

*The President's Daily Brief*

9 October 1972



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*FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY*

THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

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PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

In South Vietnam, sporadic fighting continues north of Saigon in Binh Dinh Province, and the Communists evidently intend to increase the pace of their activity in several other provinces near Saigon. *(Page 1)*

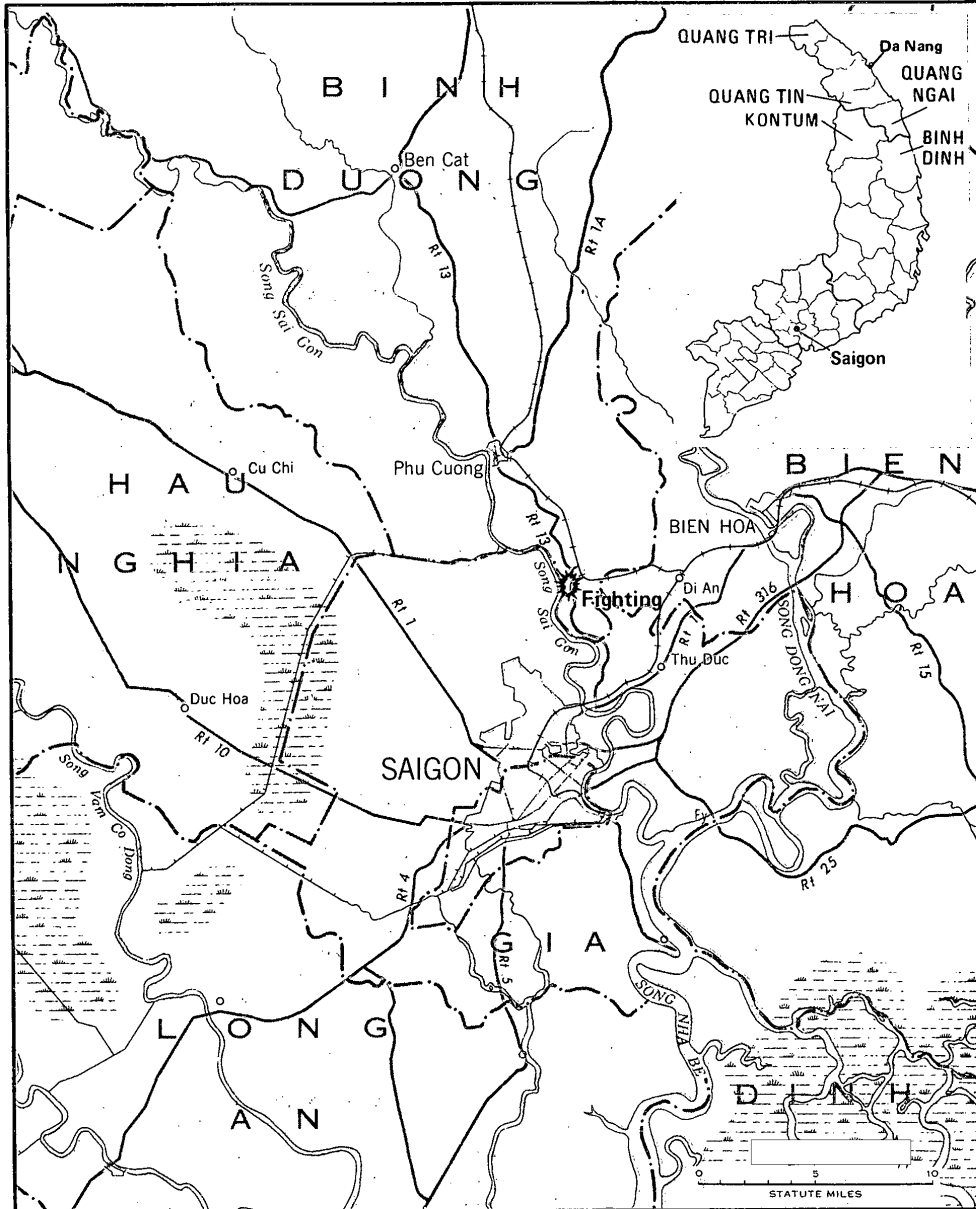
The sapper raid on Phnom Penh Saturday morning was less damaging than appeared at first, but it will further shake public confidence in the Lon Nol government. *(Page 2)*

Anti-Adeni dissidents have seized Aden's Kamaran Island in an action that may bring the Sana and Aden governments closer to direct conflict. *(Page 3)*

The peace agreement signed by Uganda and Tanzania only glosses over the sharp differences between presidents Amin and Nyerere. *(Page 4)*

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Saigon and Capital Special Zone



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VIETNAM

Sporadic sharp skirmishing continues north of Saigon along Route 13 in Binh Duong Province. Most of the fighting results from South Vietnamese defensive operations along the Saigon River corridor some ten to 15 miles north of the capital and involves small units from the North Vietnamese 7th Division as well as sapper elements.

The Communists hold several hamlets a few miles west of Phu Cuong, the provincial capital, and have infiltrated two battalions of the 7th into the southernmost district of Binh Duong, about ten miles from Saigon.



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The government has moved two regular battalions into blocking positions near Bien Hoa; additional Ranger battalions already had been deployed along Route 13. Numerous sources indicate that the Communists intend to increase the pace of the military activity in several other provinces around the capital as well as in the delta.

In other action, in Kontum Province in the central highlands three days of heavy Communist shellings as well as stiff resistance to government clearing operations near Kontum City resulted in heavy casualties to both sides. South Vietnamese forces in the coastal area, meanwhile, have recaptured several key positions in Binh Dinh, Quang Ngai, and Quang Tin provinces.



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South Vietnamese Marines report some progress in a limited offensive launched on Saturday north of Quang Tri City.



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CAMBODIA

A military assessment of the sapper raid on Phnom Penh Saturday morning shows that the damage was less extensive than was initially indicated. Of the army's armored personnel carriers caught napping, only seven were destroyed, considerably fewer than first reports indicated. The attack on Pochentong Airfield caused no damage to the runways, buildings, or aircraft. The fallen spans of the Tonle Sap bridge, however, are blocking the shipping channel that leads to the city's POL docks. [redacted]

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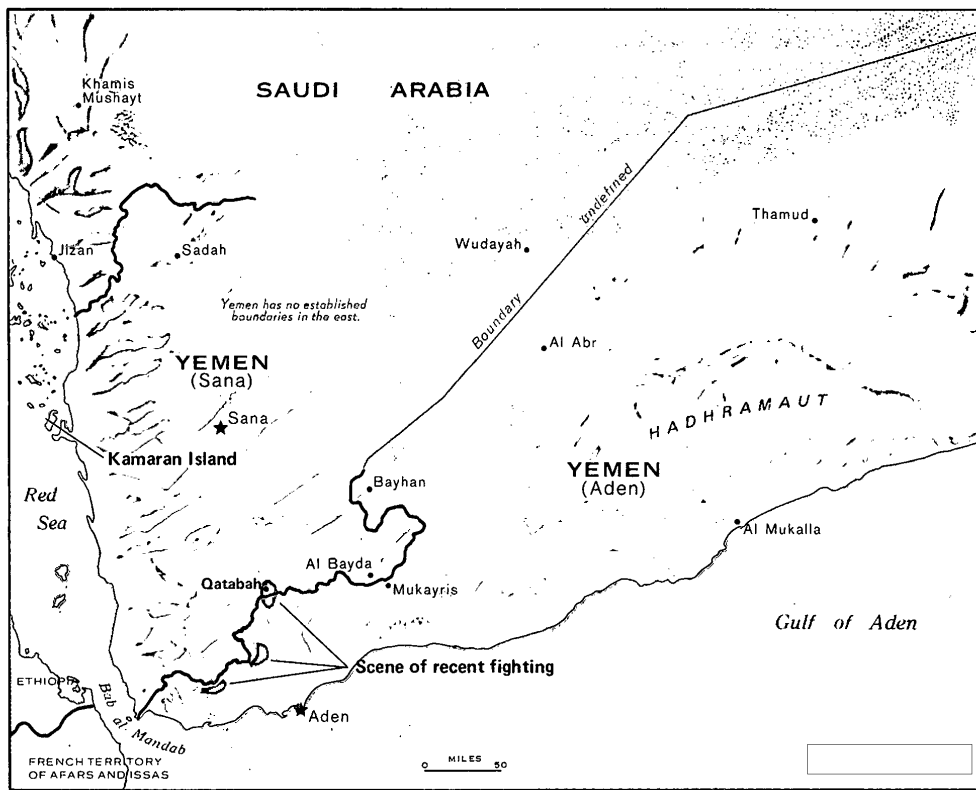
[redacted] that it will be impossible to repair the bridge quickly.

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*More significant than the material damage, the complete surprise the attackers achieved will further shake public confidence in the government. The defenders' lack of preparedness also underscores how far Major General Sosthene Fernandez, the new chief of staff, has to go in organizing and disciplining the armed forces.*

Meanwhile, Phnom Penh may soon face another rice crisis. No deliveries of foreign rice have yet been arranged for the last week of this month. The US Embassy estimates that the capital's stocks could then dip to a few days' supplies.

*The closing of Route 5 for nearly two months has prevented the delivery of 20,000 tons awaiting shipment in Battambang Province and forced Phnom Penh to depend on supplies from abroad. Sosthene Fernandez is fully aware of the urgency of reopening the route, but the recent destruction of a second bridge north of Phnom Penh will further delay the road's availability.*



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THE YEMENS

Anti-Adeni dissidents based in Yemen (Sana) on Friday seized the Red Sea island of Kamaran, a possession of Yemen (Aden), according to a dissident radio announcement yesterday.

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*Kamaran, which has a population of only a few thousand, was administered by the British until Aden became independent in 1967. Its seizure may well bring Sana into a direct clash with the extreme left-ist regime in Aden, which will not distinguish between the dissidents and Sana's regular army. Previously fighting had been limited primarily to border skirmishes between the dissidents and the Adeni army.*

*The occupation may be the first step of President Iryani's recent decision to take firmer action against Aden.*

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UGANDA-TANZANIA

The peace agreement signed by the two countries last week in Mogadiscio only glosses over their sharp differences. According to details announced on Saturday, both countries have pledged to cease all military operations against each other and to pull their forces back six miles from the frontier by 19 October. Somalia has agreed to provide a temporary observer force during the withdrawal period.

*The detente is an uneasy one at best. Any lasting resolution of the dispute seems likely only if presidents Amin and Nyerere agree to negotiate directly. Nyerere does not recognize the Amin regime, refuses to meet with Amin, and continues to harbor Uganda's ex-president Obote and his followers who, with Tanzanian support, led the abortive invasion of Uganda last month. For his part, Amin continues to charge that Tanzania and other countries are still planning to invade his country.*

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