



The President's Daily Brief

16 August 1972

45



~~*Top Secret*~~^{25X1}

Exempt from general
declassification schedule of E.O. 11652
exemption category 5B(1)(2)(3)
declassified only on approval of
the Director of Central Intelligence

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

16 August 1972

PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

More Communist forces seem to be headed for the battle of Quang Tri City. The North Vietnamese also appear to have been sending a large number [redacted] to South Vietnam's two northern provinces in the last month and a half. (Page 1)

25X1
25X1

Units of the Cambodian and South Vietnamese task force that has been moving slowly to reopen Route 1 in Cambodia are still two miles from the outskirts of Kompong Trabek. (Page 2)

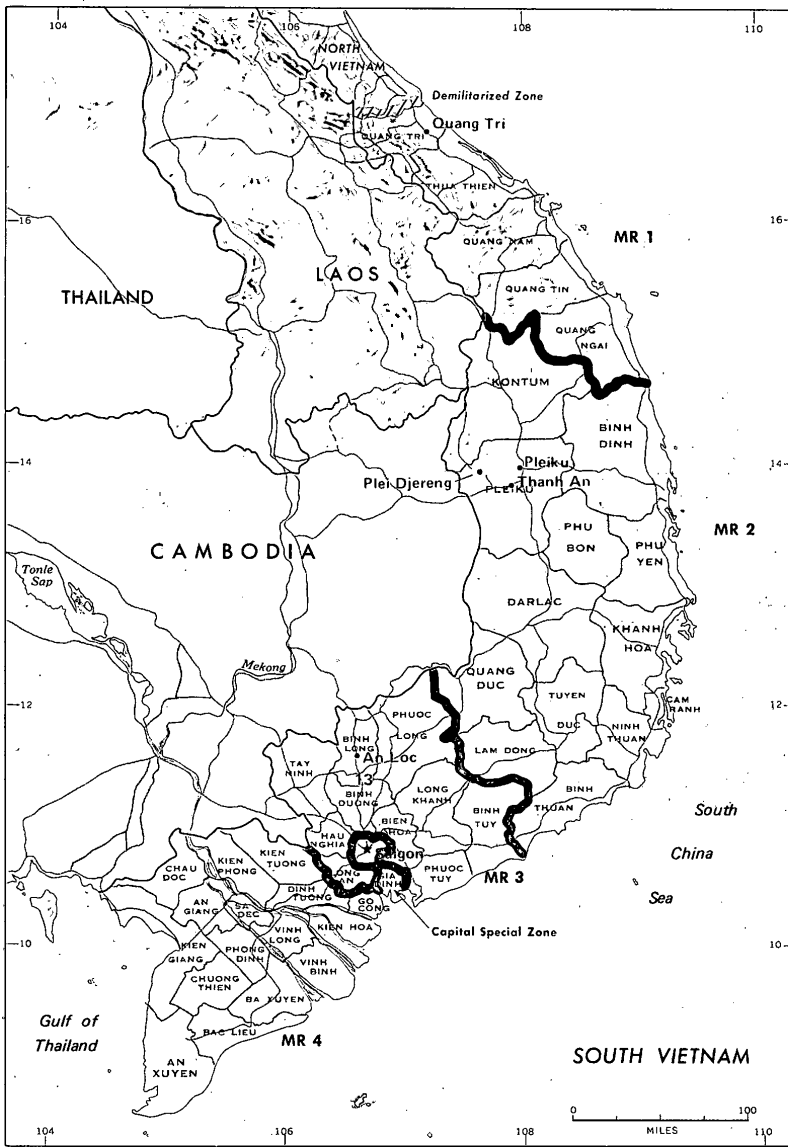
In Laos, Vang Pao's forces have launched a fresh effort against Communist forces west and south of the Plaine des Jarres. (Page 3)

25X1

[redacted]
[redacted] North Vietnam [redacted]
[redacted] (Page 4)

25X1
25X1

Preparations for elections this fall in West Germany are just getting under way, but there are already indications that it will be a close race. (Page 5)



553468 8-72

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

VIETNAM

More Communist forces seem to be headed for the battle over Quang Tri City. [redacted]

25X1
25X1



The North Vietnamese also appear to have been sending a large number [redacted] to South Vietnam's two northern provinces in the last month and a half. We have [redacted] sufficient data to conclude that more than 20,000 troops are involved. Troops from the 312th and 325th divisions are not included in this total.

25X1
25X1

Harder fighting may be ahead in Military Region 2.

25X1



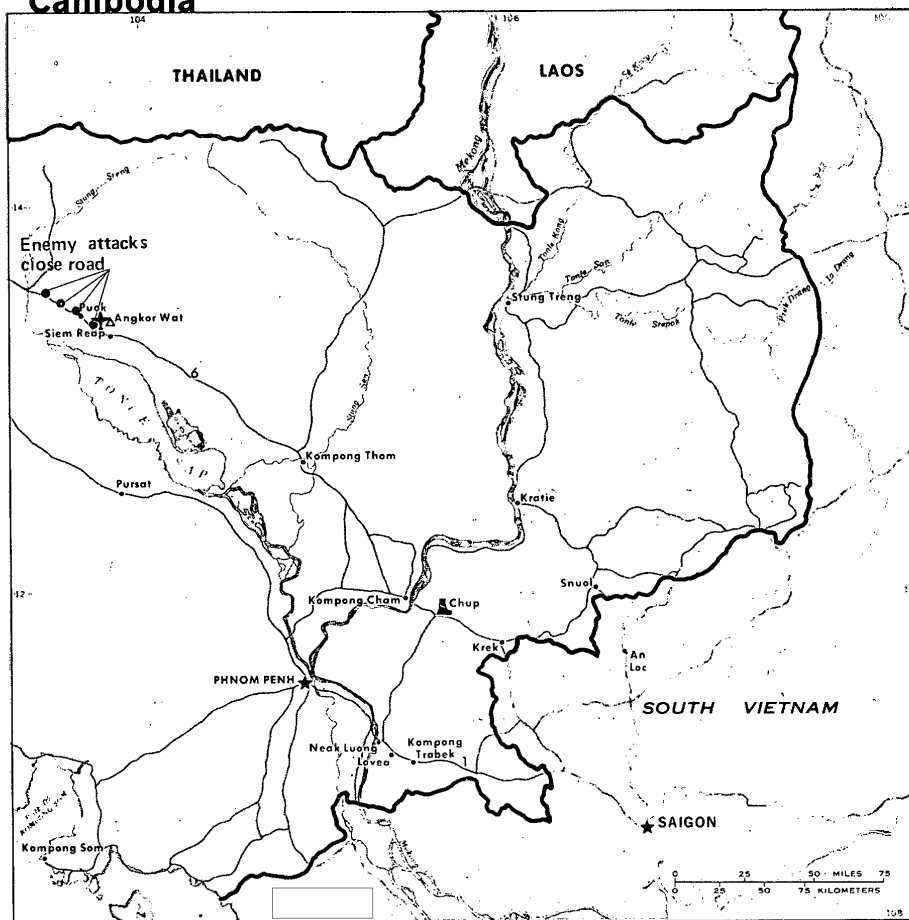
25X1



25X1



Cambodia



553465 8-72 CIA

25X1

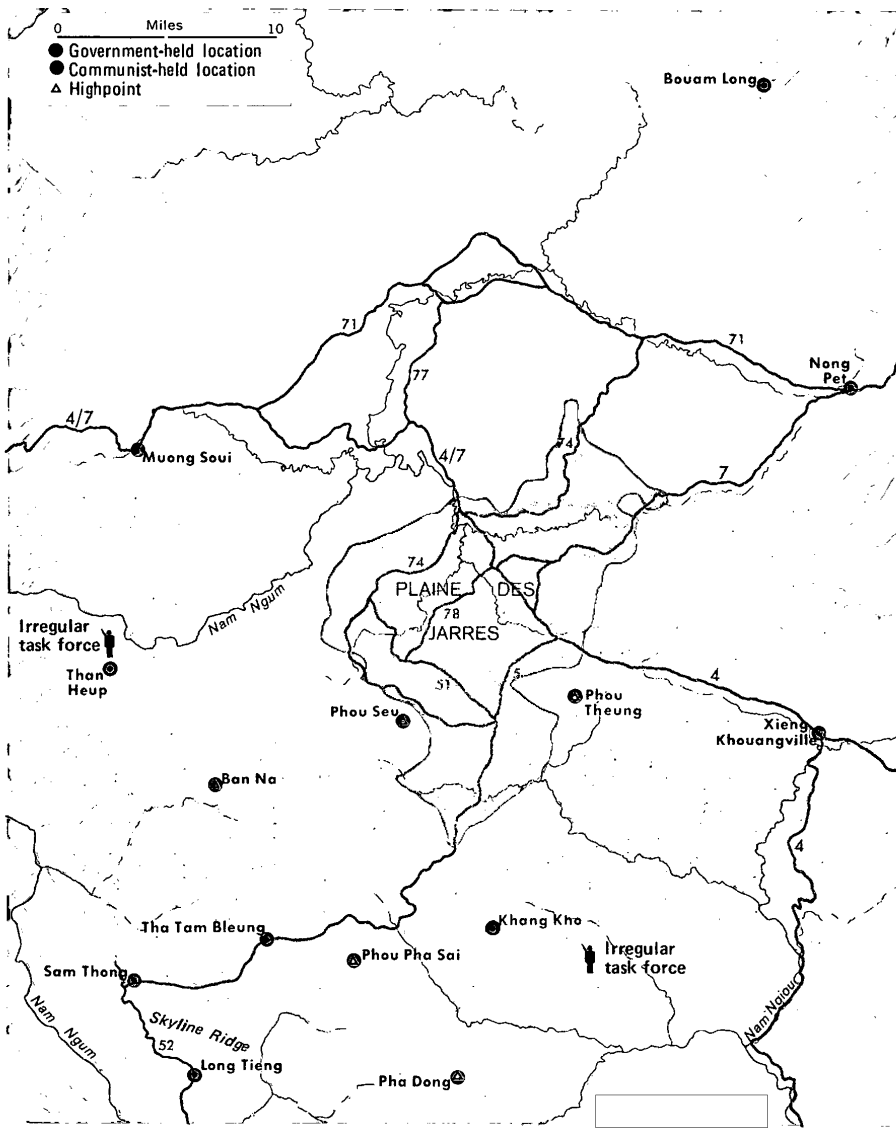
FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

CAMBODIA

Units of the Cambodian and South Vietnamese task force that has been moving slowly to reopen Route 1 in Cambodia are still some two miles from the outskirts of Kompong Trabek, where five government battalions have been pinned down by enemy infantry and tank attacks since 6 August. A US army attaché from Phnom Penh who visited the five hard-pressed battalions on Tuesday reports that their morale is high, despite supply shortages and the inability to evacuate their wounded. The Cambodian soldiers indicated they were proud of having withstood the Communists' steady pressure and of having destroyed enemy tanks.

The morale of these troops stands in sharp contrast to that prevailing in the Angkor Wat area in Siem Reap Province, where government forces have been badly shaken by recent reverses. The Cambodian units in the vicinity of the ruins are now isolated. The Communists have cut Route 6 west of Siem Reap town and enemy shellings have closed the town's main airfield.

LAOS: PLAINE DES JARRES AREA



553466 8-72 CIA

25X1

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

LAOS

Government forces have launched a fresh effort against Communist troops west and south of the Plaine des Jarres. Four battalions of Vang Pao's tribesmen have been airlifted to Than Huep, about 11 miles west of the Plaine and another four battalions have been moved to positions 12 miles south-east of the Plaine. Neither task force has encountered enemy resistance, although four North Vietnamese regiments and several small Pathet Lao units are ready to contest the government's advance.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

NORTH VIETNAM

[Redacted]

25X1

[Redacted]

25X1

[Redacted]

25X1

[Redacted]

25X1

[Redacted]

25X1

* * *

Premier Pham Van Dong [Redacted]

25X1

[Redacted] met with visiting representatives of the so-called "International Commission for Inquiry into US War Crimes in Indochina," and this week he has seen a visiting Mongolian leader.

These interviews mark the first time in three months that any foreigner has met with Pham Van Dong. The North Vietnamese press, however, has continued to refer to official documents issued in his name in an effort to offset his absence from public view.

25X1

[Redacted]

25X1

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

WEST GERMANY

Preparations for elections this fall are just getting under way, but there are already indications that it will be a close race. Although Chancellor Brandt's government has many accomplishments to its credit, especially in the foreign policy area, several recent developments have been favorable to the opposition Christian Democrats. Most notable was the dramatic resignation last month of Economics and Finance Minister Schiller. Schiller is widely respected, and the opposition is citing his departure as evidence for its claims that the government has neglected domestic affairs. According to a leading opinion poll, the coalition's popularity dropped immediately following the resignation. Now the press is speculating that Schiller will join the CDU.

25X1

The Christian Democrats gained more campaign ammunition last week when police raided various offices of a mass circulation weekly which published what it claimed was Schiller's letter of resignation. Brandt has denied any federal government responsibility, but suspicions have been aroused that the Social Democrats violated press freedom for their own ends.

Although these events appear to give the Christian Democrats an early advantage, the government can be thankful that they have occurred during the vacation season, a period of diminished political impact. The coalition parties have ample time to go on the offensive before the voting in late November or early December. Moreover, they have basic strengths to exploit. A recent poll shows the team of Brandt, Foreign Minister Scheel, and Economics and Finance Minister Schmidt more popular than the Christian Democrats' candidates.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

NOTE

Japan: The country's trade surplus is running about one third higher than for the first seven months of 1971 and will easily top last year's record of \$7.8 billion. The surplus for July reached one billion dollars, the largest monthly total so far this year.

Top Secret