



The President's Daily Brief



15 July 1969

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~~*Top Secret*~~

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

I. MAJOR PROBLEMS

SOVIET AFFAIRS

In anticipation of the President's upcoming visit, Bucharest has made a few friendly moves, particularly in the cultural field, to prepare the way. USIA Director Shakespeare was received with unusual courtesy during his recent unofficial visit and due notice was paid to his presence in the press. In contrast, former director Marks got only perfunctory treatment and no publicity during a visit in 1967. Shakespeare was treated as a VIP by the Foreign Office, even though the trip was unofficial, as well as by the State Committees for Art and Radio and Television. He was guest at several social functions and was invited back for an official visit by the First Deputy Foreign Minister.

In talks with Shakespeare, the Romanians seemed ready to reach agreement on the questions of establishing a US library in Romania and exchanging magazines. Both of these issues have been under negotiation for some time, and Bucharest would probably like to formalize agreements on them during the President's visit.

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EUROPE

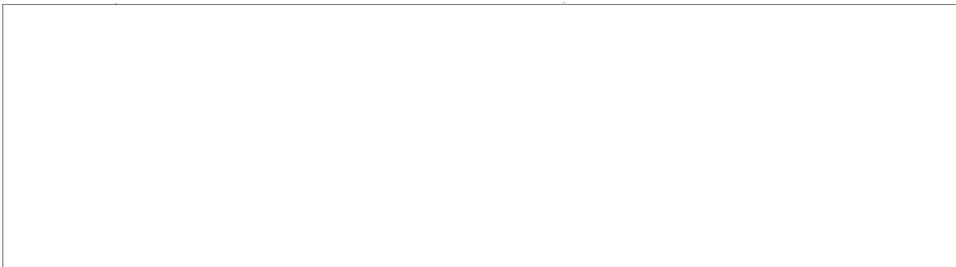
Gromyko's reference in his Supreme Soviet speech last week to Moscow's readiness to discuss a reduction of tension over Berlin is striking a responsive chord in Bonn. The West Germans had for some months been urging the three Western allies to sound out the Soviets on the subject. Bonn would like to make arrangements with East Germany for easier civilian access to West Berlin.

The Gromyko speech is being cited by leaders of both major parties in Bonn as justification for moving ahead "as soon as possible." With an election campaign coming up, it may not be politically feasible for the CDU to push hard for new soundings on Berlin. The SPD probably has a better claim to credit for any foreign policy successes in relations with the East.

London and Paris had been lukewarm toward the idea, but recently they have appeared more willing to proceed. They previously argued that such soundings might impinge on four-power responsibility for Berlin matters and that Moscow would not be interested.

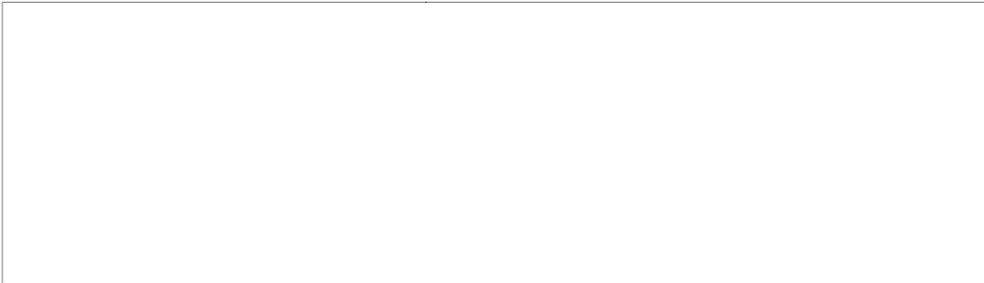
MIDDLE EAST

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The government's arrest over the weekend of a number of terrorists responsible for shelling an Israeli settlement may have brought a direct clash a little closer. Terrorist leaders are said to have ordered their men to fire on Jordanian army units if there are any more attempts to interfere with fedayeen activity.



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Israel apparently will not be able to buy the 67 Canadian-manufactured F-86 Sabrejets after all. The deal

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hinged on the willingness of Ecuador to act as a go-between. After first saying yes, Ecuador now says no.

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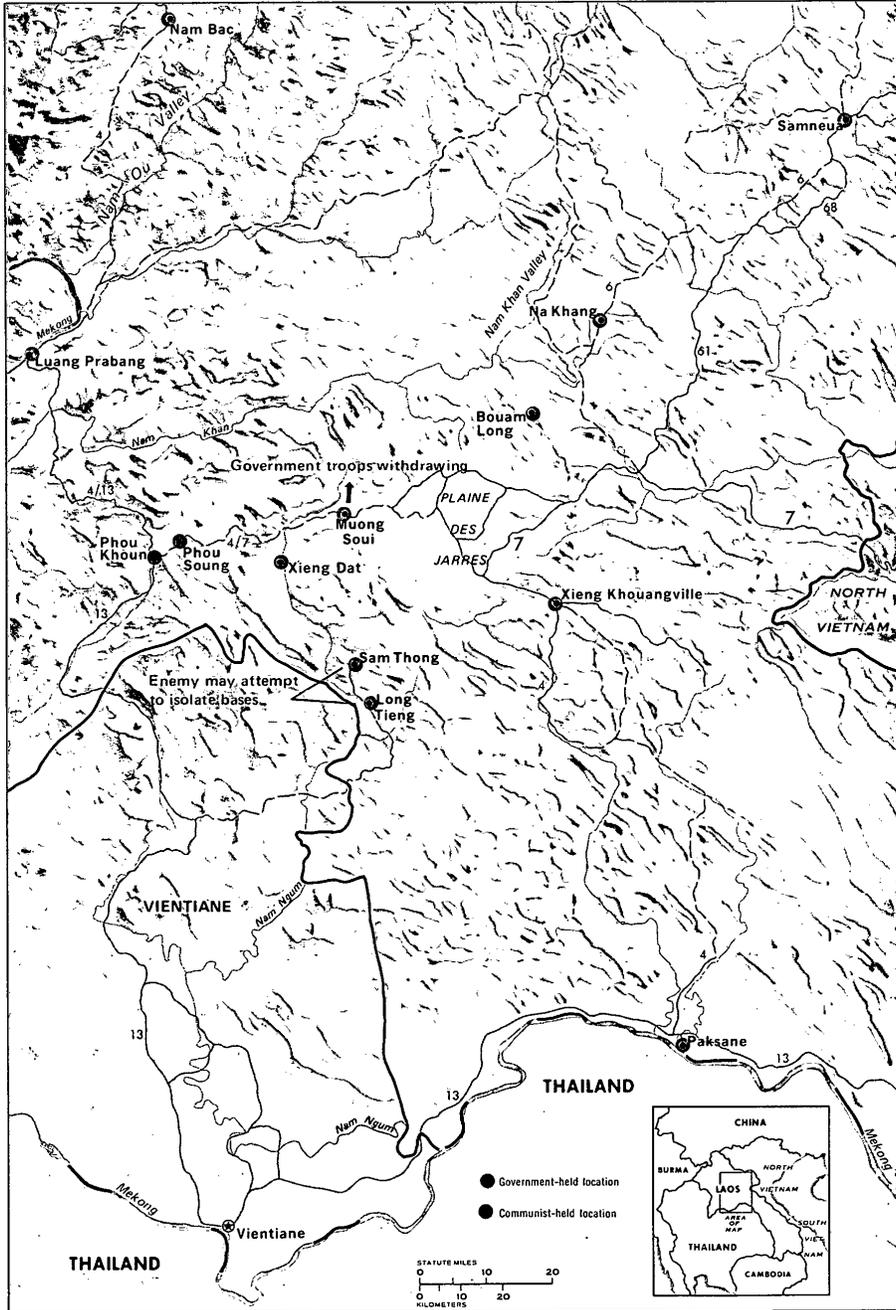
There is nothing significantly new to report on Vietnam.

II. OTHER IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS

THAILAND

Foreign Minister Thanat, for over a decade one of the principal architects of Thailand's pro-US foreign policy, may

LAOS: Current Situation



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be leaving the government. Bangkok has circulated an official note among foreign embassies asking support for Thanat's candidacy for an opening on the International Court of Justice that will become available early next year. Thai leaders have made a strong pitch for US backing.

Bunchana Attakorn, former Thai ambassador in Washington, seems to have the inside track for Thanat's job. This suggests that no important changes in Thai foreign policy are likely in the near future.

LAOS

Meo General Vang Pao

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The two-week operation had made some headway but a number of difficulties including weather and morale apparently convinced the general that the chances of victory in the operation were minimal. He will probably turn his attention now to thwarting what he believes will be an early enemy drive westward on Route 7 and then south into the northern section of Vientiane Province.

EL SALVADOR - HONDURAS

OAS efforts are under way to halt the hostilities which broke out between the two countries last night. An emergency session of the OAS Council agreed to the Honduran request for a foreign ministers meeting and decided to send a fact-finding

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team, headed by Nicaraguan Ambassador Sevilla-Sacasa, to help the Central American mediators. The team is expected in San Salvador today.

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Salvador may now be willing to accept a cease-fire arranged by the OAS in the hope of avoiding a counterattack from Honduras.

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