



The President's Daily Brief

29 January 1970

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

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PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

Le Duc Tho is on his way back to Paris. (Page 1)

King Savang is pressing hard for an aerial attack on Chinese road construction in Laos. (Page 2) 50X1

Peking [redacted] Russian [redacted] (Page 3) 50X1
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China [redacted] (Page 4) 50X1
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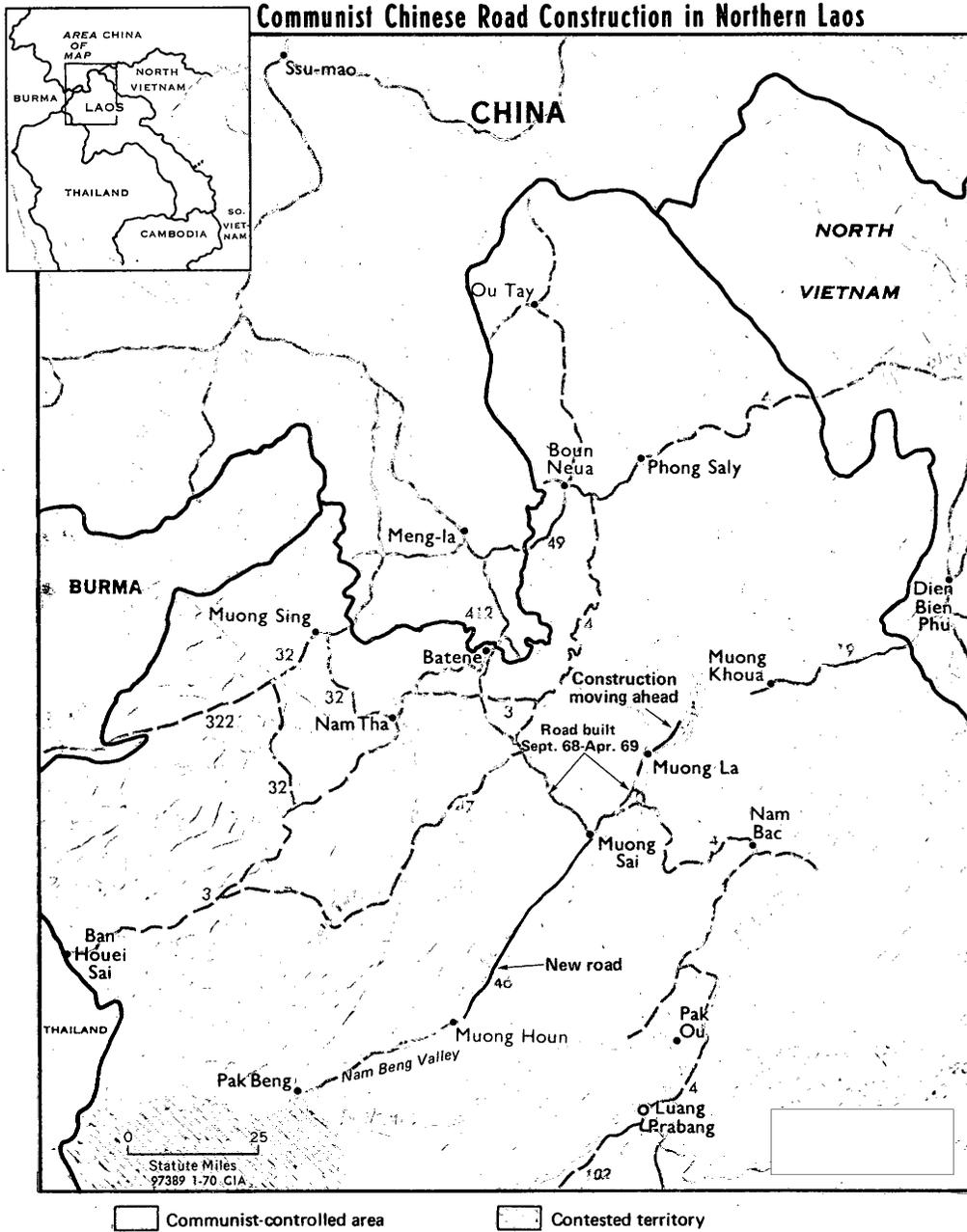
FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

NORTH VIETNAM

A French official informed the US delegation in Paris last week that Le Duc Tho would be on hand for the French Communist Party Congress scheduled for 4 to 8 February. Moscow radio has now announced he is on the way.

There are no persuasive reasons why Hanoi would send Le Duc Tho to Paris solely for the French party congress. His presence inevitably will generate press speculation that it is connected with the talks, and this may be more what the Communists have in mind. Any significant Communist initiative in the talks is unlikely at this stage, but Hanoi might calculate that keeping Tho on tap in Paris for a while would generate more interest in--and pressure for--the naming of a successor to Ambassador Lodge.

The Communists do not wish to abandon the Paris forum, and they are unhappy over what they regard as US efforts to "downgrade" the importance of the talks. More importantly, they probably are chagrined that the US has been able to soft pedal the talks without generating much adverse public reaction. Indeed, in view of the importance Hanoi has always attached to the public relations aspect of its policies, we suspect the Communists want to get out from under a propaganda disadvantage. Their intransigence in recent months has facilitated US and GVN efforts to show that progress in the negotiations is only possible if the Communists are willing to loosen up. Sending Le Duc Tho back to Paris now might be a way to get the ball back in our court.



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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY**LAOS**

King Savang is pressing hard for a concerted aerial bombardment of the Chinese road south of Muong Sai. On returning from Luang Prabang yesterday, Prime Minister Souvanna called in Ambassador Godley to inform him of the King's orders to hit the road "forthwith," including the Pathet Lao headquarters at Muong Sai. Souvanna said that he did not want to go as far as the King on this matter, but would bomb targets southwest of the present terminus of active construction near Muong Houn. Souvanna added that he considered it "absolutely essential" that a ground blocking position be established between Pak Beng and Muong Houn.

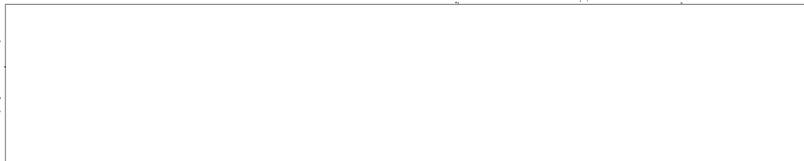
Souvanna said the King dismissed out of hand a suggestion that the government make a demarche to Peking on the road building activity prior to any military moves. The King continues to believe that in light of Peking's refusal to admit to any activity in Laos, the government could safely take any action deemed necessary for its own defense.

Although Ambassador Godley was able to forestall any Lao military initiative for 48 hours in order to notify Washington, the Lao Government appears to be moving rapidly toward the point of taking some type of military action against the Chinese road builders, either with or without US concurrence.

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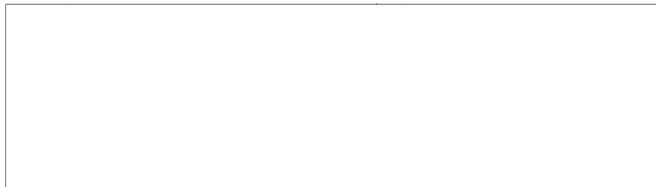
COMMUNIST CHINA - USSR



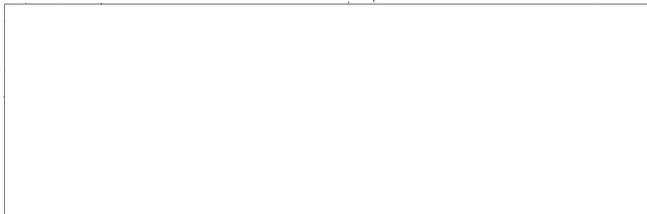
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NOTES

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USSR:

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Greece:

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