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~~TOP SECRET~~**S U M M A R Y****SOVIET UNION**

1. Bohlen notes Soviet concern over American statements on Indochina (page 3).

SOUTHEAST ASIA

2. Two Vietnamese battalions mutiny in southern Annam (page 3).
3. Viet Minh reported planning increased activity in Cambodia (page 4).

SOUTH ASIA

4. Comment on alleged plans for Afghan-Pakistani confederation (page 6).

NEAR EAST - AFRICA

- 5.

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~~TOP SECRET~~

SOVIET UNION

1. Bohlen notes Soviet concern over American statements on Indochina:

Ambassador Bohlen reports that the recent indications of the firmness of American policy regarding Indochina have produced the "characteristic uncertainty" which Moscow displays when opposed with real determination. He finds that the Soviet press has contained "a distinct note of concern and even disarray" over Indochina developments. Pravda's charge that American efforts to provoke Chinese intervention in Indochina have failed--judged on the basis of past reactions--reflects the Soviet government's serious concern at being drawn into a situation which it wishes to avoid.

Bohlen doubts that the Soviet leaders are willing or even able to force China to abandon Ho Chi Minh, as they forced the Satellites to abandon the Greek guerrillas in 1948. He believes, however, that a demonstration of Western unity would enhance any possibility that may exist of an acceptable solution in Indochina.

Comment: Pravda has avoided any hint of possible Communist reaction to greater American participation in the Indochina war except to say that a "repetition of the Korean variant" will end in "defeat for the aggressors." Moscow's attitude of caution and uncertainty was also evident in Pravda's remark that international reaction to Dulles' proposal shows that it is impossible even to think of submitting the question of intervention in Indochina to the United Nations.

SOUTHEAST ASIA

2. Two Vietnamese battalions mutiny in southern Annam:

[redacted] a Vietnamese army light battalion, stationed on the southern Annam coast, had mutinied. In another battalion, the officers were said to have lost their authority and the unit had refused to carry out the mission assigned to it.

14 Apr 54

~~TOP SECRET~~

~~TOP SECRET~~

The commander attributed the incidents to fear among the troops from southern Vietnam that they would be kept away from their home districts, contrary to promises made when they enlisted.

Comment: The 55 light battalions in the Vietnamese army were organized under time pressure in 1953. Those which have been committed to battle, largely at the insistence of Vietnamese chief of staff Hinh, have generally performed poorly. Present plans for the enlargement of the Vietnamese army call for 66 more of these light units. No increase is planned in the 66 conventional battalions.

3. Viet Minh reported planning increased activity in Cambodia:

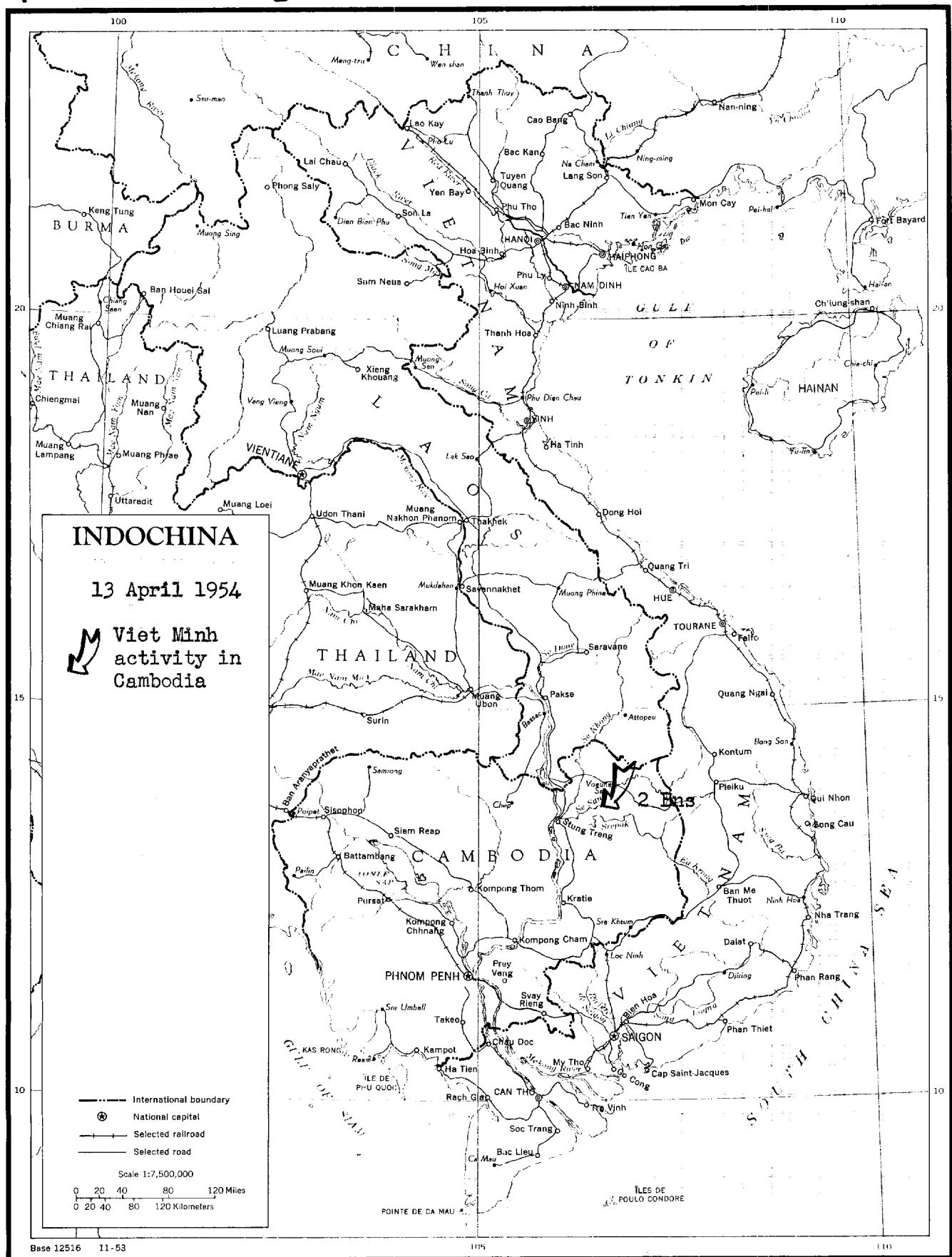
[redacted] The Viet Minh command has ordered the development of bases and building up of guerrilla units along the Mekong River in northern Cambodia,

[redacted] The enemy aim is to harass French lines of communication into Laos and to prepare bases for future operations in central Cambodia. (See map, p. 5.)

[redacted] this information suggests that the Viet Minh's current incursion into Cambodia is not merely a hit-and-run affair, but rather a move to extend its active military operations to all areas of Indochina and to buttress the position of pro-Viet Minh elements in Cambodia.

Comment: The two invading Viet Minh battalions were last reported moving in the direction of the Mekong River town of Stung Treng, and two more battalions now in southern Laos may be en route to join them. French-Cambodian units are attempting to counter this threat with reinforcement of Stung Treng and the deployment southward of several battalions from Laos.

~~TOP SECRET~~

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SOUTH ASIA**4. Comment on alleged plans for Afghan-Pakistani confederation:**

[Redacted]

Press reports of secret negotiations for a "confederation" of Afghanistan and Pakistan apparently originate in the efforts of the Pakistani ambassador to Kabul, Colonel Shah, to promote a settlement of the seven-year-old Pushtoonistan dispute between the two countries, as well as from rumors of Afghan interest in the Turkish-Pakistani defense agreement.

Afghanistan has intimated that it might be willing to enter into a pact similar to the Turkish-Pakistani agreement if the Pushtoonistan dispute were settled, and the Afghans appear more seriously interested in settling this problem than at any time in the past.

[Redacted]
these developments are extremely unlikely under present conditions.

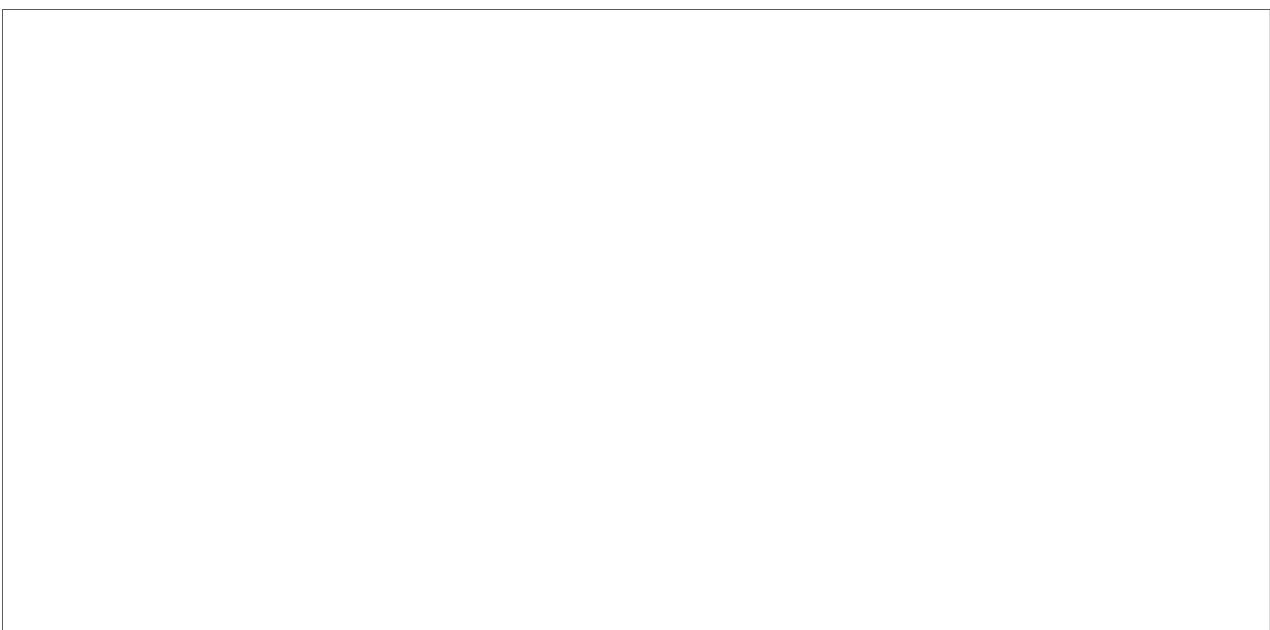
Moscow, whose broadcasts quickly seized on the first press story of the "confederation" project, may use the rumors to increase the pressure it is reportedly exerting to get the Afghans to accept more Soviet technical and possibly military aid. The Soviet-Afghan treaty of 1931, still in force, prohibits Afghanistan from entering any political or military alliance or agreement "which might be directed" against the USSR.

NEAR EAST - AFRICA

5

~~TOP SECRET~~

~~TOP SECRET~~



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