

*The President's Daily Brief*

11 July 1972

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*FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY*

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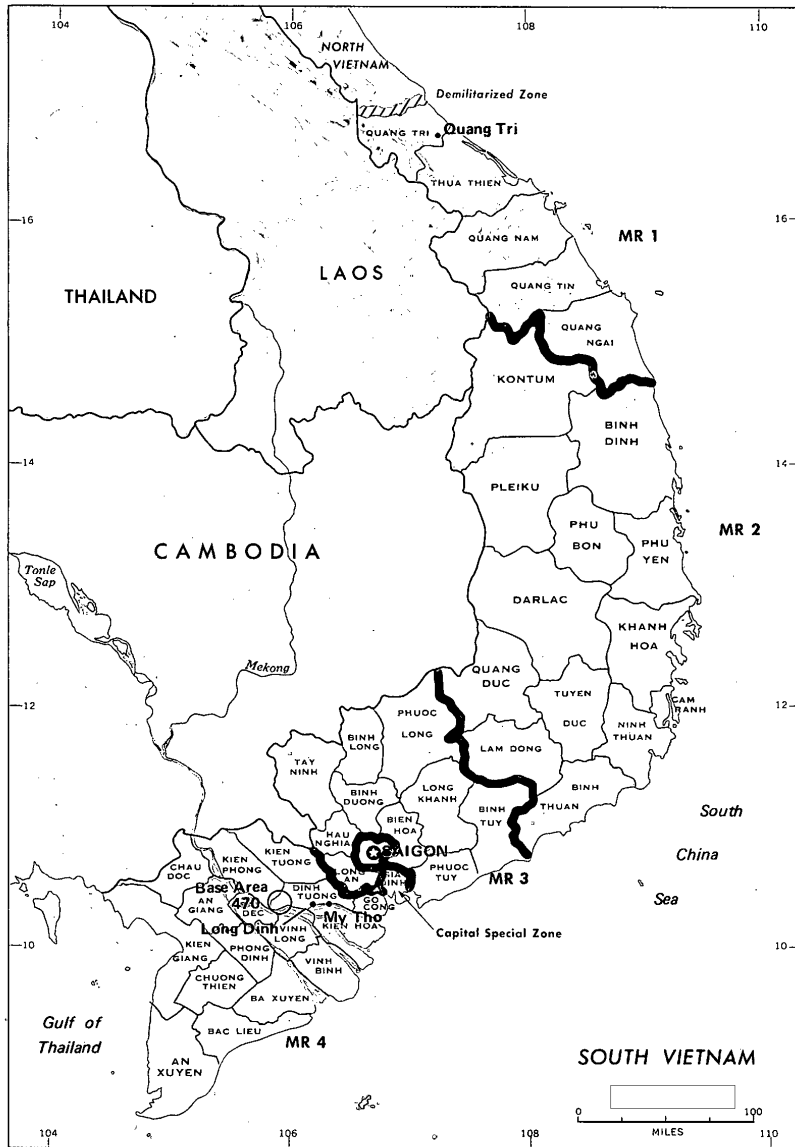
PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

The advance of South Vietnamese airborne elements in Quang Tri City is being delayed by enemy artillery attacks. In the northern Mekong Delta, heavy fighting continues. Meanwhile, Xuan Thuy has arrived in Paris amid indications the Communists will stick to their standard demands when the talks resume on Thursday. *(Page 1)*

Peking appears to be hinting that the time has come for a negotiated settlement of the war. *(Page 2)*

Philippine President Marcos has won an important test in his bid to retain power beyond December 1973. *(Page 3)*

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## VIETNAM

South Vietnamese airborne elements are still in the southwestern section of Quang Tri City, but their further advance is being delayed by artillery attacks by the well-entrenched Communist defenders. Airborne forces south of the city have also been subjected to shelling attacks; marine units to the east, supported by artillery and naval gunfire, reportedly destroyed six enemy tanks yesterday.

There is continuing evidence that the Communists are suffering supply and coordination problems. A recent intercept from an element of the North Vietnamese 304th Division showed that the unit had failed to prepare attack plans and indicated that it was short of rice, ammunition, and infantry weapons. Earlier intercepts show that other Communist units in the Quang Tri area have been having difficulties supplying artillery ammunition and in coordinating the use of artillery.

Heavy fighting continues in Dinh Tuong Province in the northern Mekong Delta. Enemy troops attacked the district headquarters in Long Dinh, eight miles west of the provincial capital at My Tho. The regional commander believes that this action, together with the Communists' efforts to clear the area around their nearby Base Area 470, is designed to draw government forces away from the border areas in Cambodia and to open infiltration routes to the delta.

\* \* \*

Xuan Thuy, North Vietnam's chief negotiator, arrived in Paris yesterday amid further indications that the Communists will stick to their standard negotiating demands when talks resume on Thursday. At an airport press conference, Thuy condemned US bombing and reaffirmed Hanoi's commitment to the Viet Cong's seven points, but he did assert that the Communists would "gladly examine any new proposals from the US." In other recent statements, Communist spokesmen have been adhering to a tough position on negotiations, calling for an end of the US bombing and mining, and rejecting the possibility of a cease-fire without a political solution. Hanoi announced this morning that Le Duc Tho, chief adviser to North Vietnam's negotiating team, left Hanoi today and is en route to Paris.

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## CHINA-INDOCHINA

Peking appears to be hinting that the time has come for a negotiated settlement of the war. In a speech honoring a visiting Yemen (Aden) delegation on Sunday, Premier Chou En-lai, citing recent developments in Korea, Japan, and the Indian subcontinent, claimed that the demand for reasonable settlement of mutual disputes had become "an irresistible trend" throughout the world. This emphasis on reasonableness and mutual accommodation was also apparent in a New China News Agency article on 6 July commenting on President Nixon's recent press conference. Although the article stated that it remains to be seen "whether the US Government is prepared to end the Vietnam war through negotiations," it did not specify that Washington must follow Hanoi's scenario to achieve this end.

*Chinese propaganda remains critical of US actions in Indochina and continues to demand a rapid and complete US withdrawal. Peking's comment on the political issues remains ambiguous, however. The NCNA article on the President's news conference, for example, set forth Hanoi's position on political questions in reasonable and non-polemical terms, but carefully refrained from endorsing the North Vietnamese view.*

*Chou En-lai's speech to the visiting Yemenis hints at a possible change of Chinese thinking on the mechanics of a political settlement. Although calling on the US to end its support for President Thieu, Cambodian President Lon Nol, and the "Laotian rightists," Chou pointed out that the recent Korean agreement and the Indian-Pakistani accord on partial troop withdrawals had been reached without the "superpowers' control and interference." This indication that Peking sees advantages in political talks between Hanoi and Saigon without direct US participation suggests that China may be urging North Vietnam to look again at the US proposal for an immediate cease-fire followed by an eventual political settlement to be worked out directly by the two Vietnamese parties.*

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PHILIPPINES

President Marcos has won an important victory in his campaign to retain political power beyond December 1973 when his second term expires. Last Friday the constitutional convention voted to replace the presidential system with a parliamentary form. This will circumvent the two-term limitation the current constitution places on the presidency, and Marcos believes that he could be more easily elected prime minister by the legislature than president in a nationwide contest. The President's forces also defeated efforts to ban Marcos from holding public office in the future.

*The substantial margin of victory in the crucial vote shows that Marcos remains in control of the convention despite recent scandals over the bribing of delegates by his agents. Although the convention must still give final approval to the current working draft, Marcos now should have little difficulty in getting the kind of document he wants.*

*The new constitution, because of its close association with Marcos, still could be rejected in the required national referendum. There is also no certainty that Marcos' Nacionalista Party will win the majority needed to make him prime minister.*

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NOTE

Pakistan: Rioting in Karachi and other cities in Sind Province in the past few days over the declaration of Sindhi as the official provincial language has thus far taken more than 40 lives. Security forces believe the situation is worsening and martial law may be declared. Although police officials do not expect the rioting to spread to other provinces, the flare-up highlights the potential for violence inherent in Pakistan's fragmented ethnic and linguistic make-up, even since the separation of Bangladesh.



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