



The President's Daily Brief

25 April 1970

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

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PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

Cambodia [redacted]
[redacted]

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In Paris, hints that Xuan Thuy and Madame Binh, the Viet Cong's chief delegate, may be going home soon provide further indication of the declining importance--at least over the near term--the Vietnamese Communists seem to attach to the talks as a forum for developing their terms for a settlement in South Vietnam. (Page 3)

[redacted]

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In the Caribbean area, shelling yesterday by the Haitian coast guard did little damage either to Duvalier's palace or to his power position. Trinidad's Prime Minister Williams, on the other hand, may have suffered irreparable political damage from concessions he has had to make to ease tensions. (Page 5)

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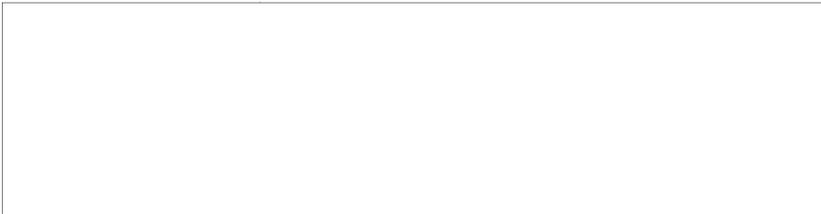
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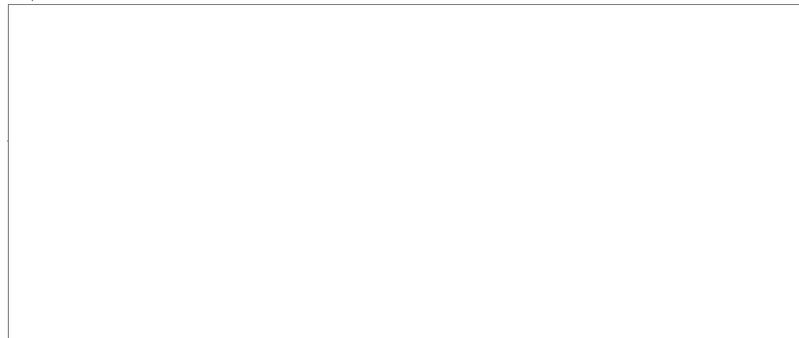
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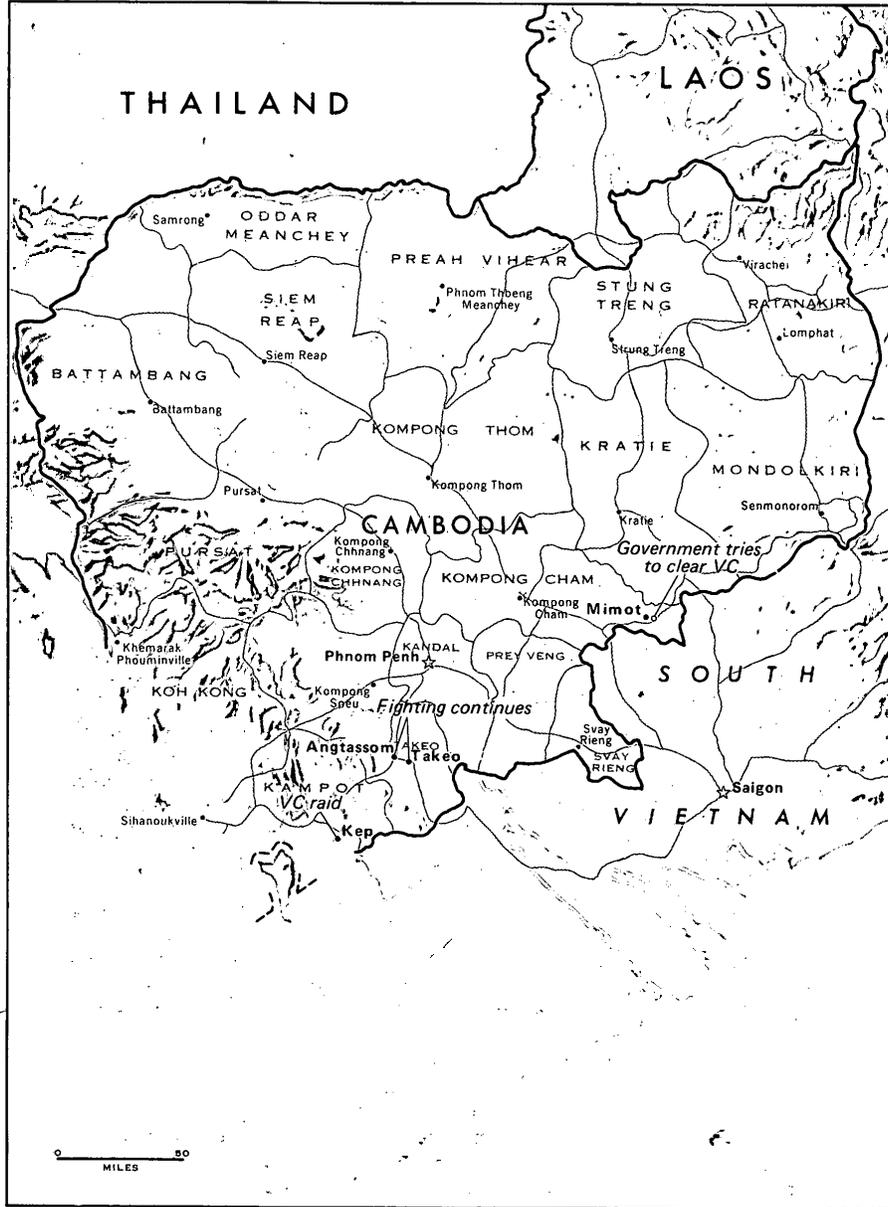
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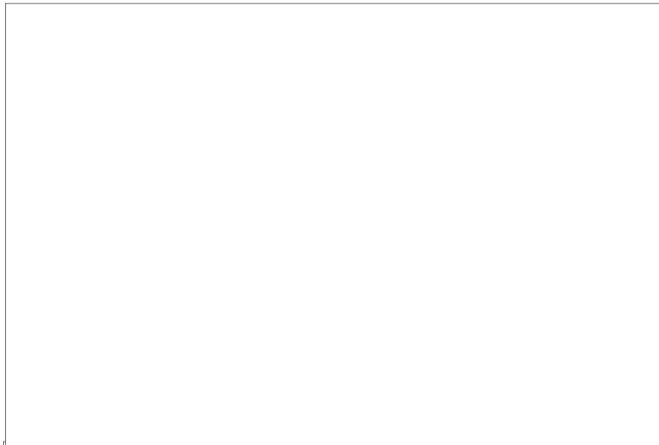
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Cambodia: Current Situation



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Meanwhile, some new Viet Cong attacks have been reported. The government claims that a small Communist force made a hit-and-run attack on the coastal resort of Kep, on the Gulf of Siam, on 24 April and destroyed several government buildings. Some fighting continues to be reported near Takeo town and at last report the government had still not cleared Communist forces from the village of Angtassom between Takeo and Phnom Penh. On the eastern border, government reinforcements are trying to clear Viet Cong forces from the area around the town of Mimot, in Kompong Cham Province, which was hit by South Vietnamese air strikes on 23 April.

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NORTH VIETNAM

Following Thursday's session of the Paris talks, Communist spokesmen hinted that both Hanoi delegation head Xuan Thuy and Viet Cong chief delegate Madame Binh will soon be going home.

Le Duc Tho, the high-level "adviser" to the North Vietnamese delegation, left for Hanoi earlier this month, and Ha Van Lau, the other principal delegate for the North Vietnamese, has been absent since mid-February. Should Thuy and Binh also depart, leaving no high-level Communist personalities connected with the talks, it would suggest that Hanoi has decided to shelve the talks--at least over the near term--as a forum for promoting Communist terms for a settlement in South Vietnam.

The Communists might have good reason to do this. New opportunities for more effective pressure on the US have developed recently outside of Vietnam. The Communists may have concluded that increased military pressure in Laos and Cambodia and the specter of a wider war is a more effective way of eroding allied negotiating firmness than any course presently open to them either in Paris or South Vietnam.

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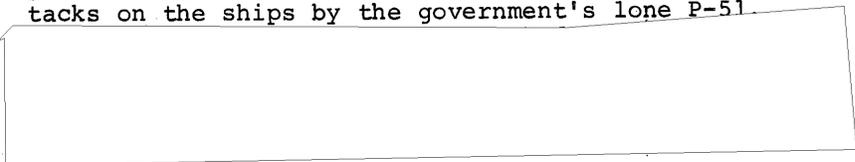
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NOTES

Haiti: The coast guard mutineers led by the commandant, Colonel Cayard, have been unable to attract essential army support. Cayard would thus seem to have little choice but to flee into exile, unless he is foolhardy enough to attempt a landing. The sporadic shelling yesterday from Cayard's three coast guard cutters did little damage to Duvalier's palace. Equally ineffectual were the strafing attacks on the ships by the government's lone P-51.



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Trinidad: Tension in Port of Spain is subsiding. The government and the army mutineers seem close to a settlement of the brief insurrection. The political costs to Prime Minister Williams of the events of the past few days have been high, however. Difficult days are ahead for him.

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