



The President's Daily Brief

26 June 1970

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THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

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PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

The situation in Cambodia is discussed on *Page 1*.

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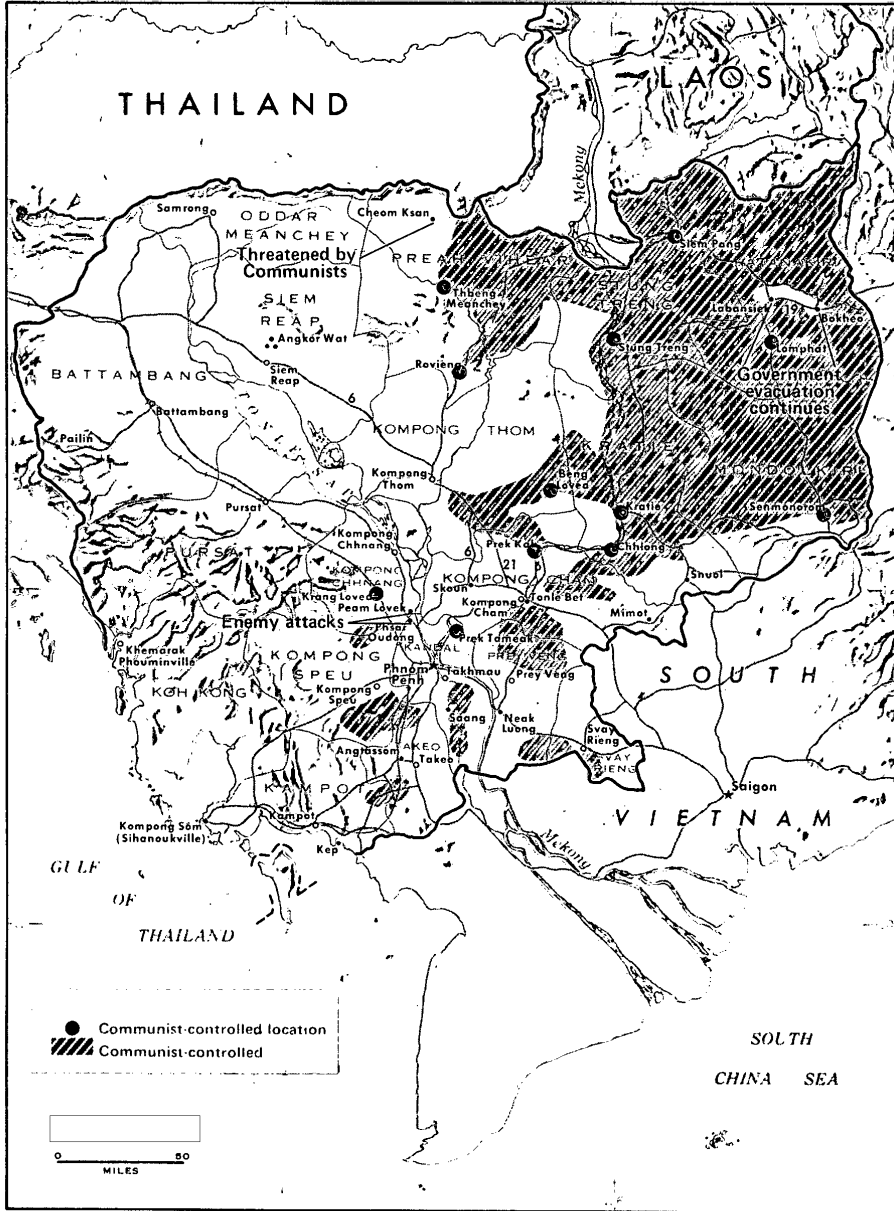
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Ecuadoran President Velasco has taken a number of stern measures since assuming dictatorial powers last Monday; thus far, there has been no meaningful opposition. (*Page 5*)

Yesterday's Syrian-Israeli clash is noted on *Page 6*.

Cambodia: Current Situation



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CAMBODIA

An important government munitions depot at Peam Lovek, in Kompong Chhnang Province, came under enemy attack yesterday. Late press reports indicate the attack was repulsed. A Communist battalion-sized force also attacked the town of Phsar Oudong, south of Peam Lovek, Wednesday night; a government battalion moving to reinforce Phsar Oudong was ambushed by the enemy five miles northwest of the town. A second battalion was en route to Phsar Oudong from Phnom Penh yesterday.

Enemy activity around the capital of Kompong Chhnang appears to be increasing again. A government message reports that the Communists have taken over several villages near the town and are bringing in "antiaircraft weapons."

The Communists continue to harass government reinforcements en route overland to Kompong Thom city. An army intercept asserts that several hundred enemy troops are in ambush positions at the junction of Routes 6 and 21, southeast of Kompong Thom, and are trying to attack a government column from the rear. No significant enemy attacks were made on the city, but Communist forces are still nearby.

Siem Reap has been quiet. On 24 June, however, a police message claimed that 3,000 enemy troops were located just north of the city, and that villagers in that area were fleeing. The local commander at Siem Reap is asking for air strikes along the entire length of Route 6, between Siem Reap and Kompong Thom.

The evacuation of government troops from Preah Vihear Province toward Thailand is continuing, and an intercepted army message stated that Communist forces were converging on another government position at Cheom Ksan town on 23 June.

The Communists apparently still hold Prek Tameak village, northeast of Phnom Penh. A local Cambodian unit reports that there are now 2,000 enemy troops in the area preparing to attack a government battalion near Prek Tameak.

In the northeast, the South Vietnamese air evacuation of the inhabitants of Bokheo and Labansiek towns in Ratanakiri Province is continuing. The

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Labansiek airfield was harassed briefly by enemy mortar fire on 24 June. South Vietnamese troops are moving toward the town along Route 19; there has been only light contact with the enemy.

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A government decree issued on 25 June calls for the mobilization of all Cambodian citizens of both sexes between the ages of 18 and 60. They must either enter military service or join auxiliary organizations. The decree also makes persons in "defense capacities"--presumably including anyone affected by the mobilization decree--subject to military law and tribunals. Furthermore, all economic resources considered necessary for national defense will be "relinquished" to the state. The decree does not spell out which resources are in this category.

These draconian measures, if indeed they are carried out with any vigor, would tend to mute carping in the National Assembly over the government's conduct of the war.

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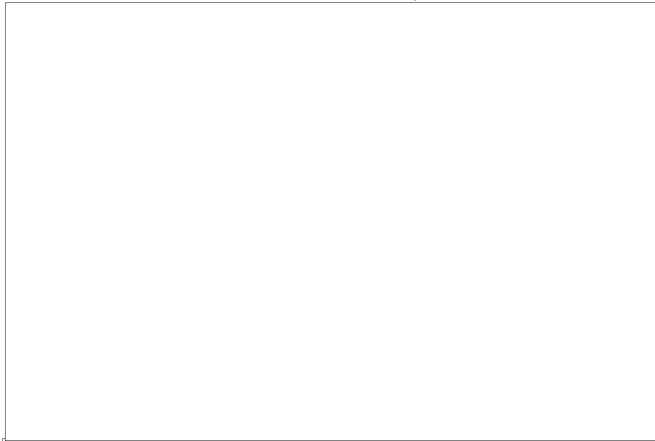
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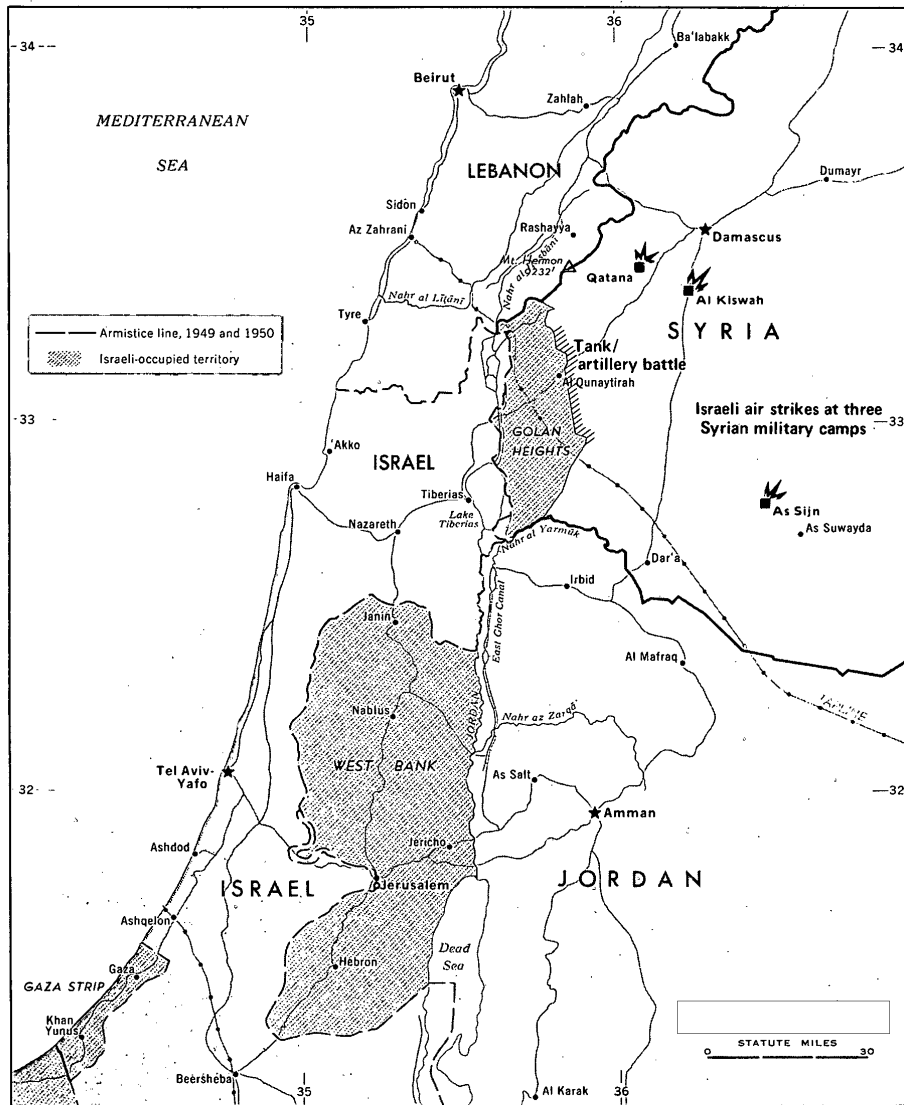
President Velasco has moved quickly to secure the dictatorial powers he assumed last Monday. With little prompting needed from the military, he has carried out a roundup of leftists and student agitators. Velasco has nullified the 1967 Constitution and says he intends to rule by decree until he hands over the reins to his elected successor in September 1972. The Supreme Court has been closed, at least temporarily, and Congress appears to have been made a permanent casualty by the reallocation of funds intended for it.

Leaders of the traditional Liberal and Conservative parties have made largely pro forma protests over the take-over. Public response has bordered on indifference.

By breaking the constitutionality of his regime, Velasco has knowingly thrown away whatever independence of the military he may have enjoyed. When opposition elements regroup, as they are certain to do, the military will be the sole arbiters of Velasco's tenure.

Velasco has been elected president five times, but has been ousted during three of his four previous terms. Although he now has the backing of the military, this will become more uncertain as he becomes the target of opposition elements.

Military Activity on the Syrian Front



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NOTE

Syria-Israel: The Syrians carried out an unusually aggressive artillery and tank attack yesterday against the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights, and Israeli planes lashed back at military camps near Damascus. Further Israeli air attacks against similar targets were made this morning. This has been the least active of the four Arab-Israeli fronts, although clashes have occurred at the rate of at least one a month. Damascus' exaggerated claims of casualties and damage inflicted by its forces serve to prove its radical Arab credentials. They underscore Syria's refusal to accept the continued Israeli occupation and settlement of this area.

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