

The President's Daily Brief

3 May 1972

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THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

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PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

The military situation in South Vietnam is discussed on *Page 1*.

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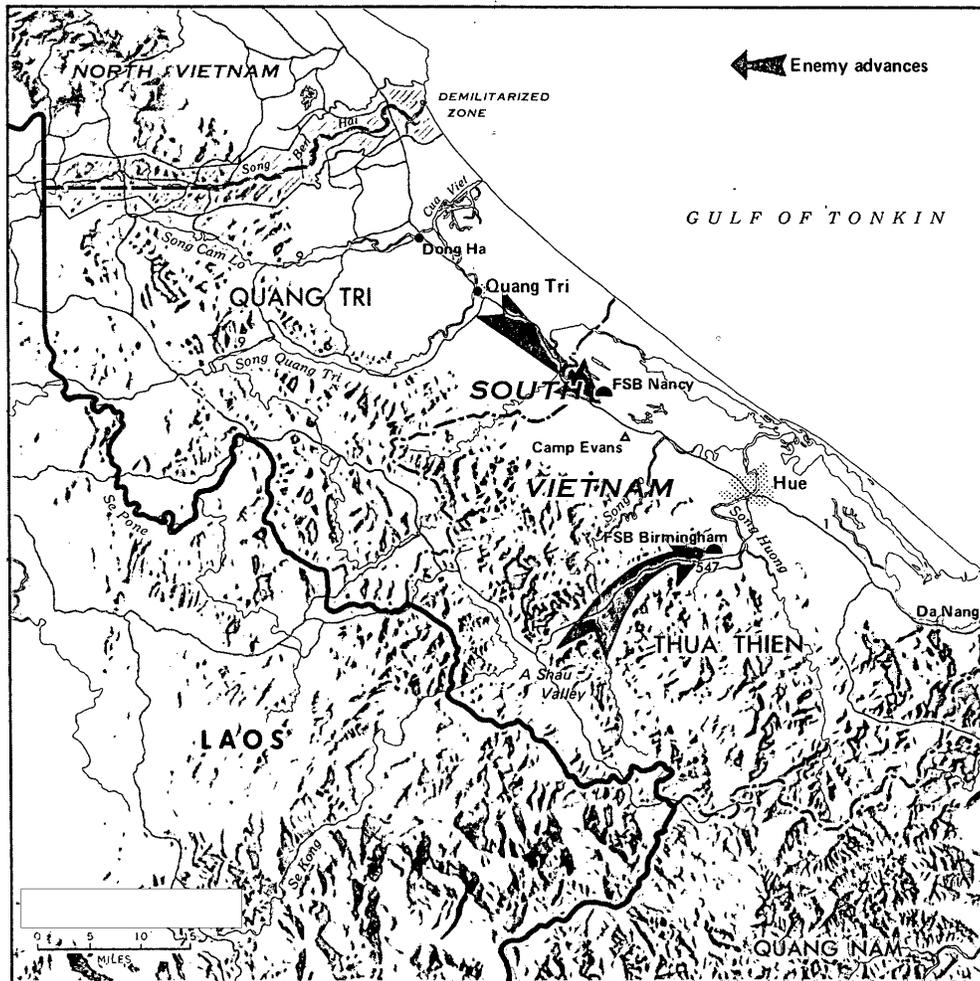
Indian Defense Minister Ram has said publicly that India will conduct underground nuclear tests when it develops the technology. (*Page 5*)

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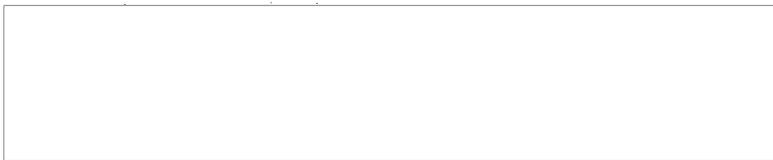


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VIETNAM



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While the threat to Hue from the north continues to grow, aerial reconnaissance shows substantial numbers of men and armored vehicles moving east toward Hue from the A Shau Valley. In addition, an intercept indicates that enemy forces are deploying around Fire Base Birmingham and are ready to shell the base. Birmingham is the only remaining South Vietnamese position on Route 547, the key road west of Hue.

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Within the city, the situation is reported to be chaotic. Three quarters of the city's civil servants are said to be fleeing, and refugees are jamming Route 1 to the south.

In the central provinces, Qui Nhon and Kontum cities were shelled yesterday. South Vietnamese forces abandoned another position along Route 14, leaving only one base north of Kontum in friendly hands.

Government troops on the outskirts of the city are bracing for the attack which they expect at any time. These forces include regular army, airborne, ranger, and territorial forces; the government's ability to coordinate and control such diverse elements will be an important factor in defending the city.

Communist forces are still making headway in the coastal areas of Binh Dinh Province. Landing Zone English, the last government position in the northern third of the province, came under heavy attack on 2 May, and government forces have begun withdrawing. About 400 South Vietnamese soldiers and some territorial forces had been concentrated there after having been driven from the province's three northern district capitals by the advancing

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Communists. [redacted] 25X1
[redacted] unless South Korean troops
operating farther south in the province help out,
the entire province could fall by mid-May.

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SOUTH VIETNAM

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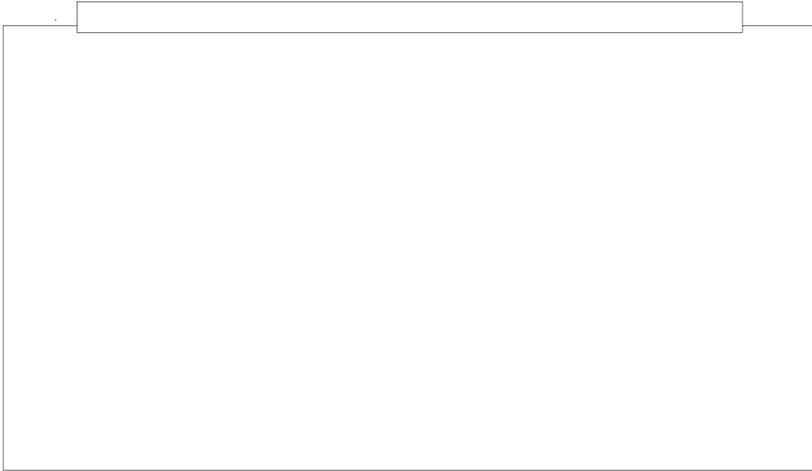
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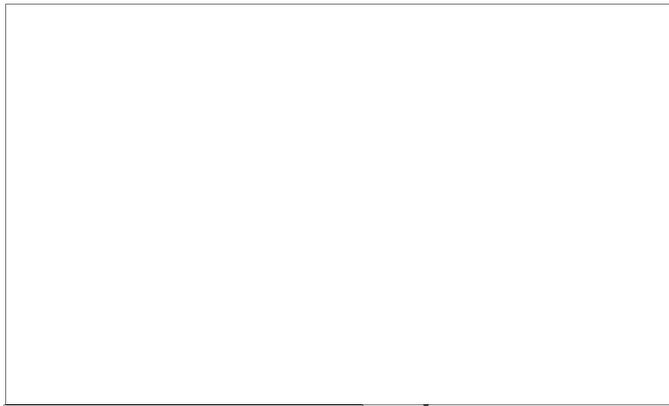
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JAPAN-CHINA



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INDIA

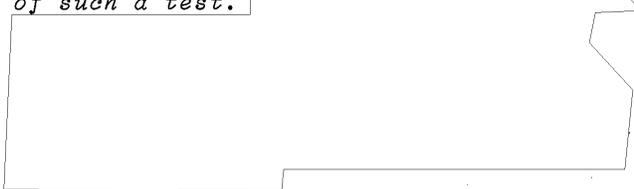
Indian Defense Minister Ram told Parliament on 2 May that India will conduct underground nuclear tests when it develops the technology. He also said that developments in the international situation did not warrant a change in India's policy of utilizing nuclear energy only for peaceful purposes.



Ram is the highest level Indian official to date to make such a statement publicly, but his remarks give no information on the timing of such a test.

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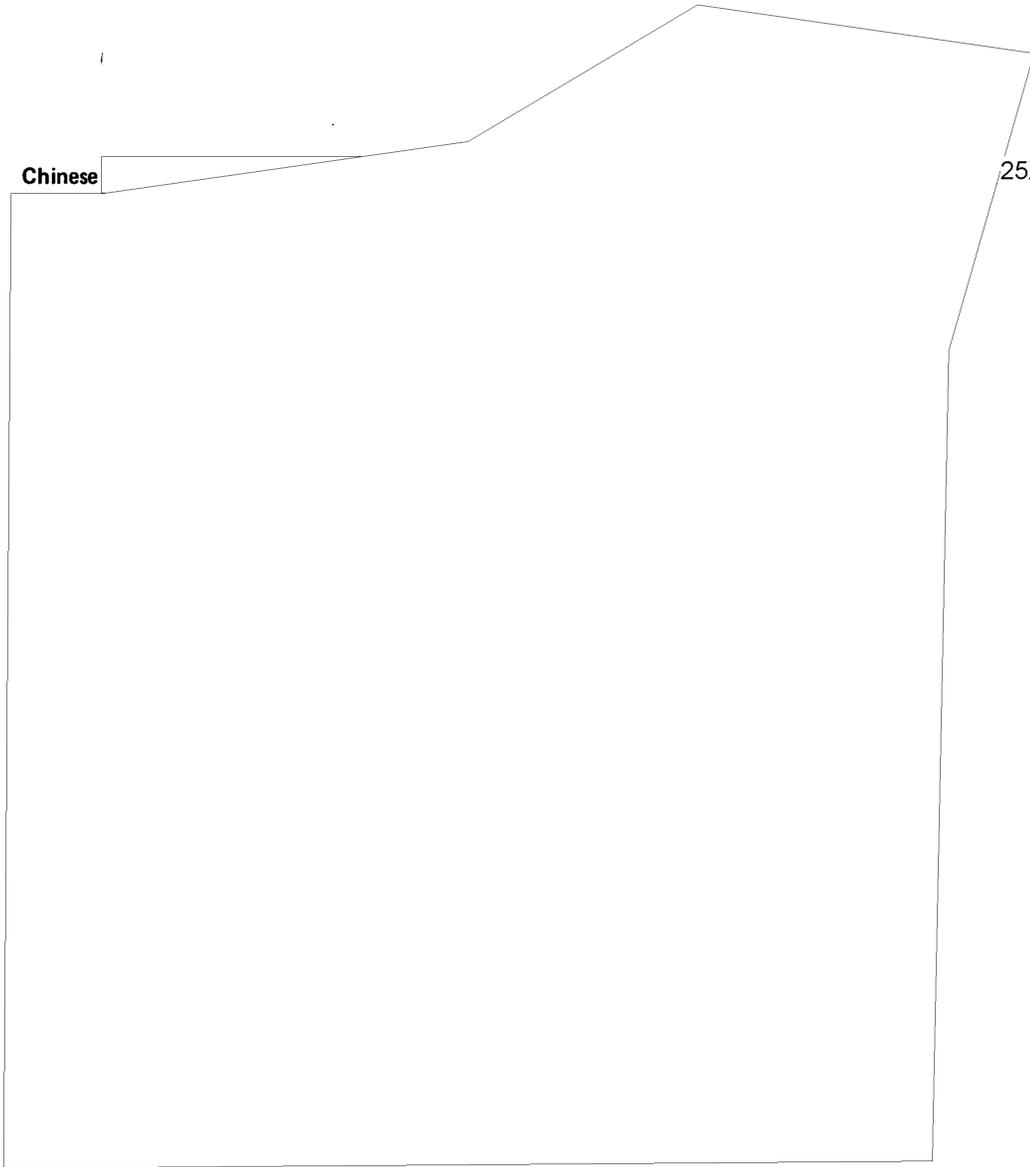
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There has been recent discussion in India about development of nuclear explosives for peaceful purposes. A test might be intended for such objectives and probably would be so labeled. If the Indians conduct a test, however, for whatever purpose, it would have a major political and psychological impact on India's neighbors and the world community, even though the military ramifications would remain minimal for some time to come.

Chinese

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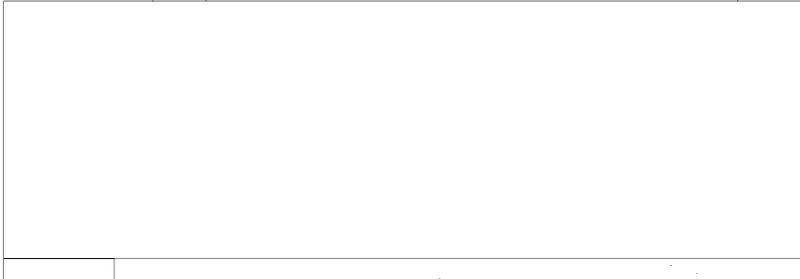


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NOTES

China:

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West Germany: The Brandt government and the Christian Democratic opposition are still trying this morning to reach an agreement permitting the opposition to acquiesce in the ratification of the Eastern treaties. Negotiators are attempting to draft a declaration expressing the CDU position that the treaties do not preclude Germany's right of self-determination or a final peace treaty. The Bundestag steering committee, also convened this morning, is awaiting the outcome of the talks before rescheduling the treaty debate.

Cuba: In his May Day speech Fidel Castro announced that this week he will begin a two-month tour to Guinea, Algeria, Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary, Poland, East Germany, Czechoslovakia, and, finally, the Soviet Union. He both praised Soviet support for Cuba and condemned US "international diplomacy"-- suggesting that the idea of a secret US-Soviet deal on Cuba still haunts him. Castro warned that any interference with Cuban warships operating against exile vessels on the high seas could bring reprisals against Guantanamo. A US-Cuban rapprochement is not possible under present circumstances, he concluded.

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