



The President's Daily Brief

19 August 1972

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

19 August 1972

PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

In South Vietnam, Communist forces have begun a series of attacks in several areas of the central coastal lowlands. (Page 1)

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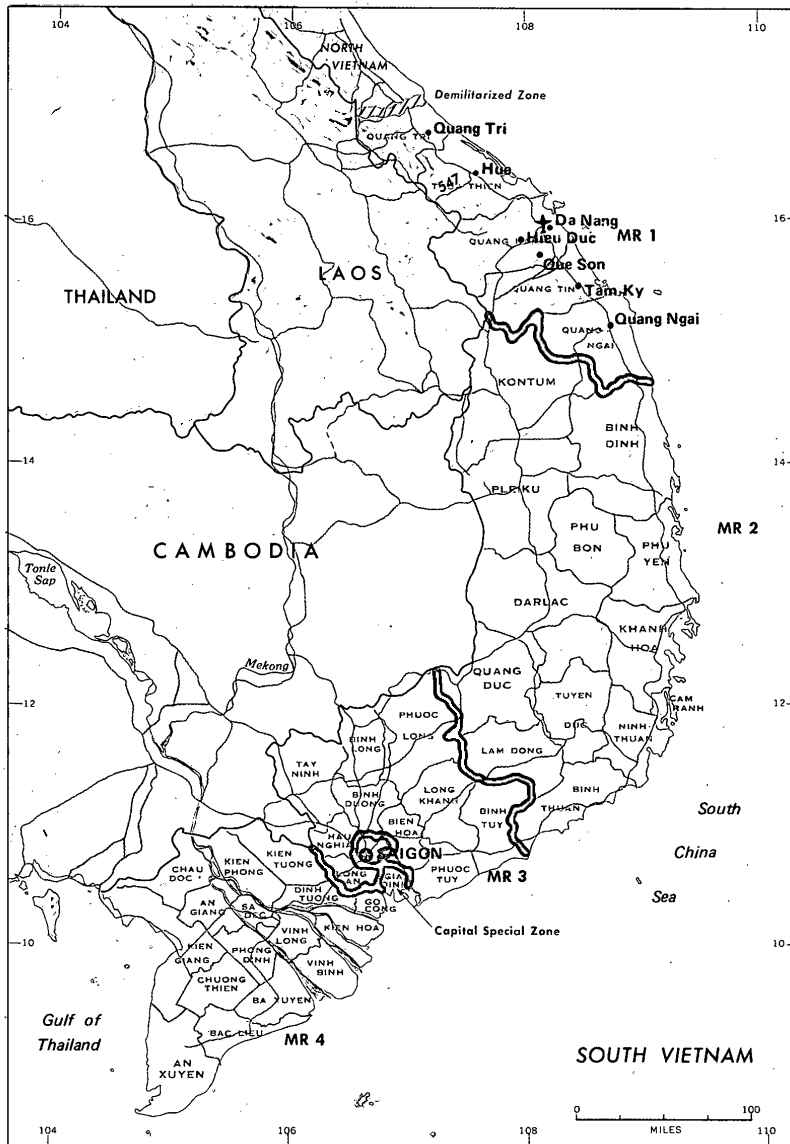
[Redacted] Soviet [Redacted]
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The Soviets [Redacted]
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The West Germans have decided to discuss establishing diplomatic relations with Peking in the near future. (Page 4)



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VIETNAM

Communist forces have begun a series of attacks in several areas of the central coastal lowlands. Following heavy shelling, which included the first use of 130-mm. field guns in these provinces, enemy forces from the North Vietnamese 711th Division yesterday attacked government positions around the district town of Que Son and nearby Fire Support Base Ross. Fighting there is continuing. According to an intercept of 17 August, enemy forces have also attacked in Hieu Duc District southwest of Da Nang and claim to be "in complete control" of the area.

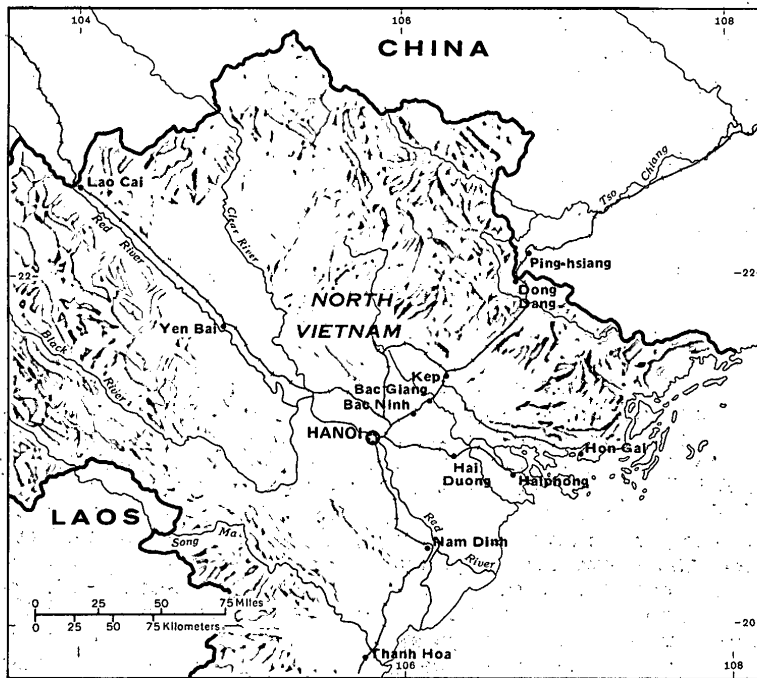
The enemy has also been active in coastal areas to the south. Tam Ky, the capital of Quang Tin Province, was shelled with 122-mm. rockets as were government positions north and south of the town. The shelling was followed by ground attacks against outposts in the area, and one road was cut. There were also a number of clashes in neighboring Quang Ngai Province, where one outpost north of the provincial capital was overrun.

There have been numerous reports that Communist military activity in the coastal provinces would increase in the last half of August. Some of these reports also claimed that the enemy intended to employ armor and heavy artillery in this area. The appearance of 130-mm. field guns supports this claim, but no tanks have yet been observed.

On the northern front, street fighting between marine units and enemy defenders continues near the citadel in Quang Tri City. Enemy shellings in the area were reduced, but several ground clashes occurred on the northern and southern edges of the city. South Vietnamese airborne troops have been involved in two days of heavy fighting about five miles south of Quang Tri City. Fighting also continues west of Hue as the enemy probes government positions guarding the Route 547 corridor into the city. The North Vietnamese have now committed elements of four divisions in an attempt to prevent ARVN's recapture of Quang Tri.

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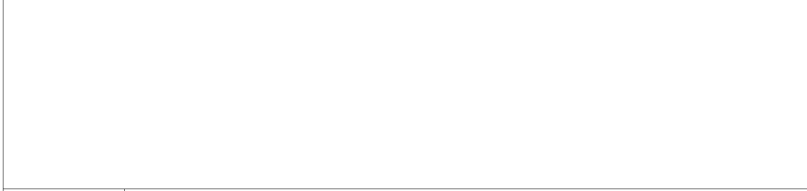
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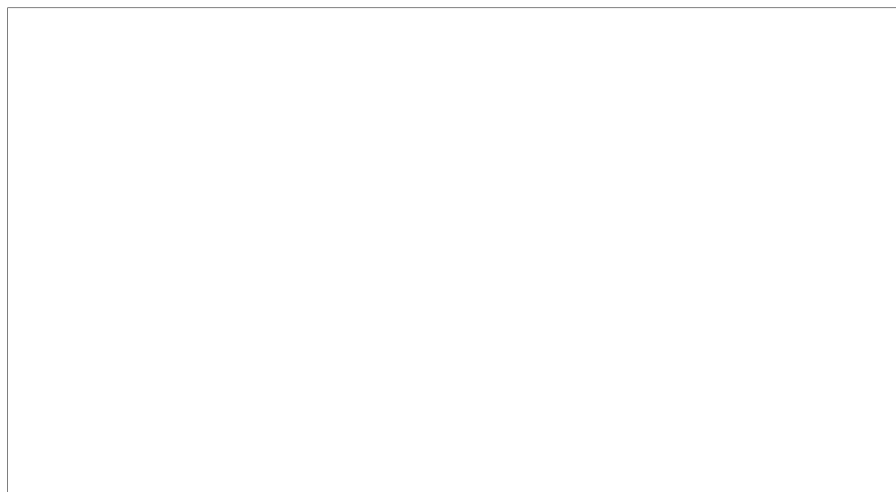


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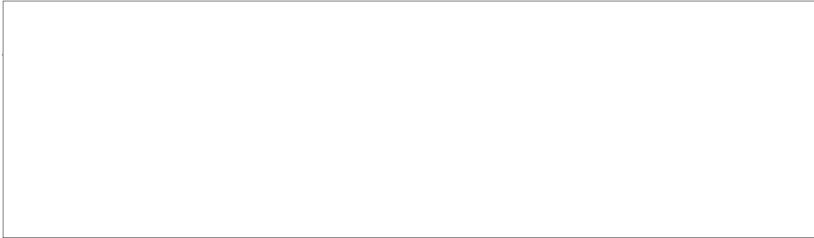
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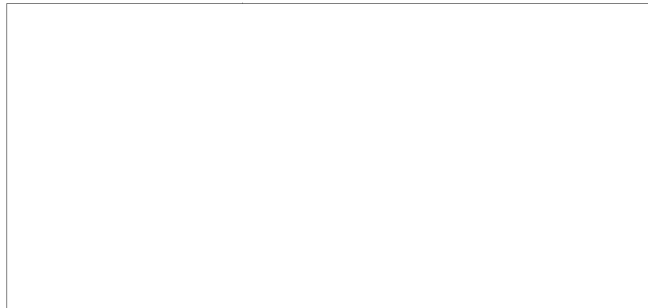
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NOTES

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West Germany - China: The West Germans have informed us that they have decided to discuss establishing diplomatic relations with Peking in the near future. Although Chancellor Brandt had preferred holding off on a bid to Peking while negotiations with the East Germans are still under way, domestic political pressures have apparently convinced him to take this step now. With elections coming this fall, he wants to neutralize any advantage the opposition Christian Democrats have gained from the visit to Peking of one of their leaders last month. Questioned in an interview on 17 August, Brandt did not rule out an eventual meeting with Chou En-lai, but said it would be Foreign Minister Scheel's turn first. In the same interview, Brandt sought to assure the Soviets that his policy toward China is not directed against them.

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