



The President's Daily Brief

28 December 1970

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

The military situation in Cambodia and Laos is discussed on *Pages 1 and 2* respectively.

The fedayeen exchanged fire with elements of the Jordanian Army over the weekend in several areas.
(*Page 3*)

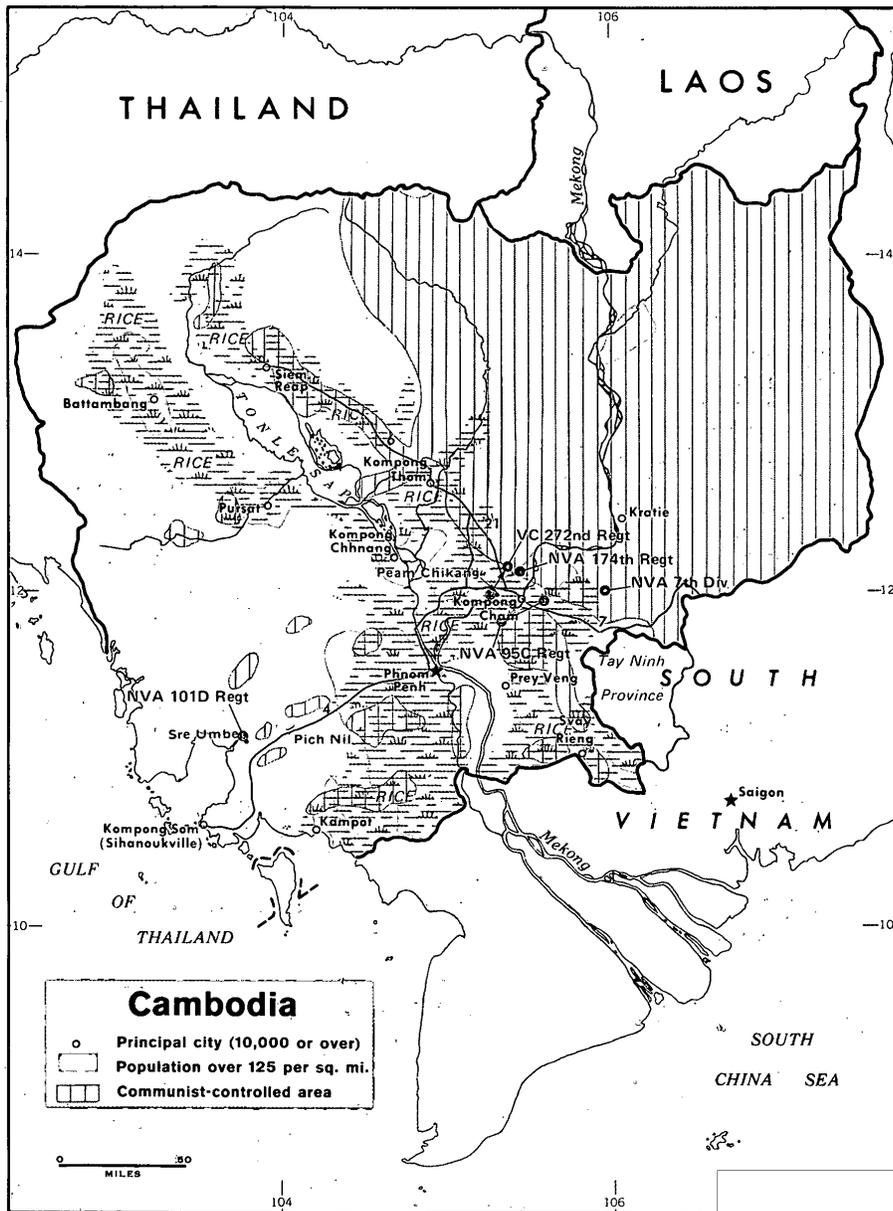


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The reasons for Mrs. Gandhi's call for national elections are noted on *Page 3*.

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Current Situation



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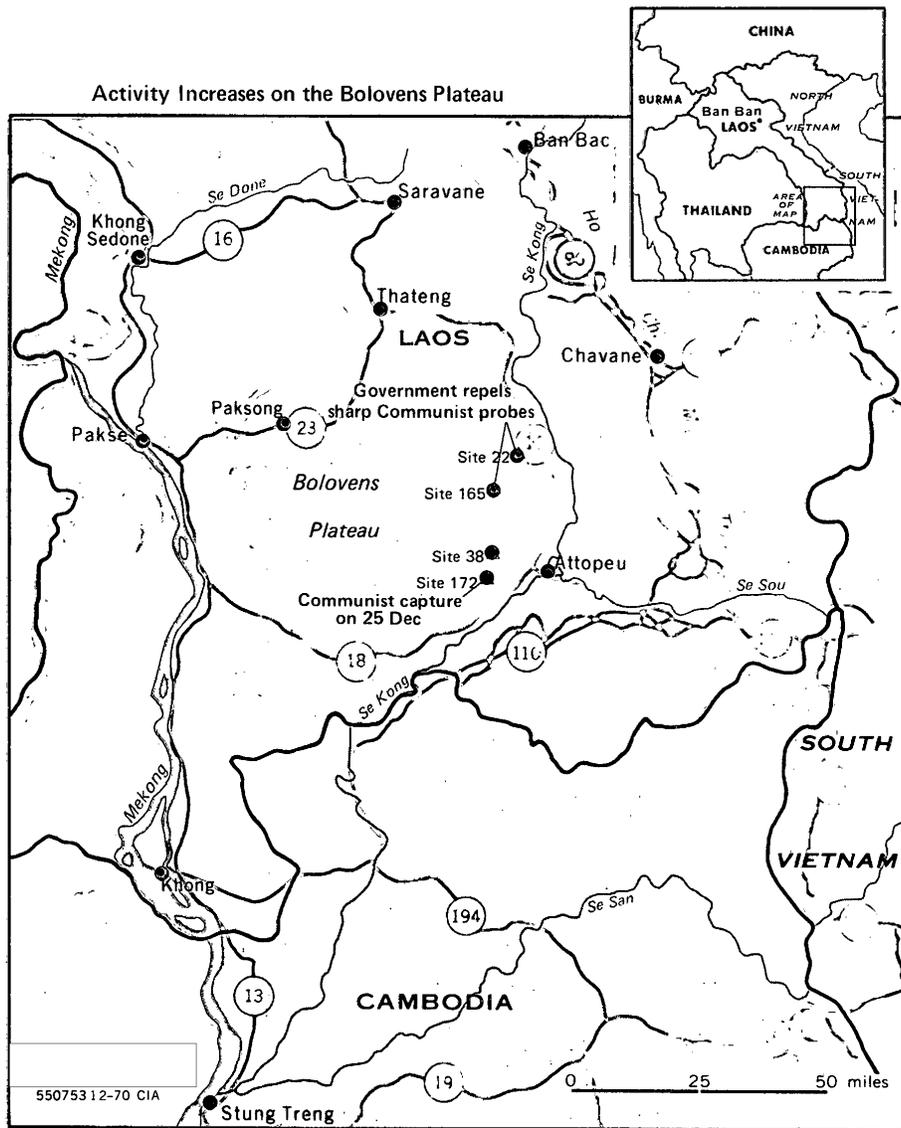
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CAMBODIA

Kompong Cham city was hit by a long-range rocket attack on 23 December, and the enemy probed several government positions in one of the heaviest harassments of a major urban area in recent weeks. The Communists also continued to shell Cambodian positions along Routes 6 and 7, but government casualties were light. A joint Cambodian - South Vietnamese (ARVN) sweep operation is continuing south of Route 7 near Peam Chikang. A preliminary assessment of the latest communications intelligence indicates the VC 272nd Regiment, which had been in this area, has moved north of Route 7.

It is not clear whether the 272nd moved to avoid contact with the allied forces or to reinforce the NVA 174th Regiment against a possible allied thrust northward along Route 21. In a possible related development, the NVA 95C Regiment has moved westward toward the Mekong River where it is in a position to send reinforcements to the 272nd or 174th.

In the south, Route 4 linking Phnom Penh with Kompong Som remains closed. Desultory Cambodian efforts to clear the Communists from the Pich Nil pass and other strongholds near the road are making no progress. A government battalion was routed near Sre Umbel on 24 December while elements of still other battalions nearby appear to have been encircled. The Cambodians have asked that ARVN forces help with clearing operations along Route 4, but we have no information on Saigon's reaction to the request.



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- Communist-held location
- Government-held location

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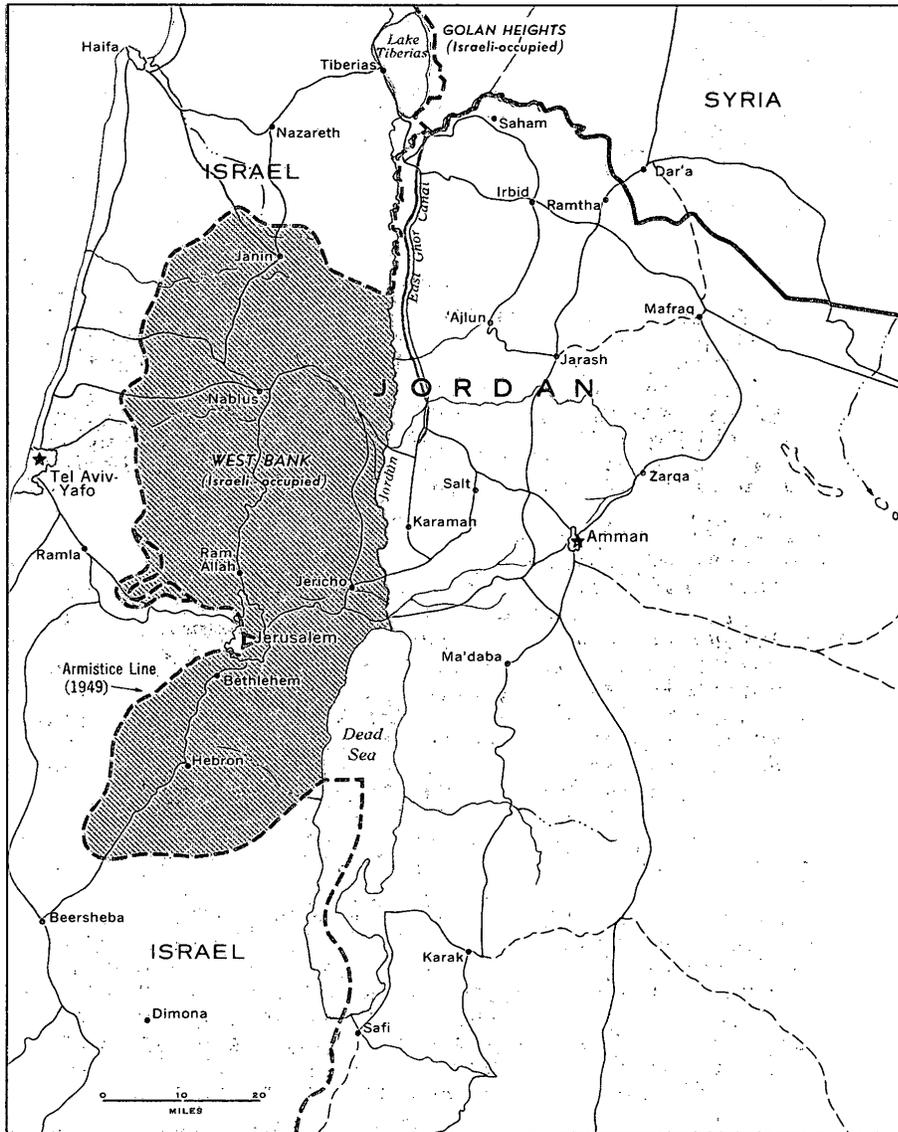
LAOS

Two battalions of government irregulars were driven from the Site 172 area on the southeastern rim of the Bolovens Plateau on 25 December by North Vietnamese troops. Sharp Communist probes were repulsed at Site 165 and at Site 22, the last major government base in the eastern portion of the plateau. Some minor skirmishing was also reported in the northern reaches of the plateau.

The Communists apparently want control of the Bolovens to facilitate the opening of a major westerly infiltration route into Cambodia, but so far they have been thwarted. The recent southward deployments of the 9th and the 52nd NVA regiments and the stockpiling of supplies in the area indicates that the enemy may make a more concerted drive on the Bolovens. At a minimum, we expect the Communists to maintain pressure on the Bolovens to divert government irregulars from conducting harassing raids against the main Communist infiltration corridor to the east.

In north Laos, the government's operation in the Ban Ban valley has not made any significant forward progress. Government troops have managed to destroy a 100-ton rice cache and some ammunition east of the valley.

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NOTES

Jordan: Two days of intermittent fighting between the fedayeen and army elements near Salt ended Saturday. New clashes broke out yesterday, however, near the Wahdat refugee camp in Amman and in the Syrian border area near Saham. The Arab Truce Committee has restored an uneasy peace in all areas.

USSR: [Redacted]

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India: Prime Minister Gandhi has decided to call for early national elections in an attempt to parlay her personal popularity--apparently at an unprecedented high level--into a parliamentary majority. She wanted to act while the opposition parties were in disarray and at a time when the economy was comparatively strong. Mrs. Gandhi's Ruling Congress Party, which now has 222 members in the lower house, will have to capture 262 of the 523 seats to win a majority.

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