

The President's Daily Brief

6 November 1972

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THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

6 November 1972

PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

North and South Korea have agreed on the composition and functions of a committee to work on national unification, and a general spirit of cooperation is evident. A significant increase in the scope and pace of North-South contacts may be ahead. *(Page 1)*

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In Laos, Communist attacks have forced an irregular task force to abandon positions south of the Plaine des Jarres. *(Page 3)*

Cambodian government forces trying to reopen several key highways are making little progress. *(Page 4)*

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KOREA

In an atmosphere remarkable for its cordiality, Seoul and Pyongyang have reached agreement on the composition and functions of a "Coordinating Committee" to undertake the work of national unification.

The agreement, fashioned in three days of negotiations in Pyongyang by South Korean CIA Director Yi Hu-rak and senior North Korean officials including Premier Kim Il-sung, charges the committee to discuss a broad range of political, social, and economic matters. The ten-man committee is to be made up of individuals of vice ministerial or ministerial rank. The committee will meet alternately in the two capitals every two or three months, with subcommittees convening more frequently. A joint secretariat will be set up at Panmunjom.

To underscore the spirit of cooperation evident in this meeting, the two sides agreed that on 10 November they would end propaganda activities directed at each other. Yi indicated in a press conference in Seoul on Saturday that the agreement could presage a whole range of cooperative endeavors in the near future. He cited as examples a proposal by Kim Il-sung that South Korean fishing boats might fish in northern waters and a suggestion by President Pak Chong-hui that the two sides jointly develop tourism.

While neither side is contemplating steps which would modify their domestic social or political institutions, these recent moves, added to other recent evidence, suggest that there may be a significant increase in the scope and pace of the North-South contacts in the weeks ahead.

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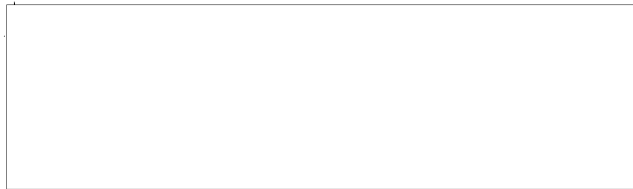
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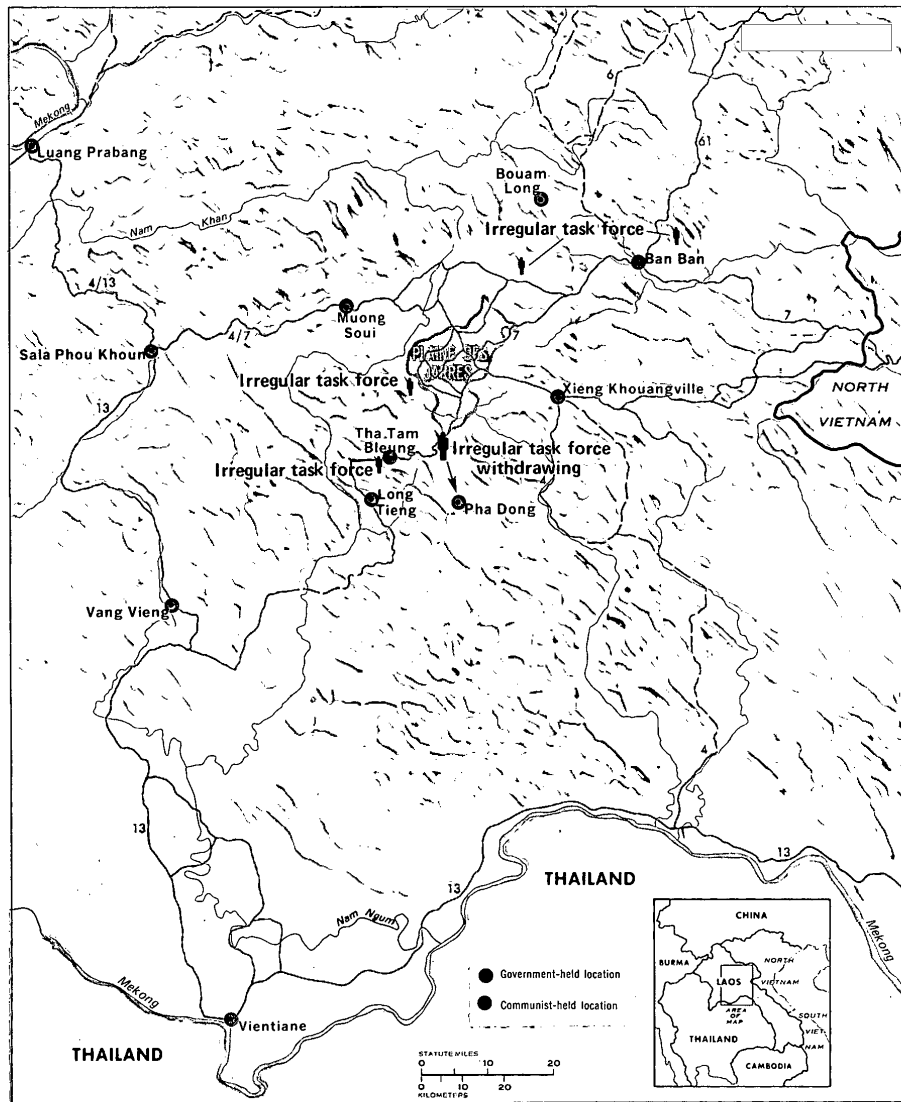
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LAOS

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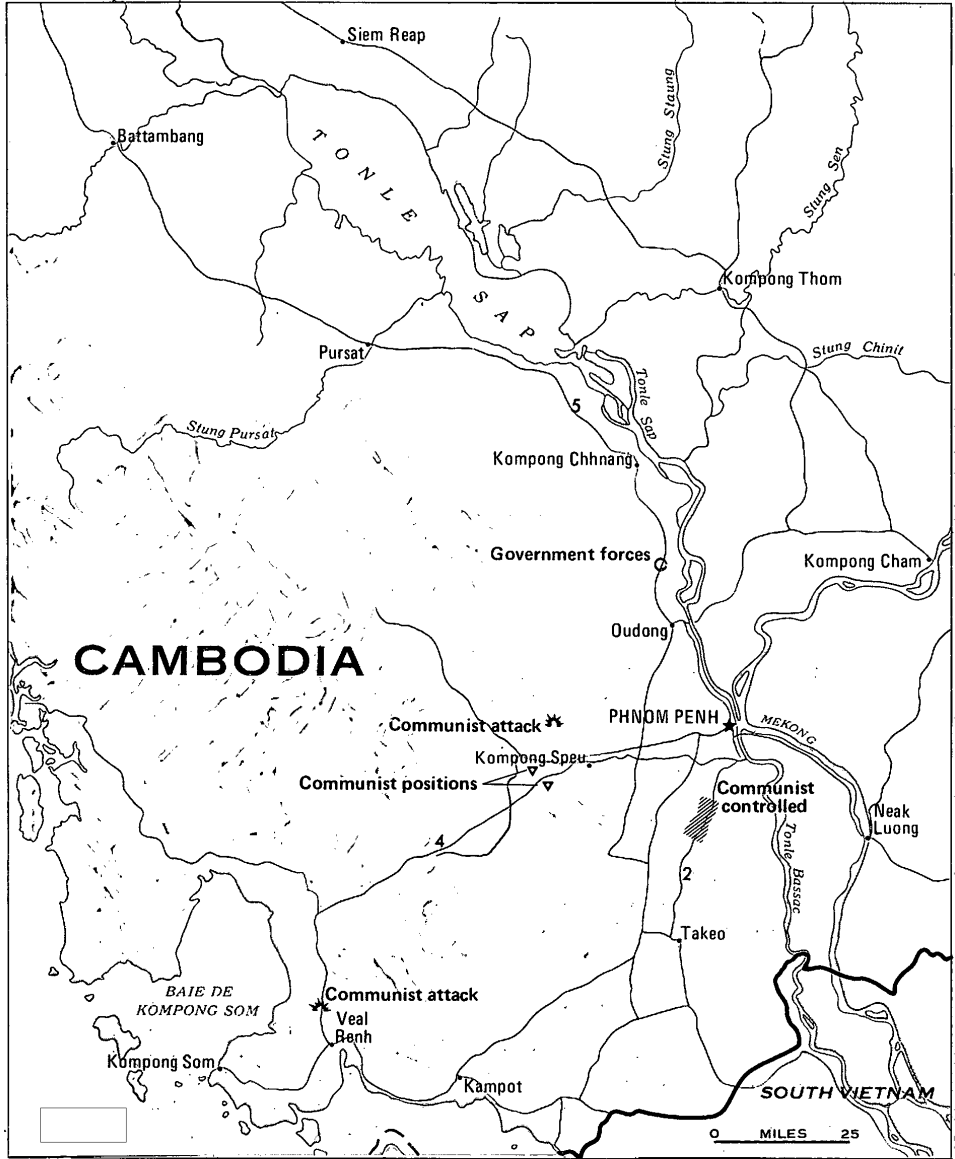
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LAOS

The Communists have again struck hard against irregular forces in northern Laos. After several days of preparation, elements of two North Vietnamese regiments on 2 and 3 November carried out ground assaults and heavy shellings against the task force that had been trying to regroup along a ridge about four miles south of the Plaine des Jarres. The attacks forced the irregulars to abandon their positions in that area, and most of them have now fallen back to Pha Dong--some ten miles south of the Plaine's southern edge.

It seems unlikely that this task force, which is the largest of Vang Pao's forces operating against the Plaine, will be able to mount any new offensive operations in the near future. Consequently, it appears that there is little chance for Vang Pao's campaign in the north to achieve any significant successes before the dry season about to begin.



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NOTE

Cambodia: Government forces are making little progress in their efforts to reopen several key highways fanning out from Phnom Penh. The attempt by five government battalions to clear a short stretch of Route 4 has faltered in the face of sharp resistance, and the Communists have mounted harassing attacks elsewhere along the road. Operations to reopen Route 5 to Battambang, closed since mid-August, are making no headway largely because of command and discipline problems. In the south, government troops are offering no serious resistance to Communist pressures against Route 2, about ten miles of which is Communist-controlled.

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