



The President's Daily Brief

30 October 1973

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

30 October 1973

PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

The Middle Eastern war fronts were generally quiet. Egyptian and Israeli officers will meet today to negotiate a return of prisoners. Iraqi troops are leaving Syria. (Page 1)

[Redacted]

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[Redacted]

(Page 3)

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Cambodia's exiled Prince Sihanouk has made another gloomy forecast of his prospects and has said that the Khmer Communists are not strong enough to take Phnom Penh by storm. (Page 4)

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On Pages 5 and 6 there are notes on [Redacted] the Quebec election results, South Korea's worries about the coming UN vote, Chinese road building in Laos, and a temporary truce on Cyprus.

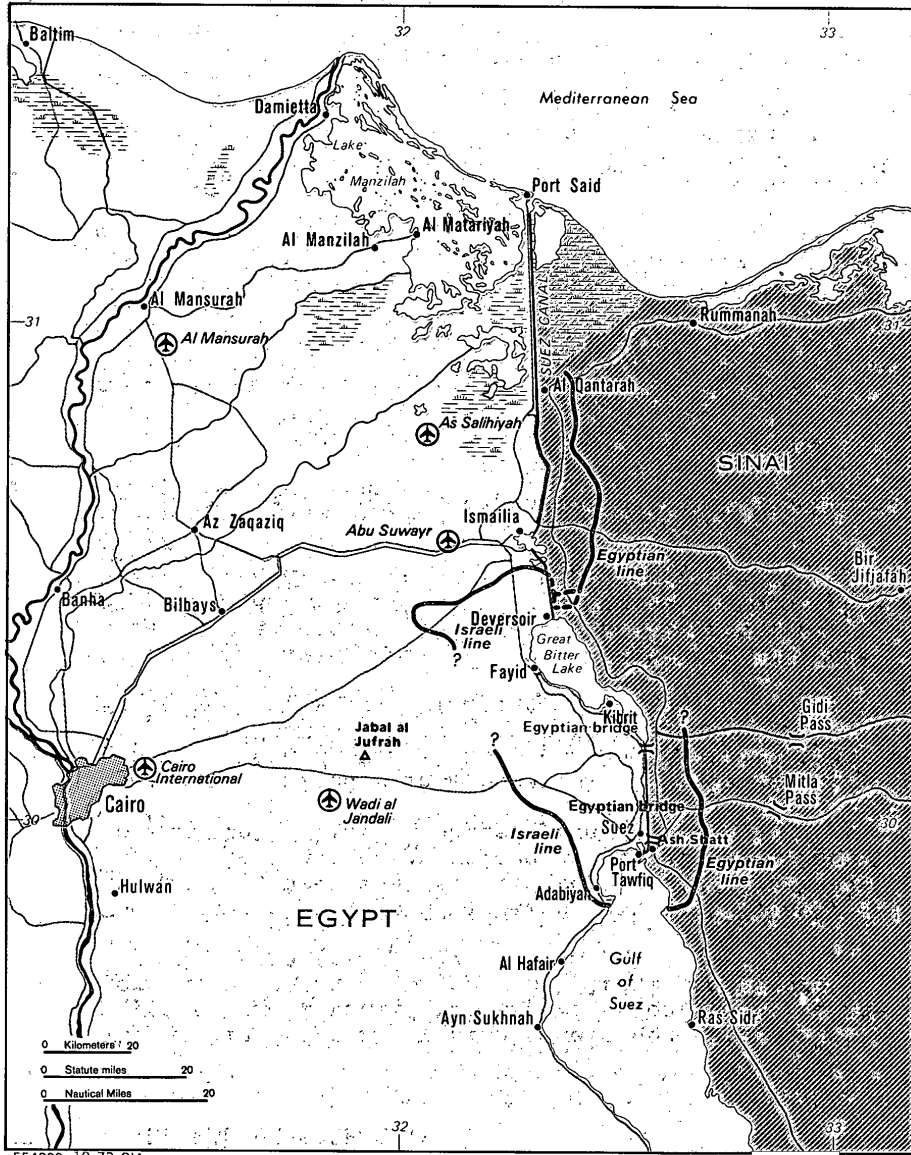
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[Redacted]

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Suez Canal Zone



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ARAB STATES - ISRAEL

Except for scattered exchanges of fire near Suez city, both the Egyptian and Syrian fronts were quiet yesterday.

Israeli and Egyptian officers are scheduled to meet today, mainly to discuss an exchange of prisoners of war. The failure of Egypt or Syria so far to reciprocate Israel's accounting of prisoners to the International Red Cross has caused a hardening of attitudes in Israel. Several influential Israelis have told US diplomats in Tel Aviv that their government--already under fire for agreeing to a US request to allow relief supplies to reach the trapped Egyptian Third Army--will not agree to anything else until the US persuades the Egyptians and the Soviets to make tangible concessions on the prisoners.

Although it is not yet a public issue, the Israelis have also served notice that they want an alleged Arab blockade of the Straits of Bab-el-Mandeb, at the southern tip of the Gulf of Suez, to be lifted.

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Syrian President Asad told his nation yesterday that the cease-fire had taken him by surprise, but that he had accepted it after the Soviets and President Sadat guaranteed that Israel would withdraw completely from all occupied Arab territory. Asad acclaimed the cease-fire as a victory for the Arab side, but threatened to renew the fighting if negotiations--presumably on an Israeli withdrawal--should be unsuccessful.

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[Redacted]

[Redacted] Radio Baghdad announced yesterday, [Redacted] that all Iraqi forces were returning home from Syria and Egypt.

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At the UN, Secretary General Waldheim is running into difficulties assembling a 7,000-man international force. Numerous states have offered troops, but most of them have been rejected either because they belong to the Warsaw Pact or NATO, or because they do not have diplomatic relations with Israel. Waldheim, therefore, will have to organize a force made up of small, ill-prepared states such as Panama and Finland, which will be a time-consuming job. One important obstacle to funding the force was overcome last night when the Soviet Union agreed to help pay for the operation, as long as it is kept under control of the Security Council.

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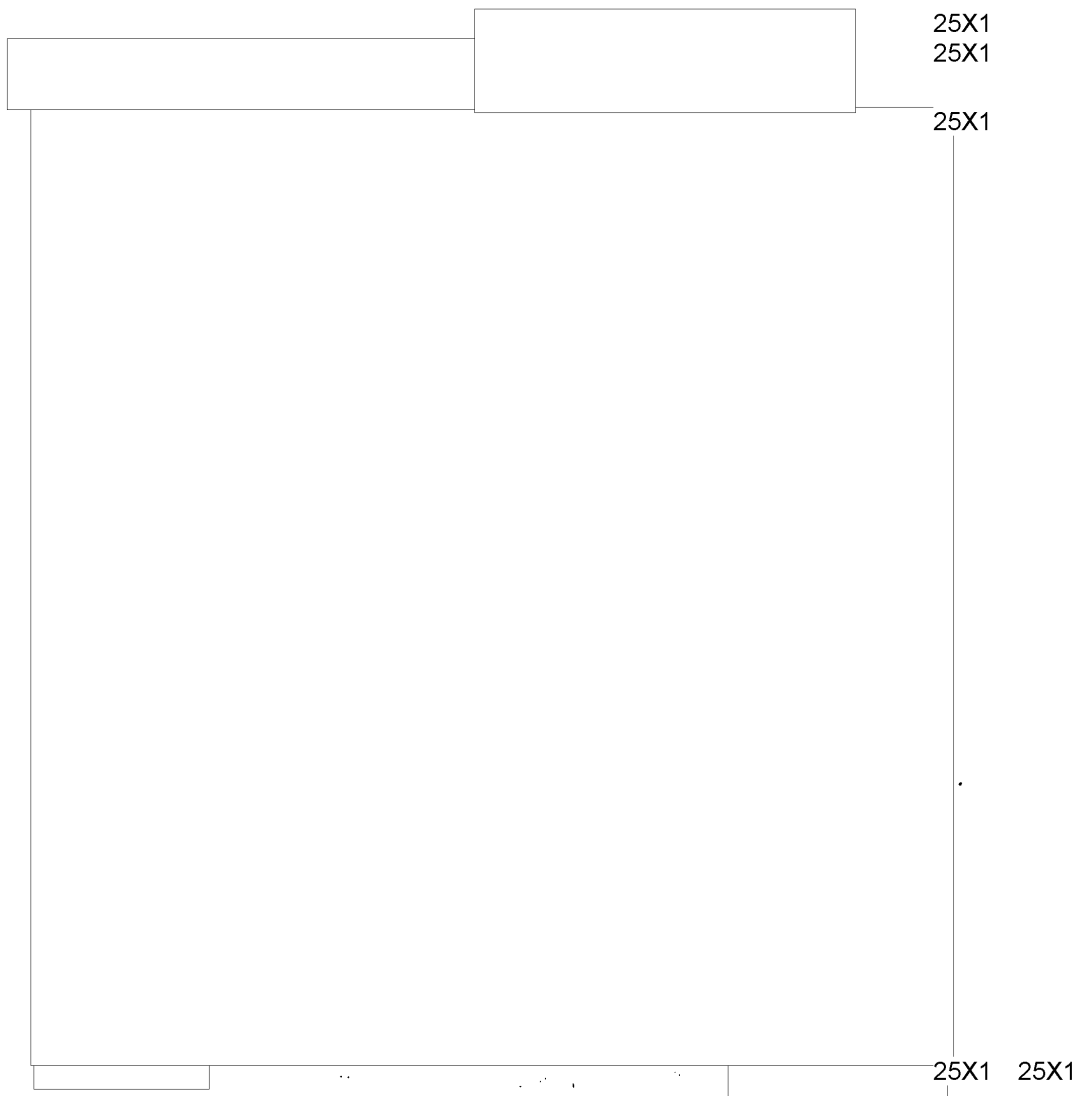
CAMBODIA

Prince Sihanouk is increasingly gloomy about his political prospects. In interviews with French journalists in Peking last week, the Prince implied that his relations with the Khmer Communist leaders-- which ostensibly had been harmonious since his trip to Cambodia last March--have soured again.

Sihanouk said again, as he had in September, that he could not return to Cambodia because of his differences with the Communists, whom he called "Stalinists." He also admitted that while his "united front" with the Communists is necessary for world opinion, it does not in fact exist.

Sihanouk did not repeat an earlier statement that all of the cabinet posts in his Peking-based "government" would be soon turned over to the leaders of the insurgency in Cambodia. His earlier announcement, however, seems to be tangible evidence that Sihanouk's problems with the insurgents have taken a new turn, involving either Communist demands for the posts or an attempt by the Prince to interest them in negotiations.

Sihanouk's admitted inability to move with Communists to negotiations seems central to his pessimism about his political future. He implied that the Khmer Communists continue to believe that a military solution is possible in Cambodia. Sihanouk claims that neither Peking nor Hanoi is willing to give the insurgents the necessary logistic support, and he stated flatly that an attack against Phnom Penh would fail.



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NOTES

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China:

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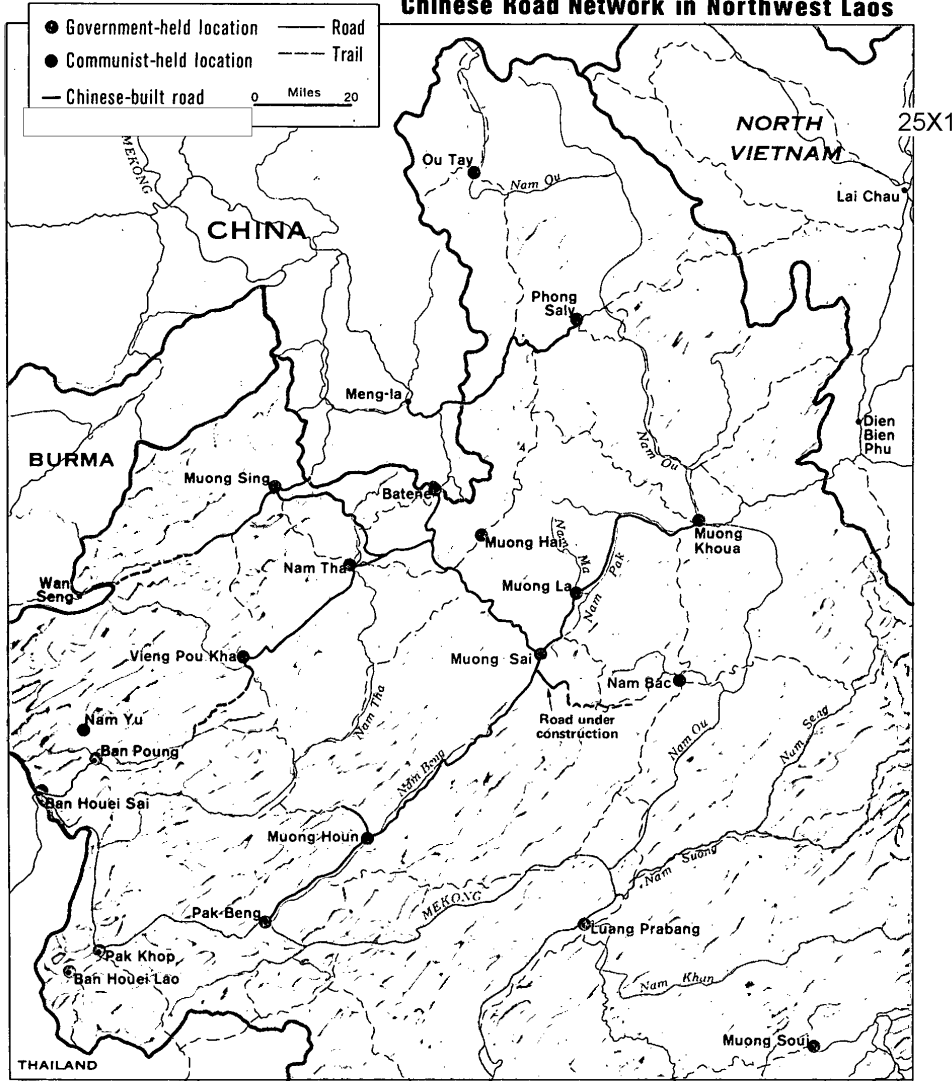
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Canada: Premier Bourassa's Liberal Party has won a landslide victory in the Quebec provincial elections. On the basis of almost complete returns, the Liberals have taken at least 91 of the 110 legislative seats, while the separatist Parti Quebecois won four.

South Korea - UN: Faced with the possibility of an unfavorable vote in the General Assembly, Seoul is considering a new approach to the Korean question. The South Korean Foreign Minister has told the US Embassy that his government would now prefer that the Security Council act on the question of Korean membership in the UN and the future of the UN Command. This would avert the possibility of General Assembly endorsement of the North Korean resolution, which calls for an end to the Command and rejects Seoul's concept of dual Korean membership. The foreign minister urged the US to explore the new approach with the Chinese, who have been lobbying on Pyongyang's behalf. Peking has on several occasions held out the possibility of a compromise, but the North Koreans thus far have not.

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Chinese Road Network in Northwest Laos



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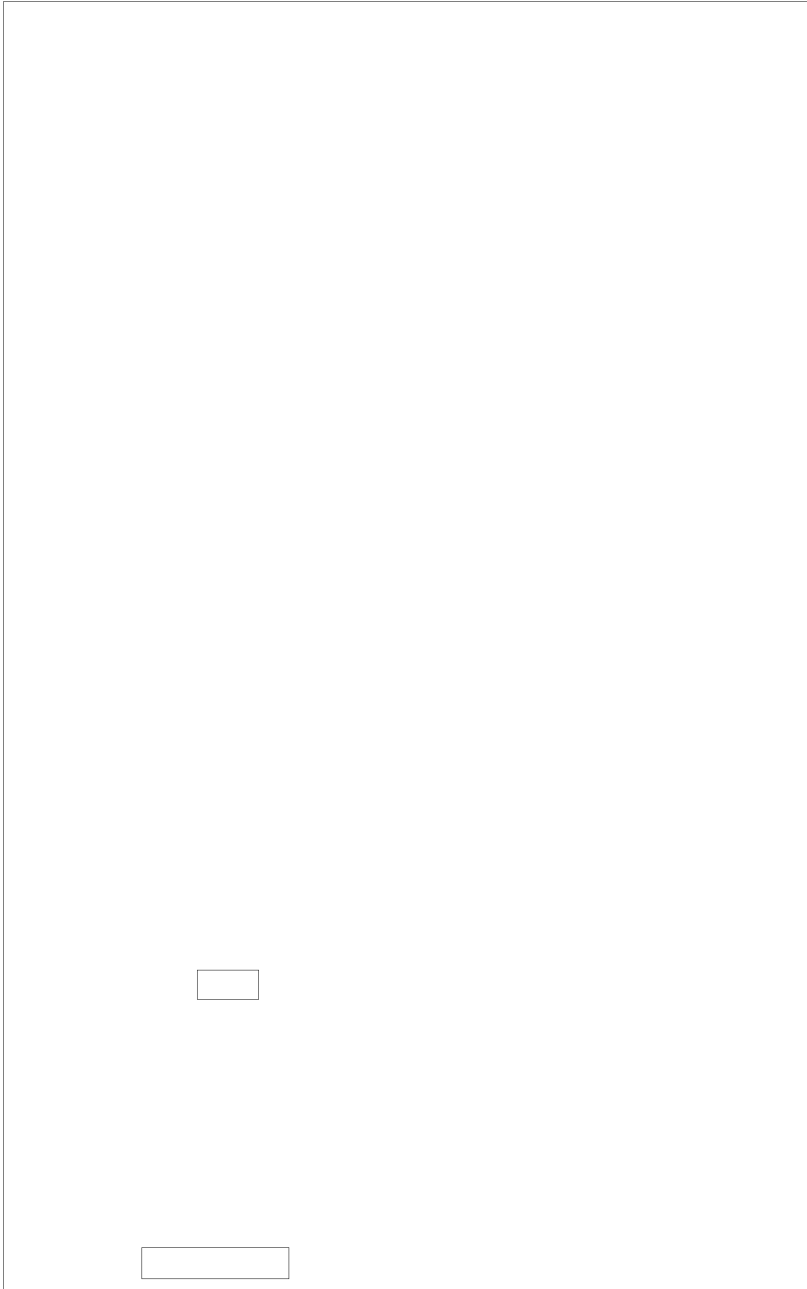
China-Laos: The Chinese have resumed construction of their road network, this time toward north-central Laos. [redacted] a single-lane dirt road about eight miles long, plus four additional miles of road clearing, running from Route 46, south of Muong Sai, toward the town of Nam Bac. Construction apparently had been planned as early as January 1972, when survey work began and Chinese security forces were sent to the area.

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Cyprus: The chief UN representative on Cyprus has told the US Embassy he has received assurances from both Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot leaders that they will not try to take advantage of the situation caused by the drawdown of UN forces sent to the Middle East. [redacted]

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