



# The President's Daily Brief

*February 20, 1975*

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*FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY*

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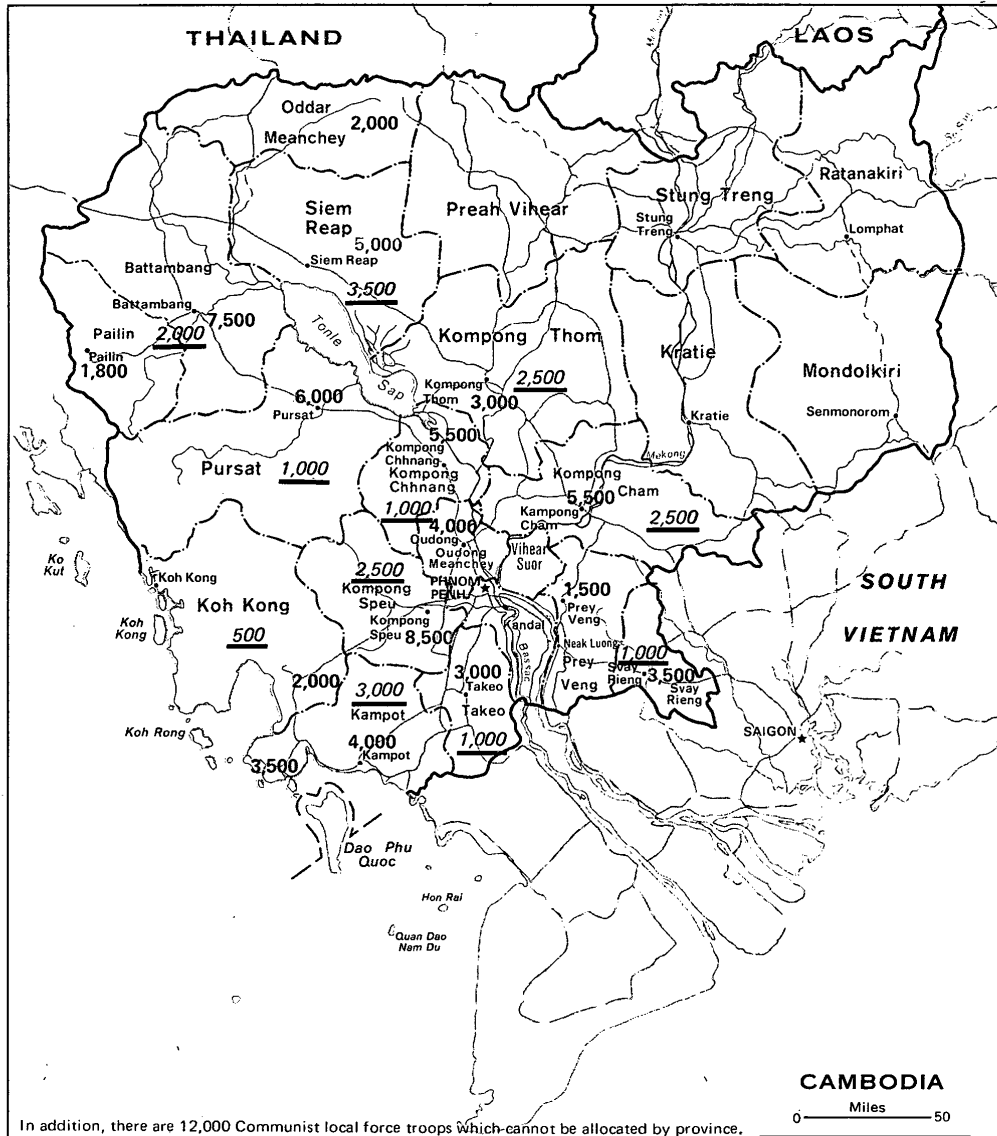
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**Government and Communist Strength in the Provinces**



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## CAMBODIA

*The military situation has continued to deteriorate during the past week, and military leaders must find additional troops to help defend Phnom Penh and assist in reopening the Mekong River.*

The Khmer communists have won control of the two key Mekong River narrows some 25 and 40 miles downstream from Phnom Penh, and insurgent forces are beginning to close in on the government navy base at Neak Luong. In the immediate Phnom Penh area, the Cambodian army's battered 7th Division, manning the capital's northwestern defenses, appears on the brink of collapse after six weeks of relentless attack.

The Cambodian high command is still positioning its forces for clearing operations to secure the southern narrows of the Mekong River. The headquarters and two battalions of the 4th Brigade have been landed on the west bank above Peam Reang Island, and the brigade is to attack southward as soon as it is joined by the remaining battalions from Neak Luong. In the north, a brigade-sized unit, supported by armored personnel carriers, is soon to make a renewed effort to clear Route 1 and the west bank to Neak Luong.

The high command has already been forced to call in some units from provincial enclaves to help defend Phnom Penh and reopen the Mekong. These provincial reinforcements have not been enough, however, and the high command will have to strip its provincial defenses even further if it is to succeed.

The Balance of Forces

Of a total combat force of 60,000 to 70,000, the communists have massed some 25,000 in the Phnom Penh area and another 10,000 along the Mekong. The Cambodian army has a total strength of 110,000 to 130,000 troops, of which some 45,000 are in the Phnom Penh area and only 9,500 along the Mekong. Experience has shown that government forces need at least a two-to-one manpower advantage if they are to hold their own against the insurgents.

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## THE GENERAL RESERVE

Unit	Location	Authorized Strength	Effective Strength*
1st Div.	Phnom Penh area	8,786	4,767
2nd Div.	Phnom Penh area	8,786	6,737
3rd Div.	Phnom Penh area	8,786	5,824
7th Div.	Phnom Penh area	8,786	4,134
9th Div.	Phnom Penh	8,786	4,849
Para. Bde.	Phnom Penh area	2,476	1,504
5th Bde.	Phnom Penh area	2,476	1,040
12th Bde.	Kompong Som/Phnom Penh	2,476	1,193
13th Bde.	Kandal/Kompong Speu	2,476	1,535
20th Bde.	Kampot/Phnom Penh	2,476	1,672
23rd Bde.	Phnom Penh area	2,476	1,336
79th Bde.	Phnom Penh area	2,476	1,098
80th Bde.	Phnom Penh area	2,476	1,500

*\*These figures include all personnel in the field available for combat duty. This does not include personnel in training, convalescing, or those carried on unit rolls but listed as missing or absent without leave.*

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A massive infusion of manpower is clearly needed if the government is to redress the situation even partially along the Mekong. Additional units will also have to be deployed to the Phnom Penh area to maintain the army's razor-thin margin there.

With some 65,000 troops in the provinces, the government would appear to have a ready supply of reinforcements; in fact, it does not. The vast majority of provincial troops are assigned to territorial units that perform a static defensive role. On the few occasions these territorial units have participated in operations outside their home provinces, they have for the most part performed poorly.

The only units that might be used effectively as reinforcements are elements of the 24,000-man general reserve. The five infantry divisions that form the backbone of this force are already in the Phnom Penh area as are four of the reserve's nine independent infantry brigades.

Government Options

In its search for additional troops the army high command will almost certainly have to withdraw major elements of the general reserve brigades still in provincial enclaves. The best of the territorial units also probably will have to be pressed into duty along the Mekong or around Phnom Penh. Although government commanders at most provincial centers should be able to hold on with somewhat reduced forces, currently threatened enclaves like Kampot and Takeo may fall if significant numbers of troops are withdrawn.

Any decisions to abandon holdings in the countryside will be difficult for military leaders, but such choices will have to be made soon if the government is to survive even for the short term.

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USSR-CYPRUS

*President Makarios is pushing hard to get stronger support from Moscow. He hopes to use the USSR as a lever against Turkey.*

On Monday, Makarios reportedly told [redacted] that Moscow should consider joint mediation with the US of the Cyprus dispute. If Washington refused, the archbishop said, he would welcome a unilateral Soviet initiative, including a visit by Foreign Minister Gromyko.

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In return for stronger Soviet support, Makarios said he would:

- Welcome a call at Cyprus by Soviet warships.
- Visit Moscow if satisfactory results could be prearranged.
- Enter into new cultural agreements with the USSR.

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Makarios has [redacted] overblown public statements hailing what in fact has been tepid Soviet support. He has also endorsed Moscow's long-standing proposal for a broad international conference on the Cyprus situation.

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[redacted]

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A statement issued by the Soviet news agency on February 16 regarding the Turkish Cypriot declaration of autonomy was mild, avoiding direct criticism of Ankara.

[redacted]

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Moscow has an added reason to be careful of its relations with Ankara now that the US aid cutoff has called into question US use of Turkish military facilities.

The Soviets have been wary in dealing with the archbishop and will be suspicious of his willingness to accord the USSR a lasting role in the Cyprus situation. Nonetheless, the Soviets will probably do what they can to strengthen their hand with Makarios, particularly since their view of a proper solution for Cyprus tends to coincide with that of the archbishop. The Soviets may be intrigued by Makarios' suggestion that they offer their good offices to mediate the dispute.



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NOTES

Israel is continuing to provide military assistance to the Kurdish rebels in Iraq.



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Israelis have provided money, small arms, and advisers to the Kurds for several years. Tel Aviv's support for the rebellion is motivated in part by a desire to keep the Iraqi army tied down at home and out of the Arab-Israeli dispute. Israel is also anxious to stay on good terms with Iran, important as a source of oil. Tehran, for its part, probably welcomes greater Israeli support for the Kurds.

\* \* \*

China has agreed to deliver to a private Japanese firm this year 108,000 barrels of crude oil a day at \$12.10 a barrel--a price below that for comparable Indonesian crude and considerably below the price of \$14.10 that the Japanese were paying China by the end of 1974.

Talks later this spring with Japanese importers could push China's oil exports to Japan for 1975 above the target of 160,000 barrels a day projected by the two governments last fall. Last year, China exported only 80,000 barrels a day to Japan.

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