

The President's Daily Brief

26 October 1971

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PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

The Indians and Pakistanis have traded charges of responsibility for incidents along the East Pakistan border, while President Yahya is reported to have asked U Thant to visit the subcontinent. *(Page 1)*

North Vietnam has made several major improvements in its air defense system. *(Page 2)*

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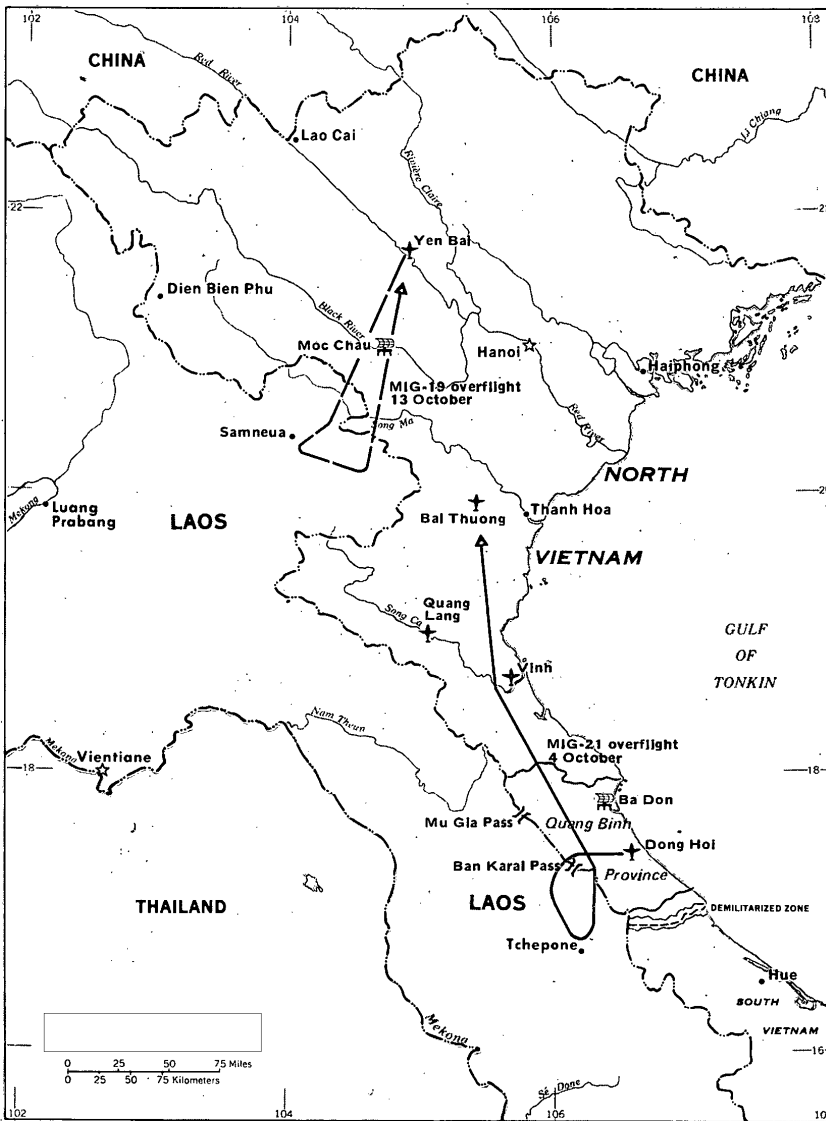
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INDIA-PAKISTAN

The tempo of activity along the East Pakistan border appears to be increasing. The Indians continue to accuse the Pakistanis of shelling small towns along the province's eastern border. Radio Karachi, in turn, has alleged that the Indians fired some 2,200 shells into East Pakistan border villages yesterday.

President Yahya has asked Secretary General Thant to visit the subcontinent immediately and has suggested that UN observers oversee mutual troop withdrawals in the border areas, according to press reports.

This proposal is unlikely to generate much enthusiasm in New Delhi. U Thant last week offered his good offices to mediate the dispute, but initial Indian and Soviet responses seem generally negative. India, with Soviet support, has opposed any UN activity that could be construed as placing responsibility for the crisis equally on the shoulders of New Delhi and Islamabad.



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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY**NORTH VIETNAM**

North Vietnam has made several major improvements in its air defense system in the past few months. These include the establishment of ground controlled intercept radar sites at Moc Chau west of Hanoi and at Ba Don in the southern panhandle, the partial rehabilitation of Dong Hoi airfield further south, and an increase in fighter strength through the return of 32 MIG-17s from China since September. Hanoi has also sought to improve pilot proficiency through numerous air intercept exercises and has stationed additional surface-to-air missile and anti-aircraft artillery units in the panhandle.

Recent air activity has reflected these measures. The MIG-21 that attempted to engage a US B-52 bomber near Tchepone the night of 4 October used the Dong Hoi field and guidance from a senior ground controller at the Ba Don radar site. Although the mission was unsuccessful it was well executed. A MIG-19 operation against a US aircraft near Samneua on 13 October similarly made use of the Moc Chau radar site. On 19 October the six MIG-21s that moved to Bai Thuong, Quang Lang, and Vinh airfields were put on standby for another mission, according to intercepts. Like the mission on the 4th, this one may be aimed at engaging a B-52 over southern Laos.

All of these measures may well point to more aggressive activity during the upcoming dry season. With the transfer of the MIG-17s from China, North Vietnam now has over 200 MIGs, the highest number ever present. The movement from China appears intended to free the more advanced MIG-21s to be sent to the more active southern area.

The AAA and SAM buildup in the panhandle is also unprecedented in scope. There are now elements of six SAM regiments between Thanh Hoa and the DMZ and 17 AAA regiments in Quang Binh Province alone.

[redacted] part of this force will proceed into Laos--one SAM unit has already moved through the Ban Karai Pass. The recent creation of a new air defense division in Quang Binh Province, with authority extending into adjacent areas of Laos, should improve command over these AAA and SAM units and ensure closer coordination with other North Vietnamese elements in the area.

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