

The President's Daily Brief

21 December 1972

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THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

21 December 1972

PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

The reaction of both China and the Soviet Union to the impasse in negotiations and renewed US bombing of North Vietnam continues to be restrained. (Page 1)

The Lao Government continues successful operations in the south while in the north, combat remains at a low level as the Communists prepare for an assault on Bouam Long. (Page 2)

Pakistan [redacted]
[redacted]

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(Page 3)

[redacted]
[redacted] (Page 5)

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Weather in the USSR is causing concern over prospects for the winter grain harvest. (Page 5)

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CHINA-USSR

The reaction of both China and the Soviet Union to the impasse in negotiations and renewed US bombing of North Vietnam continues to be restrained.

A Chinese Foreign Ministry statement issued on 20 December is similar in tone and substance to the line taken since October. It says that US attempts to revise basic portions of the October agreement have caused delays in a final accord, and it maintains that the bombing creates a new "obstacle" to a settlement. Peking does not express explicit support for North Vietnamese terms for agreement nor does it pledge increased Chinese political and military support for Hanoi, even though a North Vietnamese Foreign Ministry statement on the 19th had requested more assistance. The statement does assert that the US "must" stop its military activity in both Vietnams and "speedily" sign the agreement drafted in October to bring the war to an end.

All things considered, the Foreign Ministry's pronouncement seems to contain little more than the minimum that Peking can say.

Soviet media continue to give extensive but relatively low-key treatment to Vietnam and have not digressed from the generally temperate TASS statement issued on 19 December [redacted]

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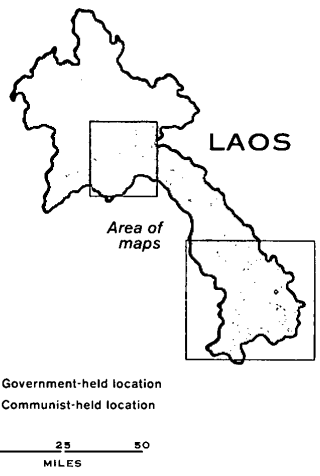
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A note delivered to the US Embassy yesterday protesting damage to a Soviet ship in Haiphong, was brief, pro forma, and apparently intended mainly for the record. There was no suggestion that any Soviet casualties had occurred, [redacted]

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[redacted]



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LAOS

The government continues successful operations in the south. Government battalions are expanding their control around Paksong on the Bolovens Plateau and are pushing farther east beyond Muong Phalane in the central panhandle. North Vietnamese units in both areas are suffering from localized supply shortages and personnel losses.

Enemy replacements and materiel are on their way to Communist units in southern Laos. Several weeks of reorganizing and refitting will be necessary, however, before the Communists will be ready for new offensive operations.

In the north, combat remains at a low level as the Communists continue preparations for an assault on Bouam Long.

Bouam Long, which withstood Communist sieges in 1970 and 1971, has often been used by General Vang Pao as a staging area for operations against Communist supply lines north of the Plaine des Jarres.

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PAKISTAN

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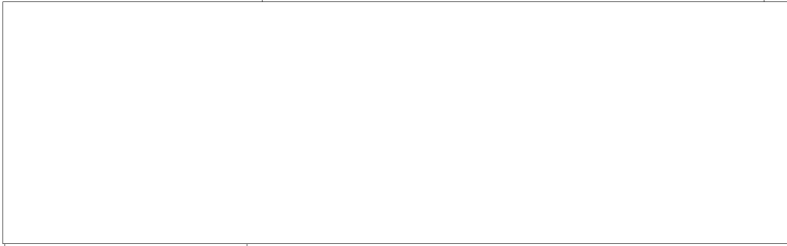
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NOTES

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USSR-Cuba: 

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USSR: The weather is causing concern over prospects for next year's harvest of winter grains. Because of the autumn drought, sowing in some areas was as much as a month behind schedule, thus increasing the susceptibility of the plants to winter-kill. A sudden cold wave in European Russia and the absence of snow cover for the young plants now has endangered the crop. Moreover, the total area planted last fall was the smallest in the last two decades. Last year a cold spell in January was the main factor in the loss of almost one third of the area sown to winter wheat and rye.

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