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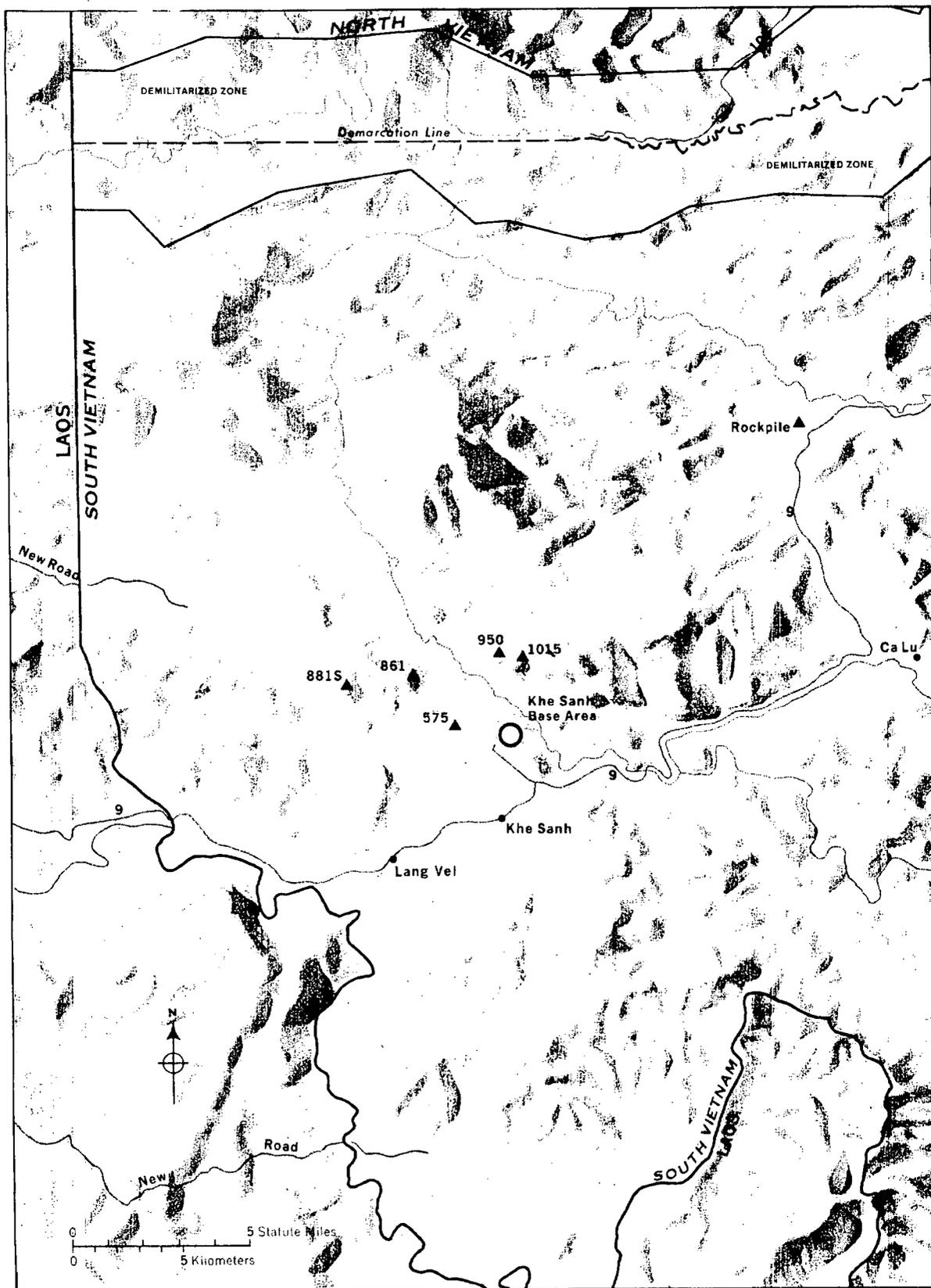
The President's Daily Brief

Top Secret 13 March 1968

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DAILY BRIEF
13 MARCH 1968

1. Vietnam

Military activity remains at a low level in most of South Vietnam. Allied clearing operations are continuing in the northern provinces.

Clouds obscured most of the territory photographed on the OXCART mission of 8 March, but good coverage was obtained around Khe Sanh.

The photographs showed further development of the Laotian road network to the west of Khe Sanh. In addition to Route 9, the Communists have built (over the past several months) two spurs running east from Route 92. These roads appear to have advanced about two miles since January and are now well within South Vietnamese territory.

All of the routes west of Khe Sanh appeared to be in serviceable condition. No vehicles were photographed, but extensive tracking suggests that moderate to heavy traffic uses these roads.

2. Panama

While the stalemate in the assembly drags on, we have a hopeful report from a sensitive and usually reliable clandestine source. According to this source, Robles agreed Monday night to appoint a new, "nonpolitical" cabinet. A new cabinet might be announced as early as today.

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3. Eastern Europe

Police in Warsaw had to use tear gas again yesterday to put down demonstrations, and students in other Polish cities are beginning to voice support for their colleagues in the capital.

The government is cracking down on people it thinks instigated the demonstrations or failed to rein in the demonstrators. Yesterday, for instance, it fired three high government officials whose children had been seen leading the protestors. The official line has begun to take a heavily anti-Semitic slant.

There may be unrest in the labor movement, too, the government's propaganda to the contrary notwithstanding. At least, that was what four workers claimed yesterday when they turned up at our embassy to ask if they could use its printing press to print an anti-regime pamphlet. (This may have been a provocation; the embassy turned down their request.)

Labor leaders in Czechoslovakia are also having their troubles. Prague radio yesterday announced the resignations of three of them, including the head of the central council of trade unions. This official said he took on himself part of the blame for various "shortcomings" in the labor movement. The union hierarchy has been a Novotny stronghold.

And in East Germany, the always jittery Ulbricht government is telling its local party bosses to "keep an ear open" for signs of the liberal virus. According to intercepts, these functionaries are being urged to exercise "the highest degree of vigilance" and to "step in immediately" if anyone gets out of line.

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4. Egypt-Israel

Both Jarring and the Israelis think Cairo will soon take its grievances back to the Security Council.

Nasir's domestic troubles probably are behind his renewed intransigence. Our embassy in Cairo believes that the recent student and worker demonstrations have made Nasir back away from even indirect talks with the Israelis. The regime apparently plans to have another go at diverting internal public opinion with a noisy hassle in the UN.

5. Communist China

The Chinese have roughly doubled their fighter aircraft strength on Hainan Island during March. This beefing-up is almost certainly related to Chinese nervousness about US intentions in the wake of the Tet offensive.

6. Defectors

US military defectors in Sweden are not finding life a bed of roses. Four of them--out of 36 known to have fled to Sweden--have recently returned to their units. Unhappiness over manipulation by antiwar groups, as well as disillusionment with life in Sweden, apparently was behind the decision to redefect.

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