

The President's Daily Brief

23 April 1973

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

23 April 1973

PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

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Sirik Matak is completing his consultations with the other members of Cambodia's new supreme political council.

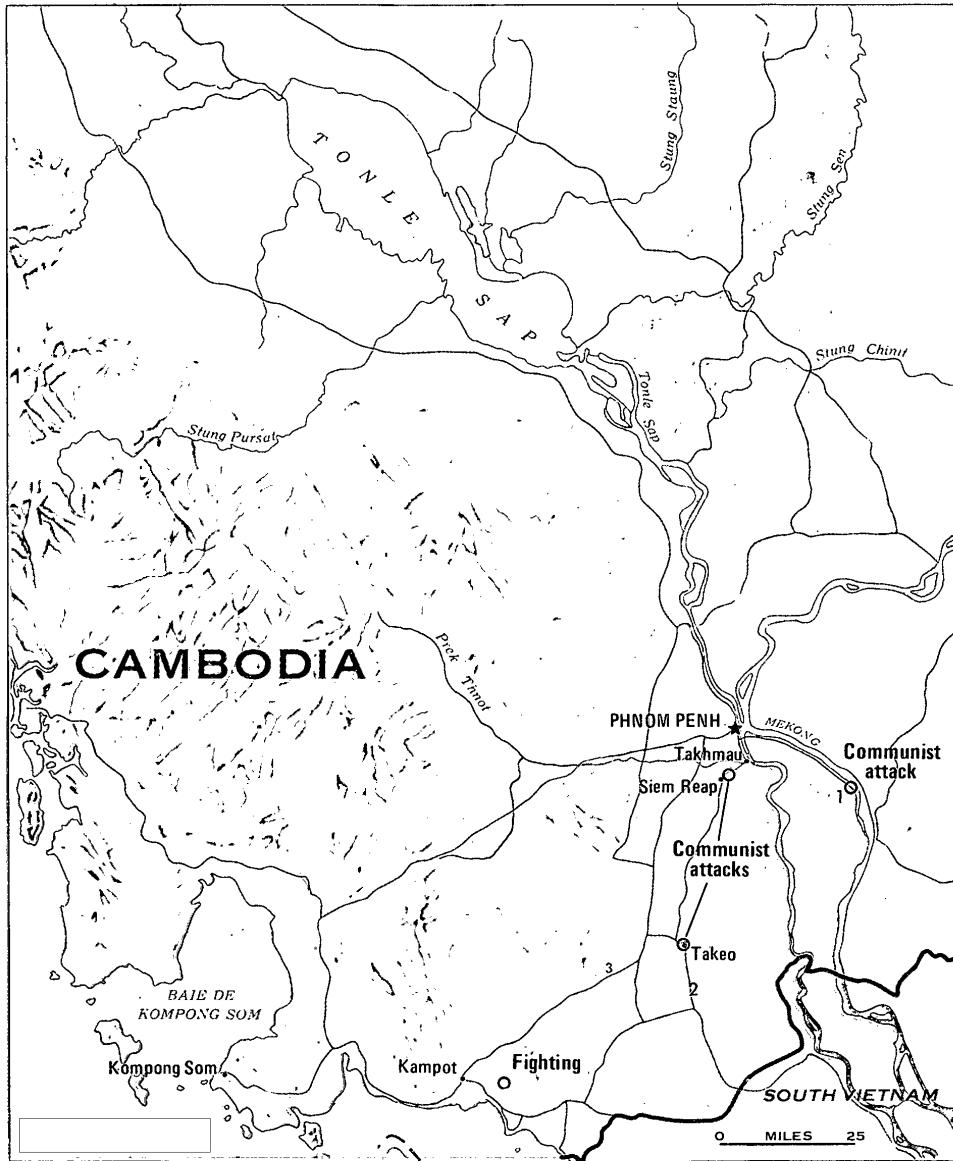
The Khmer Communists, meanwhile, kept up their military pressure on the Phnom Penh area over the weekend. (Page 1)

25X1

Lebanon's President Franjiah is trying to rein in the fedayeen leaders, or possibly persuade them to move to Cairo. (Page 2)

Pakistan's formal reply to last week's joint India-Bangladesh statement, together with other reports, suggests some flexibility on the major issues. (Page 3)

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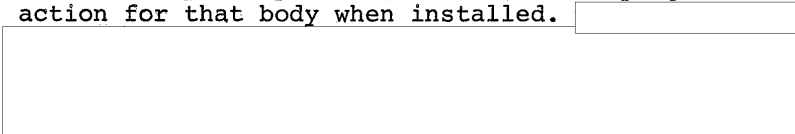
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CAMBODIA

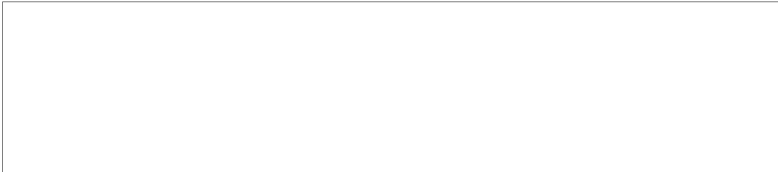
Republican Party leader Sirik Matak is completing his consultations with other members of the four-man supreme political council on a program of action for that body when installed.

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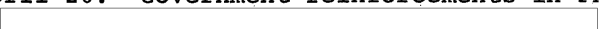
Under the agreement reached between President Lon Nol and Matak late last week, the council will be installed once Matak's program is ready. Matak appears bent on becoming the council's dominant member despite the agreement that each of the four participants have an equal voice.



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The Khmer Communists are keeping up their military pressure in the Phnom Penh area. Over the weekend, the Communists again shelled Takhmau, the capital's large southern suburb. The Communists also attacked and surrounded two government battalions southeast of Phnom Penh on Route 1.

Some eight miles south of the capital, Khmer Communist troops are still harassing elements that withdrew from the village of Siem Reap on Route 2 on April 20. Government reinforcements in Phnom Penh  have not yet moved.

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Farther south, the Communists are shelling and probing government positions on the perimeter of the isolated provincial capital at Takeo. Some Cambodian reinforcements were airlifted into Takeo yesterday. In the southwest, some fighting is still going on about eight miles east of Kampot, but no Communist action against the city itself has been reported.

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LEBANON-FEDAYEEN

President Franjiah has been trying to control some aspects of fedayeen activity in the aftermath of the Israeli raid of April 10 and the attacks on US-owned petroleum facilities. [redacted]

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Franjiah demanded of Yasir Arafat that fedayeen leaders limit their presence and activities to Palestinian refugee camps, and that they end their associations with Lebanese leftists.

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Franjiah is also urging the fedayeen to transfer their headquarters to Cairo. He told Ambassador Buffum on Friday that two Egyptian officials have been cooperating with him in trying to persuade the fedayeen leadership to move. Franjiah does not anticipate a confrontation between his government and the fedayeen so long as Arafat maintains control of the Palestinians.

Sadat is not likely to take on the burden of the Palestinians' presence without imposing considerable restrictions of his own.

In any event, Lebanon has geographical advantages over Egypt and will remain attractive to the fedayeen leadership so long as the government does not effectively deny them Beirut as a base. [redacted]

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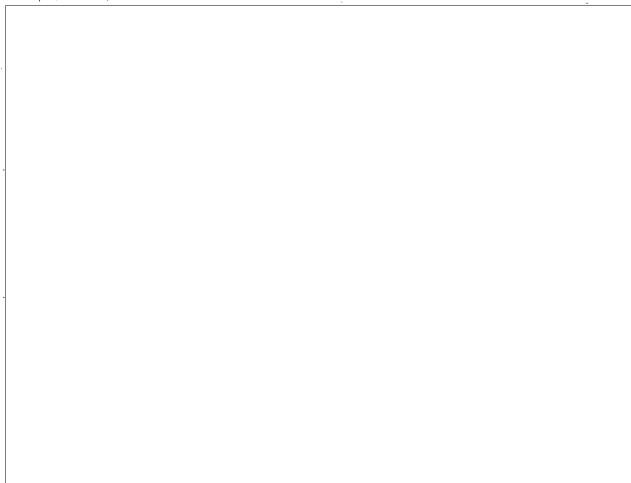
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SOUTH ASIA

Pakistan's formal reply to last week's joint India-Bangladesh statement invites further negotiation. The statement rejects India's right to impose conditions for the release of the war prisoners. It also disclaims any responsibility for accepting the quarter million Biharis whom Dacca proposes to expel, but says Pakistan would play its part in a general solution to the problem.

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NOTES

South Vietnam: Saigon will offer a new peace proposal at the stalled bilateral talks in Paris this week [redacted] not with any view of success but to demonstrate an effort to reach agreement with the Provisional Revolutionary Government by April 27 as called for by the Paris agreements. The proposal [redacted]

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[redacted] has virtually no chance of acceptance. The PRG has consistently rejected any discussion of the withdrawal of North Vietnamese troops from the South.

Egypt: [redacted]

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[redacted] This could be a reference to the recently arrived Libyan Mirages, now reported in the press. Israel yesterday announced that it presented the French ambassador with evidence that the French-supplied planes had been transferred to Egypt, but Paris subsequently denied that any proof had been given.

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