

The President's Daily Brief

3 April 1972



~~*Top Secret*~~

25X1

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

3 April 1972

PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

The Communists have shattered most of the South Vietnamese Army's forward positions in northernmost Quang Tri Province and are increasing their activity in some other parts of the country. (Page 1)

North Vietnamese forces continue to exert pressure on Lao Government irregulars defending Long Tieng, but there has been no major change in the situation there. (Page 3)

North Vietnamese leaders have expounded a harsh line on the war before their national assembly. (Page 4)

The Soviets are reported to be urging the Kurds to settle their differences with the Iraqi Government. (Page 5)

[Redacted]

25X1 25X1

[Redacted]

25X1

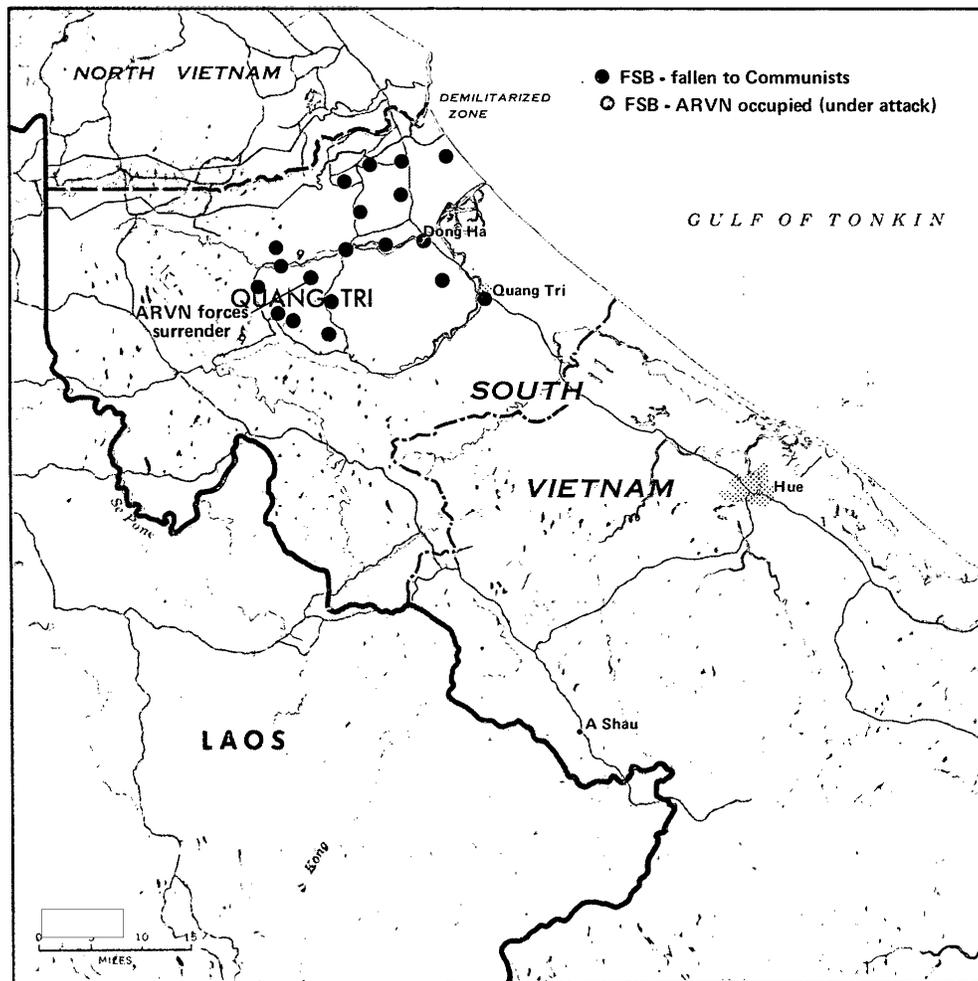
25X1

[Redacted]

25X1

25X1

[Faint, mostly illegible text]



25X1

552762 4-72 CIA

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

SOUTH VIETNAM

With the collapse of another government base last night, the Communists have now forced the abandonment or surrender of at least 15 South Vietnamese outposts in northern and central Quang Tri Province since they began their drive there on Thursday. Other bases in the area remain under pressure and the provincial capital now appears directly threatened. Yesterday, a North Vietnamese tank column tried to break through South Vietnamese Army positions near Dong Ha. Government tanks, with US air support, engaged the column and destroyed two North Vietnamese tanks.

Infantry and artillery regiments operating under the senior Communist military command in the Demilitarized Zone, together with about two regiments of the North Vietnamese 304th Division, seem to have done most of the enemy's fighting so far. Intercepts suggest that the rest of the 304th as well as the 308th Division may now be preparing to join the attack. The headquarters of the 308th, previously well inside North Vietnam, has moved south to within a few miles of the DMZ. Should both divisions now be fully committed to this area, Communist strength would nearly double. Such an increase would indicate that the Communists intend to do much more than overrun a number of South Vietnamese outposts.

Heavier fighting may also be in store just to the south of Quang Tri Province near the Hue area. Recent intercepts suggest that the North Vietnamese 324B Division, which has been probing government defenses west of Hue for about two weeks, is preparing for heavier combat.

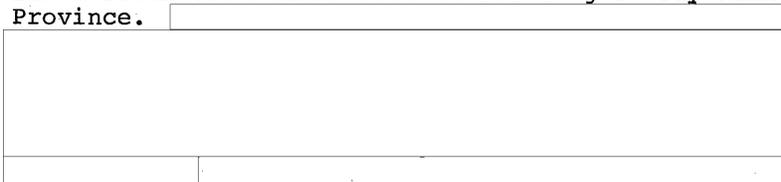
In the central highlands, Communist attacks have increased somewhat in the past few days, and more apparently are planned. According to several intercepts, Communist artillery units have targeted their weapons against South Vietnamese fire support bases and outposts between Dak To and Kontum city. One message stated that all of the bases will be brought under fire as soon as orders are received.

(continued)

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

Farther south, Communist forces--reported to be using tanks and armored personnel carriers--over-ran a South Vietnamese base at Lac Long in Tay Ninh Province.



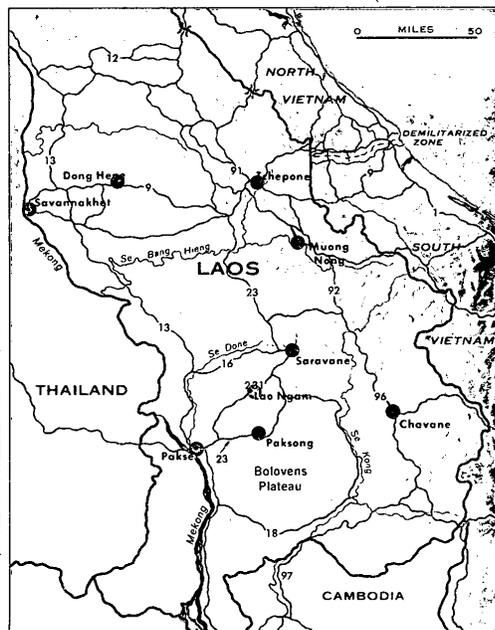
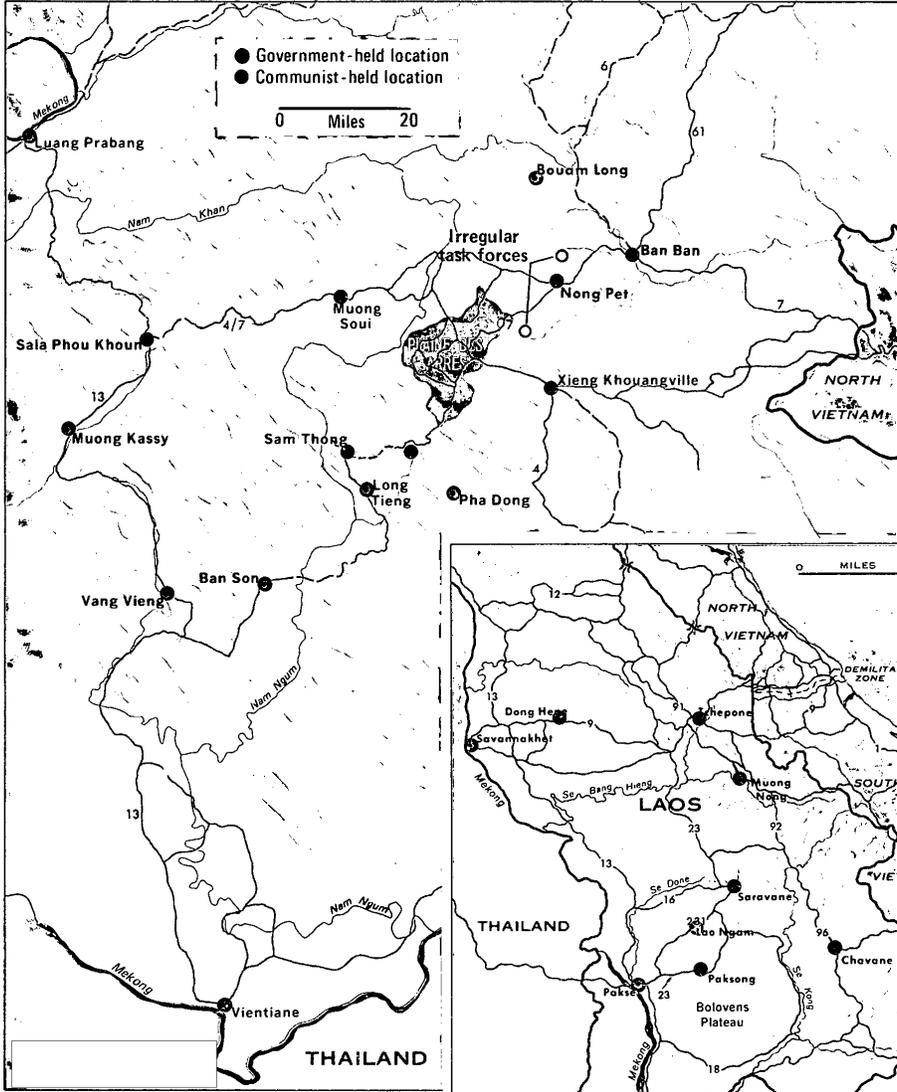
25X1
25X1

25X1

[Faint, illegible text, possibly bleed-through from the reverse side of the page]

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

LAOS



25X1

552761 4-72 CIA

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

LAOS

Communist forces kept up their pressure on government irregulars in the Long Tieng area over the weekend, but launched no new drives to break the stalemate. Several positions on Skyline Ridge have changed hands during the past two days, but neither side appears to have made significant headway. The North Vietnamese are still pounding the ridge and the Long Tieng Valley with artillery and mortar fire, causing some casualties among the irregulars.

The Communists may be taking losses themselves from government air strikes and heavy weapons fire, but they show no signs so far of revising their tactics or the disposition of their forces.

The government's diversionary task forces north and east of the Plaine des Jarres reported some clashes on 1 April with enemy units. There is no indication, however, that the Communists have moved any of their forces away from the Long Tieng area in order to engage these irregulars.

In south Laos, the government launched a large operation on 1 April to regain a foothold on the western edge of the Bolovens Plateau. Elements of 11 irregular, Lao Army, and neutralist battalions staged from the vicinity of Lao Ngam and are now advancing eastward along Route 23. No significant enemy contact has yet been reported, although light resistance was encountered yesterday.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY**NORTH VIETNAM**

The convening of Hanoi's rubber-stamp national assembly last week provided an occasion for the regime's leaders to weigh in with some further harsh rhetoric on the war. Premier Pham Vang Dong, in a long keynote speech, asserted that military strength was the principal asset of the North and reiterated the recent propaganda claim that the balance of forces in the war is rapidly shifting in favor of the Communists. He made it clear that the Communists intend to use all the forces at their disposal to win "ever greater victories" and that this will entail even greater sacrifices on the home front.

The speeches of both Dong and Foreign Minister Trinh gave short shrift to prospects for negotiations. Dong implied at one point that any attempt to meet the allies half-way would be tantamount to temporizing with evil. There were no echoes of Hanoi's ambiguous line of last summer and last fall that suggested it might be willing to separate the political and military aspects of a settlement. Dong, in fact, specifically characterized the Communist negotiating proposals as "an over-all solution, an integral, indivisible whole."

We consider it likely that North Vietnam's leaders fairly recently reviewed their policy toward the war and reconfirmed the tough line enunciated last week by Dong and his colleagues. There were passing references by Dong and another speaker to a central committee meeting held earlier this year.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

USSR-IRAQ

In late February, a Soviet delegation visited Kurdish leader Barzani in order to urge the Kurds to resolve their differences with the Iraqi Government and join a national front coalition, [redacted]

25X1
25X1

[redacted]

25X1

Moscow is pressuring both sides to come to terms. Its interest in fostering Iraqi stability stems from a desire to tie up any loose ends that affect its relations with Arab countries prior to President Nixon's visit to the USSR next month. The Soviets may also be hedging against a possible setback in Egypt.

Although Baghdad has given lip service to the idea of a national front government, Barzani most likely sees no need to go along. He is not dependent upon Moscow for arms or financial support/ [redacted]

25X1

Barzani's difficulties with Baghdad stem from the Iraqi Government's failure to implement a 1970 agreement ending the intermittent civil war the Kurds have waged against Iraqi regimes since the late 1950s.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

ROMANIA - WARSAW PACT

[Redacted]

25X1
25X1

[Redacted]

25X1
25X1

25X1

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

UGANDA - ARAB STATES



25X1

25X1

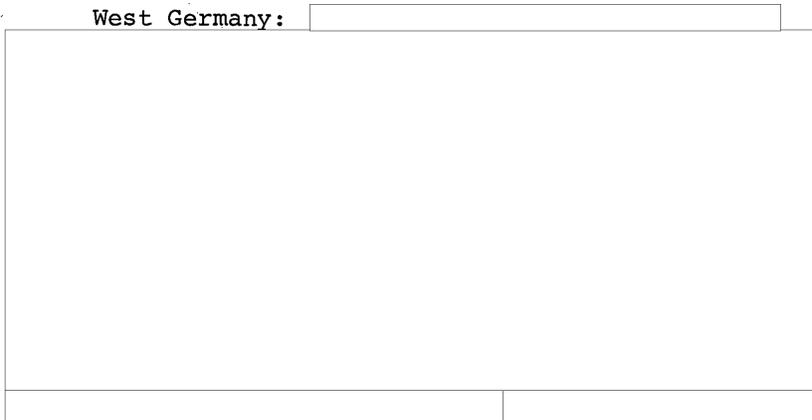
25X1

25X1

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

NOTE

West Germany:



25X1
25X1

25X1

Top Secret