



The President's Daily Brief

10 February 1971

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

10 February 1971

PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

The Communists' military and political position in the Mekong Delta provinces of South Vietnam has deteriorated. (Page 1)

There is no agreement in sight between Israel and Egypt on reopening the Suez Canal although there may be further dialogue. (Page 2)

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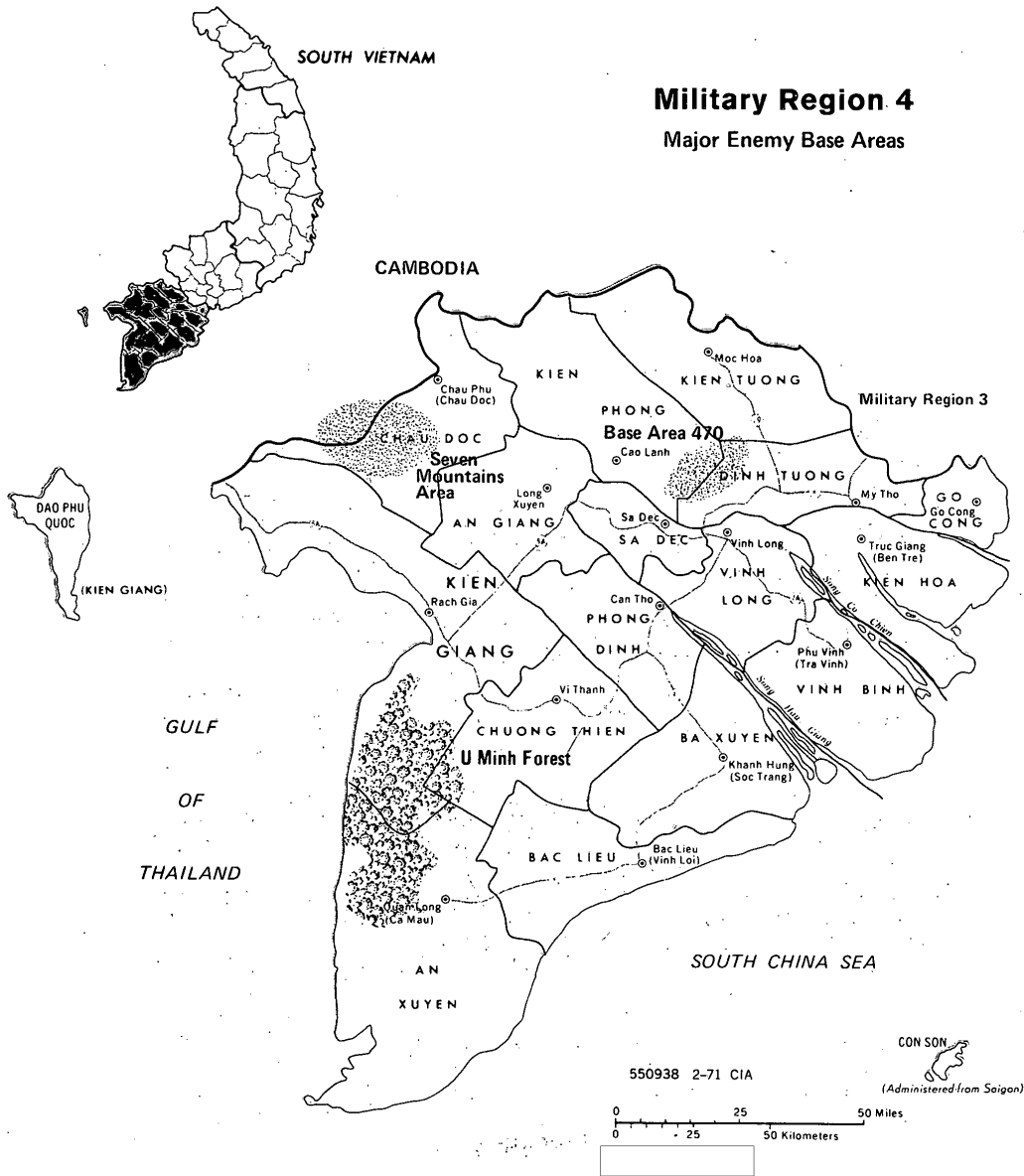
In North Vietnam, Truong Chinh's recent activity has countered rumors that he is seriously ill. (Page 4)

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SOUTH VIETNAM

Captured enemy documents have given us an insight into a declining enemy position in the southernmost delta provinces. One document--an assessment of the overall Communist situation for the third quarter of 1970 passed from the regional headquarters for the southern delta to COSVN--lamented that some two thirds of the population lived in South Vietnamese - controlled areas and only 13 percent were directly under Communist control. In addition to constant problems, such as manpower attrition, low morale, and insufficient supplies, the document gloomily concluded that it would be "many years" before the balance of power in the southern delta provinces could turn in favor of the Communists.

Since then, South Vietnamese military operations, under the command of General Ngo Quang Truong, have added to the deteriorating military and political position of the Communists in the Mekong Delta provinces. Recent drives by South Vietnamese regulars into traditional enemy strongholds in the U Minh Forest, the Seven Mountains area, and Base Area 470 have been successfully carried out, and permanent artillery bases have been built in all these areas. In addition, Regional and Popular Force troops in concert with the police have conducted a successful short-term campaign against Viet Cong guerrillas and members of their political apparatus, and further such operations are being planned.

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ISRAEL-EGYPT

In yesterday's speech to the Knesset, Mrs. Meir characterized Egyptian President Sadat's demand for a partial Israeli withdrawal in return for reopening the canal to "international navigation" as aimed merely at giving Cairo a strategic advantage without including any real commitment to peace. While Mrs. Meir stated that Israel would favorably consider proposals aimed at the mutual reduction of military forces along the canal, there was no indication that Israel was prepared to depart from its long-held position that there would be no withdrawal prior to a signed peace treaty.

Mrs. Meir offered to conclude an agreement outside the peace talks that would reopen the canal to all shipping, including vessels flying the Israeli flag. There will be further dialogue on this subject but Cairo is unlikely to agree at this stage to any proposals concerning the canal that ignore the question of Israeli withdrawal.

Israel



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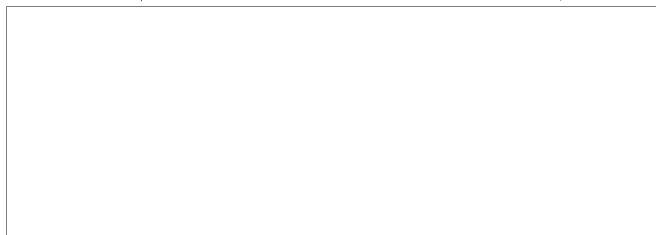
CONGO-ISRAEL-SUDAN



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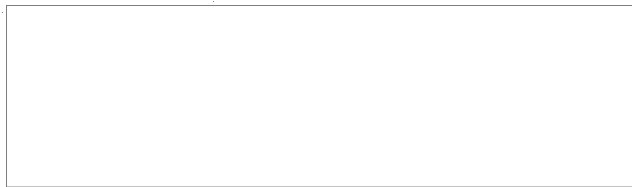
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NOTES

North Vietnam: Hanoi has made a special effort to scotch rumors--noted in The President's Daily [redacted] that Truong Chinh, the second ranking party leader, is seriously ill. Two radio broadcasts yesterday announced that Chinh chaired a meeting of the National Assembly on 8 February and visited troops the following day.

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