



The President's Daily Brief

19 December 1970



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PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

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

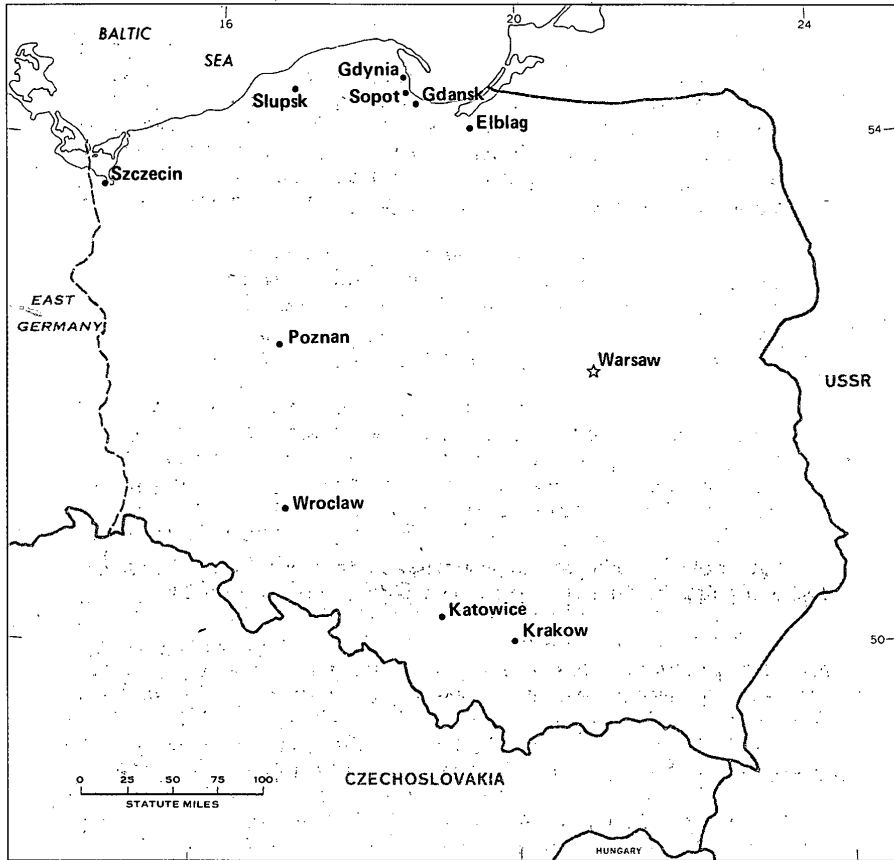
Highlights of the concluding Helsinki phase of SALT are reported on *Page 3*.

On *Page 4*, we discuss a Vietnamese Communist article which advocates a return to a more conventional warfare strategy.

The Egyptians are continuing to improve their radar coverage west of Port Said and along the canal.
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LOCATIONS OF DISTURBANCES IN POLAND



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POLAND

The trouble that broke out in Szczecin two days ago is not completely over, but there have been hints in local broadcasts that the curfew in the city might be lifted this morning. Gangs of youths were still roaming the city streets as of mid-afternoon yesterday and a Swedish correspondent had reported in the morning that tanks and armored cars were used to disperse local crowds.

To the east, the cities of Gdynia and Sopot apparently were quiet throughout the day yesterday and the rioting of the previous night in Gdansk seems to have abated with daylight. Many workers in the tri-city area are still staying away from their jobs, however, and normality has not yet been fully restored.

New unrest was reported yesterday in Slupsk and looting in Elblag was witnessed by a traveler. Sit-down strikes occurred in two of Warsaw's largest plants and in the firm that prints the main Communist Party daily, Trybuna Ludu. Disturbances or strikes in Silesia were also suggested by the cancellation of flights to the area, by a break in telecommunications with Katowice, and by an East German intercept; some Polish troops in the area were put on alert on 17 December.

Previously, Silesia has not been much affected by the riots in the north. The region, however, has been the scene of several protests in recent months against the regime's wage policies.

In addition, flights were canceled yesterday to the cities of Poznan and Krakow, and the main squares of Krakow and Wroclaw were cordoned off, presumably to keep crowds from forming. College students throughout the country are also being dismissed today, three days early, for the Christmas holidays.

Although young people have been seen in the vanguard of looters and arsonists, there has been little evidence of student

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involvement in the protests and riots. The regime, however, is obviously taking no chances.

So far, there has been no indication that factional differences in the party have been a factor in the disruptions. If trouble is prolonged, however, there will be increased likelihood of factionalism and of a search for scapegoats.

There is still no evidence that Soviet forces in either Poland, East Germany or the USSR have gone on alert. Adjacent areas of East Germany were also reported quiet yesterday by local officials.

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SALT

The second Helsinki phase of SALT ended yesterday with little to show in the way of tangible progress, but with the Soviets doing their best to head off any impression that the talks are stalemated. In his final statement, Semenov cited "points of contact" between the two sides as well as remaining differences, and voiced the view that Helsinki II marked a "useful stage" in SALT.

At the last senior advisers' meeting, which took place on 17 December, the Soviet adviser noted that he saw "movement" in Ambassador Smith's formula of the previous day concerning forward-based systems (FBS). In an informal discussion after the 16 December plenary, one Soviet delegate said he did not consider Smith's formal statement to be a final rejection of the Soviet ABM-only proposal.

At the 17 December advisers' meeting, the Soviets suggested that during the upcoming Vienna round the two sides focus on individual offensive systems. In this connection, a US adviser tried in vain to elicit Russian comment on the status of SS-9 deployment. The most he could extract was one Soviet remark that they may have something to say on this at Vienna.

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VIETNAM

An article recently broadcast by the Viet Cong radio and published in the Hanoi press on 16 December contains the first call in more than two years for large-unit, quasi-conventional military operations of the kind that Hanoi pursued in the mid-60s and that culminated in the Communist offensives of 1968. This theme, once commonplace, has been muted since that time as the Communists in South Vietnam adopted lower profile tactics. The new call comes from the commander of Communist forces in the South, a general officer who goes by the pseudonym Tran Nam Trung.

Trung argues that large-unit pressure-- particularly the Tet offensive of 1968-- was instrumental in starting the US on the path of disengagement, and that more such pressure will be needed if the Communists are to bring the war to a favorable conclusion. He seems to be saying that the time is growing ripe to accelerate big-unit warfare while maintaining guerrilla and subversive action, both because allied ranks are being thinned as a result of the widened Indochina battlefield and the US withdrawals and because the Communists have gained "new allies" in Laos and Cambodia. Trung's article, unlike other recent Vietnamese Communist military commentaries, does not dwell on the need to preserve and rebuild local assets as the base for a gradual return to large-scale combat. Instead, it argues that increased military action will improve the climate for recruitment and for both political and guerrilla activity.

We are not certain what this sudden call for a shift in strategy may indicate about Hanoi's intentions. It could be one more sign that Hanoi plans an intensified drive

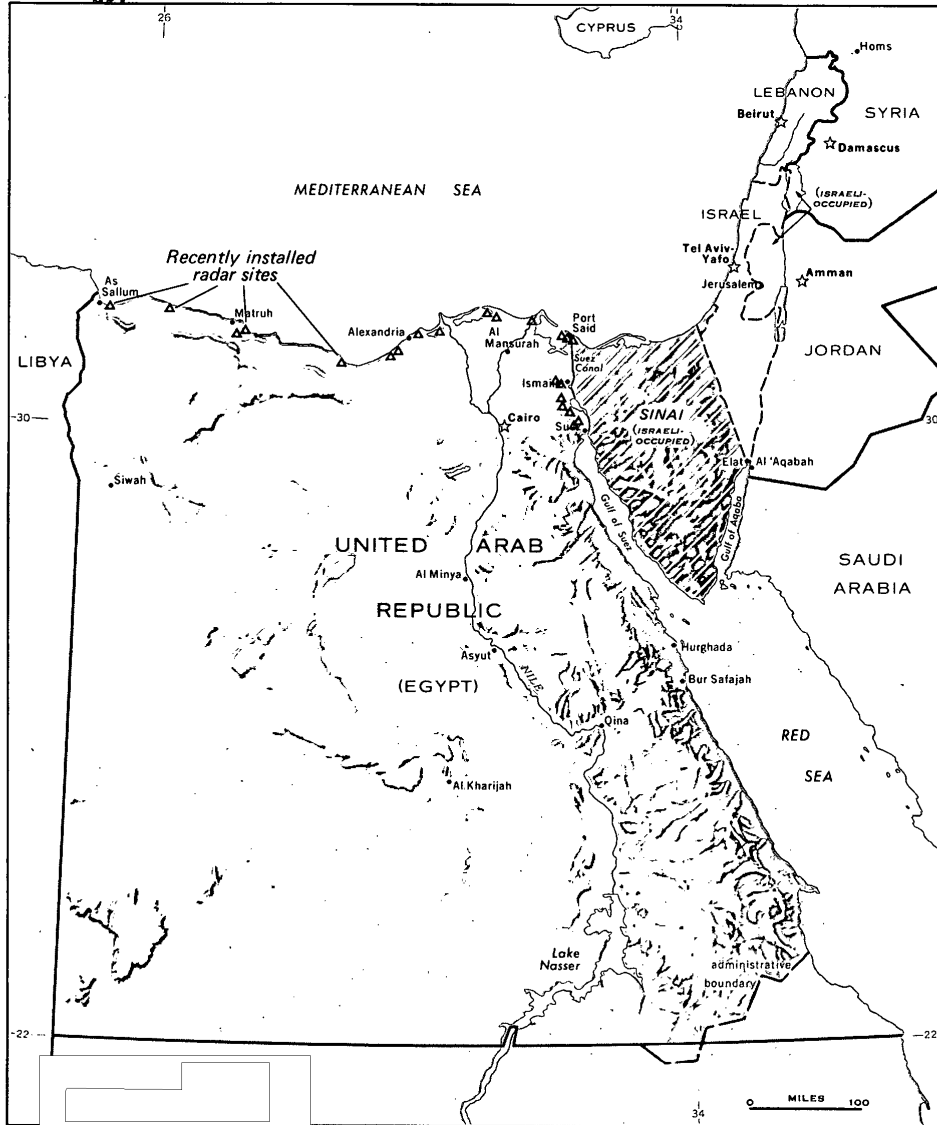
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in Cambodia where much of the Communist main force strength once targeted against South Vietnam currently is based. Most evidence suggests that the Communists will focus their principal effort in Cambodia for the next several months.

On the other hand, the Trung article is cast largely in terms of the war in South Vietnam, and it may mean that Hanoi has decided it must pump more troops into the South if the stronger allied position there is to be reversed. The article could, therefore, be intended to serve notice on Communist commanders in the South that a shift is in the wind. Before big-unit warfare could be stepped up, however, the Communists would need from several months to a year to re-establish their supply lines to the far south and to move down more troops and supplies from the North.

A third possibility, and one we are inclined to weigh more heavily than the others, is that Trung's article represents an opening shot in a renewed debate within the Vietnamese Communist leadership over the proper tactics for carrying on the war at its present stage. In the past, similar disagreements have often been reflected in the Communist press, especially in the mid-60s when the issues were how many North Vietnamese troops should be committed and how they should be used. If the Trung article is indicative of renewed high-level debate, it may not necessarily indicate the prevailing view in Hanoi, and we may before long see in the press more conservative articles about how the war should be fought.

New Egyptian Radar Surveillance Stations



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EGYPT-USSR

The Egyptians are continuing to improve their early warning radar coverage between Port Said and Alexandria, and have extended this for the first time to the Libyan border by installing a series of air surveillance radars between Alexandria and As Sallum.

This effort apparently is designed to prevent the Israelis from circumventing the Egyptian radar screen, as they did in 1967, by flying over the Mediterranean and approaching Cairo from the west.

In the Suez area, the Egyptians have erected a line of at least seven low altitude surveillance radars parallel to the canal and about eight miles apart.

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The function of these radars evidently is to detect Israeli penetrations at low altitudes--a favored Israeli tactic.

The Egyptians are able to play a major role in setting up and operating these radars, but the Soviets are almost certainly providing advice and technical aid as well as the equipment itself.

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NOTE

USSR-Cuba: The four Soviet vessels that arrived in Havana earlier this week left port yesterday. The guided-missile frigate and F-class diesel submarine departed in the morning and headed west; the submarine tender and oiler followed later in the afternoon. The four ships have joined up and at last report were proceeding on a westerly heading about 50 nautical miles northwest of Havana.

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