

7



The President's Daily Brief

15 August 1970

26

~~Top Secret~~ 50X1



FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

15 August 1970

PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

Cambodian developments are discussed on *Page 1*.

A lull in the Laos fighting may reflect a desire to keep things quiet while the possibility of peace talks is explored. (*Page 2*)

Syria

50X1

(*Page 4*)

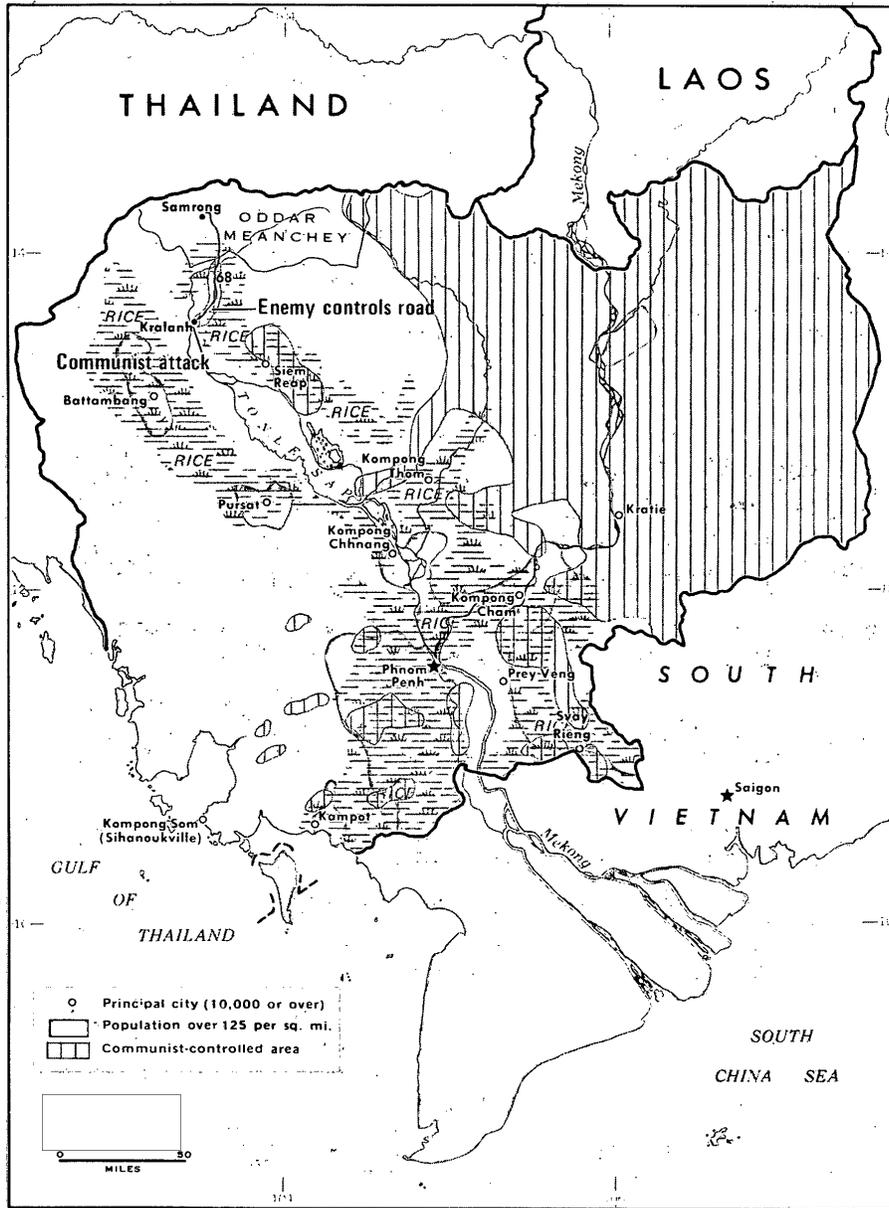
Panama says the US must vacate Rio Hato airfield by 23 August when the present agreement expires. (*Page 5*)

Korean President Pak takes the propaganda initiative on the reunification issue. (*Page 6*)

Chou En-lai's intention to visit Southern Yemen signals China's enhanced interest in the Middle East. (*Page 7*)

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

CAMBODIA: Current Situation



99696 8-70 CIA

50X1

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

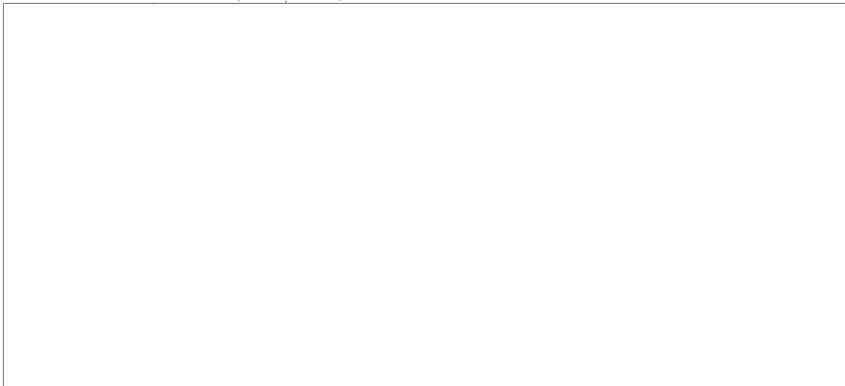
CAMBODIA

Government troops attempting to clear a section of the road between Siem Reap city and its airport on 13 August clashed with a small enemy force. At last report the road was still blocked, and travelers were stranded at the airport. To the west, a government battalion was attacked near the town of Kralanh but no details on the fighting are available. Cambodian commanders continue to report that enemy troops are heading into the Kralanh area. Statements by a North Vietnamese prisoner indicate that some of the enemy troops deployed there have been newly infiltrated from North Vietnam.

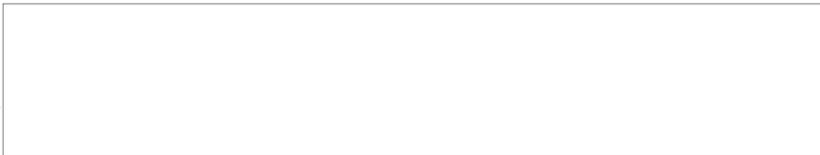
The Cambodian regional military commander reported yesterday that the road between Kralanh and Oddar Meanchey Province is now controlled by the enemy. He added that government forces in Oddar Meanchey have only about a month's supplies on hand and will have to be resupplied from Thailand.

* * *

50X1



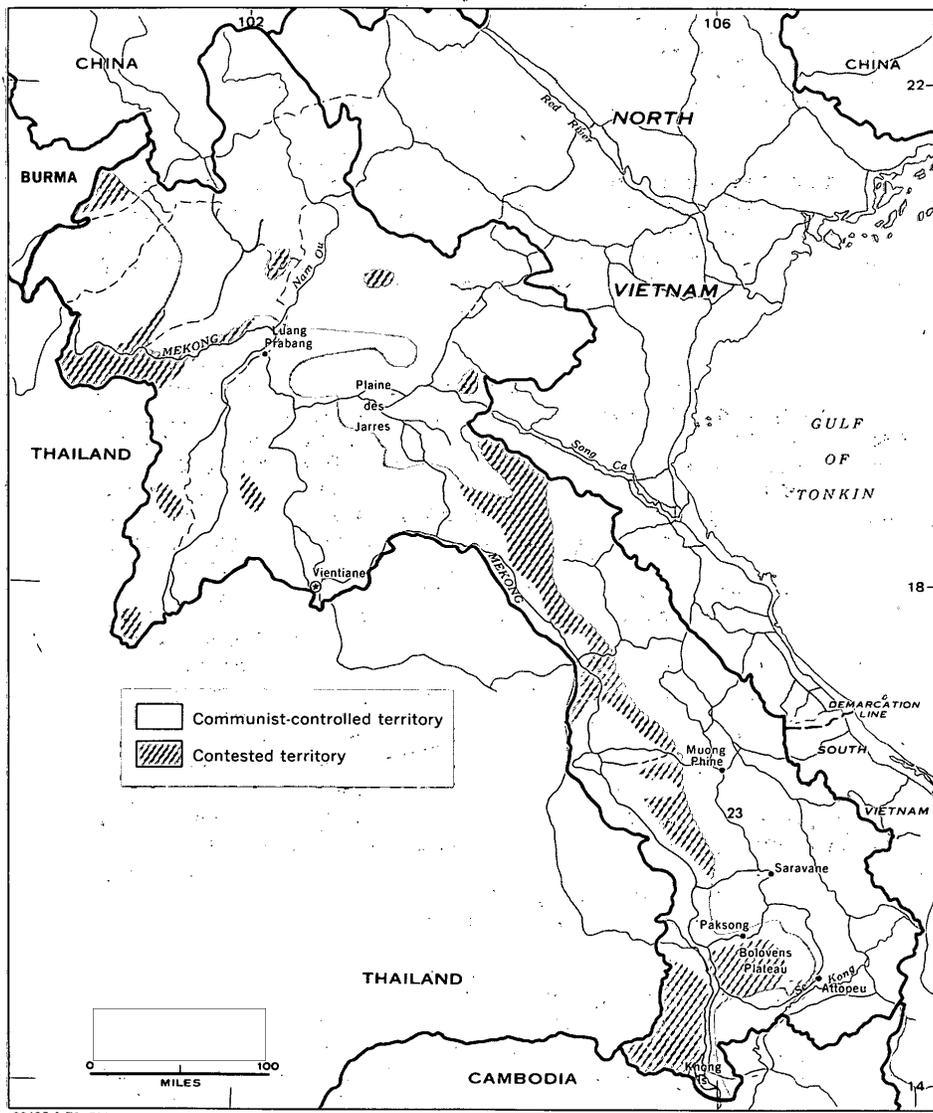
50X1



50X1



Laos



50X1

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

LAOS

The relatively low level of recent North Vietnamese and Pathet Lao military activity may have been prompted in part by a desire to keep things quiet while the possibility of peace talks is being explored. Difficulty in mounting attacks and moving supplies in extremely poor weather are undoubtedly contributing factors. Government forces, which usually take the offensive during this time of year, have not been very active.

In the north, government forces sweeping areas to the north and west of the royal capital of Luang Prabang have had few contacts with the enemy. Southwest of the Plaine des Jarres, the Communists have staged several spoiling attacks on forward positions as they continue to frustrate government efforts to retake territory south of the Plaine. Government casualties have been high. The North Vietnamese forces involved, however, have not sought to occupy these positions, and enemy units in this sector are considerably under strength as a result of ground clashes and heavy bombing.

In the panhandle, last month's occasionally heavy fighting along Route 23 south of Muong Phine has been slowed by heavy rains. Farther south, Communist forces succeeded in eliminating the last government outpost near Saravane on 13 August, but otherwise this region has been relatively quiet for several weeks.

Along the eastern edge of the Bolovens Plateau, Communist units continue to launch mortar attacks and probe government positions. For the time being, however, the Communists appear satisfied to maintain their foothold on the plateau. They have not made extensive logistic use of the Se Kong River, strengthening earlier indications that Attapeu and Saravane were captured largely for their political impact.

(continued)

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

In the far south, the Communists have yet to fulfill their propaganda threats against the towns along the road and river routes leading to Cambodia. Government patrols around Paksong have found no evidence of major enemy forces, and in the Khong Island area the Communist forces seem to have dispersed recently.

50X1

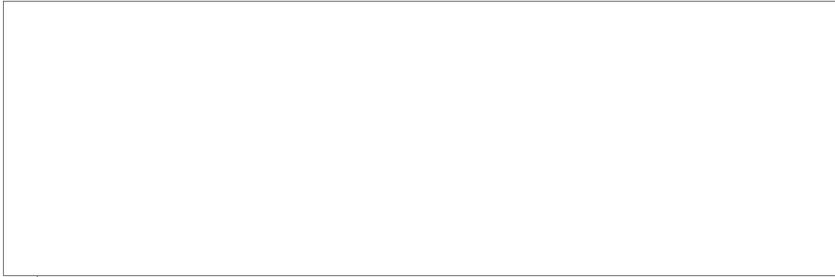
[redacted] the Communists' chief activity in this region is to organize support bases in extreme southwestern Laos for Cambodian operations.

50X1

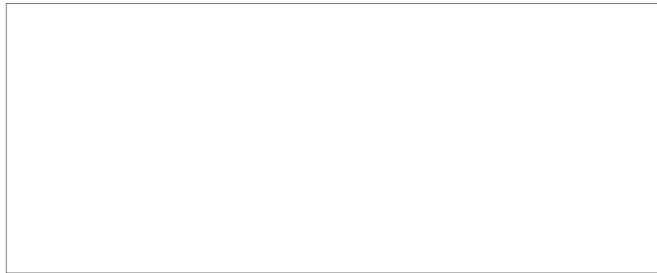
FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

SYRIA



50X1

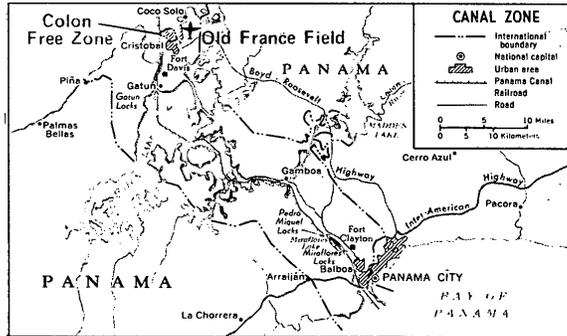


50X1

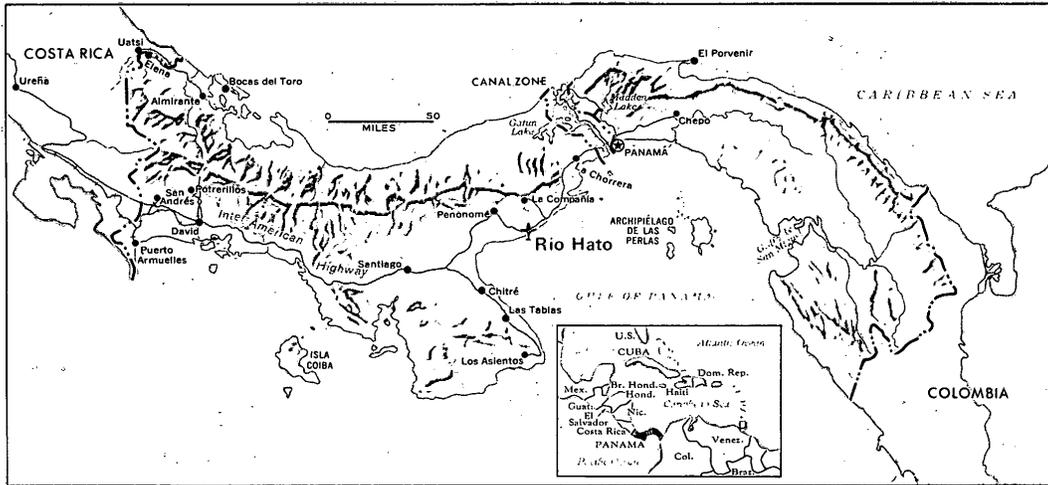
US Asked to Leave Rio Hato



99693 8-70 CIA



50X1



FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

PANAMA

The Panamanian ambassador advised State yesterday that the US would have to vacate the 19,120-acre Rio Hato airfield and training area by 23 August, when the present agreement expires. The ambassador indicated that a low-key announcement to this effect will be released in Panama shortly. He held out, however, the possibility of negotiating a new base agreement some time in the future.

Last year Torrijos promised General Westmoreland that the base agreement would be extended without conditions, but recently he has been demanding a quid pro quo.

Torrijos, convinced that he will not be able to obtain sufficient concessions from the US to protect his popular image, and looking ahead to possible Canal treaty negotiations in the future, seems to be using the base issue to test US resolve and at the same time demonstrate his toughness in dealing with the "gringos."

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

KOREA

South Korean President Pak, in his Independence Day speech yesterday, called on the North Koreans to renounce their policy of Communizing all of Korea by force so that the country can move toward reunification. In a departure from former South Korean policy, Pak said his government would no longer oppose North Korean participation in the UN debate of the Korean question providing Pyongyang accepted the competence of the UN to deal with the question.

Pak's condemnation of the North Korean leadership for causing the continued tension in Korea and his demand that it recognize the competence of the UN--something Pyongyang has never been willing to do--indicates that Pak's intention is to gain a propaganda advantage rather than to advance materially the cause of unification. Pak has been aware for some time that Seoul's intrasigent position on contact with the North has had less propaganda appeal than Pyongyang's ostensibly more flexible approach.

The North Koreans have been proposing a step-by-step program leading to eventual North-South elections and the creation of a single government. Their proposal is in line with Pyongyang's switch last year to less militant tactics after the guerrilla teams infiltrated into South Korea failed in their effort to foment insurgency. Basic to the North's proposals, of course, is the withdrawal of US forces from Korea.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

COMMUNIST CHINA

Chou En-lai's acceptance in principle of an invitation to visit Southern Yemen underlines the movement of Chinese diplomacy into a more active phase and emphasizes Peking's interest in the Middle East. This area has received increasing Chinese attention in recent weeks, largely in hopes of countering Soviet influence in the region. The visit-- which would be Chou's first to a non-Communist country since the cultural revolution-- will almost certainly not take place before the conclusion of the upcoming National People's Congress and the celebration of National Day on 1 October. Chou may combine visits to other countries, such as Pakistan, Nepal, and Romania, with this trip. The last Chinese leader to make a swing of several countries outside the Communist world was former head of state Liu Shao-chi in 1966, before the infamous cultural revolution.

Top Secret