



The President's Daily Brief

4 March 1971

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

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PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

Sharp fighting has resumed in eastern Laos. (Page 1)

President Thieu, with his domestic audience as well as Hanoi in mind, has warned that South Vietnamese forces might attack the North. (Page 2)

In Cambodia, South Vietnamese forces have engaged in a series of sharp battles east of the Chup plantation (Page 3)

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Mujibur Rahman has rejected a bid by President Yahya to mollify East Pakistani anger. (Page 5)

Lee Kuan Yew says that the Soviets have invited Singapore to bid on a "huge" maintenance and repair facility. (Page 6)

The Chinese launched their [] space satellite [] (Page 7)

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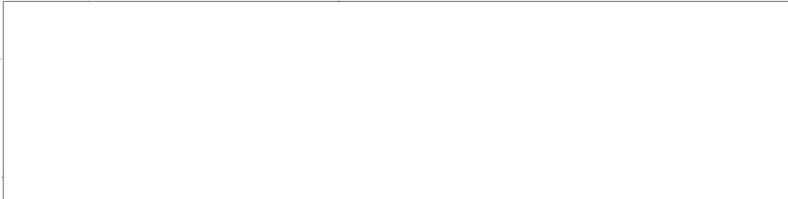
FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

VIETNAM-LAOS

Sharp fighting has resumed in eastern Laos, with Communist attacks on 2 and 3 March against Hills 30 and 31 north of Route 9, against the high ground south of Ban Dong, and against a South Vietnamese strongpoint just north of the intersection of Routes 9 and 92. Some of the assaults were preceded by heavy shelling and ground probes.



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In South Vietnam, widely respected former prime minister Tran Van Huong, now a senator, has publicly criticized the US for failing to provide adequate air support for the campaign in Laos.



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SOUTH VIETNAM - NORTH VIETNAM

President Thieu told a provincial cadre meeting yesterday that South Vietnamese forces might attack the North unless Hanoi stopped sending its forces into the South. He added that the Communists no longer retain the initiative, and that anti-Communist forces now have the capability to attack the enemy anywhere.

Thieu has only recently adopted this bellicose line more characteristic of Vice President Ky. He clearly wants to keep North Vietnam thinking about its own defenses while it attempts to counter Lam Son 719. He probably also wants to impress on Hanoi that the time has passed when it can invade the South without much concern over retaliation. Thieu also had his domestic audience in mind, for many of the cadre addressed may be able to help his re-election, and an element of bravado stands well with them.

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The speech will reinforce Hanoi's apprehensions about possible attacks against the North.

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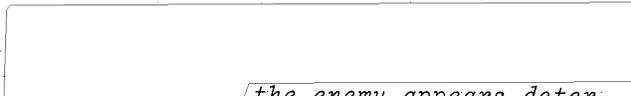
CAMBODIA-VIETNAM

South Vietnamese armor, infantry, and ranger troops around Dambe fought a series of sharp battles along Route 75 east of the Chup plantation on 1 and 2 March. They reported killing about 270 enemy troops while their own casualties were 58 killed and over 200 wounded. The South Vietnamese also lost a substantial amount of weapons and equipment, including one tank.



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Since the clearing operation began in early February, the South Vietnamese claim to have killed over 2,500 Communists, at a cost of about 330 killed and 1,700 wounded.

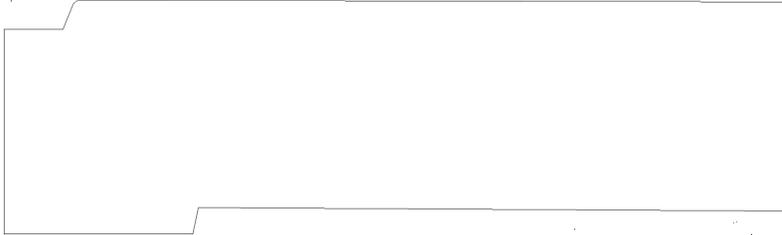


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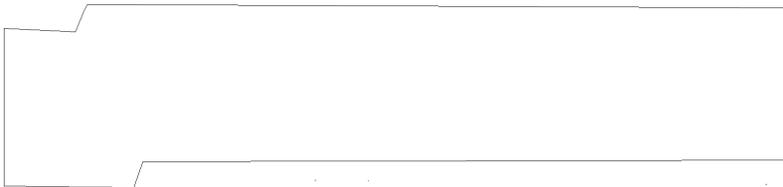
the enemy appears determined to keep the South Vietnamese forces tied down to divert or delay them from moving into the important storage and base areas in the countryside around Dambe.

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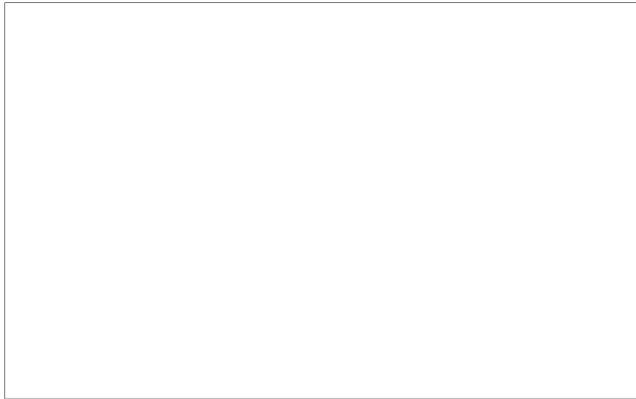
CAMBODIA



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PAKISTAN

Yesterday Mujibur Rahman rejected a major bid by President Yahya Khan to mollify East Pakistani anger over his postponement of the Constituent Assembly. Earlier in the day Yahya had called for leaders of Pakistan's political parties to meet in Dacca on 10 March, and intimated that the assembly might be able to meet soon afterwards. Mujib quickly announced, however, that he would not attend, charging that the conference was being scheduled "at gunpoint."

Mujib's stand increases the significance of his promised statement to a mass rally on Sunday, when he says he will announce his plans. By turning away from this chance to defer a definitive pronouncement pending the proposed conference, he is at least partly seeking to safeguard his leadership of the irate East Pakistanis. Consul General Blood believes that unless some dramatic breakthrough occurs, a declaration of independence by Mujib on Sunday appears increasingly likely.

Also yesterday, on the second day of a scheduled two-day general strike, Mujib extended the work stoppage through Saturday, while still urging restraint. The army appears to have supplanted the police in Dacca, and nighttime curfews remain in force.

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SINGAPORE

Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew told Ambassador Cross yesterday that the visiting Soviet maritime delegation has invited Singapore to bid on a "huge" maintenance and repair arrangement for Soviet ships. Lee said he estimated that the arrangement would cover 25 to 40 percent of the Soviet fleet and an even larger amount of merchant shipping. Although he did not say what he had replied to the Soviets, Lee reiterated to Ambassador Cross his earlier position that if the US, UK, and Australia kept Singapore facilities busy there would be no room for the Soviets.

Previously, Lee had given assurances that he would not entertain any proposals for Soviet naval use of Singapore's facilities and that he would make no arrangements about Soviet shipping without first consulting his Commonwealth defense partners. Lee's attempts to pressure these partners and the US into a substantial commitment to use the Singapore facilities show up clearly in his obvious exaggeration of potential Soviet business.

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NOTES

Communist China: The Chinese launched their
space satellite

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Yemen (Sana) - US;

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Berlin: The slowdown of West German civilian traffic on the autobahn to West Berlin is an attempt by Pankow to strike a balance between its current relatively flexible approach toward matters of mutual interest with Bonn and its much harder view on matters which it considers illegal, such as West German political meetings in West Berlin. The Christian Democratic Party is now holding a three-day meeting there. The traffic harassment caused Mayor Schuetz to postpone the opening scheduled today of West Berlin Senat talks with the East Germans on Easter passes.

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