

The President's Daily Brief

4 September 1972

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

4 September 1972

PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

The South Vietnamese advance into the Que Son Valley appears to be making progress. (Page 1)

Vang Pao's offensive in north Laos has suffered some sharp setbacks. (Page 2)

[Redacted]

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Greek [Redacted]
[Redacted]
(Page 4)

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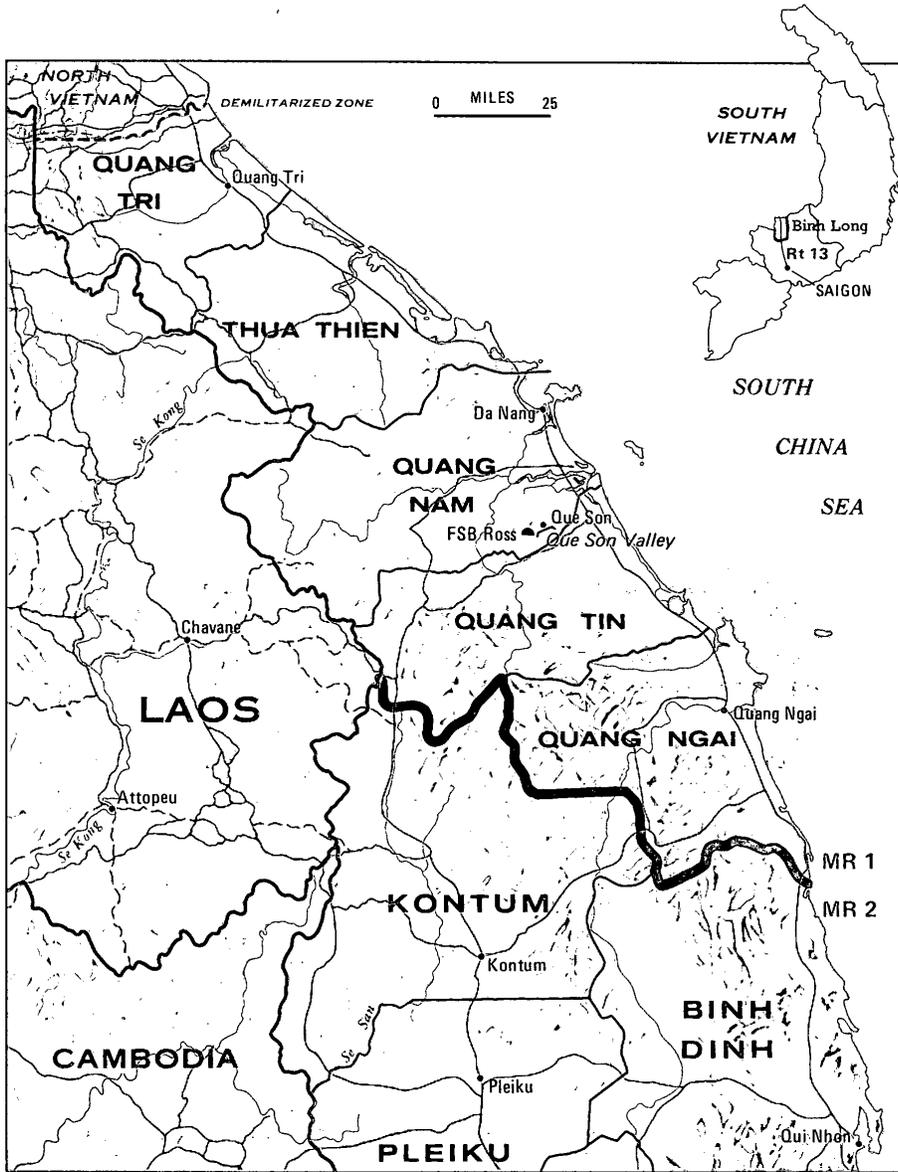
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The Libyan effort to recruit Arab volunteers for the Palestinian resistance movement is assessed on Page 5.

The Soviets have tacitly accepted free trade arrangements [Redacted]
[Redacted] (Page 6)

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VIETNAM

The South Vietnamese advance into the Que Son Valley appears to be making progress. Government forces now control most of Que Son district town and are trying to drive out the few remaining Communist troops. To the west, South Vietnamese forces report that they have moved to within a few hundred yards of Fire Support Base Ross, which fell to the enemy two weeks ago. A prisoner from the North Vietnamese 711th Division, which has been largely responsible for this enemy campaign, claims that his unit, the 270th Regiment, has suffered heavy losses and has received no replacements since the fighting in this area began. According to other prisoners [redacted] the 711th Division is currently engaged in a major resupply effort, indicating that the Communists intend to continue the fighting in this sector.

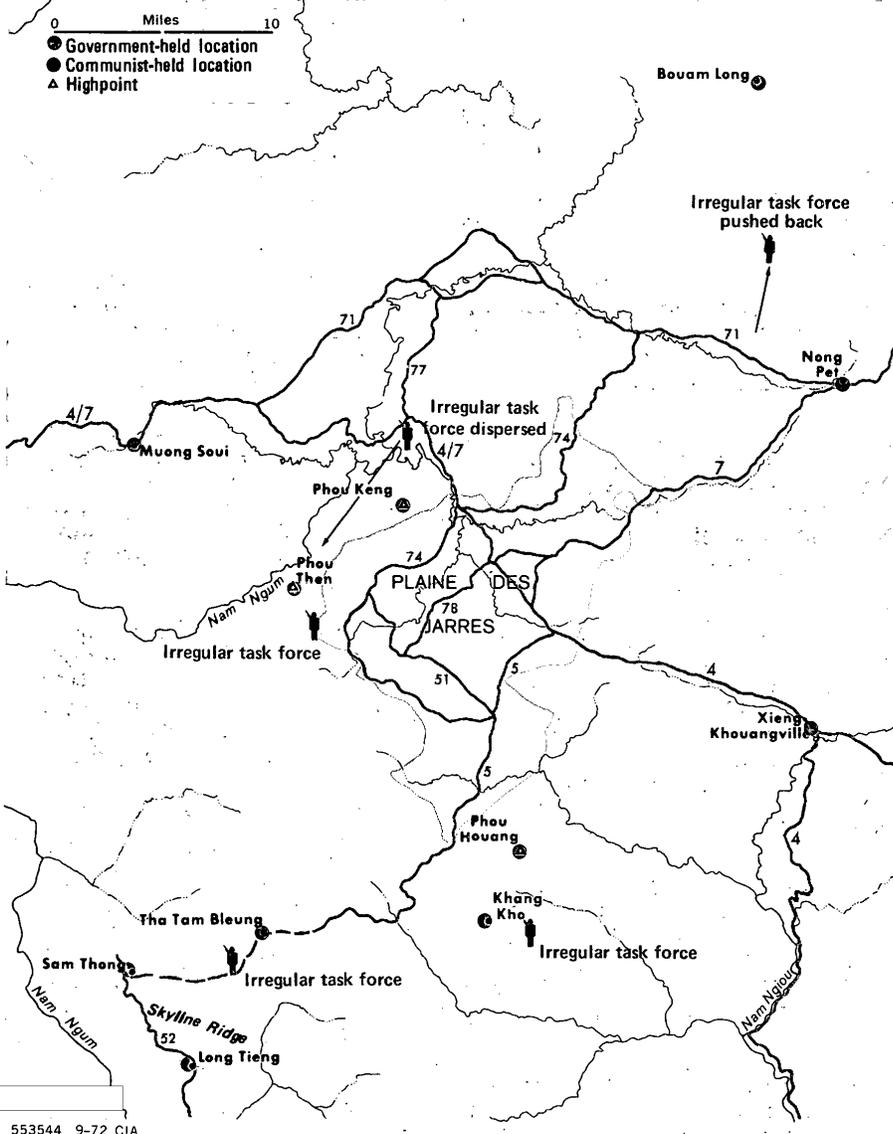
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South Vietnamese Marines clashed frequently with the Communists in both the northern and southern outskirts of Quang Tri City over the weekend. Communist gunners poured about 3,000 artillery and mortar rounds into government positions throughout Quang Tri Province on Saturday and Sunday, but the shellings caused only light casualties.

In the central highlands, the Communists launched their heaviest attack in more than two months. A South Vietnamese Ranger outpost 20 miles west of Pleiku City was attacked and partially occupied by the enemy on Saturday. Late reporting indicates the outpost was overrun early this morning.

In other parts of the country, military activity over the weekend was light, consisting largely of harassing attacks against government positions along Route 13 in Binh Long Province and against isolated outposts in the Mekong Delta.

LAOS: PLAINE DES JARRES AREA



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LAOS

The government's offensive in north Laos has suffered some sharp setbacks. The most serious occurred north of the Plaine des Jarres, where heavy North Vietnamese ground attacks and shellings have dispersed the 2,500-man irregular task force that had been operating in the area. Thus far, some 600 to 700 troops from this force have worked their way to other irregular positions near the Plaine's western edge; most have been evacuated for medical treatment.

Northeast of the Plaine, the irregular task force from Bouam Long that had been advancing toward Communist supply lines near Nong Pet has also encountered stiff opposition. Three of its battalions pulled back on Friday in the face of heavy Communist attacks. At last report, however, the task force commanders indicated that they were still determined to move toward their objectives. Intercepts indicate that elements of the North Vietnamese 866th and 335th independent regiments most likely are responsible for the enemy pressure both north and northeast of the Plaine.

The other three task forces participating in Vang Pao's campaign continue to report relatively light contact with Communist forces in their respective sectors west, southwest, and south of the Plaine, and their positions remain essentially unchanged.



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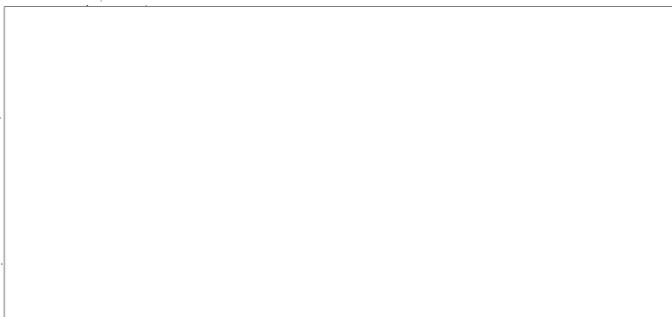
CHINA-LAOS



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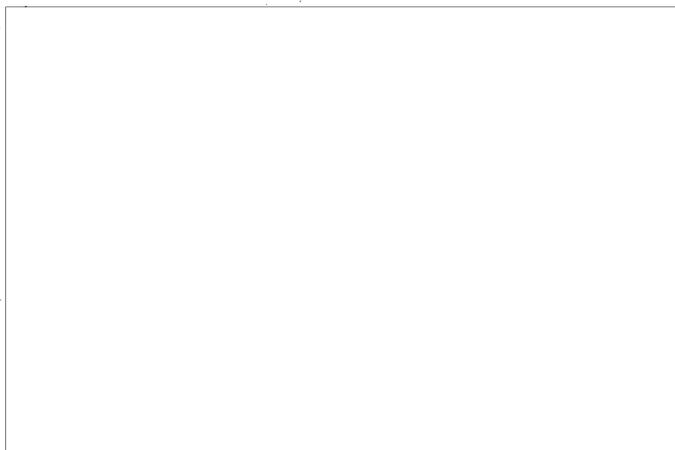
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GREECE



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LIBYA-FEDAYEEN

Last June, Colonel Qadhafi announced a joint Libyan-Fatah effort to recruit Arab volunteers for the Palestinian resistance movement. Since then, there has been a steady rise in the number of people answering the Libyan leader's call for a popular crusade against Israel.

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Fatah leader Yasir Arafat recently claimed that 8,000 volunteers were now in Libya.

[Redacted]

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The volunteers' motives are mixed. Those from Lebanon are mostly unemployed Syrian expatriate laborers who welcome an opportunity to earn a living, especially the \$150 a month that each recruit is said to be receiving. Those from the Persian Gulf are largely Palestinian refugees whose residence permits were about to expire. Others, from conservative countries such as Yemen (Sana) and Saudi Arabia, appear to be genuinely moved by pan-Arab slogans of unity and defeating the "Zionist invaders."

Qadhafi, for his part, apparently is convinced that this project is essential if the struggle against Israel is to continue. Moreover, he contends that Libya must appeal to the Arab masses over the heads of their national leaders, who he fears are seeking a peaceful solution to the Arab-Israeli impasse. Although clearly annoyed with Qadhafi, most Arab leaders find it necessary publicly to support the Libyan initiative rather than risk censure for being soft on Israel.

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USSR-EC

Moscow has tacitly accepted free trade arrangements between the expanding Common Market and three of the principal European neutral states. [redacted]

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[redacted]

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[redacted]

[redacted]

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The Soviets do not appear to have gone as far in approving a Finnish arrangement with the EC.

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[redacted]

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Despite these signs of a more realistic attitude in Moscow, the political implications of an expanding European Community continue to trouble the Soviets. To slow EC growth, the USSR would like to see entry into the Community defeated in one of the upcoming Scandinavian referenda on accession, and Soviet propaganda is zeroing in on the close Norwegian contest.

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