

The President's Daily Brief

21 April 1972

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

21 April 1972

PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

Satellite photography shows that the Soviets are developing a large new ICBM. (Page 1)

In South Vietnam, critical situations are shaping on several fronts. (Page 2)

Enemy units have taken several towns along Route 1 in Cambodia. (Page 4)

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The North Vietnamese are maintaining pressure on the USSR and their other allies for stronger public support of Hanoi's war effort. (Page 6)

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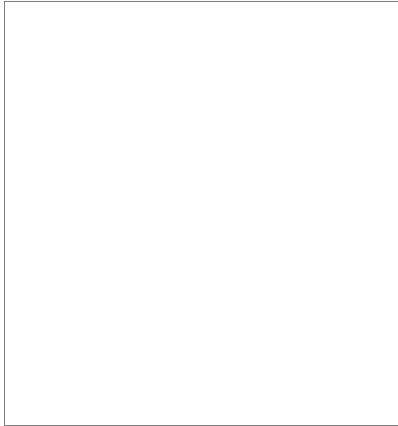
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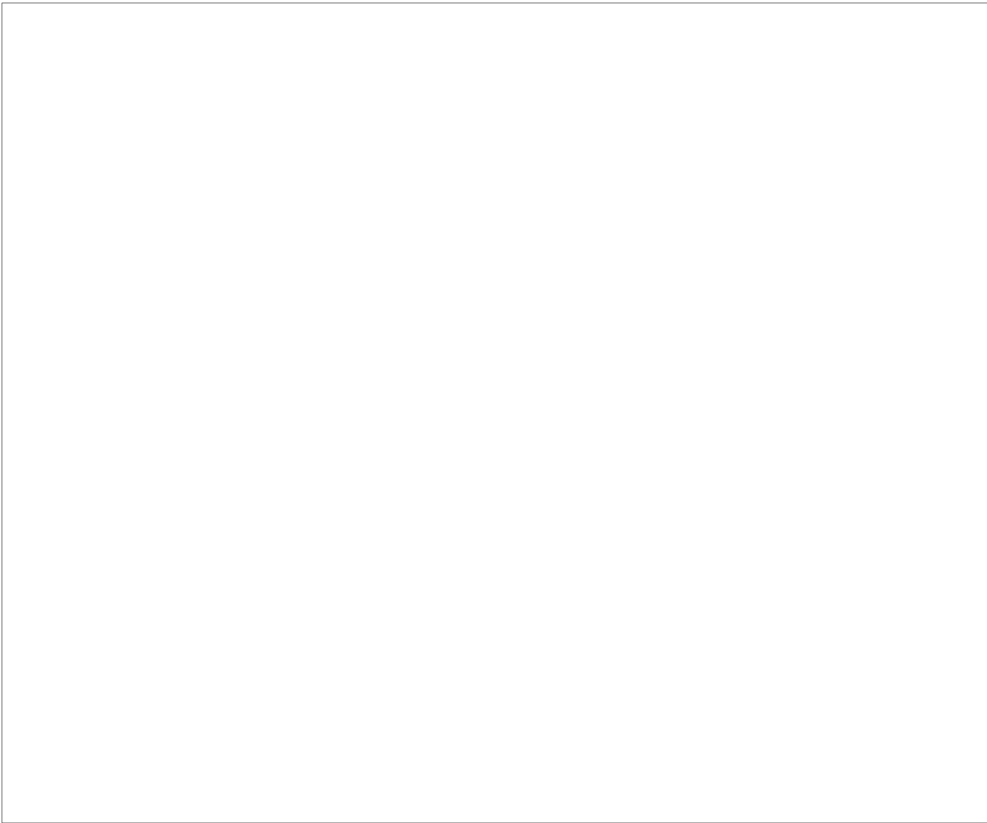
Soviets



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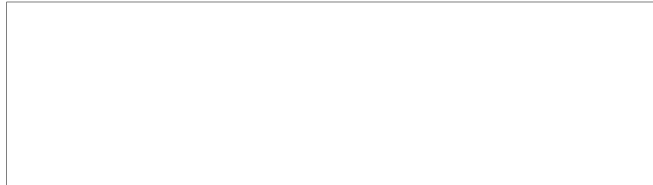
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USSR

The latest satellite photography of the Tyuratam missile test center indicates that the Soviets are developing a new large ICBM for deployment in the large silos which have been under construction at five of the six SS-9 complexes since the fall of 1970. The new missile appears to be at least as long as the SS-9 and one or two feet larger in diameter.

Two missile bodies on rail cars and a new missile transporter were seen at the support facility serving Launch Complex H--the part of the range used for the initial testing of all four variants of the SS-9 ICBM. On rail cars adjacent to each of the missile bodies is a cylindrical object with about the same diameter. This cylinder could be an additional section of the new ICBM and could extend its length well beyond that of the SS-9.

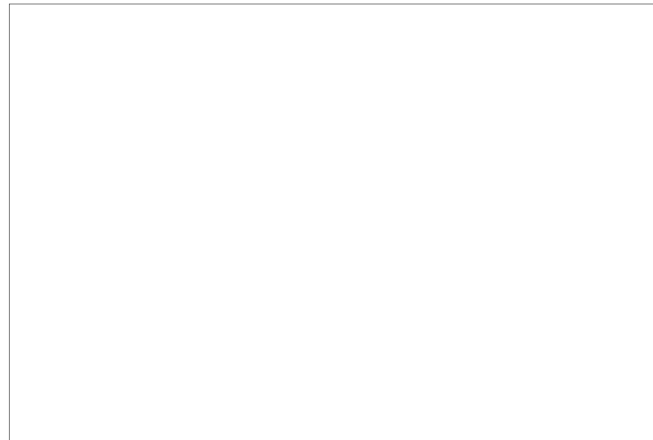
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Near the two launch pads at Complex H there is a considerable amount of debris, including the remnants of a missile body with about the same diameter as those on the rail cars--12 feet.

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SOUTH VIETNAM

Critical situations are shaping up on several fronts in South Vietnam.

Following another massive shelling, An Loc was again attacked by tanks and infantry which penetrated the northern part of town on 19 April. The defenders' ammunition and medical supplies are running low, [redacted]

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In Saigon, government leaders are becoming concerned about a new threat to the capital. They are evidently worried about the series of enemy attacks along Route 1 in Cambodia's "Parrot's Beak" region, a traditional launching point for enemy moves against Saigon. [redacted]

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This possibility may be behind the South Vietnamese high command's reluctance to hurry more of the 21st Division to the relief of An Loc.

In the delta, intercepts suggest the Communists will soon try to exploit their recent successes in Chuong Thien Province. There are now three main force regiments controlled by a divisional headquarters in the province, and they have recently moved close to the provincial capital, Vi Thanh. Government forces throughout the delta are on full alert in anticipation of a general increase in enemy attacks.

In the central part of the country, South Korean forces are bogged down in their effort to clear the strategic An Khe Pass into the highlands. The enemy has kept the pass closed for more than a week and food and ammunition shortages in the Kontum-Pleiku area are becoming a significant problem.

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In Military Region 1, stiff clashes continue west of Quang Tri city and Hue. In the three southernmost provinces of the region, Viet Cong and North Vietnamese units are continuing a damaging guerrilla

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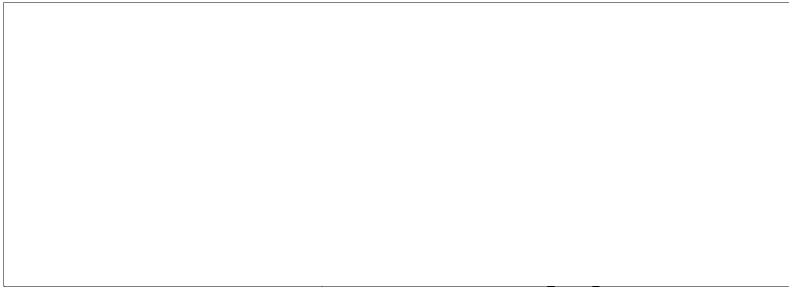
campaign along the coast. They are striking hard at refugee resettlement centers, provincial towns, roads, and regional defense units. The US consul general in Da Nang has reported that in Quang Ngai Province, following the departure of some regular South Vietnamese units for battlefields farther north, a Viet Cong main force battalion has been moving from one government-sponsored settlement to the next, systematically burning each to the ground. [redacted]

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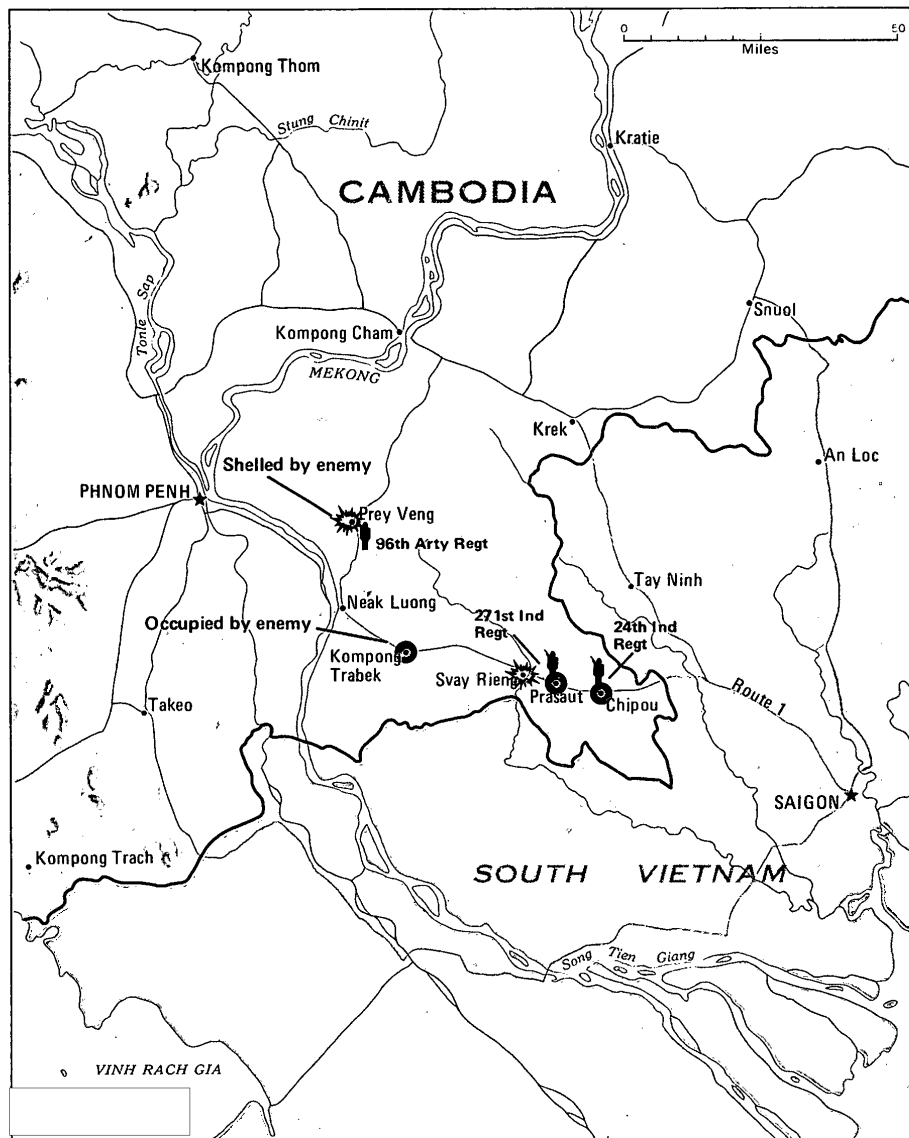
[redacted] the Communists are setting up "revolutionary political administrations" in areas that they dominate militarily.

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CAMBODIA

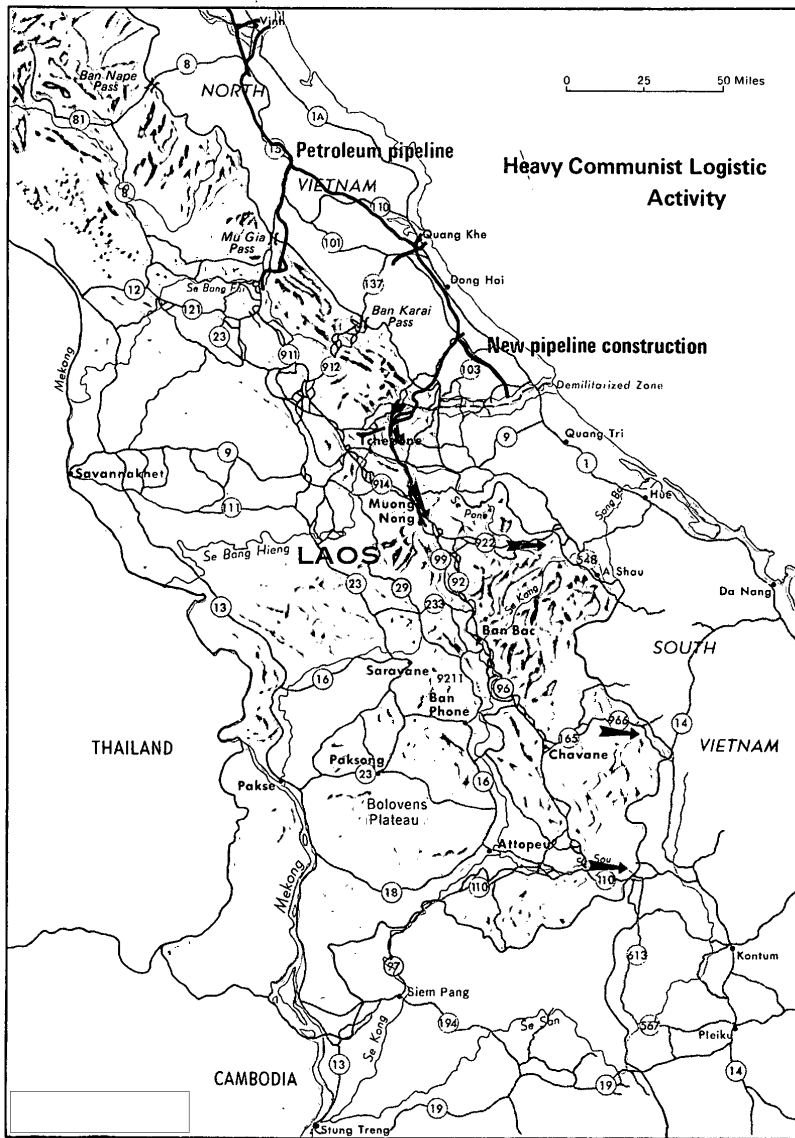
Enemy units have attacked a number of government positions along Route 1 between the Mekong River and the South Vietnamese border, closing the main road between Phnom Penh and Saigon. The enemy has taken the towns of Kompong Trabek, Prasaut, and Chipou. The Communists have also shelled the provincial capitals of Prey Veng and Svay Rieng, but have not followed with ground attacks.

Thus far the Cambodians have done little to reopen the highway. The regional Cambodian commander has claimed that he must have additional troops before a clearing operation can be launched along Route 1. For the moment, he plans only to expand and clear a large zone around the South Vietnamese base at Neak Luong, on the Mekong's east bank.

The Communists may have seized control of the eastern section of Route 1 in order to facilitate the flow of supplies through Cambodia to the South Vietnamese delta area; indeed the two enemy main force regiments involved in these attacks could be passing through Svay Rieng's "Parrot's Beak" region en route to southern South Vietnam.

Almost all of the enemy main force units in Cambodia are concentrated on the South Vietnamese border, and thus are not in a position to open a broader offensive throughout Cambodia, or to threaten Phnom Penh or other population centers west of the Mekong River. Nevertheless, the effect of the attacks on the Cambodian Government will be to heighten its nervousness that the heavy fighting in South Vietnam is now spilling over the border. There will also be some concern that the supply flow to Phnom Penh via Route 1 will be interrupted for a long period, although the Mekong River is the principal pipeline into the capital.

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INDOCHINA

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A recent Communist message discussed plans to establish a new storage complex on Route 9 in South Vietnam and to stockpile supplies for use during the rainy season. In addition, aerial photography shows that between 7 and 14 April a pipeline from a petroleum storage area along Route 101 approximately 14 miles south of Dong Hoi has been extended 30 miles to a point just north of the Ben Hai River in the DMZ.

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NORTH VIETNAM - SOVIET UNION

On 20 April, the North Vietnamese Fatherland Front (a grouping of mass organizations under control of the Communist Party) voiced yet another appeal for more international support, the fourth time since the offensive began that the Vietnamese Communists have formally called on their allies to be more forthcoming. On the same day the party daily published an editorial that emphasized the value of Soviet aid to the current offensive. In discussing the notes exchanged by Moscow and Washington over the bombing of Haiphong last weekend, the editorial quoted approvingly the US assertion that Moscow and other socialist countries must "share the responsibility" with Hanoi for the recent attacks in South Vietnam. It strongly implied that Hanoi continues to expect its comrades in Moscow and elsewhere to render full support to the war effort.

By stressing the "valuable support" from the Soviets, Hanoi is making it as difficult as possible for the USSR to equivocate in its public support of North Vietnam.

The USSR probably resents Hanoi's efforts to extract stronger and more open backing of the current offensive. Moscow must regard the timing of the offensive as most unfortunate and must be concerned that matters of far more import to the USSR--i.e., the Soviet-US summit and its European policy--will be jeopardized.

Indeed, the Turks tell us that during President Podgorny's recent visit to Turkey, Deputy Foreign Minister Kuznetsov professed ignorance about the actual situation on the ground in Indochina but said the USSR could not condone increased US bombing raids over North Vietnam. During the visit, which ended on 17 April, the Soviets stressed that the USSR attaches great importance to the forthcoming meeting with the President and has hopes of making substantial progress in Soviet-US relations.

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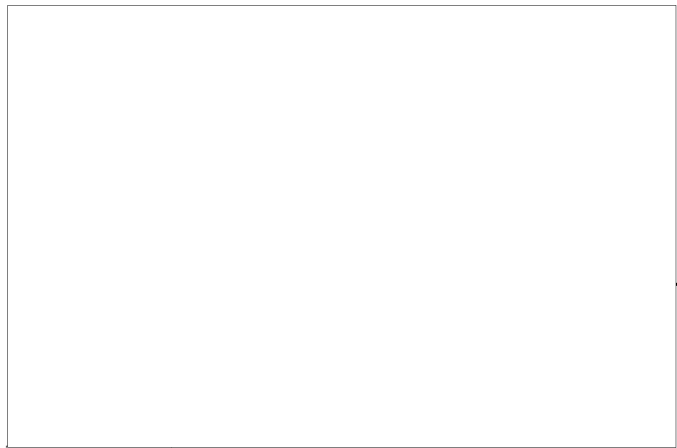
CHINA-US



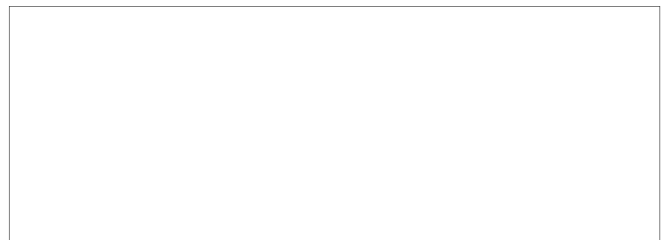
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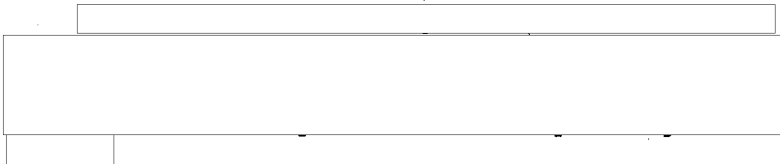
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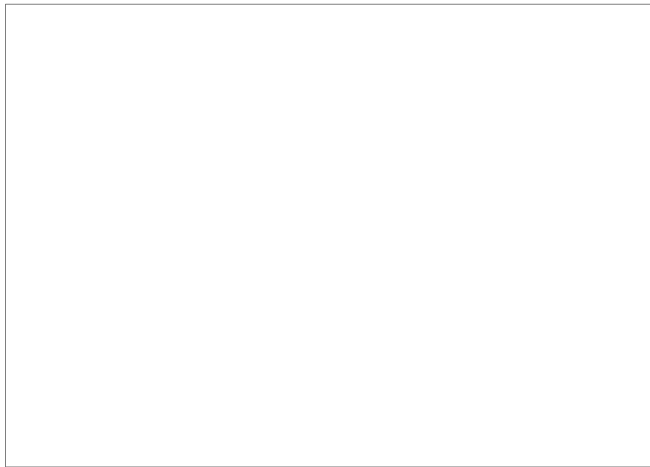
USSR



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