

The President's Daily Brief

6 April 1972

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

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PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

On Page 1 we discuss the current military situation in South Vietnam.

A stinging diatribe against "counter-revolutionaries" published in Hanoi on the eve of the current offensive suggests that the recent policy decisions may produce an internal crackdown. (Page 3)

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East German party leader Honecker has arrived in Moscow

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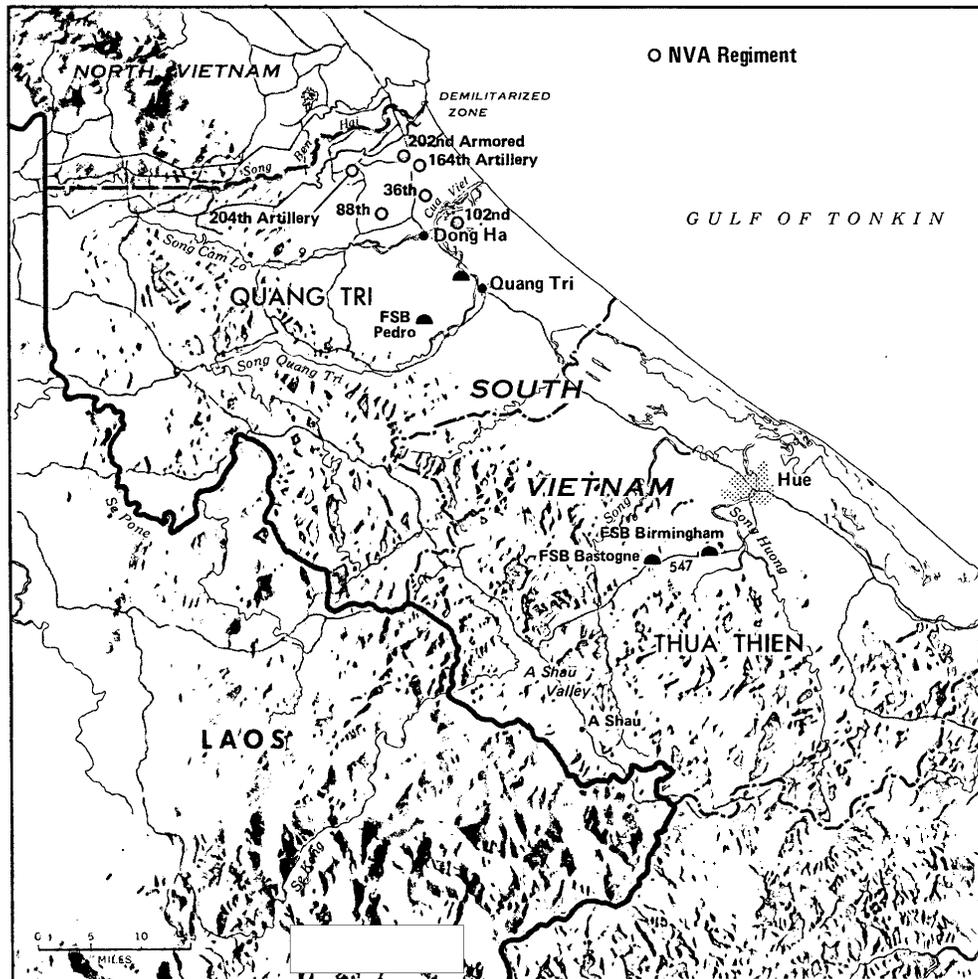
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SOUTH VIETNAM

The North Vietnamese are maintaining heavy pressure against Fire Support Base Pedro west of Quang Tri city and are sporadically shelling Quang Tri Combat Base. Farther south, they have launched artillery and ground attacks against fire bases Bastogne and Birmingham astride Route 547, the natural avenue of attack on Hue from the west. An intercept reveals that an element of the North Vietnamese 324B Division has been urged to cut off any ARVN troops retreating from the bases.

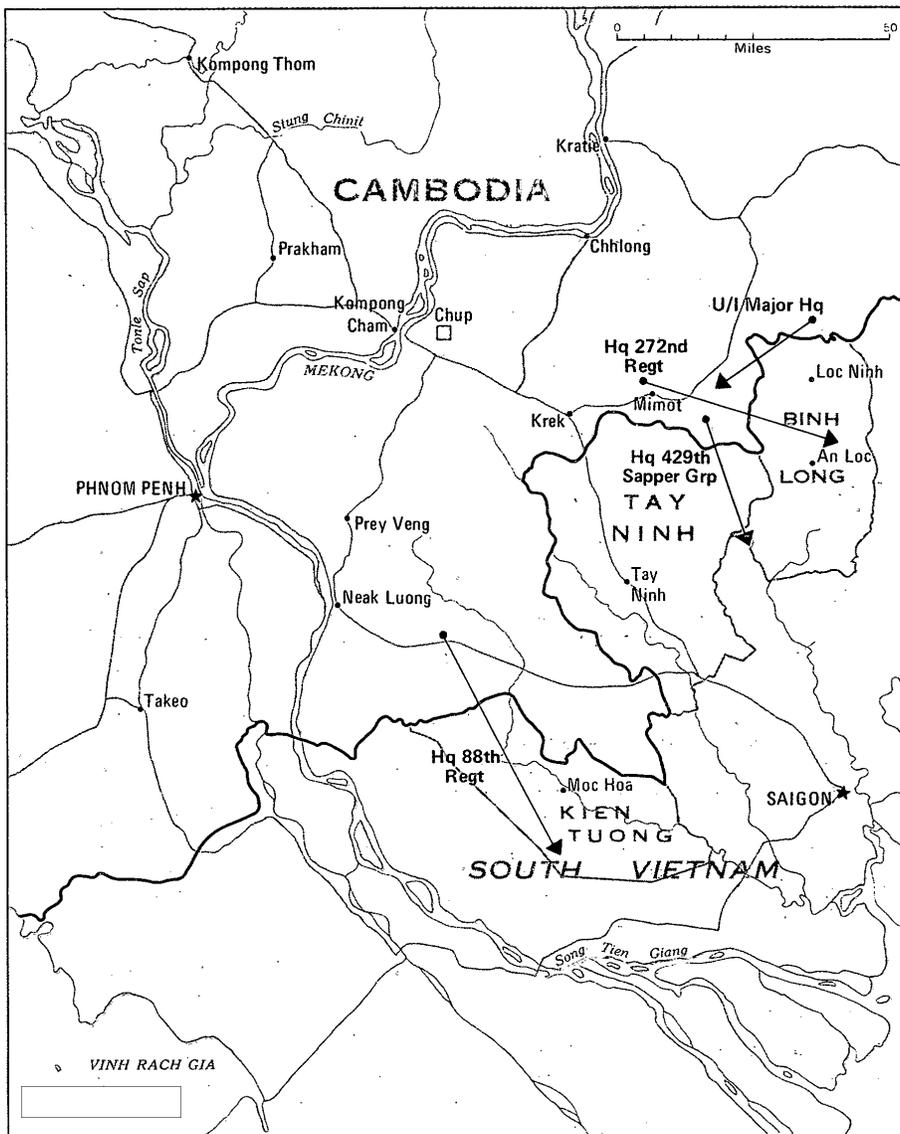
There are indications that the Communists are preparing for a fresh round of attacks. Captured troops state that all four combat regiments of the North Vietnamese 308th Division are now south of the DMZ, while enemy communications indicate that they are being supported by an independent artillery regiment and an independent armored regiment. Prisoners state that the Communists hope to coordinate their attacks in northern Quang Tri with heavier action against Hue in order to spread government forces thin and capture both areas.

South Vietnamese units are getting ready to strike back at enemy units north of Dong Ha. General Lam, the government's commander in MR-1, plans to begin operations as soon as additional reinforcements are in position. Nine ranger battalions already have been airlifted to MR-1 from Tay Ninh Province, and an ARVN division from the delta is also to be sent to the area. In addition, regional and popular force troops and local militia units in Thua Thien Province are being reorganized to help strengthen local defenses around Hue.

Communist military activity in the central highlands has been largely limited to artillery attacks against government positions in Kontum and Pleiku provinces. The South Vietnamese Joint General Staff expects large-scale enemy attacks in the highlands very soon. Anticipated targets include the Kontum city - Dak To region, as well as the area along Highway 14 between Kontum and Pleiku cities and near Tan Can north of Kontum city.

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Farther south, three additional Communist formations have moved into South Vietnam from Cambodia. The Communist 9th Division's 272nd Regiment has been detected just northeast of An Loc, the capital of Binh Long Province, and was probably involved in the series of attacks against Loc Ninh and An Loc early yesterday. The 429th Sapper Group, which has at least three subordinate battalions, is now located east of Tay Ninh city. Meanwhile, a major Communist headquarters that may serve as the tactical control for the 5th, 7th, and 9th divisions in eastern Cambodia has moved close to the border.

The North Vietnamese 88th Regiment has moved to a position south of Moc Hoa, deep within the delta province of Kien Tuong. It poses a new threat in an area from which some ARVN units have recently been withdrawn.

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NORTH VIETNAM

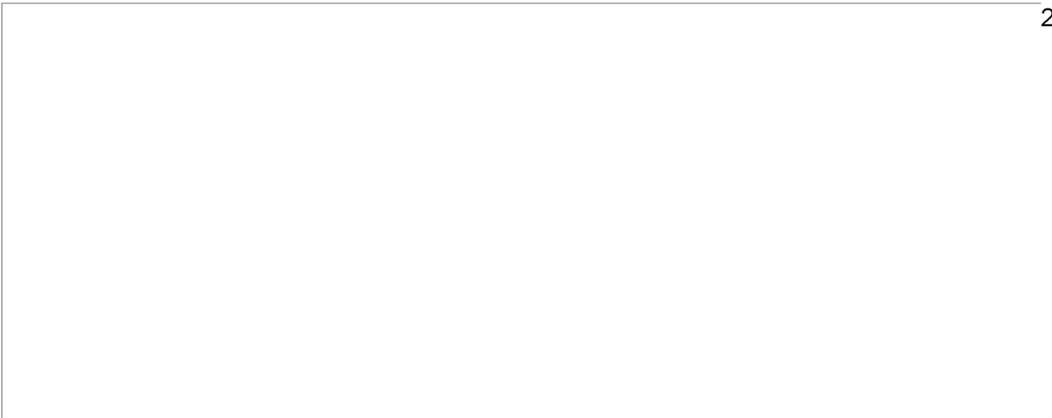
On the eve of the current military push Tran Quoc Hoan, who heads Hanoi's secret police, published a stinging diatribe against "counter-revolutionaries" both at home and abroad. Writing in the March issue of Hanoi's party journal, he argues in favor of using "revolutionary violence" more liberally to "repress" and "exterminate" all those who oppose the party line. The cutting edge of his article seems to be directed at the faint of heart in North Vietnam; he condemns those guilty of "timidity" and "lack of firmness" in the face of the US threat. He quotes party First Secretary Le Duan to the effect that any effort to coddle such types while the country is struggling against US imperialism would be "a dangerous rightist deviation and a crime against the revolution."

For such waverers, Hoan urges reindoctrination, penal measures, and the use of violence when necessary. He cites agrarian reform as one area of the economy that has benefited from previous party efforts to stamp out "counter-revolutionaries"--an unmistakable allusion to the regime's liquidation of an estimated 50,000 recalcitrant peasants in the mid-1950s.

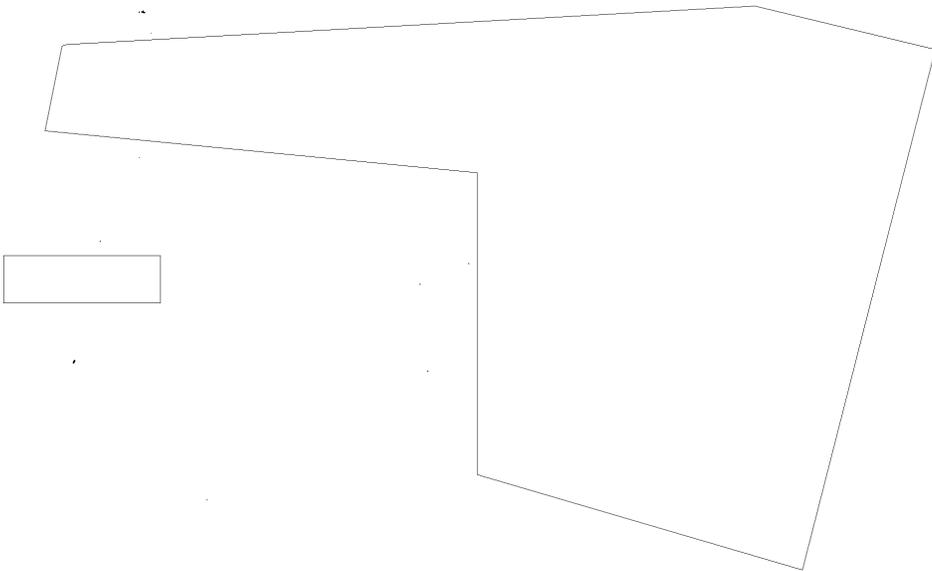
No North Vietnamese cadre who reads these words can doubt their seriousness. Other recent propaganda has hinted at such a crackdown as a consequence of the latest rounds of strategic decision-making in Hanoi. An authoritative "Commentator" article in December, which spelled out Hanoi's new preoccupation with main-force warfare, spoke of the problem of "subjective" attitudes in some quarters. More recently the Hanoi press has warned that some cadres would have to be expelled to ensure a proper party response to the regime's policies.



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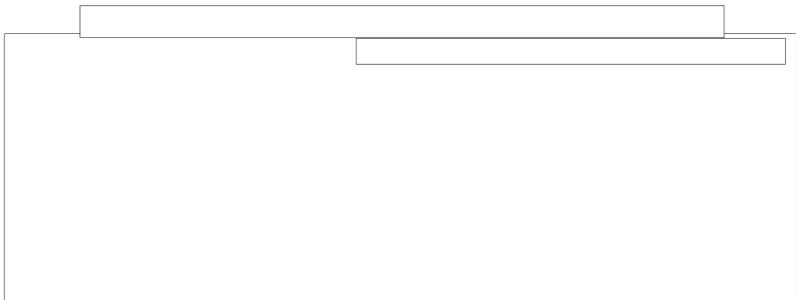
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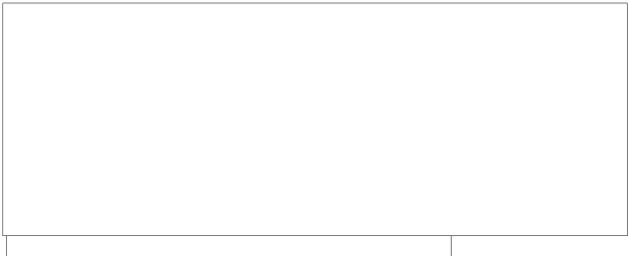
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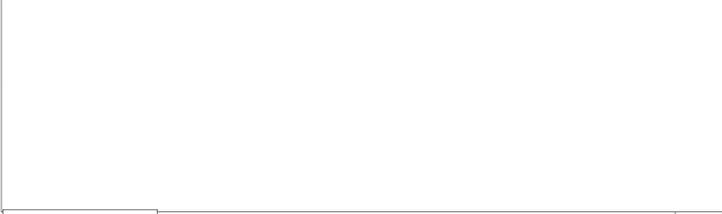


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JAPAN

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EAST GERMANY - WEST GERMANY

East German party leader Honecker arrived unexpectedly in Moscow on Tuesday, fueling speculation about Soviet - East German moves to facilitate West German ratification of the Eastern treaties.

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Moscow presumably would wish Pankow's direct participation in any final decision on such concessions. Both Soviet and East German spokesmen have recently indicated that Pankow is anxious to settle its major differences with Bonn this year, prior to West Germany's national elections in 1973. Yesterday, however, East and West Germany began accelerated weekly negotiating sessions on a general traffic treaty without Pankow's showing any new flexibility.



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NOTES

Israel-Egypt: [REDACTED]

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USSR-Iraq: Premier Kosygin is scheduled to arrive in Baghdad today, and we believe that a "treaty of friendship and cooperation" between the USSR and Iraq may be announced while he is there. The visit presumably was arranged in February when Iraqi strongman Saddam Tikriti spent a week in the USSR and began negotiations for a friendship treaty. Kosygin's visit will coincide with the beginning of production at an oil field that has received large amounts of Soviet assistance and with the anniversary of the constitution of Iraq's ruling Baath Party.

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