



The President's Daily Brief

23 February 1971



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THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

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PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

Communist military activity is continuing in several areas near Phnom Penh. (Page 1)

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The North Vietnamese are moving a large volume of supplies into northern Laos. (Page 4)

In Pakistan, the constitution-making impasse shows no sign of abating but tension seems to be easing with India over the recent hijacking incident. (Page 4)

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Phnom Penh Area



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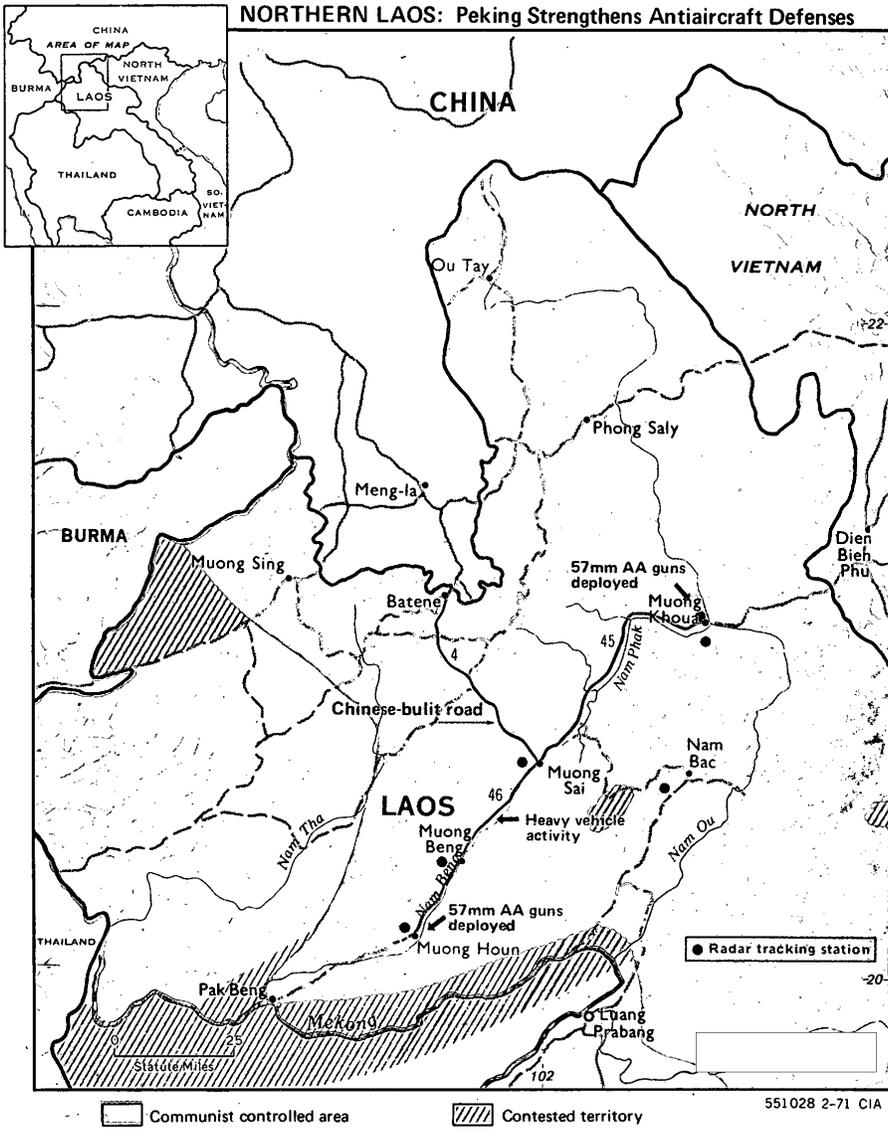
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CAMBODIA

An enemy attack yesterday on a Mekong River convoy some ten miles southeast of the capital destroyed a barge carrying ammunition. Other vessels in the convoy sustained only minor damage and were able to proceed on to Phnom Penh. Cambodia's other main transportation route to South Vietnam, Route 1, has been closed since Saturday, when the enemy destroyed a bridge near Neak Luong.

Northeast of Phnom Penh, Cambodian troops conducting clearing operations near the village of Vihear Suor continue to report light contact with enemy elements. Meanwhile, Cambodian Army messages indicate that small enemy groups are infiltrating several villages to the northwest of the capital.

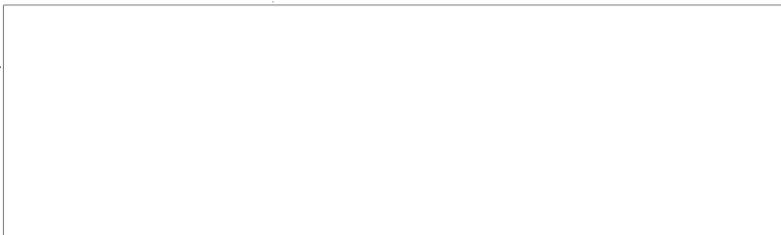
Heavier fighting in the Vihear Suor sector may be in prospect. Intercepted army messages recently have claimed that there has been intense nighttime Communist infiltration from the north and the northeast. On 20 February the headquarters of the Communist 96th Artillery Regiment was some 15 miles northeast of Phnom Penh, within easy range of Vihear Suor.



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COMMUNIST CHINA - LAOS



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Photography [redacted] showed a continuing buildup of Chinese engineer units at Muong Houn, but they have still not resumed construction of the road beyond Muong Houn, southwards toward the Mekong River.

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EGYPT-USSR

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NOTES

North Vietnam - Laos: Intercepts show that the North Vietnamese are moving a large volume of supplies into northern Laos. Beginning on 20 February, nearly 2,000 tons of supplies are scheduled to be sent to units in and around the Plaine des Jarres. About half of the supplies are to go to North Vietnamese units, with the remainder split between Pathet Lao and neutralist troops. The supplies to the North Vietnamese units are to include about 175 tons of arms and munitions and 500 tons of food-stuffs; almost all the shipments to the others are to be food. Delivery of those supplies destined for the Pathet Lao is to be completed in about three weeks, but no time frame has been disclosed for the other deliveries.

Pakistan: President Yahya is flying to Dacca this week to urge East Pakistani leader Mujibur Rahman to end his intransigence on the new constitution. Although the trip is an extraordinary gesture to Mujib, who refused to go to West Pakistan to see Yahya, it has little chance of success. Mujib will find it difficult to make significant concessions to Yahya, especially in the face of current West Pakistani threats to boycott the assembly if Mujib does not back down. Mujib still insists that he will use his majority in the constituent assembly to ram through a constitution giving provincial governments responsibility for all matters except defense and foreign policy.

India-Pakistan: According to Indian Foreign Office officials, Pakistan has agreed to call off its military alert along the border, and India has assured Pakistani diplomats that it does not wish to "escalate the controversy" stemming from the hijacking of an Indian airliner on 2 February. The Pakistani ambassador in Washington has again told US officials that Pakistan is willing to negotiate a settlement. Politicians in both countries may still be tempted to play upon strong popular feelings about the hijacking, but the diplomats appear to be moving the two governments toward a settlement of the immediate crisis.

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