemy artillery. The eastern flank of the city has been exposed by the evacuation of the South Vietnamese Navy base at Cua Viet.

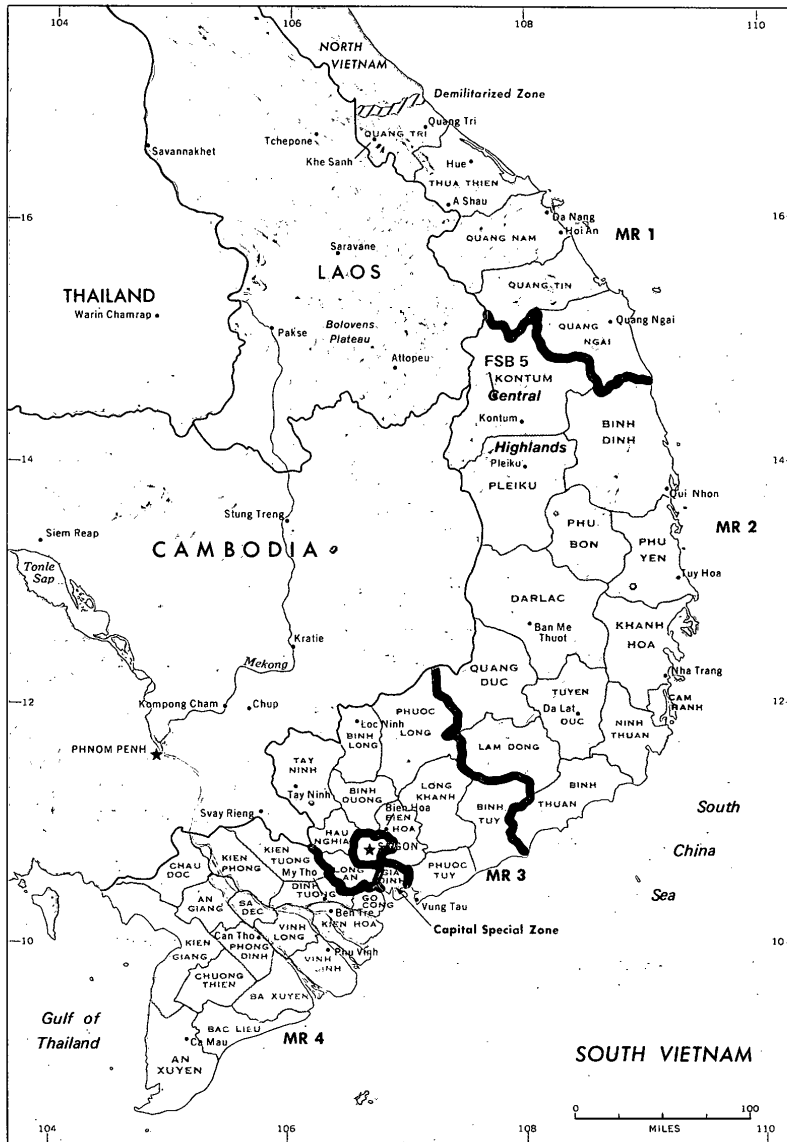
There are indications in communications intelligence that the North Vietnamese 308th Division has moved into the battle zone. This would raise the number of North Vietnamese regiments in the area to 13. North Vietnamese tanks are reported to have crossed the Ben Hai River over a newly constructed bridge, and a few have been sighted south of the Cua Viet River.

The weather over Quang Tri Province has improved enough to allow some allied air strikes, but the damage inflicted is not yet known. The North Vietnamese have markedly increased the strength of their air defenses along the borders of northern South Vietnam. Allied aircraft have encountered intense antiaircraft artillery fire over Quang Tri Province, and the enemy has fired some 50 to 60 surface-to-air missiles from positions north and west of the DMZ.

The enemy is shelling South Vietnamese positions in the foothills west of Hue in Thua Thien Province, and there have been several small ground engagements with enemy forces edging closer to the coastal lowlands. Communist communications reflect enemy intentions to attack Hue. One unit radioed on 3 April that "our tanks have moved out and will surround the city of Hue."

(continued)

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In the highlands, a South Vietnamese artillery base on Rocket Ridge, some five miles southwest of Fire Support Base 5, withstood an attack

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The Communists are continuing to build up their forces in this area.

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The South Vietnamese generally have reacted calmly to the invasion thus far. On 3 April, there was little sign of panic in Quang Tri city, although the streets were choked with refugees from the DMZ area. Saigon is taking the news of the fighting and the loss of bases near the DMZ quietly. The press is generally restrained, but the government has confiscated some newspapers to prevent dissemination of lurid accounts of the fighting, and Saigon is censoring battlefield reports.

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PAKISTAN-BANGLADESH



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BANGLADESH

Inadequate food distribution and labor unrest are causing serious difficulties for Prime Minister Mujib's government. Several violent clashes have occurred, and opposition elements are beginning to speak out against the regime. Maulana Bhashani, leader of the small but active National Awami Party/Left, has denounced the government for failing to preserve law and order and for corruption and favoritism among members of Mujib's ruling Awami League. Bhashani also objected to Mujib's warning that troublemakers will be shot, saying this could be used as a pretext to suppress all political opposition. Other, more moderate politicians have also criticized the lack of law and order.

Mujib has embarked on a trip to several district capitals, his first such tour since his return in January. As the country's revered and dominant figure, he apparently is counting on his personal charisma to override the opposition as he attempts to cope with his country's enormous problems. No real challenge to his continuation in power has yet materialized.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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