

The President's Daily Brief

27 September 1972

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~~*Top Secret*~~

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

27 September 1972

PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

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[redacted] Soviet [redacted] Syria [redacted]
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Two of the Laotian Government's task forces near the Plaine des Jarres have made gains, but a third was forced back yesterday. In the sparring over possible peace talks, the Communists have sent another tough message to Prime Minister Souvanna. (Page 3)

President Marcos has decreed land reform for the Philippines, but we have some doubts that it will be more effective than past halting efforts. (Page 4)

With military action on the Ugandan-Tanzanian border limited to mopping up operations, the Somali foreign minister says his peace proposals have been accepted. (Page 5)

[redacted] Greek [redacted]
[redacted] (Page 6)

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USSR-SYRIA

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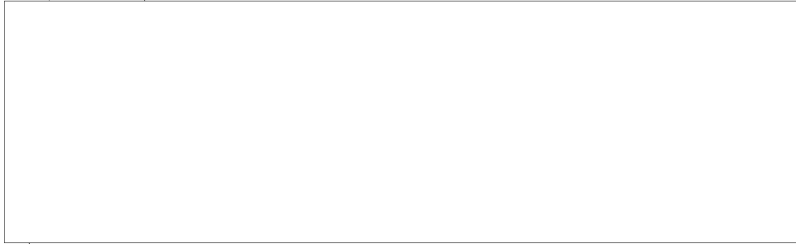
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[REDACTED] Foreign Minister Gromyko stopped short of offering total support to the Arabs in his UN General Assembly speech yesterday. While expressing the standard Soviet support for a peaceful settlement, the Jarring mission, and the restoration of Palestinians' rights, he said that "acts of terrorism by certain elements in the Palestinian movement" hurt the Palestinians' best interests.

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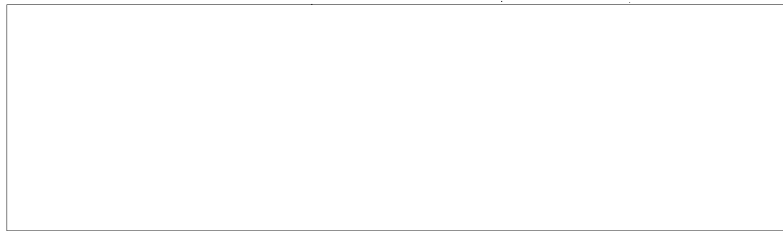
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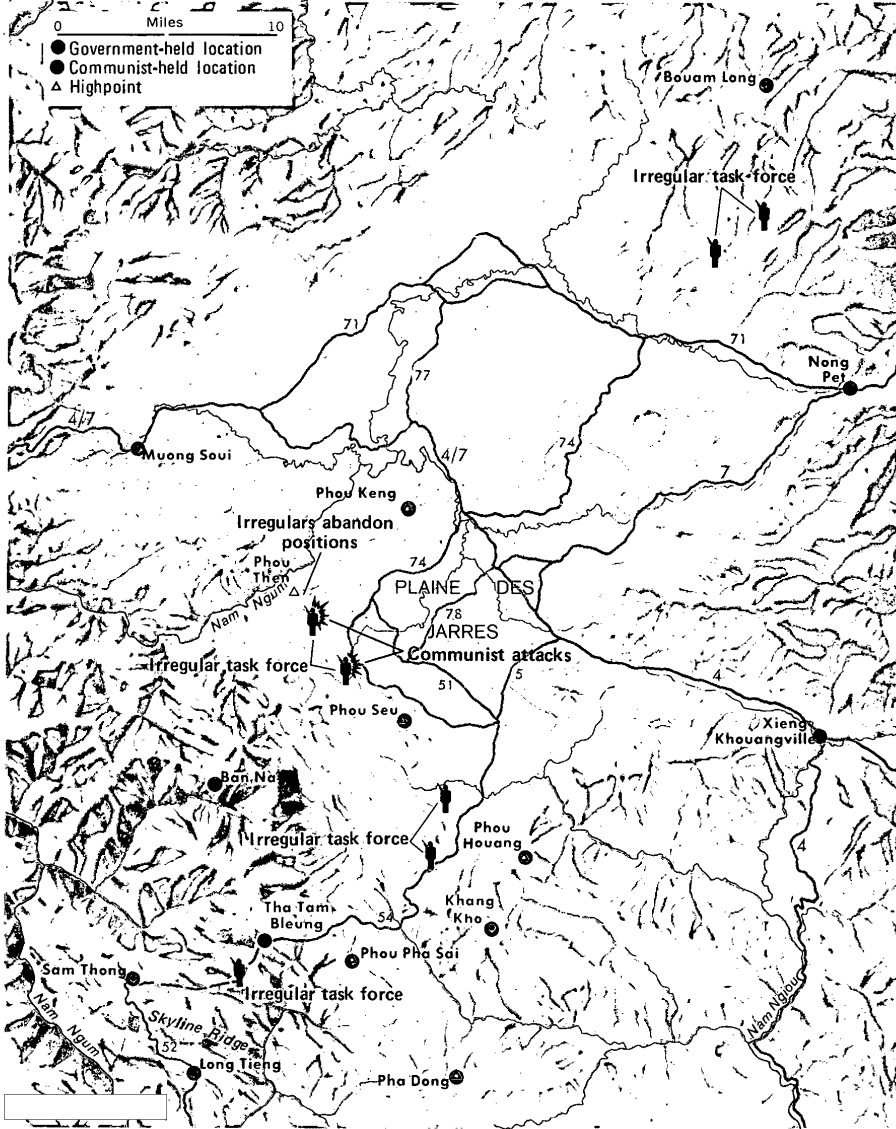


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LAOS: PLAINE DES JARRES AREA



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LAOS

Under the personal direction of General Vang Pao, elements of one government task force have moved onto the southern tip of the Plaine des Jarres, severing the Communists' main supply line to their forces in the Tha Tam Bleung area. Several caches of ammunition were found, the first significant supplies captured during this year's offensive. North of the Plaine, units of another task force have advanced from Bouam Long to within three miles of Route 71, an important Communist supply route.

Although neither task force has yet encountered serious resistance, there are numerous signs that the Communists are moving troops and supplies for counter-attacks.

Elements of Vang Pao's force on the western edge of the Plaine abandoned high ground at Phou Then yesterday after being hit by a coordinated infantry and artillery attack. Intercepts indicate that the North Vietnamese have units from three regiments ready for further assaults.

On the political front, Communist leader Souphanouvong on 22 September sent another tough message to Prime Minister Souvanna on peace talks. The Communists again strongly condemned US "intervention and aggression in Laos," but proposed to send a representative to Vientiane to resume preliminary discussions.

The Communists' special representative for peace talks had left Vientiane on 3 September after protesting the government's offensive in the north. Since that offensive has failed to shake their control over the Plaine, the Communists evidently now see some merit in resuming the hitherto sterile discussions.

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PHILIPPINES

President Marcos' second decree under martial law declares all the Philippines a "land reform area" and announces that sweeping changes in current land-lord-tenant relationships will ensue.

Land reform legislation is always popular in the Philippines, a high-tenancy agricultural country. Over the years, however, there has been little effort to implement existing legislation because of the influence of powerful owner groups, especially on Luzon. Although Marcos could make some showcase changes fairly easily, it is far from certain that he will be willing or able to enforce effective reform even under martial law.

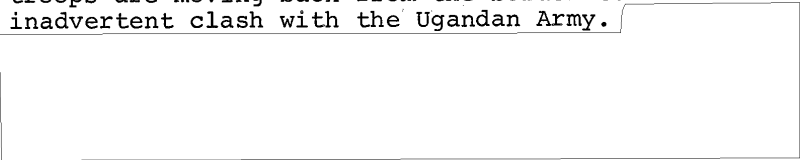
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UGANDA-TANZANIA

Somali Foreign Minister Arteh, who has been shuttling between Kampala and Dar es Salaam, announced yesterday that Uganda and Tanzania had accepted a Somali peace proposal. Arteh gave no details, but did indicate that some issues remained unresolved.

Among the issues that could prove difficult to settle are the mutual withdrawal of troops from the border and the status of Ugandan guerrillas in Tanzania. Nonetheless, tensions between the two countries appear to be easing. President Nyerere has clearly indicated that he wants to arrange a cease-fire and is endeavoring to minimize the damage done to his government as a result of its complicity with the invading guerrilla force.

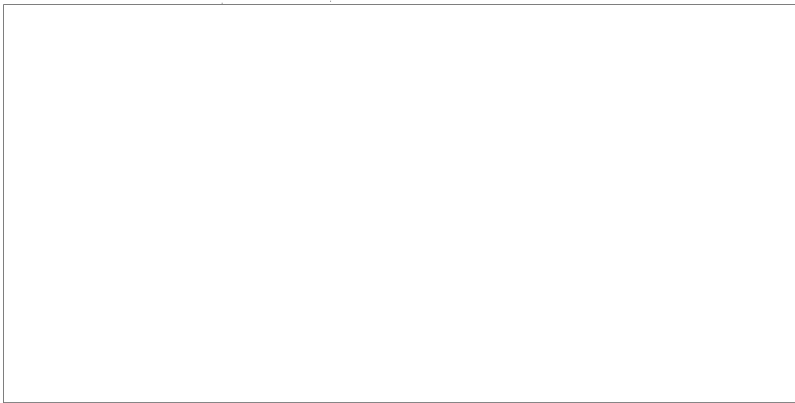
Military action by Ugandan troops now seems to be limited to mopping up operations near the Tanzanian border. Press reports state that Tanzanian troops are moving back from the border to avoid an inadvertent clash with the Ugandan Army.



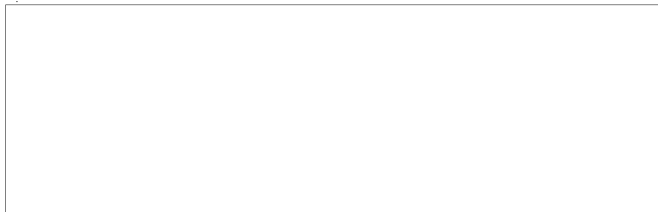
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NOTES

USSR: The Soviets have postponed or canceled the planned launch of their largest space booster-- the "J-Vehicle." [redacted]

[redacted] an unmanned lunar mission, and most of the ships that were to have monitored the event have left their stations in the Pacific, Atlantic, and Indian oceans. This is the second major space event the Soviets have called off in recent weeks: on 19 September we reported the cancellation of a space mission involving a manned Soyuz spacecraft.

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USSR: Prospects for the Soviet grain harvest continue to deteriorate with the onset of freezing temperatures in much of the New Lands area of Siberia and Kazakhstan. Recent reports of negotiations for wheat from West Germany and Romania may reflect a reassessment of Soviet needs. Confirmed Soviet purchases of grain for delivery by mid-1973 now stand at almost 27 million tons, of which about 18 million tons is wheat.

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