



The President's Daily Brief

9 June 1970

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

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PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

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[Redacted] (Page 1)

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A rare meeting of the North Vietnamese National Assembly may signal a more militant line on the war. (Page 3)

In Laos, the Communists have occupied Saravane. (Page 5)

Argentine generals have replaced President Ongania, but short-run changes in policy probably will be minimal. (Page 6)

Panamanian-US relations are seriously threatened. (Page 7)

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[Redacted] Egypt. (Page 8)

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CAMBODIA

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The government has recaptured the Siem Reap airfield, but fighting continues in the area. An army spokesman in Phnom Penh stated yesterday that government troops are occupying the ruins at Angkor Wat, and that no enemy elements are in that area.

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[Redacted]

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To the east, pressure has eased on the city of Kompong Thom where there has been heavy fighting since last week. Government forces apparently have also driven away enemy troops that were blocking Route 6 between Kompong Thom and Siem Reap.

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The threat to Kompong Cham appears to be growing again.



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In an intercept of 4 June, a Communist unit in northern Prey Veng Province asked a COSVN element to furnish transportation for three US prisoners. Two days later the unit sent another message stating that the prisoners, one of whom was a woman, had been captured several miles west of the town of Svay Rieng.



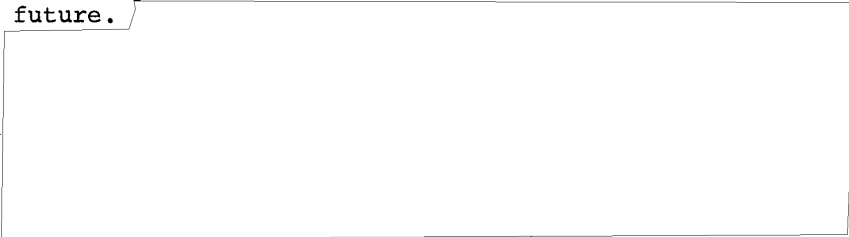
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three correspondents disappeared in this area early last month.

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Sihanouk returned to Peking yesterday, after a two-week stay in Hanoi. His sojourn in North Vietnam was not marked by any significant new statements on the Cambodian situation, although his references to the long, tough fighting ahead suggests that Hanoi made no promises that he would be restored in the near future.



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NORTH VIETNAM

The North Vietnamese National Assembly met in Hanoi "recently," according to the Vietnamese news service. Convening of the assembly is an unusual event, and the latest session could have important implications for the course of the war.

The assembly is supposed to meet twice a year, but it has never done so. It rarely comes together, in fact, unless the leadership is seeking a legislative rubber-stamp for a new policy decision. It met briefly last September to commemorate Ho Chi Minh's death, but its most recent substantive session was in May 1968, just after the Paris talks opened. Before then, it met in April 1966, after the leadership had engaged in a lengthy review of the problems posed by increased US participation in the war; and in April 1965, when the bombing of North Vietnam began.

We do not yet have all the public statements from the most recent session, and most of the texts that are available seem to be pretty standard fare--certainly nothing that would justify calling the assembly together. There are a few hints, however, that the meeting was called to endorse a more militant line on the war. This comes through most clearly in some passages of the report delivered by Pham Van Dong. The recent period of relative ease for the North Vietnamese people, Dong seems to be saying, is now over, and they must once again expect to make heavy sacrifices in support of an even larger effort in the south. This would, of course, be in line with signs that infiltration activity is resuming and supply movements are continuing into the wet season, and with what the Communists seem to be doing on the ground in Cambodia.

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A major infiltration station in North Vietnam's southern panhandle radioed on 4 June that "many" southbound groups would be moving through this month. It instructed a transportation unit in the area to be ready to move battalion-size groups. Another recent intercept indicated that a 570-man group, including headquarters, infantry, and combat support elements was to be trucked south from the Vinh area on the night of 8 June.

These intercepts suggest that a fairly heavy southbound flow of manpower will be resumed in June. The final May total entering the pipeline was only about 1,200.

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LAOS

Early this morning [redacted] at least 400 Communist troops occupied the provincial capital of Saravane after a prolonged rocket and mortar barrage. All but 1,000 of the town's 5,000 civilians had been evacuated before the final assault. Saravane was defended by about 500 dispirited army, police, and local defense personnel.

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For the Communists, capturing the town is more a political than a military victory. It has some military merit, however, for it will help to extend Communist control over additional potential supply routes to the south.

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ARGENTINA

General Ongania has been removed from the presidency by the commanders of the three services, who have proclaimed themselves the governing junta. Their leader-spokesman, General Alejandro Lanusse, has announced that a civilian will be appointed as provisional president within ten days, but he named no individual. Ongania's cabinet has been asked to continue to serve, with the exception of the minister of the interior. He and the chief of the federal police have been dismissed--presumably because they mishandled the Aramburu kidnaping case.

The new junta, as well as the provisional government which is scheduled to succeed it, will represent Ongania's departure as nothing more than a new phase of the revolution of 1966. It will maintain that the continuity of government has not been interrupted.

In many respects, that is true. The major change that we now can foresee is the junta's probable willingness to set long-term goals for political and economic reform.

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PANAMA

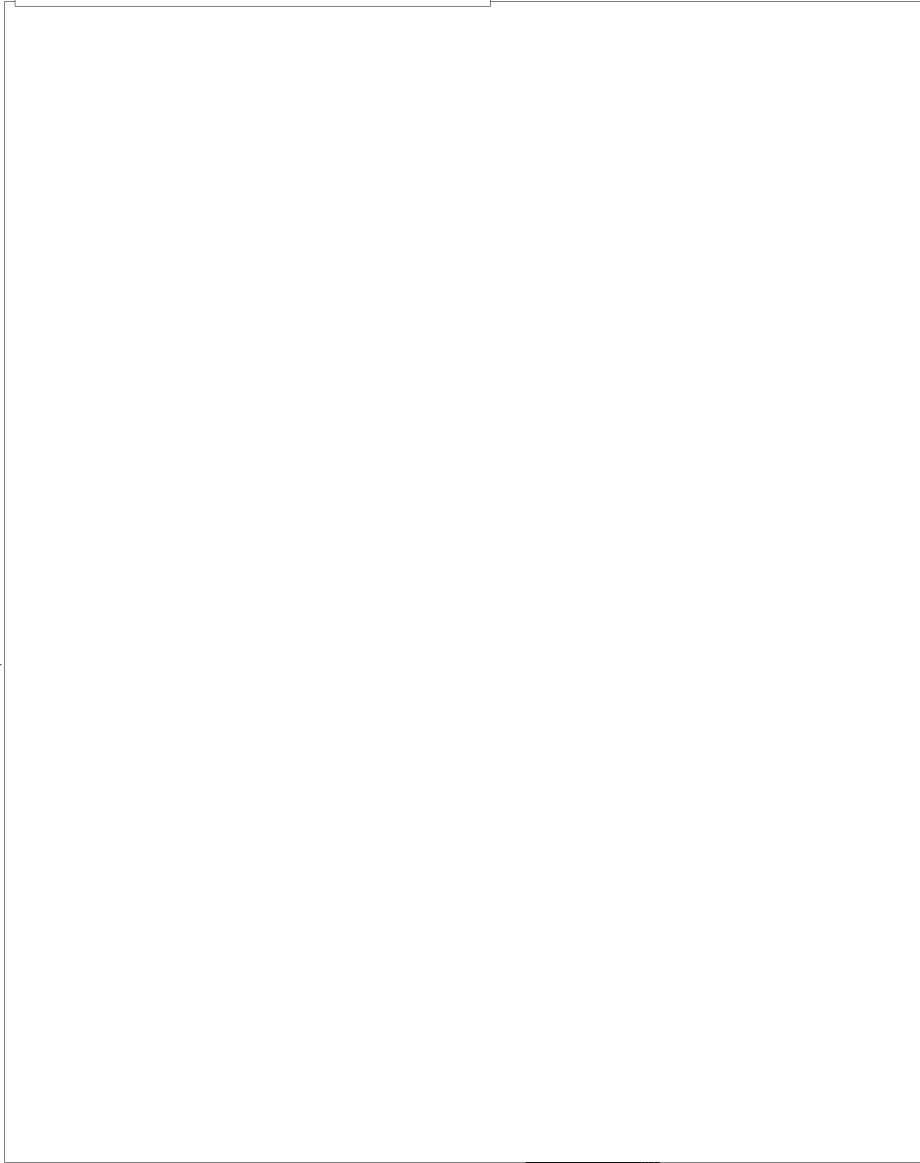
President Lakas made a strong appeal to Ambassador Sayre for the return of three National Guard colonels who escaped from jail yesterday and sought asylum in the Canal Zone. The escapees, leaders of the abortive coup against General Torrijos last December, had been taken out of maximum security at Lakas' insistence, and the President said that Torrijos would "remove" him if they were not returned to Panama.

Last March, Torrijos accused the US of allowing the Zone to be used as a safehaven for individuals plotting against him. Torrijos calmed down after a time, but this latest incident will hit a raw nerve. Panamanian insistence on immediate extradition is likely to be even more intense this time.



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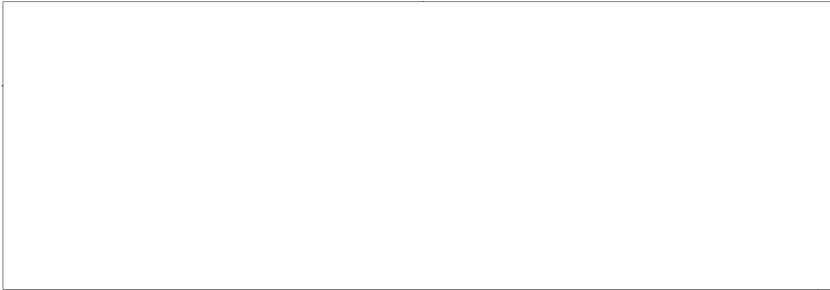


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USSR-EGYPT



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NOTES

Japan: Leftist groups are continuing to protest the mutual security treaty with the US. Japanese police expect their activity to intensify between now and 23 June, the date of its automatic extension. The police are sure they can handle whatever the leftists serve up in the line of mass demonstrations--the general public tends to be indifferent to the treaty issue anyway. A more worrisome problem is presented by reports that a student group may attempt to kidnap foreign diplomats as a means of embarrassing the government.

Jordan: Heavy fighting broke out throughout Amman this morning between Jordanian troops and guerrilla forces. This is the fourth and apparently the worst day of armed clashes between the government and the fedayeen. The fact that neither side has managed to stop the fighting is ominous. In Jordan's charged atmosphere a full-scale showdown is not in the interests of either side.

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