

The President's Daily Brief

1 April 1972



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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

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PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

South Vietnamese forces remained under heavy attack today. (Page 1)

In Laos, the seesaw battle for Skyline Ridge may go on for some days. (Page 2)

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[Redacted]

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Chile's President Allende is being pre-empted by Socialists in his government who wish to capitalize on radical agrarian reforms for their own political benefit. (Page 5)

The Soviet press has played down air defense chief Batitskiy's recent trip to North Vietnam. (Page 6)

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Pakistan. (Page 6)

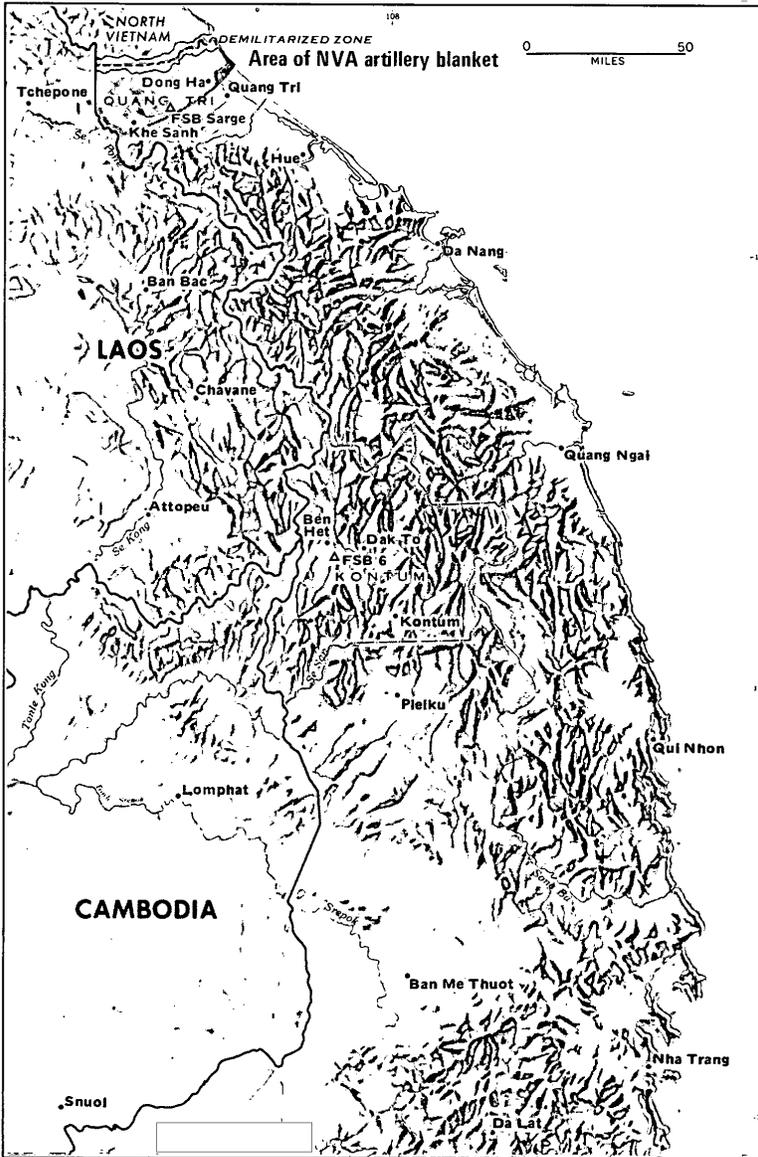
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SOUTH VIETNAM



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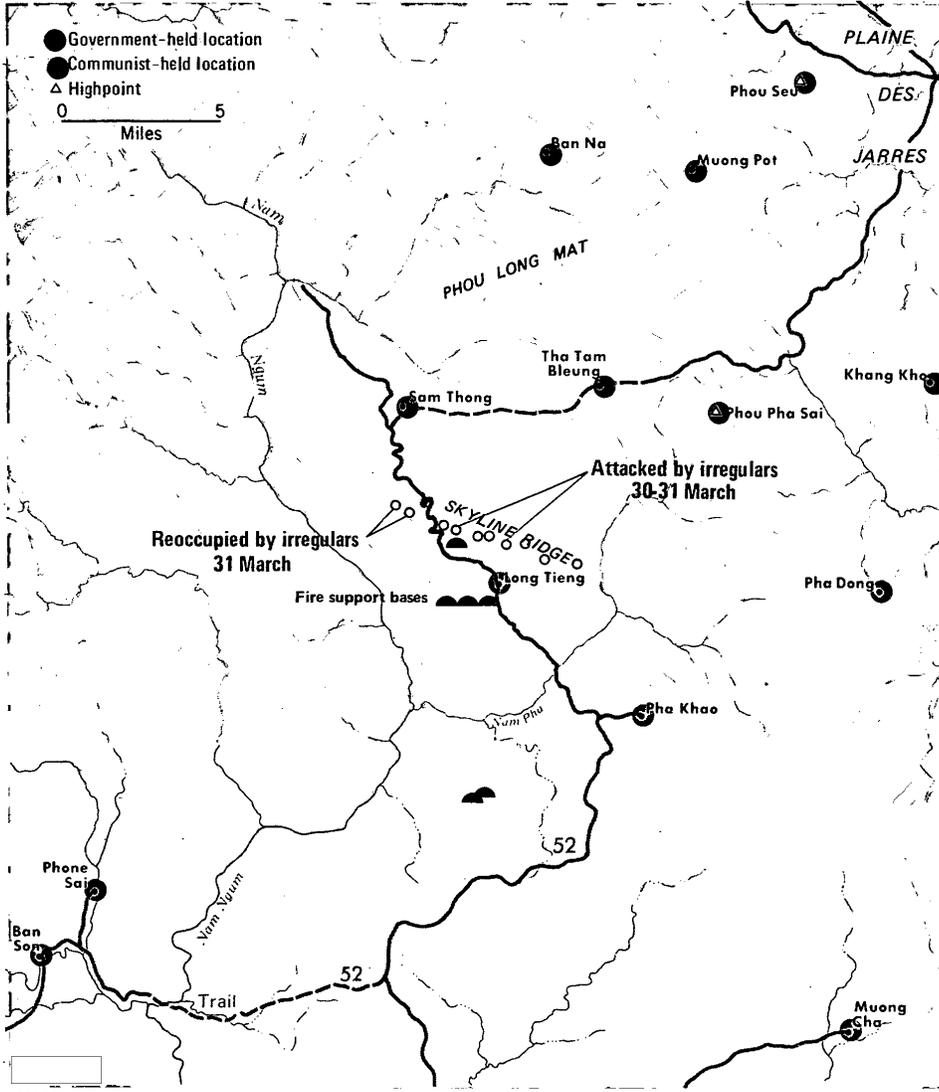
SOUTH VIETNAM

Heavy attacks south of the DMZ in northeastern Quang Tri Province continued today. Enemy attacks have been directed against military and civilian targets, including villages and refugee camps. Some South Vietnamese positions have been abandoned, but field reports indicate that the defenders' casualties are light so far.

At least three North Vietnamese infantry and two artillery regiments are participating in this action. Heavy enemy artillery in Quang Tri Province, combined with batteries north of the DMZ, blanket most of the South Vietnamese positions in the northern half of the province. Intercepts reveal that sufficient munitions and supplies are available for extensive attacks.

In the western highlands, messages passed yesterday call for attacks today against a South Vietnamese brigade south of Fire Support Base 6 in Kontum Province. We expect additional attacks in this area in the near future.

LONG TIENG AREA



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LAOS

Government forces yesterday recaptured two strongpoints on the western end of Skyline Ridge that had been in North Vietnamese hands for nearly two weeks. They are pressing attacks against two other positions, one of which had fallen to the enemy within the last 48 hours. The North Vietnamese still hold three positions on the ridge. While giving ground on Skyline, the North Vietnamese have kept up artillery fire on irregular positions on the ridge as well as in the Long Tieng Valley. They have not, however, launched any major ground action since irregulars turned back a tank and infantry assault on the western sector of the ridge on 29 March. As of this morning, there were still enemy tanks in this sector.

North Vietnamese intercepts give no indication that the Communists are ready to give up their attempt to capture the base. Neither side has been able to throw a decisive blow, and the current round of punch and counterpunch seems likely to continue for at least some days to come.

To the north and northeast of the Plaine des Jarres, Vang Pao's two irregular task forces remain stalled near enemy supply lines. The 2,600 troops have not inflicted any significant damage nor have they succeeded in diverting troops from Long Tieng.

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USSR-CHINA

[redacted]
Soviet negotiator Ilichev [redacted]
[redacted]

[redacted] will revive several proposals made in earlier rounds of the negotiations on frontier delineation. One, first tabled last year, called for an agreement on nonaggression. Ilichev will also restate Soviet willingness to accept minor territorial adjustments in the interest of settling the border dispute and make other "concrete" offers for increased trade and bilateral exchanges. [redacted]

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[redacted] the USSR was "fed up" with China's intransigence and will make the Soviet position in the talks public if the Chinese reject Ilichev's proposals.

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Moscow probably does not expect a positive response to the proposals since the Chinese have rejected similar ones in the past.

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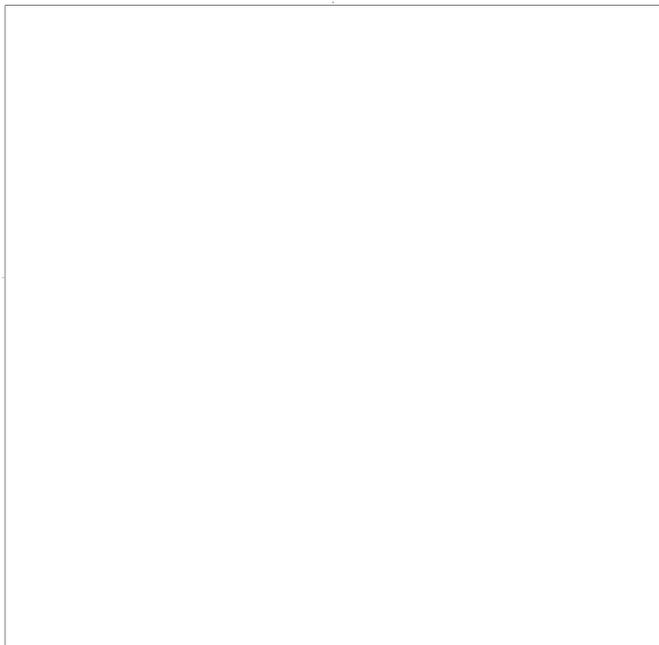
It is likely, however, that the Soviets want to avoid disrupting the talks, at least prior to President Nixon's visit to Moscow.

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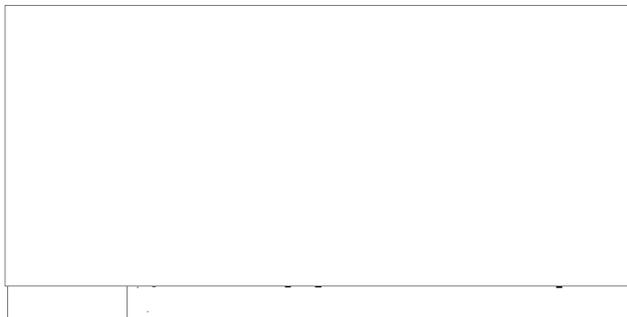
KOREA



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CHILE

The Socialist Party, [redacted]
[redacted] has created a "revolutionary command" in
Nuble Province, 150 miles south of Santiago. The
command boasts of encouraging land seizures and
claims to have obtained arms from the extremist
Movement of the Revolutionary Left. The Socialists'
objective is to speed agrarian reform and to create
a mass peasant organization under their control.

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*The government has not yet found a formula
whereby it can carry out its agrarian re-
form plans fast enough to satisfy its own
hotheads. It also has not convinced land-
owners that it will respect their residual
rights. President Allende objects not
only to the Socialists' refusal to await
action by the government of which they
are a part, but to their establishment of
another independent organizational base.
He has sent cabinet ministers to the area
to investigate and plans to visit the
province himself next week to cool tempers.*

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NOTES

USSR - North Vietnam: Moscow, in contrast to Hanoi, gave little publicity to Air Defense Chief Batitskiy's recent visit to North Vietnam [redacted]

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[redacted] Soviet media merely noted the marshal's presence in Hanoi and made no mention of the substantial delegation of air defense experts who accompanied him. Moscow thus bypassed an opportunity to play up Soviet backing and make points against Peking. In playing down Batitskiy's visit, Moscow may be making a deliberate effort to underplay its military support of North Vietnam lest this become a troublesome issue before President Nixon's visit to Moscow.

India-Pakistan: [redacted]

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[redacted] Indian Foreign Minister Swaran Singh may meet with a Pakistani representative during Singh's current visit to Kabul en route to Moscow. New Delhi is puzzled by frequent shifts and inconsistencies in Bhutto's public position--such as his insistence that he wants to meet with Mrs. Gandhi while also demanding the return of some 94,000 Pakistani prisoners in advance of negotiations--and may feel the time has come for exploratory talks.

West Germany: [redacted]

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[redacted]

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(continued)

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USSR-Iraq-Syria: The USSR and Iraq are likely to conclude a friendship treaty this month. [redacted]

[redacted] the two sides were then putting finishing touches on the document. In neighboring Syria, meanwhile, Soviet politburo member Kirill Mazurov hinted broadly during a visit in February that Moscow wants a friendship treaty with Damascus.

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[redacted] Mazurov did not actually propose a treaty but noted that such an agreement could facilitate a favorable Soviet response to Syrian aid requests. The Soviet ambassador in Damascus [redacted] that Syria eventually will sign a treaty with the USSR, although at this time a majority of the Syrian leaders are opposed to the idea.

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USSR: [redacted]

[redacted]

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USSR: The Soviets failed on 30 March in an attempt to send a space probe toward Venus. It was to be a follow-up to another Venus probe--designated Venus 8--launched from Tyuratam on 26 March, which is expected to reach the planet in late July and, according to the Soviets, will attempt to make a soft landing. Favorable opportunities for launches to Venus will exist until late April, and the Soviets may attempt a third probe.

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