



The President's Daily Brief

14 February 1970



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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

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PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

In Laos, the Communist offensive against the Plaine des Jarres is growing. (Page 1)

Communist China has sharpened its propaganda against the US following a recent overflight incident. (Page 2)

In Jordan, incidents between the fedayeen and government forces continue. (Page 3)

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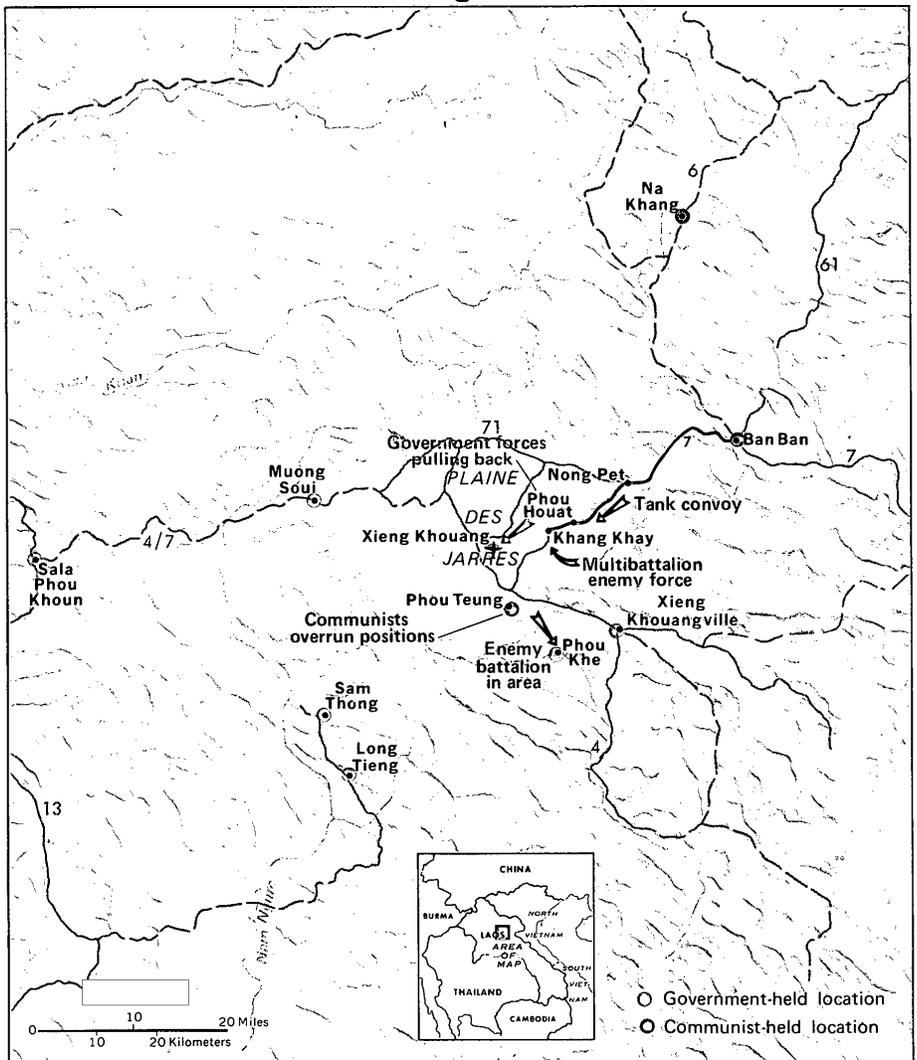
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The Turkish prime minister will submit his government's resignation today. (Page 5)

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Communist Offensive Widening



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LAOS

The Communists are widening their offensive against the Plaine des Jarres. Phou Theung, a mountain top overlooking the southern edge of the Plaine, was overrun yesterday morning, and Phou Khe to the southeast is threatened. Should the Communists capture Phou Khe, currently the southern anchor of General Vang Pao's defense line, the government's position at Xieng Khouangville would become untenable. The enemy would then have an unobstructed approach to the Plaine from the southeast.

A strong enemy thrust at the heart of the Plaine also appears to be shaping up. Enemy forces are converging on the Khang Khay area presumably in preparation for a push against the government's forward command post at Xieng Khouang airfield.

North of the Plaine, Vang Pao is pulling his forces out of vulnerable positions west of Nong Pet and moving them onto the Plaine. Elements of the government's guerrilla force that has been operating within enemy rear areas east of the Plaine have begun arriving on the Plaine and are taking up defensive positions along the western fringes.

Vang Pao's decision to break contact with the enemy to the east and north of the Plaine was made in order to minimize casualties. By concentrating his troops in the more open areas of the Plaine, however, he may defeat this purpose. Although frontal assaults against these positions no doubt would be costly to the enemy, the North Vietnamese frequently have demonstrated that they are prepared to pay the price. At this stage of the offensive, the enemy has not come close to the point of committing its full strength.

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COMMUNIST CHINA

Peking has sharpened its propaganda against the US following an inadvertent overflight of South China by a US reconnaissance drone on Tuesday. A strident press release two days later denounced the overflight as "new evidence" of the Nixon administration's "stubborn policy of hostility." In another article on the same day, the Chinese attacked Washington's recent offer of F-100 fighters to Taipei.

Although Chinese propaganda media in recent weeks have carried standard attacks on the US, they have generally avoided direct references to bilateral issues. This restraint was probably meant to develop a favorable atmosphere for next week's meeting in Warsaw and perhaps encourage US flexibility. The drone flight, however, has compelled Peking to return, at least temporarily, to a more virulent anti-US posture in order to demonstrate that the Warsaw talks have not softened its resistance to US "provocations."

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JORDAN

Tension between the fedayeen and the government remains high, and sporadic incidents continue. The government has relaxed its controls around Amman and has issued orders permitting armed fedayeen to enter the city unhindered. The fedayeen are much in evidence and, despite the agreed cease-fire, have been harassing the police. The fedayeen issued a further statement yesterday insisting that King Husayn's decrees be canceled if bloodshed is to be halted.

Government forces have remained in place in and around the city and have been strengthened.

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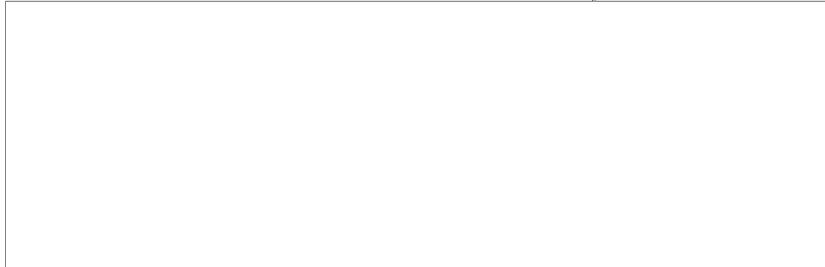
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[Redacted] The US Embassy notes that there is a considerable gap between the King's intentions to have his measures implemented and the fedayeen leaders' determination that they be abandoned.

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THAILAND-USSR



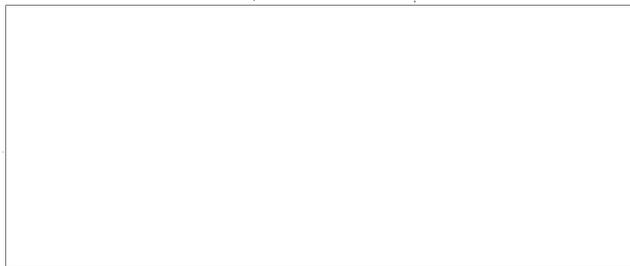
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TURKEY

Prime Minister Demirel, acting on the decision of the ruling Justice Party's leadership, will submit his government's resignation to President Sunay today. This development reflects a power struggle within the Justice Party. In a demonstration directed against Demirel's leadership, dissidents in the party recently voted with the opposition in the National Assembly to reject the budget.

Sunay may reject the resignation, or ask Demirel, as head of the party having the largest parliamentary representation, to form a coalition government with others. If these efforts fail, Sunay probably will appoint a caretaker government and call for new elections, perhaps in June to coincide with already scheduled senatorial elections.

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