

*The President's Daily Brief*

*24 July 1972*

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*FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY*

THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

24 July 1972

PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

Soviet surface-to-air missile personnel are apparently part of the forces being returned from Egypt to the USSR.

[Redacted]

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(Page 1)

In the Vietnam fighting, enemy activity increased sharply over the weekend in both Thua Thien and Quang Tri provinces. (Page 3)

[Redacted]

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Vietnam  
(Page 4)

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Lao Prime Minister Souvanna Phouma's two-month struggle with rightist elements in the national assembly may be moving toward a showdown. (Page 6)

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EGYPT-USSR

Soviet surface-to-air missile personnel are apparently part of the forces being returned to the USSR.

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[Redacted]

[Redacted] There have been no flights since President Sadat's announcement of the Soviet withdrawal.

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[Redacted]

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[Redacted] On the whole, Egyptian military activity continued at a routine level.

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[Redacted]

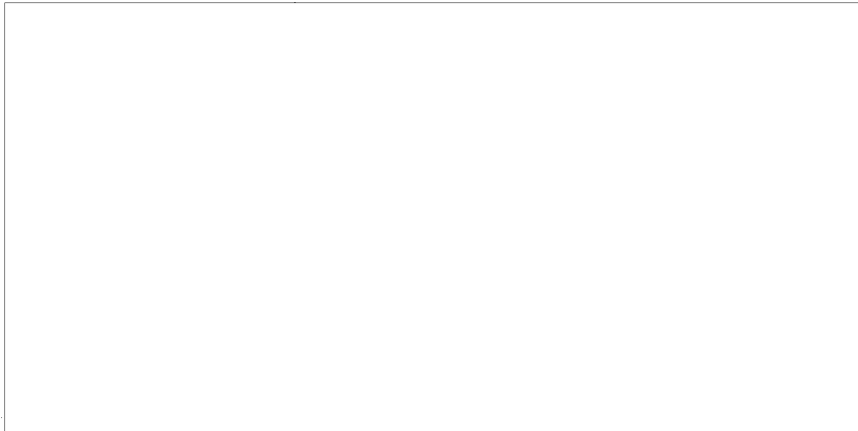
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Moscow is still trying to put on the best face it can. Soviet leaders have sent Egyptian leaders congratulations on the anniversary of the Egyptian revolution and have affirmed the closeness of USSR-Egyptian relations and continued Soviet support. Soviet television has carried a soothing address by the Egyptian ambassador in Moscow, and the press has reported that Soviet advisers were being given a warm ceremonial send-off in Cairo.

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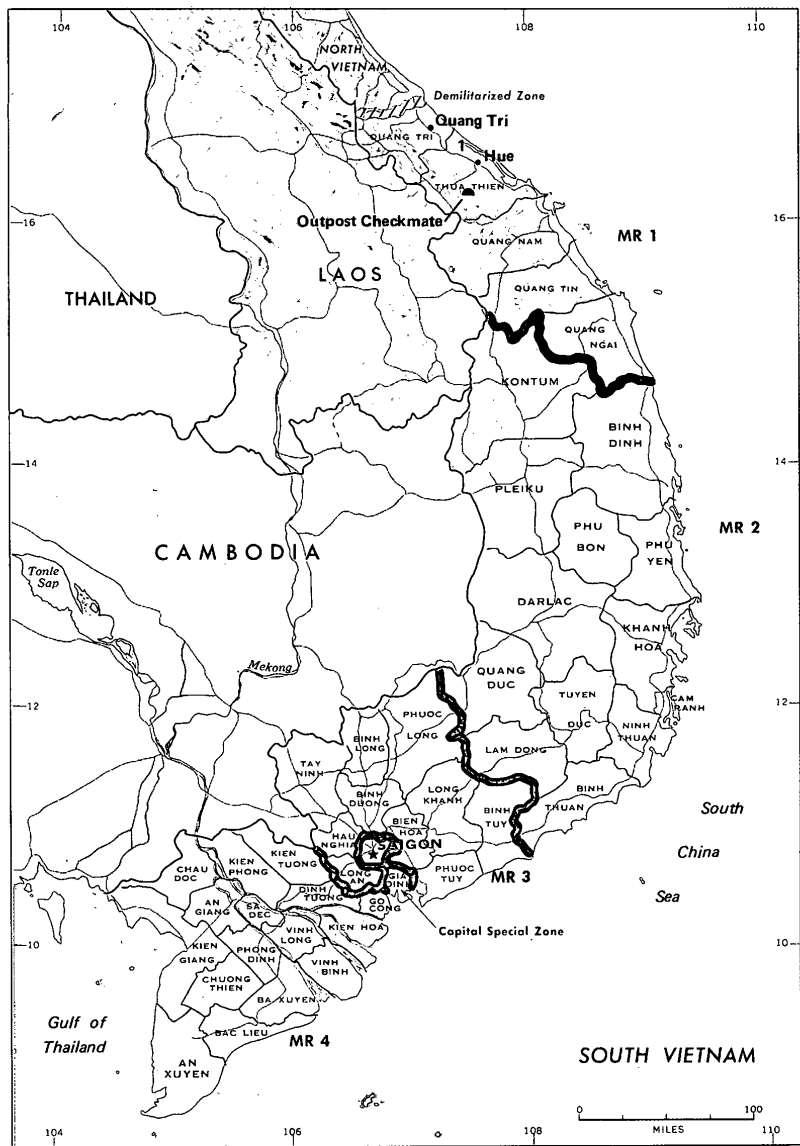
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SOUTH VIETNAM

Enemy activity increased sharply during the weekend. Communist ground and artillery attacks near Route 1 in northern Thua Thien Province on 21 and 22 July resulted in a temporary restriction of traffic on the road, which is the principal land link to government units fighting farther north in Quang Tri Province. There was also heavy ground fighting around Outpost Checkmate southwest of Hue, and government positions in this area were hit by more than 3,300 artillery rounds in a series of shelling attacks.

[redacted] these attacks aimed at interdicting Route 1 are to continue through the end of the month. Artillery attacks on Hue and surrounding positions will also continue through July.

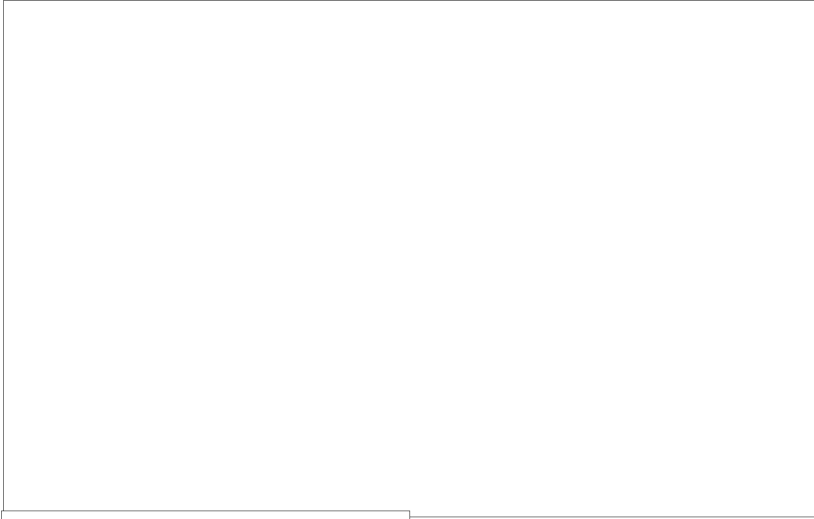
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Action has also been heavy around Quang Tri City. On 22 July a South Vietnamese Marine battalion was airlifted to a point about six miles north of the city, where it joined two other marine battalions. This combined force reports it has inflicted moderate casualties on enemy forces in fighting since the airlift. Other marine and airborne elements have had several clashes with enemy forces located on the city's outskirts, and on Friday, airborne troops fought a pitched battle inside the citadel.

In other developments on the northern front, the headquarters of the North Vietnamese 325th Division has moved from North Vietnam into Quang Tri Province and is now located about 13 miles west of Quang Tri City. Two of its subordinate regiments are already in Quang Tri.

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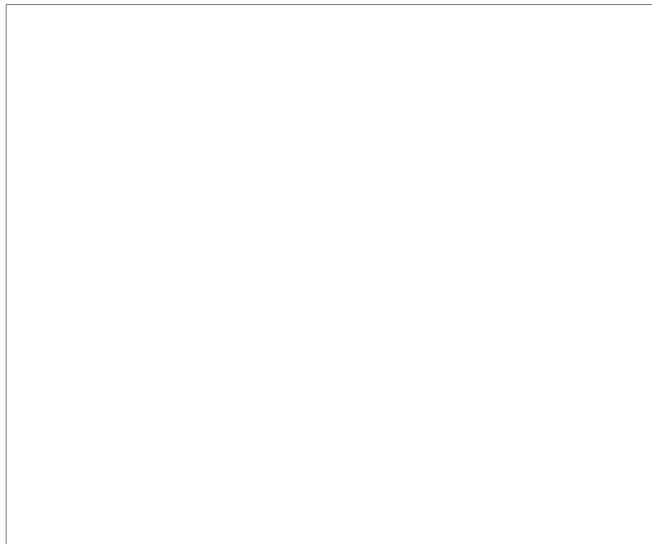
VIETNAM.



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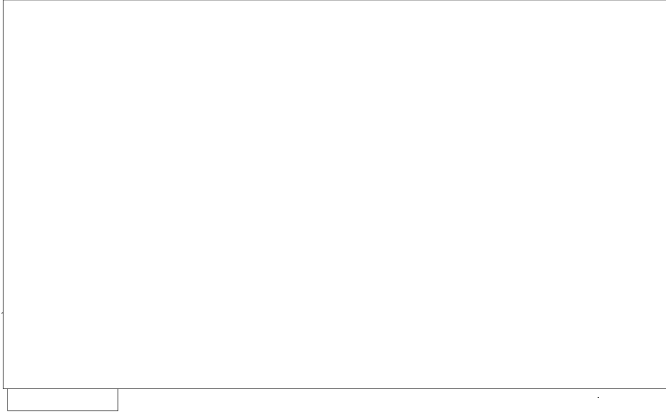
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## LAOS

Prime Minister Souvanna Phouma's two-month struggle with rightist elements in the national assembly may be moving toward a showdown. An earlier compromise between Souvanna and his critics broke down when the King refused to invest the prime minister's government until it had received a vote of confidence from the national assembly elected last January. The rightists, led by the powerful Sananikone family, interpret the King's refusal as supporting their contention that, under the Lao constitution, the Souvanna government must resign and present a new cabinet for the approval of the new assembly. The Sananikones hope to force Souvanna to reshuffle his cabinet and in particular, to drop Finance Minister Sisouk, their archenemy. They also hope to force Souvanna formally to resign in order to undermine his argument that his "coalition" government was invested by the 1962 Geneva Accords.

Souvanna is taking a tough stand against the renewed challenge from the rightists. He has withdrawn his earlier commitment to reshuffle the cabinet and has made it clear that he will not disrupt the continuity of the government by resigning. The burden of terminating the government thus falls on the assembly, and Souvanna appears confident that the Sananikones lack the votes to force the issue there.

Souvanna has moved quickly to line up support. On Friday he gained the strong backing of top military leaders including those in command of troops in the Vientiane area. These generals and prominent civilian politicians are now lobbying with assembly deputies on Souvanna's behalf.

*Souvanna's next move depends on his estimate of his support in the assembly.*

*[redacted] if the lobbying appears successful, he could seek assembly approval of his cabinet as early as Wednesday.*

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NOTE

USSR: Venus 8, an unmanned Soviet space probe,  
entered the atmosphere of Venus on 22 July.

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