

The President's Daily Brief

12 October 1970

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PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

Recent military developments in Cambodia are discussed on *Page 1*.

Jockeying for power continues behind the scenes in Egypt. (*Page 2*)

Government irregulars have taken a town in northern Laos, but some reverses were reported in the panhandle. (*Page 3*)

Canada plans to announce its recognition of Peking tomorrow. (*Page 4*)

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CAMBODIA

No new significant ground attacks developed against the government column on Route 6 yesterday. Despite the constant enemy pressure against the column, the task force commander still believes that the situation is well in hand, principally because of his air and artillery superiority.

In the Phnom Penh area, a Cambodian Army battalion located some six miles east of the capital came under heavy fire throughout the night of 9-10 October. Several towns also experienced harassing fire.

The attack near Phnom Penh probably was intended to draw attention from the festivities surrounding Cambodia's declaration as a republic, but Cambodian authorities think it may also portend an increase in military activity near the capital.

1,500 enemy troops have recently moved into the area, but there is no other hard evidence that a force of this size has deployed so close to Phnom Penh.

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Several major elements of the Viet Cong 9th Division recently have converged at the Chup rubber plantation just east of Kompong Cham city. The buildup of enemy forces at Chup may be related to a recently intercepted message from Hanoi's Central Research Directorate to COSVN's military intelligence bureau which told of Communist intentions to attack and occupy Kompong Cham. The message also spoke of the necessity of opening up a new infiltration route from Laos through northeastern Cambodia to Kompong Cham.

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EGYPT

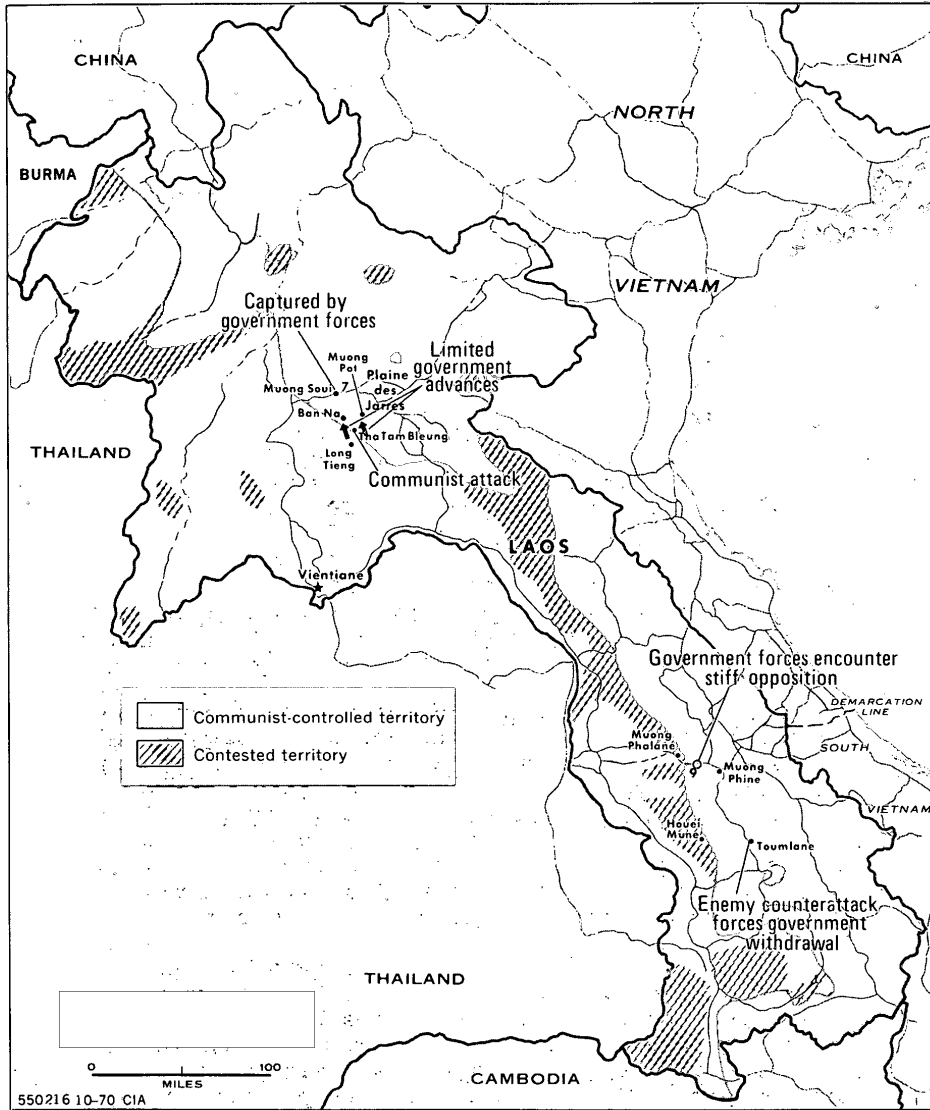
Two loosely knit triumvirates have emerged from the political infighting following Nasir's death. The members of the in group--acting President Sadat, Minister of Interior Jumah, and Ali Sabri--have worked together to ward off other contenders for their present position of pre-eminence, but they are maneuvering against each other for key posts in the new government.

Three other close associates of Nasir, Minister of Guidance Haykal, Kamal al-Din Husayn, and Zakariya Muhyeddin, appear to be shut out of the power structure. Haykal, who has dominated the press as editor of the Cairo daily Al-Ahram, will soon be replaced. Husayn has been confined to his home by security officials, and Muhyeddin has indicated that he is content to remain on the sidelines for the present.

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Egypt's disgruntled students, who in general support Muhyeddin, are another factor in the fragile political situation. Jumah recently ordered the arrest of 150 student leaders as a protective measure. This move probably will rekindle the antiregime mood of the students, who already hate Jumah because of his repressive actions against them during antigovernment demonstrations in 1968.

LAOS: Current Situation



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LAOS

Vang Pao's irregulars this weekend occupied the deserted town of Muong Soui and its nearby airstrip on the western edge of the Plaine des Jarres. The Communists have used Muong Soui as a storage and transshipment point on Route 7, but it probably has more political than strategic importance. Southwest of the Plaine, irregulars made limited advances but reported one enemy surprise attack behind their lines.

In the Laotian panhandle, government forces operating against enemy supply lines in the Toumlane valley area have sustained serious setbacks in recent days. Intercepted government messages indicate that strong enemy counterattacks have forced them to withdraw from the valley. Government forces operating in the area of Route 9 between Muong Phine and Muong Phalane are also meeting stiff opposition from Communist troops in this sector of the panhandle.

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NOTE

Canada - Communist China: All last-minute problems have been resolved and Foreign Minister Sharp will announce Canadian recognition of Peking in parliament tomorrow. The agreed communiqué represents a considerable retreat on the part of the Chinese from their initial hard-line stand on the crucial issue of Taiwan. The Canadian announcement will put greater pressure on the Italians to conclude their own long drawn-out recognition negotiations with Peking and may cause Belgium to move in the same direction.

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