



*The President's Daily Brief*

7 October 1972

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THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

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PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

[Redacted]
South Vietnam [Redacted]
[Redacted] (Page 1)

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The Communists have moved five main force infantry regiments and several sapper outfits to within a 25-mile radius of Saigon. (Page 2)

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The enemy conducted a heavy commando raid on Cambodia's capital city this morning. Meanwhile, Lon Nol is still trying to form a "unity" cabinet. (Page 4)

The Chinese seem to be moving to fill some of the numerous high-level vacancies in the government. (Page 6)

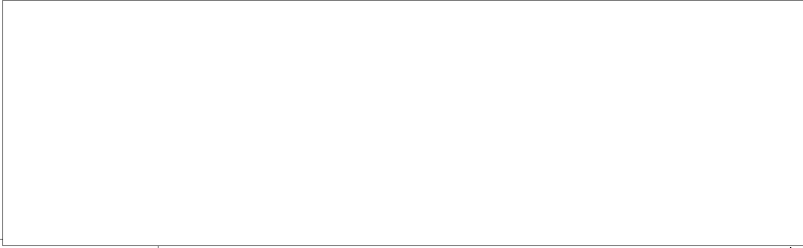
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[Redacted] the Yemens [Redacted]
[Redacted] (Page 7)

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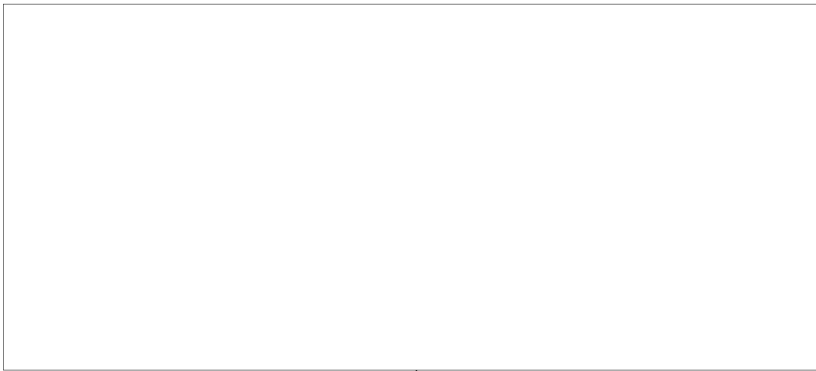
**SOUTH VIETNAM**



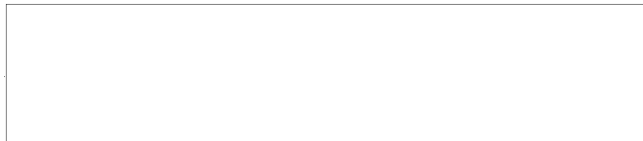
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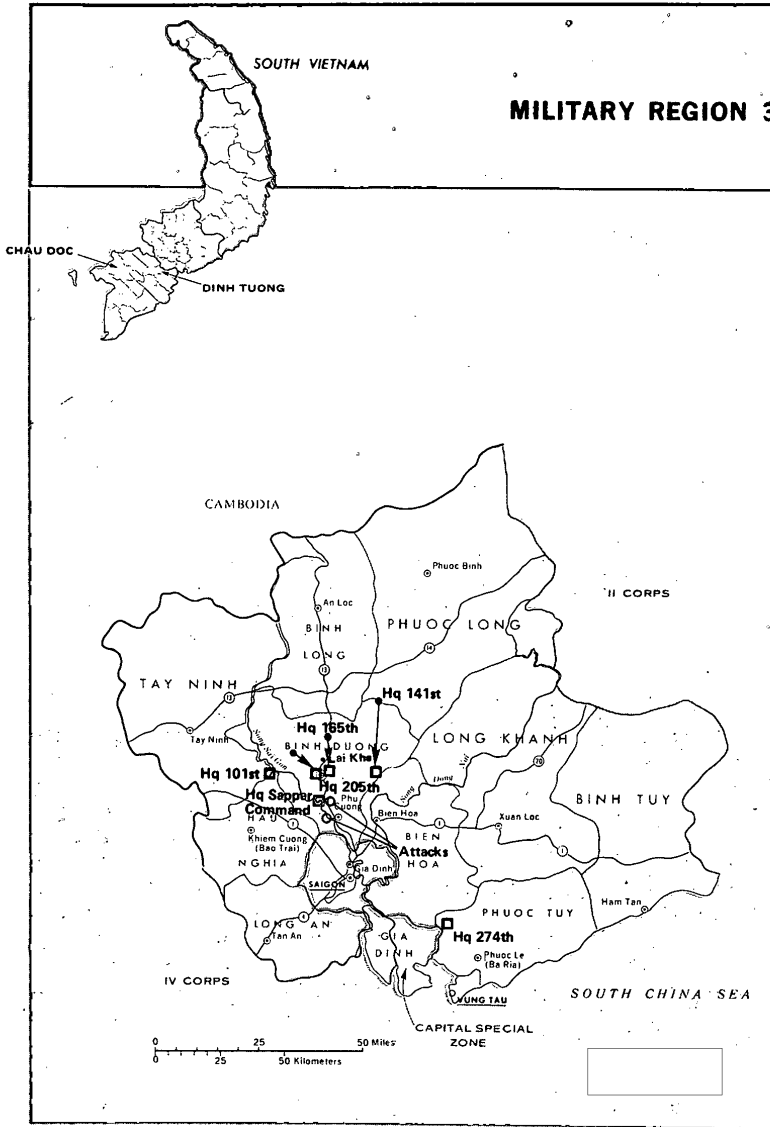
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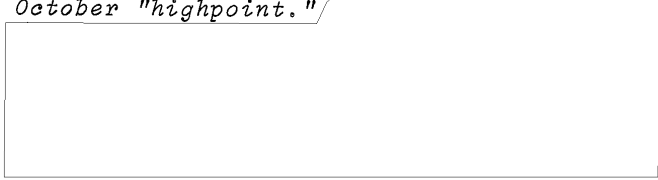
VIETNAM

Sharp fighting erupted north of Saigon yesterday following a series of Communist attacks against government positions along Route 13 earlier in the day. Hardest hit were a number of outposts near the Saigon River a few miles northwest of the Binh Duong provincial capital. South Vietnamese forces turned back several enemy ground probes accompanied by heavy mortar fire. Government forces also kept aggressive search and ambush operations going throughout the day, engaging the enemy in at least nine locations.

The enemy attacks apparently were carried out by sapper units and designed to mask the movement of main force units and supplies closer to the capital. At least three Communist infantry regiments have shifted south around the government's main base at Lai Khe during the past few days. US pilots report extensive enemy activity along the Saigon River west of Lai Khe. The shelling of a government blocking base in Binh Long Province yesterday may also have been intended to screen the southward movement of Communist troops.


*We believe that the Communists now have about five main force infantry regiments in addition to several sapper outfits within a 25-mile radius of the capital. The bulk of enemy troops apparently remains located north of Lai Khe. On the government side, a mixed force of more than four regiments of regular and territorial troops are available for the capital's defense.*

*The attacks could signal the start of another flurry of Communist actions expected throughout the country as part of an early October "highpoint."*



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Aerial photography of Haiphong harbor--partially obscured by clouds-- shows that a Chinese minesweeper and one of its attendant buoy tenders

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have departed from their previous anchorage alongside Chinese merchant vessels. These craft were last observed in the harbor--together with a larger mine-sweeper and another buoy tender-- after which bad weather precluded observation for a week. None of these vessels has been observed in the act sweeping mines since their arrival in late July.

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**FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY****CAMBODIA**

Perhaps as many as two battalions of Communist sappers raided Phnom Penh early this morning. They destroyed the bulk of one of the Cambodian Army's two companies of armored personnel carriers and dropped two spans of the key bridge across the Tonle Sap. Pochentong airport was subjected to a rocket barrage, which caused few casualties and little damage, however. The French Embassy was shot up during the fighting.

The armored personnel carrier company apparently was caught fast asleep. The enemy captured seven of the vehicles, all of which were abandoned or destroyed after government forces recovered from their initial surprise.

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The US Embassy reports that the attack resembled an earlier unsuccessful raid against Phnom Penh that was tried on 6 May. The embassy has no information which would indicate that large enemy forces are in the vicinity of Phnom Penh and does not expect a full-scale attack on the city.

\* \* \*

Meanwhile, President Lon Nol and former deputy prime minister Sirik Matak have been trying to resolve their political differences. They met briefly on Thursday and agreed that the question of appointing a vice-president should be put off for now. The President claimed that if he named Matak to fill that post, it would cause some "spectacular resignations" from the cabinet. Lon Nol added, however, that Matak would remain as a special counselor to the President.

Lon Nol later told Chargé Enders that he had instructed officers of the pro-government Socio-Republican Party to make fresh efforts to reach an accommodation with Matak's Republican Party. In addition, Lon Nol indicated that he would be willing to appoint several of Matak's close associates to executive positions--including one cabinet post--in the new government he is trying to form.

*The apparently amiable meeting between Lon Nol and Matak--their first private encounter in several weeks--may have checked the deterioration in their relations. Nevertheless, the impediments to*

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*a genuine rapprochement are formidable. Several key Socio-Republican leaders who are to be involved in the inter-party talks are hostile toward the Republican Party and even more so toward Matak. They will try to sabotage the talks to ensure that they will have a dominant position in whatever new government finally emerges. For his part, Matak will want a substantial grant of authority as the price of his participation.*

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CHINA

The official Chinese news agency on 5 October identified Li Chen as Minister of Public Security in reporting an airport reception for a visiting foreign delegation. Li, until now a deputy minister in the same ministry, is the seventh military man among the nine new government ministers named since the Cultural Revolution.

*The sensitive security post is only the second ministerial vacancy to be filled this year. The appointment of Li comes amid other signs that Peking is now moving to fill high-level posts. Wang Hung-wen, a young radical from Shanghai, was called to Peking in mid-September and has appeared regularly with top party officials. He has been ranked just below the Politburo, suggesting that he has assumed an important party post. Late last month the press identified a new head of China's official news agency.*

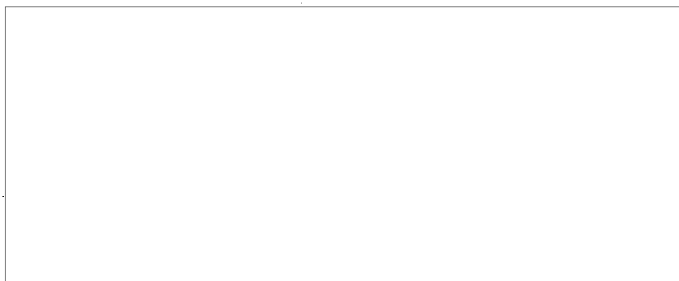
*These developments suggest that other top jobs in the party and government may now be filled at a somewhat faster rate. Nevertheless, there is no sign yet that Peking is prepared to fill the important military posts that have been vacant since the Lin Piao affair last autumn.*

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THE YEMENS



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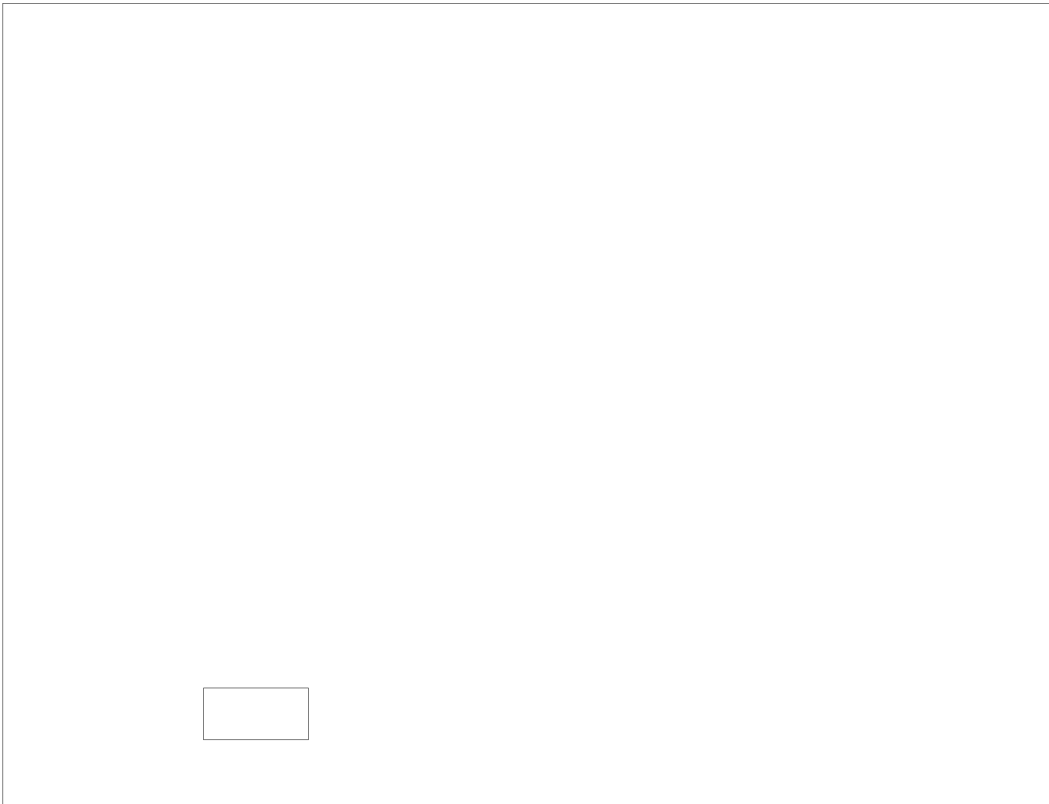


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NOTES

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India - East Germany: At the request of West German Chancellor Brandt, Prime Minister Gandhi yesterday agreed to delay India's announcement of diplomatic recognition of East Germany. The length of the postponement was not set, and the West German embassy in New Delhi surmises it may not be longer than a few days.

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