

The President's Daily Brief

12 March 1971

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PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

A new "quotation" attributed to Mao Tse-tung suggests that China's internal disputes have spilled over into questions of policy toward Indochina. (Page 1)

Some Nationalist Chinese are privately showing flexibility on the UN representation issue, but officially Taipei still insists on the status quo. (Page 3)

General Minh, the new commander of South Vietnam's MR 3, is showing a more cautious style in his Cambodian operations than the late General Do Cao Tri. (Page 4)

The Turkish military leadership has evidently decided against a direct take-over of the government just now. (Page 5)

On Page 6 we report the current situation in Pakistan.

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COMMUNIST CHINA

China's internecine disputes may have spilled over into foreign policy matters. Evidence of this is contained in a "quotation" of Chairman Mao cited in part by Chou En-lai during his weekend visit to Hanoi and further expanded by a People's Daily editorial on 11 March. The "quotation," a new one never before published, states "if anyone among us should say that we cannot help the Vietnamese people in their struggle against US aggression and for national salvation, it means mutiny and it means betrayal to the revolution."

This is extremely strong language for Chinese polemical debate. Although there have been indications of continuing serious disputes during the past year over the pace and direction of the rebuilding of China's party and governmental apparatus, a reference to mutiny and betrayal attributed to Mao has not been seen since the height of the Cultural Revolution.

Aid to Hanoi is unquestionably a factor in whatever is now at issue in Peking, but there are no current signs that the Chinese are contemplating a sharp reversal of their long-standing policy of caution with respect to the war in Indochina. The impression created by Chou's speeches in Hanoi, together with the joint communiqué issued at the end of his visit and ancillary propaganda from Peking, is that the Chinese expect the "three Indochinese peoples" to continue to bear the brunt of the fighting so long as allied operations retain their present scope and character.

Chou's statements and Chinese propaganda, however, raise the specter of a greater Chinese commitment if the war should expand further. The apparent dispute in Peking may revolve around this question and whether such an expansion would be a threat to China's security, necessitating the dispatch of combat troops to North Vietnam. Some in Peking may have been arguing that, even if the allies should move or threaten to move into northern Laos or North Vietnam, caution would still dictate against sending Chinese troops into North Vietnam. If so, it would appear that for the moment Mao has resolved the argument in favor of an opposite view. We believe, in any event, that what is now at issue in Peking involves future contingencies rather than immediate moves on the part of the Chinese.

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It may also be that the foreign policy aspect of the presumed debate in Peking has compounded existing antagonisms within the politburo. There have been no previous indications of a foreign policy debate in recent Chinese propaganda, and disappearances of major politburo figures in recent months antedate the present allied operations in Laos. Thus any disputes among the Chinese leaders almost certainly involve domestic issues as well. It is apparent that some form of "China first" argument has been put forward, but it is unclear whether Mao's strictures are directed against so-called "radicals" or his more conservative associates, since either group might have reason to argue against foreign "adventures."

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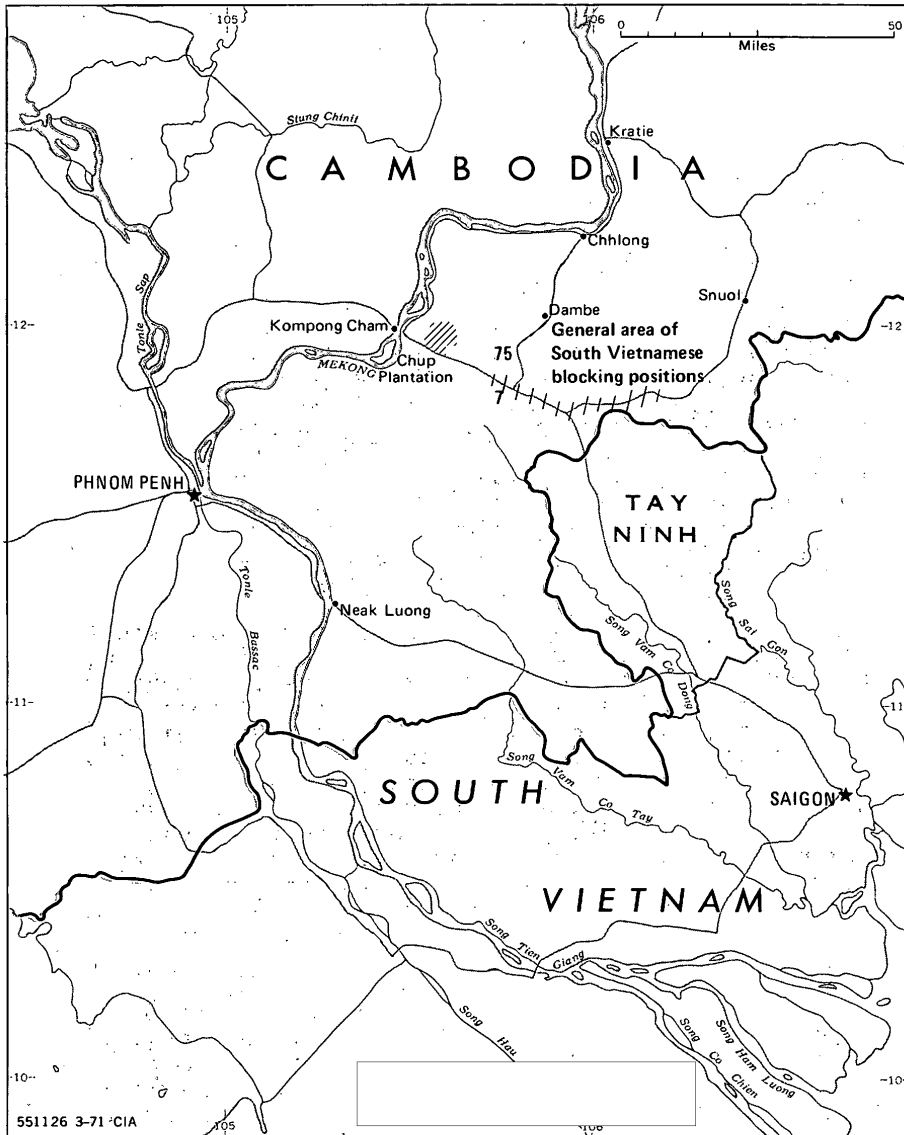
NATIONALIST CHINA

In recent discussions of the Chinese representation issue, Nationalist Vice Foreign Minister Yang centered his official comments on the need for continued use of the "Important Question" resolution. He added that the Nationalists appreciate US consideration of a new approach, but that Taipei "cannot at this time subscribe to any dual representation" formula.

In contrast to this insistence on the status quo, since last November senior Nationalists in private talks with US officials have realistically appraised the probable unfavorable voting pattern next fall. For the first time they have discussed various tactics--including several dual representation formulas--for coping with the situation. Most recently, on 10 March the Chinese representatives agreed with every point made by the US officers--but emphasized that the conversation must be kept completely "off the record." Yang has privately assured Ambassador McConaughy that he has stated to Chiang Kai-shek the "dangers of the present position" and the "need for a new formula."

In light of Nationalist officials' admitted reluctance to present unpleasant details to Chiang, it is likely that he expects any new formula to be clearly pro-Nationalist. Taipei's unyielding approach in official consultations probably is an effort to prevent the US and other supporters from committing themselves to drastic shifts; it is unlikely that Chiang, who will make the final decision, has yet considered the need to alter significantly his UN tactics.

Cambodia: Current Situation



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SOUTH VIETNAM - CAMBODIA

General Minh, successor to the late General Do Cao Tri as commander of South Vietnam's Military Region 3, several days ago pulled his forces back from Communist strongholds in the Chup Plantation and Dambe areas and has been regrouping them along Route 7. [redacted] Minh intends to set up blocking positions along Route 7 aimed at preventing the Communists from moving supplies and troops into South Vietnam.

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These moves by the new commander constitute a change in style from the free-wheeling thrusts of Do Cao Tri. President Thieu had previously indicated his concern that South Vietnamese forces not become overextended, and a decision to reconsolidate before mounting new attacks probably would have his support. The heavy fighting near Dambe last week which resulted in substantial casualties to both sides may have been a factor in Minh's more cautious approach. In any event, the South Vietnamese have already put the enemy on the defensive within their Cambodian bases, and Minh may feel that other areas now have greater priority.

Nevertheless, it seems likely that the South Vietnamese will continue to probe in strength toward Communist bases near Chup and Dambe as part of a mobile defense along Route 7.

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TURKEY

The Turkish military leadership has decided against a direct take-over of the government at this time, [redacted] In their eight-hour meeting on Wednesday the top commanders opted instead for pressing their demands on the Demirel government for as yet unspecified political, social, and economic reforms.

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Demirel, heading what has become a minority government, is in no position to force the required reform legislation through parliament. He may thus find that the only alternatives to direct military intervention are to form a national coalition organized for the specific purpose of expediting the reforms, or to resign.

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PAKISTAN

President Yahya Khan apparently still plans to meet Mujibur Rahman in Dacca to seek a political solution, but has not yet set a date for his visit.



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In East Pakistan, several army supply convoys have been stopped by crowds, and the navy has been refused bunkering facilities by distributors under pressure from the Awami League. In response, the government has declared that such acts constitute an "act of aggression" and are punishable, but has yet to take any action.

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