



*The President's Daily Brief*

*8 June 1970*

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*FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY*

THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

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PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

Events in Cambodia are discussed on *Page 1*.

In Laos, General Vang Pao's drive on Ban Na has made some progress, but in the south, the Communists stepped up attacks over the weekend on a government guerrilla base. (*Page 2*)

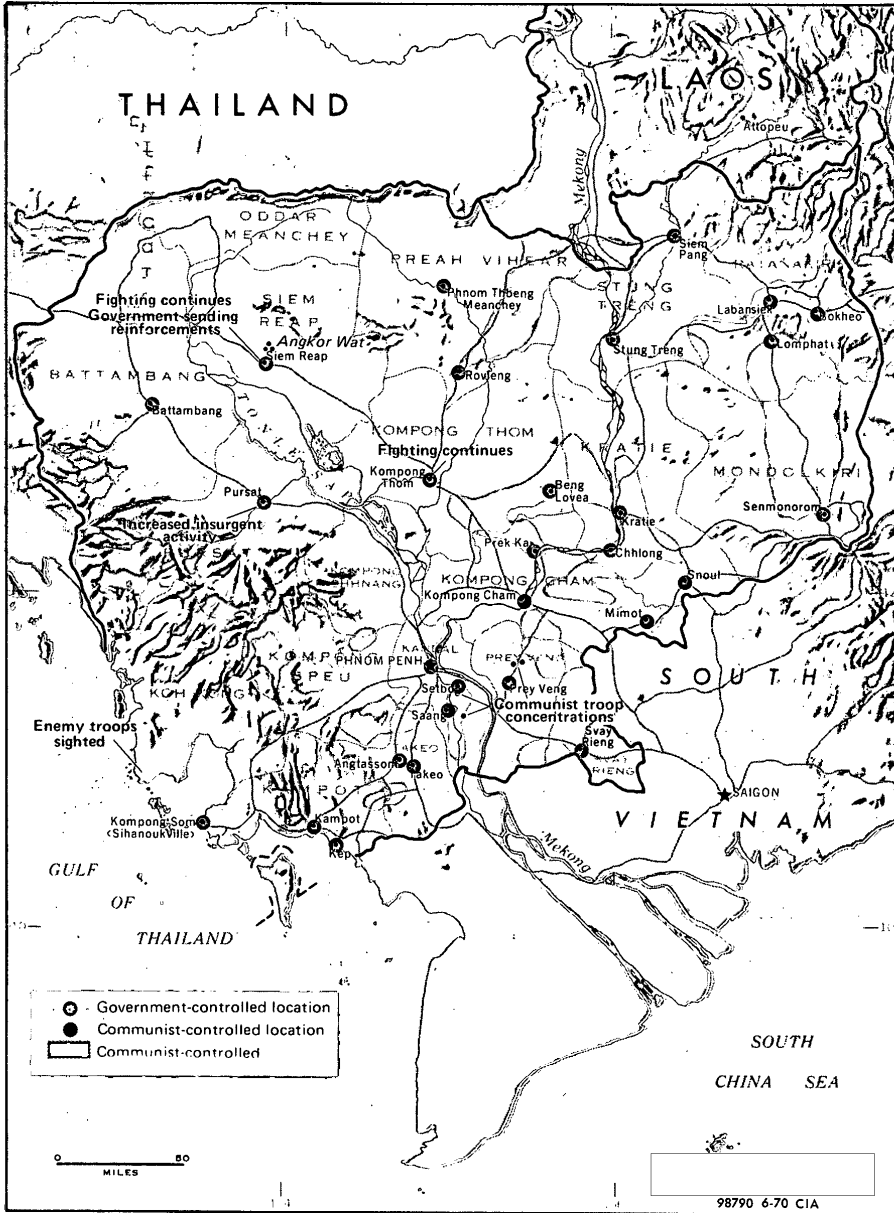
Militant Buddhist leaders in South Vietnam are planning further protests against the Saigon government and they are also considering a self-immolation or some other demonstration at the US Embassy during the current visit of US congressmen and other officials. (*Page 3*)

OAS representatives have decided to switch the late June General Assembly meeting from the Dominican Republic to Washington due to violent leftist protests in Santo Domingo. (*Page 4*)

The South Korean Government may be adjusting to the prospect of a reduction in US troop strength, but President Park can still be expected to bargain hard with Washington for every US soldier taken out of Korea. (*Page 5*)

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### Cambodia: Current Situation



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CAMBODIA

Government reports indicate that heavy fighting is still going on in and around Siem Reap town. An estimated 500 Communist troops, armed with mortars and rockets, had controlled the town's two airfields. Late press reports indicate government forces have recaptured one airfield. According to an intercepted Cambodian Army message, the town's defenses remain intact but are weakening rapidly. Phnom Penh, which has lost radio contact with several of its battalions in the area, is sending three additional battalions to support the town's defenders.

*If the Communists succeed in gaining control of the town and of nearby Angkor Wat, capital of the ancient Khmer Empire, they will score a major propaganda and psychological victory. Siem Reap could also serve as a political headquarters for Sihanouk's rump government.*

Kompong Thom city remains surrounded by Communist forces and was bombarded again yesterday with rocket fire. Air strikes reportedly have killed over 100 Communists and are enabling government elements to retain control of the city. Supplies are being dropped to Kompong Thom at night by South Vietnamese aircraft.

Government messages report that there are still several large Communist troop concentrations between the Bassac and Mekong rivers, not far south of the capital, and it is possible the Communists will soon renew offensive operations in this area. Army messages also indicate there are other sizable enemy concentrations east of Phnom Penh, in northern Prey Veng Province. One group reportedly was moving munitions and heavy weapons.

The presence and activities of South Vietnamese Army troops in Cambodia continue to inspire hostile comments from important Cambodian officials. Major Lon Non, the prime minister's brother, [redacted] the South Vietnamese were acting more like conquerors than allies, and added that clashes may soon occur between South Vietnamese and Cambodian troops. [redacted] the South Vietnamese had not done a thorough job of cleaning Communist forces out of Cambodia, and that the Communists eventually would return in strength and make strong retaliatory attacks on the Cambodians.

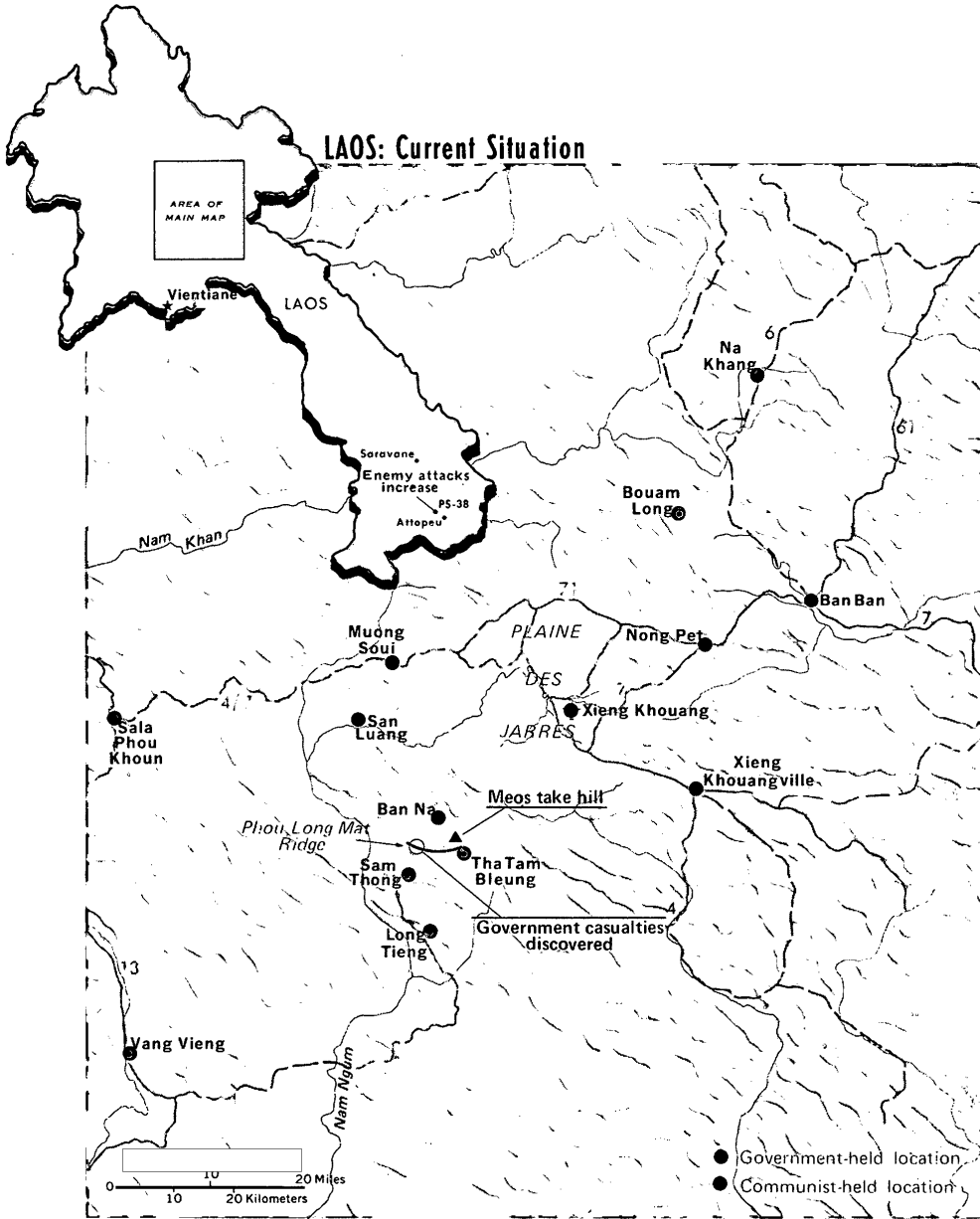
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*The recent visit of South Vietnamese Vice President Ky to Phnom Penh may have helped reduce such animosity, if only temporarily.*



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LAOS

General Vang Pao's drive on Ban Na made some progress over the weekend, but countermoves by the enemy are expected. A North Vietnamese message intercepted in this area on 5 June reported that "the first step in expanding our offensive out of the Ban Na zone has begun."

*The enemy's continuing capacity to strike hard in this sector was substantiated on 7 June when a government unit came upon 63 dead defenders at one of the outposts on Phou Long Mat ridge overrun by the Communists last week. This level of casualties is unusually high for Laos.*

\* \* \*

In southern Laos, enemy forces have stepped up their attacks on PS-38, the government guerrilla base about ten miles west of Attopeu. Over the weekend, the defenders withstood two prolonged rocket attacks and a substantial ground assault. The extended rocket and mortar firings at the base suggest that the Communists are receiving ample quantities of ammunition. At Saravane, the situation remained relatively quiet.

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SOUTH VIETNAM

The militant An Quang Buddhists are preparing for further protests against the Saigon government.

[redacted] plans had been made for a protracted, low-key campaign which, at least for the next two months, will be nonviolent. During this time, Buddhist clergy will circulate throughout the country and attempt to gain popular support for their cause by explaining their antigovernment position. At the same time, they will try to persuade candidates for forthcoming elections not to run with government support and will attempt to discredit those who do.

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[redacted] An Quang leaders also are considering a self-immolation or some other protest demonstration at the US Embassy during the current visit of a group of US congressmen and other officials. They are concerned, however, that rash actions by younger and more activist monks and nuns will cause the situation to get out of hand. The most prominent An Quang leader, Tri Quang, has dissociated himself from the protest campaign, apparently out of concern that the current campaign runs the risk of inviting repressive measures by the government.

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OAS - DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

Plans to hold the OAS General Assembly in Santo Domingo on 22 June have been canceled as a result of violent leftist protests. A formal announcement re-scheduling the conclave for 25 June in Washington will be made early this week. This will give the Dominicans time to fashion a face-saving explanation.

*No cosmetic announcement, however, will conceal the fact that the Dominican Government is bowing to leftist pressure. The left, buoyed by what it will regard as an unqualified victory, will be encouraged to use civil disorder to exert further pressure on the administration.*

*The OAS question, however, was a rare nationalistic issue that, owing to the still bitter memory of the OAS-sponsored intervention of 1965, allowed the left to gain support across the political spectrum. With the international spotlight now removed from Santo Domingo, the Balaguer government will be less reluctant to deal firmly with any further attempts to promote disturbances.*



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SOUTH KOREA

South Koreans generally are worried by the prospect of reduced US involvement in Asia and what this could mean for Korea. In the past, the government has attempted to soften concern by taking a position of unyielding opposition to any reduction of US troops in Korea. Recently, however, government-inspired press commentary suggests that the regime may be adopting a more flexible line. An editorial in the government-owned Seoul Sinmun linked US troop withdrawal to assurances of "automatic" US intervention in the event of an armed attack from the Communist North. Withdrawal was also linked to modernization of South Korean forces, and to US financing for the construction of a Korean small-arms factory. Other leading newspapers subsequently adopted a similar line. On 4 June, the English language Korean Times carried a long feature article emphasizing the need to build up South Korea's forces to compensate for any reduction of US forces.

*Despite the new signs of flexibility on the part of the government, President Pak can be expected to bargain hard for every soldier taken out of Korea. He also probably hopes to delay the cutback in US troops as long as possible. Pak, who faces re-election next year, is anxious to avoid laying himself open to opposition charges of neglecting the nation's security interests.*

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