



The President's Daily Brief

16 March 1970

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

In Laos

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(Page 1)

Talks between the Cambodians and the Vietnamese Communists are to get under way in Phnom Penh today, but we doubt much will come of them, at least until Sihanouk returns. (Page 3)

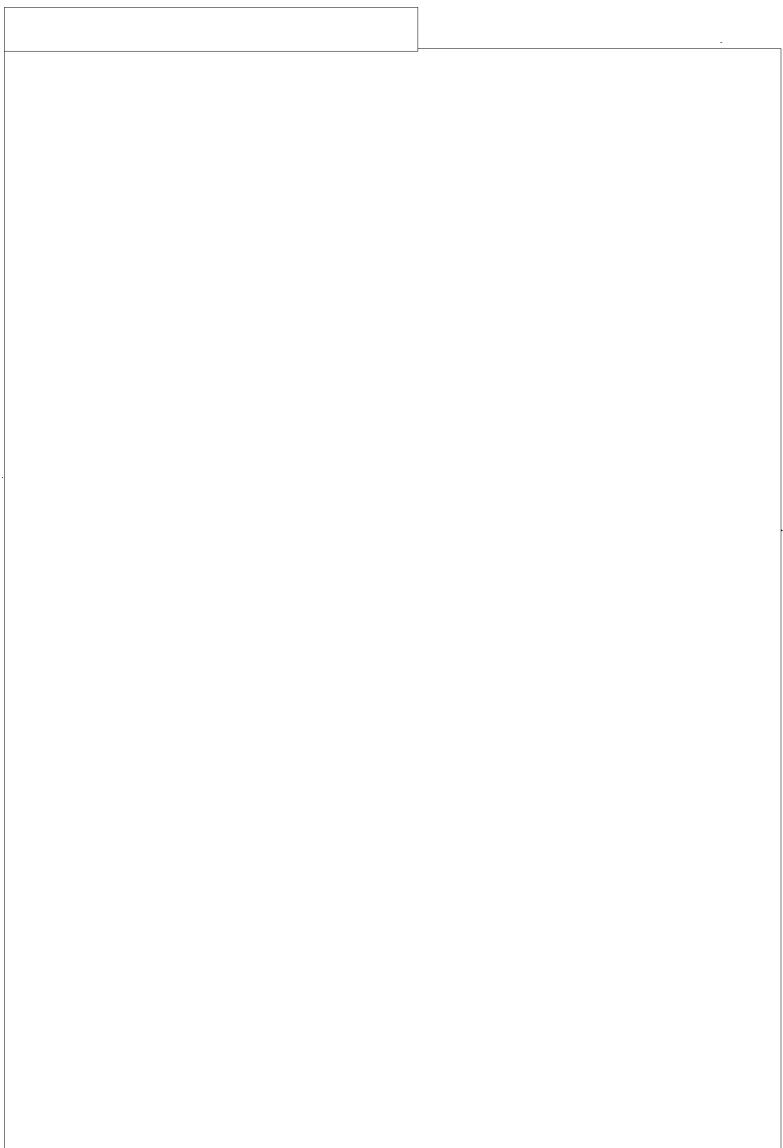
The West Germans are considering proposing that NATO sponsor a conference on European security to negotiate a mutual balanced force reduction in Europe. (Page 4)

Brazilian terrorists released the Japanese consul general yesterday, some ten hours after five political detainees were flown to Mexico City. (Page 5)

A preliminary review of the latest satellite photography shows one new group of ten SS-11 silos under construction in the USSR. (Page 6)

On Cyprus, former interior minister Georkatzis was murdered yesterday. (Page 6)

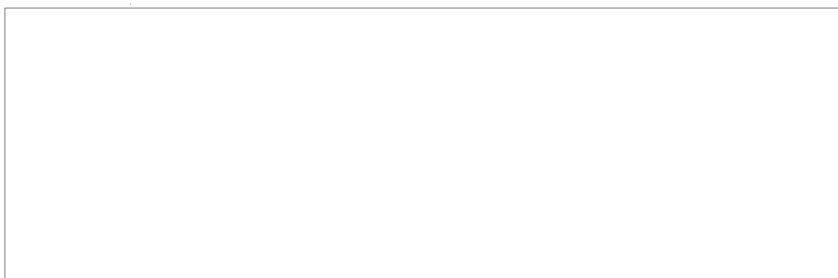
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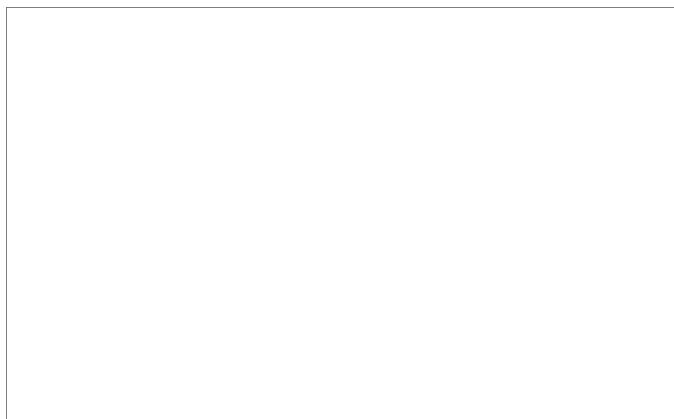
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LAOS



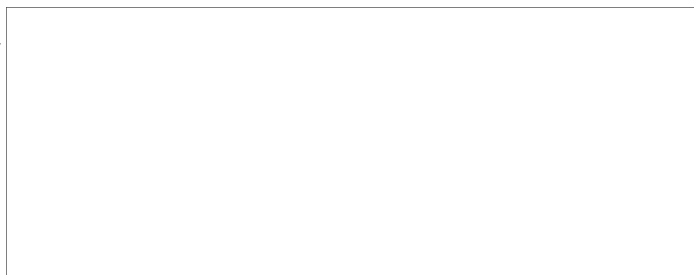
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Prime Minister Souvanna 
eased his public position on a cease-fire agreement. He told reporters Friday that he would be willing to accept a cease-fire before a North Vietnamese troop withdrawal, provided the enemy stopped all military offensive activity and allowed the International Control Commission to send observers into Communist-controlled territory.

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In the midst of all this, the Lao military seem to be moving quietly ahead with plans to bomb the Chinese road project southwest of Muong Sai in north-west Laos. According to a US Air Force representative in Luang Prabang, the local Lao commander received orders "from Vientiane" on 14 March to begin "unrestricted" bombing of the road and the Nam Beng Valley south to Pak Beng. The vagueness of the authority for the directive suggests that the Lao military may not have the concurrence of Souvanna for such action and are attempting to force his hand. There is no evidence at this time to indicate the Lao have in fact begun air operations against the road.

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CAMBODIA

Nothing much is likely to come of talks beginning today in Phnom Penh between the Cambodian Government and the Vietnamese Communists, at least until Prince Sihanouk returns. The Communists will be represented by the North Vietnamese chargé pending the arrival of an official representative from Hanoi. It is not clear whether he will be the North Vietnamese ambassador to Cambodia or a special emissary.

The Communists no doubt view the talks as a useful first step in helping to damp down the situation. Their proposal for talks was contained in an official North Vietnamese protest delivered Saturday that was notable for its conciliatory tone.

The press this morning reports some fighting between Cambodian and Vietnamese Communist forces, but so far there is no official confirmation.

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According to late press reports, some 30,000 people staged another anti-Vietnamese demonstration today in front of the National Assembly building in Phnom Penh.

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WEST GERMANY

Bonn is thinking about proposing a conference on European security--a project Chancellor Brandt may want to discuss during his visit in April. The conference, to be organized under NATO auspices and to be held about a year from now, would have as a goal a mutual balanced force reduction in Europe.

At this time, only the West Germans know if they really believe the USSR would be interested in such a conference. The West German proposal would be responsive, however, to a desire found in some West European states for a NATO initiative. For one thing, the proposal would deny Moscow some of the propaganda advantages it holds on the issue of European security.

The West Germans may believe a NATO proposal would serve to inhibit a US decision to reduce forces in Europe. Furthermore, it might remove some of the contentiousness surrounding the issue in the West German - Soviet talks by putting the whole thing into a multilateral context.

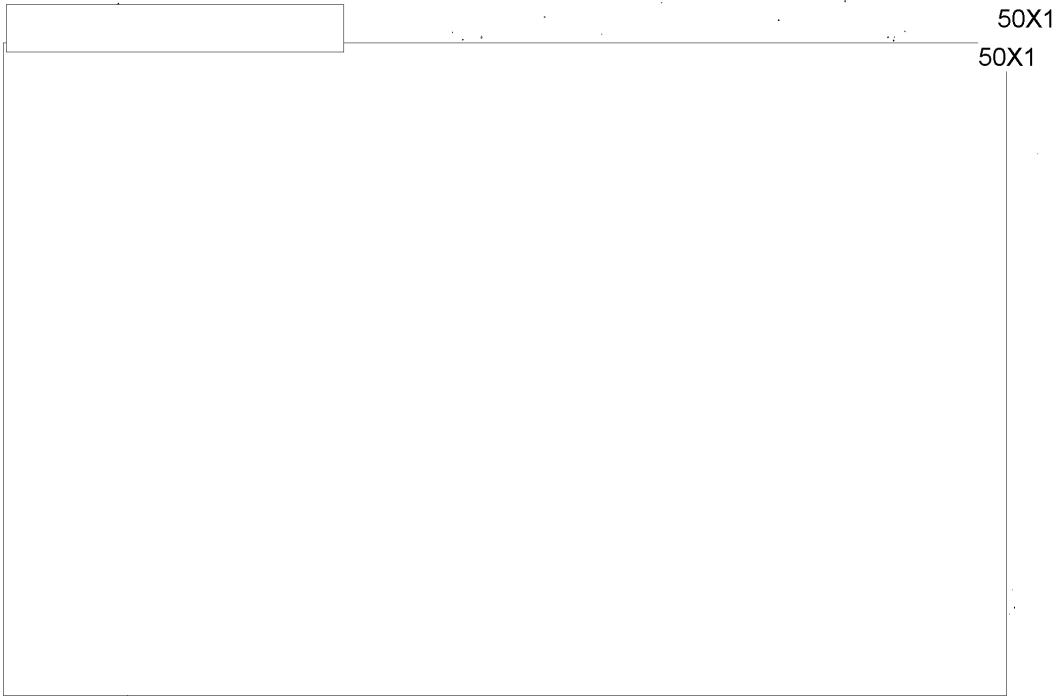
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BRAZIL

The terrorists released Consul General Okuchi yesterday after the government had flown the five prisoners into exile. Four of the five prisoners told reporters in Mexico City that they had been tortured by security agents and prison guards in Brazil. These accusations, particularly if widely publicized, will increase the dissatisfaction among many officers of the Brazilian Army.

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One prisoner said in Mexico City that the kidnaping of a foreign diplomat is a legitimate way of rescuing comrades who face long prison terms. Such assertions strengthen the fears of security officials that success will lead to more such incidents. That thought has also impelled the dean of the Sao Paulo consular corps, Lebanese Consul General Joseph Naffah, to convene a meeting of the consular corps to discuss security and to authorize him to request additional protection by local security contingents.



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NOTES

USSR: A preliminary review of the latest satellite photography shows one new group of ten SS-11 silos under construction at the Teykovo ICBM complex. Three of the USSR's six SS-9 complexes and its one SS-13 complex were also seen, but no new groups of silos were identified. About 750 SS-11s are now considered to be operational. When construction is complete on all identified ICBM groups in late 1971, the Soviets will have 1,396 ICBM launchers, including 840 SS-11s. This total excludes the eight groups of SS-11s at MRBM-IRBM complexes that are considered part of the Soviet peripheral strike force.

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Philippines:



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Cyprus: The assassination yesterday of former interior minister Georkatzis will further polarize the Greek Cypriot community into pro- and anti-Makarios factions. Georkatzis had been linked with the attempted assassination of President Makarios, but maintained his innocence. Although not arrested, he was fined for possession of weapons and was prevented from leaving the country last Thursday. Georkatzis' well-armed and devoted followers will probably blame Makarios for the murder and may seek revenge.

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