



The President's Daily Brief

April 1, 1975

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Top Secret 25X1

Exempt from general
declassification schedule of E.O. 11652
exemption category 5B (1)(2)(3)
declassified only on approval of
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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

April 1, 1975

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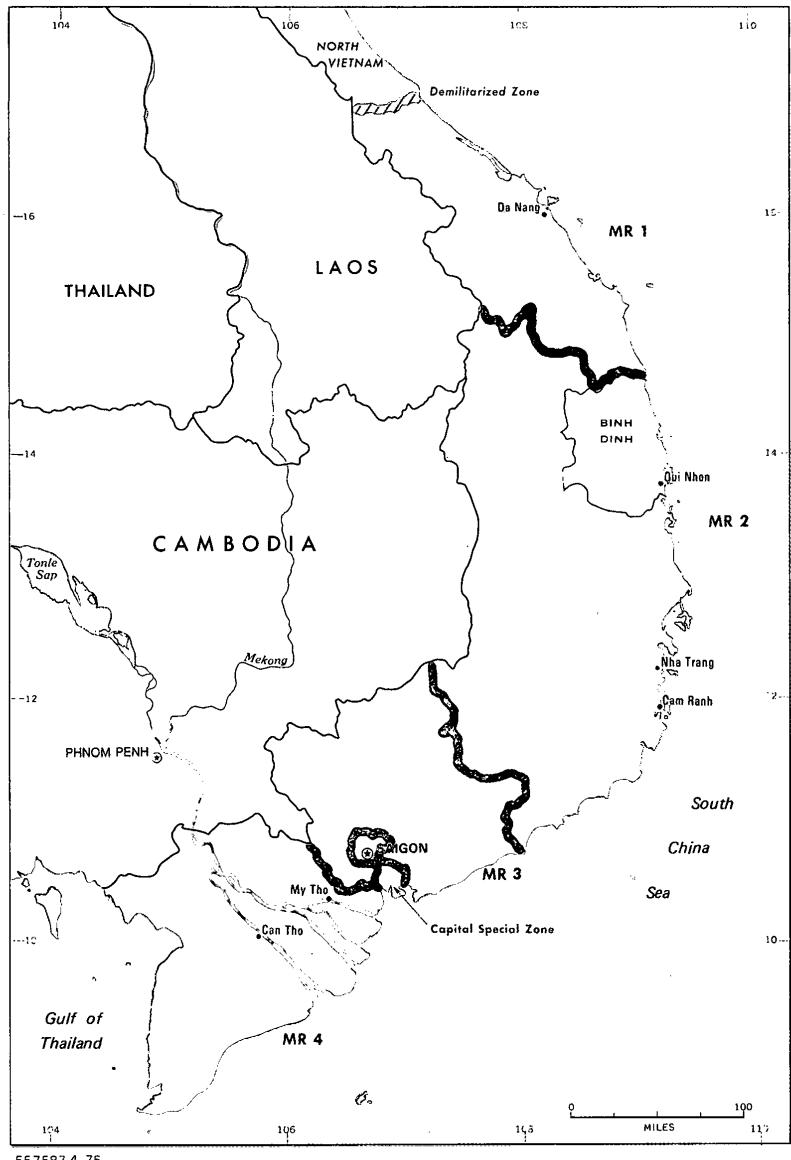
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VIETNAM

The communists are pressing their drive southward along South Vietnam's central coast. Qui Nhon was abandoned by government forces last night. The South Vietnamese 22nd Division, which had been defending the city, was all but shattered in heavy fighting. The government's territorial forces in the Qui Nhon area appear to have heeded communist calls for an uprising and joined in attacks on the 22nd Division.

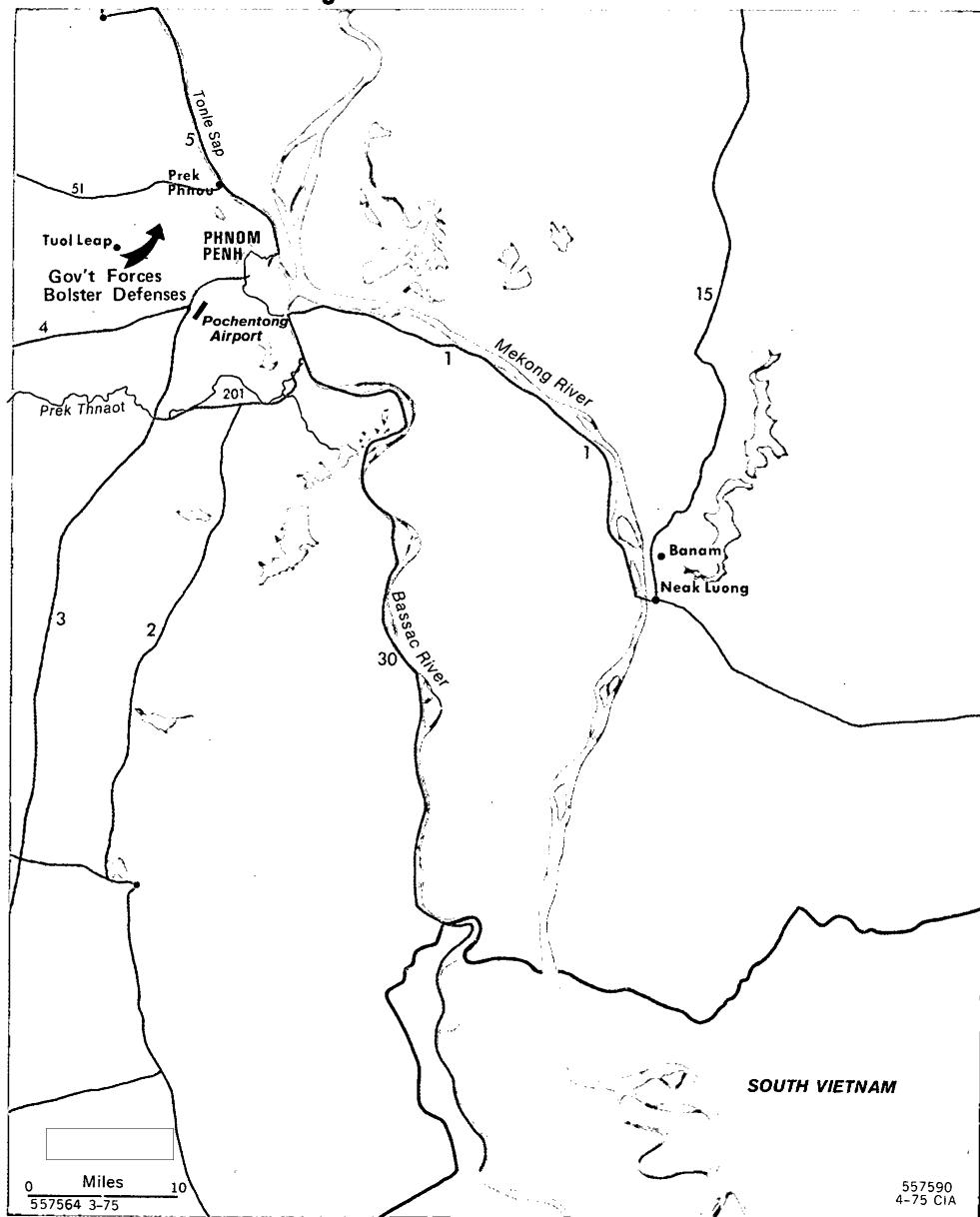
Near Nha Trang, an airborne brigade has taken heavy losses and been forced to pull back. About 9,000 members of the marine division are now at Cam Ranh, but it is doubtful they can be reorganized in time to come to the rescue of Nha Trang. Some troops have deserted from Cam Ranh, taking their weapons with them to Nha Trang, where they are adding to the panic and confusion, much as armed stragglers did in Da Nang.

Government forces in Military Region 2 have lost all 12 of their 175-mm. guns, all 54 of their M-48 tanks, and well over half of their 54 155-mm. guns. Although some attempts were made to destroy ammunition and fuel, large quantities are now in communist hands.

Regional commanders in the delta are expecting strong communist attacks against Can Tho and My Tho cities at any time. These commanders have been trying to prod their regular units to break up communist formations moving into place for the anticipated attacks, but without much success. Even if major attacks against the cities are slow to develop, the communists appear to have the major South Vietnamese units on the defensive and are likely to continue to make territorial gains.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

Cambodia: Lower Mekong



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CAMBODIA

Cambodian army units have plugged the gap in the defense line north of Phnom Penh's Pocheントong Airport. This action reduces the threat of a communist ground penetration toward the airfield, but was achieved only by the diversion of some units from the operation to re-take Tuol Leap and to eliminate insurgent artillery and rocket sites in the area.

The airlift continued at a near record pace, even though nearly 40 rockets struck around Pocheントong. Several rockets also fell near the US embassy in the southeastern section of Phnom Penh; damage, however, was slight. The Japanese and Thai embassies in Phnom Penh plan to close later this week, and the South Vietnamese embassy has requested space for its personnel aboard US airlift flights returning to Saigon.

* * *

President Lon Nol departed from Phnom Penh today. Prince Sihanouk told newsmen in Peking yesterday that Lon Nol's departure would not alter his or the Khmer communists' opposition to negotiations. Sihanouk reportedly said that Lon Nol was leaving "under pressure from the US" and that the move was a "trap" into which neither he nor the communists would fall. The Prince predicted a "100-percent" victory for the insurgents.

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USSR-PORUGAL

Moscow, which is trying to strengthen its ties with Portuguese leaders, gave front-page coverage to Portuguese Labor Minister Costa Martins when he visited the USSR last week.

Costa Martins, who is a member of the ruling Armed Forces Movement, met for three hours with Soviet Premier Kosygin. The Premier, speaking "on behalf of the Soviet leadership," expressed solidarity with the Portuguese government and the Armed Forces Movement. Costa Martins subsequently told the press that Kosygin had promised Soviet aid to Portugal. Moscow heretofore has been notably reluctant to give the Portuguese, including Communist leader Cunhal, reason to believe that substantial economic aid is a possibility.

Moscow's public coverage of the abortive coup of March 11 and its aftermath suggests that its qualms about Portugal are ebbing. Against this are reports circulating in Lisbon and elsewhere that the Soviets are still fearful that the Portuguese political situation may get out of hand and that the Soviets are doing what they can to counsel moderation. These reports help Moscow deal with expressions of concern it has received from the West Germans, the Italians, and others regarding the direction of political events in Portugal.

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IRAN-IRAQ

The communiqué that concluded the visit of Iranian Prime Minister Hoveyda to Iraq last week pledged both sides to work for closer cooperation in all areas and affirmed that the Persian Gulf region should be "spared all foreign interference." The Shah has frequently indicated his desire to arrange closer security cooperation among Gulf countries. Until now, he had excluded Baghdad from those with whom he has sought to cooperate.

The Shah has supported US naval activity in the Persian Gulf as a counter to Soviet naval access to Iraqi facilities. He regards Soviet influence in Iraq as a threat to Iranian and Gulf security, and the reduction of that influence has been a major foreign policy goal. To the extent that the Shah now presses Iraq to reduce its ties to the Soviet Union, he in turn will be under pressure from his Arab critics to indicate that Iran is not closely tied to US policy in the region.

Iran and Iraq, meanwhile, have completed joint preparations to seal their border at the expiration today of the cease-fire between Iraq and the Kurdish rebels that was announced on March 13. Beginning today, Iraqi Kurds--both civilians and fighting men--will no longer be allowed to take refuge in Iran. The Iraqi army is expected to resume its offensive against pockets of remaining rebels.

Baghdad has, however, extended until the end of April the amnesty it has offered to Kurdish refugees in Iran who return to Iraq. Few refugees are expected to return.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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NOTES

Suleyman Demirel took the reins of government in Turkey yesterday.

The Justice Party leader now has a maximum of one week to prepare a government program for a parliamentary vote of confidence. The shaky foundation of the new government may have already been weakened; four independents are reported to have withdrawn their support. No sharp turns are likely in major Turkish policies, but there will be pressure on Demirel to harden the policy toward Cyprus.

* * *

Turkish and Greek Cypriot forces in Nicosia exchanged fire last night before UN forces succeeded in restoring the cease-fire.

Turkish troops may have been reacting to shots fired by Greek Cypriots who reportedly were celebrating the 20th anniversary of the guerrilla campaign against the British. The Turks, who claim to have information that the Greek Cypriots will soon initiate a guerrilla campaign against the Turkish sector, may be attempting to react strongly to any provocation to dissuade the Greek Cypriots from such a venture.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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A LOOK AT THE KHMER COMMUNISTS

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With the Cambodian conflict now approaching what may be its final stages, the insurgent leaders and their administrative apparatus stand ready to take the reins of power in Phnom Penh. The handful of leading insurgent figures known in the West probably will assume prominent positions in a successor regime, but actual power in post-war Cambodia will be held by the covert Khmer Communist Party.

The overt political and military organizations of the Cambodian insurgency are the National United Front of Cambodia and the Cambodian People's National Liberation Armed Forces, both of which were created five years ago. Sihanouk's Royal Government of National Union so far has had no significant role inside Cambodia, but has been used as a channel for the insurgents' external relations.

Actually controlling and directing the insurgent apparatus is the Khmer Communist Party. It assumed formal identity in 1961, but it traces its origins to the early 1950s and Ho Chi Minh's Indo-China Communist Party. The Khmer party has expanded to a membership of over 10,000, led by a central committee of about 20 members.

The composition of the central committee has remained a closely guarded secret. Sihanouk's "defense minister" and "deputy prime minister" Khieu Samphan is the best known of the senior leaders, but it is generally believed that Saloth Sar is top man in the party. Ieng Sary--who now handles most direct contacts with Peking and Hanoi--also appears to occupy a position of strength. Other central committee members have been identified with varying degrees of certainty. These include such well-known individuals as Hou Yuon and Hu Nim and a variety of civilian leaders, insurgent military commanders, and regional party chairmen.

All of the individuals whose membership in the central committee is fairly well established are in their 40s. Most qualify as Cambodian intellectuals, having been educated during the 1950s in France--where they absorbed their leftist if not their communist ideology--and having subsequently worked as

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journalists or teachers. Khieu Samphan and Hou Yuon, in fact, have doctorates in economics. A significant number have had considerable experience in politics: Khieu Samphan and at least two others held cabinet portfolios under Sihanouk during the 1960s. Almost all the known or suspected party leaders are remembered as tough nationalists and unyielding ideologues even before their involvement in the insurgency. Another collective trait is long-standing opposition, and in many cases personal enmity, toward Prince Sihanouk.

The party has directed the insurgency with cohesiveness and determination. Evidence of internal friction has appeared, however, particularly on the matter of the party's relationship with the Vietnamese communists.

Relationship with Hanoi and Peking

Hanoi nurtured the Cambodian party while Sihanouk was in power, and ties became even closer during the initial years of the current conflict when the Vietnamese increased their support. From the beginning, however, Hanoi has had to deal with an undercurrent of Khmer distrust; Khmer suspicions and contentiousness grew as the Khmer Communist Party expanded and assumed responsibility for its own military and political affairs.

The lines of division on the issue are murky, but Ieng Sary--who, along with several other top leaders, is supposed to have received training in North Vietnam--is frequently identified as the leading proponent of close ties with Hanoi. Khieu Samphan is often reported as heading a more nationalistic faction, which has apparently had some success in its efforts to strengthen the party's ties with Peking as a balance to Hanoi's influence.

China, for its part, has appeared eager to cultivate ties with the insurgents. It apparently has the dual intention of preventing Vietnamese dominance over the Cambodians and foreclosing any possible intrusion of Soviet influence.

The party's already discernible drift toward some middle ground between Peking and Hanoi may involve practical considerations. North Vietnam's ability to extend post-war reconstruction aid to a communist-controlled Cambodia would be limited, while China would be in a position to provide help to rebuild the country's war-torn economy. The

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party, in fact, seems keenly aware of the major problems it would encounter in the period immediately following an end to the fighting and has been careful to keep open all potential sources of foreign aid. A policy statement issued by a recent "congress" of party front organizations, for example, juxtaposed a promise of an "independent and nonaligned foreign policy" with a statement that it would accept all "unconditional aid."

Attitude Toward Sihanouk

The leadership's current policy toward Sihanouk also appears to have been developed with an eye to the future. It now seems fairly certain that the party plans to retain Sihanouk as a nominal leader if and when the insurgents win a total military victory or the Lon Nol government capitulates. Party leaders have long recognized that the Prince has given their movement a legitimacy both inside and outside Cambodia that otherwise it would not have had. During a period of post-war consolidation, Sihanouk's value as a domestic rallying point and his ability to attract international recognition and economic support will be important. The Prince's close relationship with Chinese leaders is probably also a consideration. The party may, in fact, have been under some pressure from Peking to retain Sihanouk.

Sihanouk, for his part, appears painfully aware of the party's exploitative attitude toward him. His recent claims that he will involve himself after the war only in foreign relations may reflect arrangements he has been forced to accept. Similarly, Sihanouk's frequent references to the possibility of early retirement probably reflect an awareness that his usefulness will decline and pressures to jettison him will increase as the party gains confidence in its administrative ability and as the country's international position becomes established.

Post-War Domestic Policy

The party's professed aim is to impose its own brand of Marxism on Cambodian society. Essentially

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this will mean the implementation on a country-wide basis of programs long under way in the communist zone. These include:

--Destruction of the traditional administrative system and its replacement by a centralized government controlled by the party.

--Confiscation of privately owned land and the establishment of government-run communes.

--Nationalization of all industry and commerce.

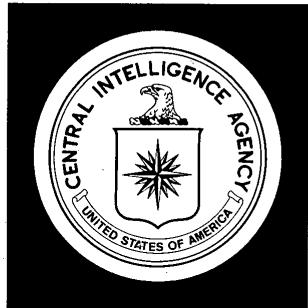
--Gradual replacement of Buddhism by communist-controlled mass organizations.

Although the Khmer Communist Party leadership lacks the pool of well-trained cadre possessed by its Asian allies, it can be expected to push relentlessly its efforts to regiment and collectivize Khmer society, using force where necessary.

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The President's Daily Brief

April 2, 1975

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Exempt from general
declassification schedule of E.O. 14176
exemption category SR (b) (2)(d)
declassified only on approval of
the Director of Central Intelligence

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April 2, 1975

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Egypt-Israel:

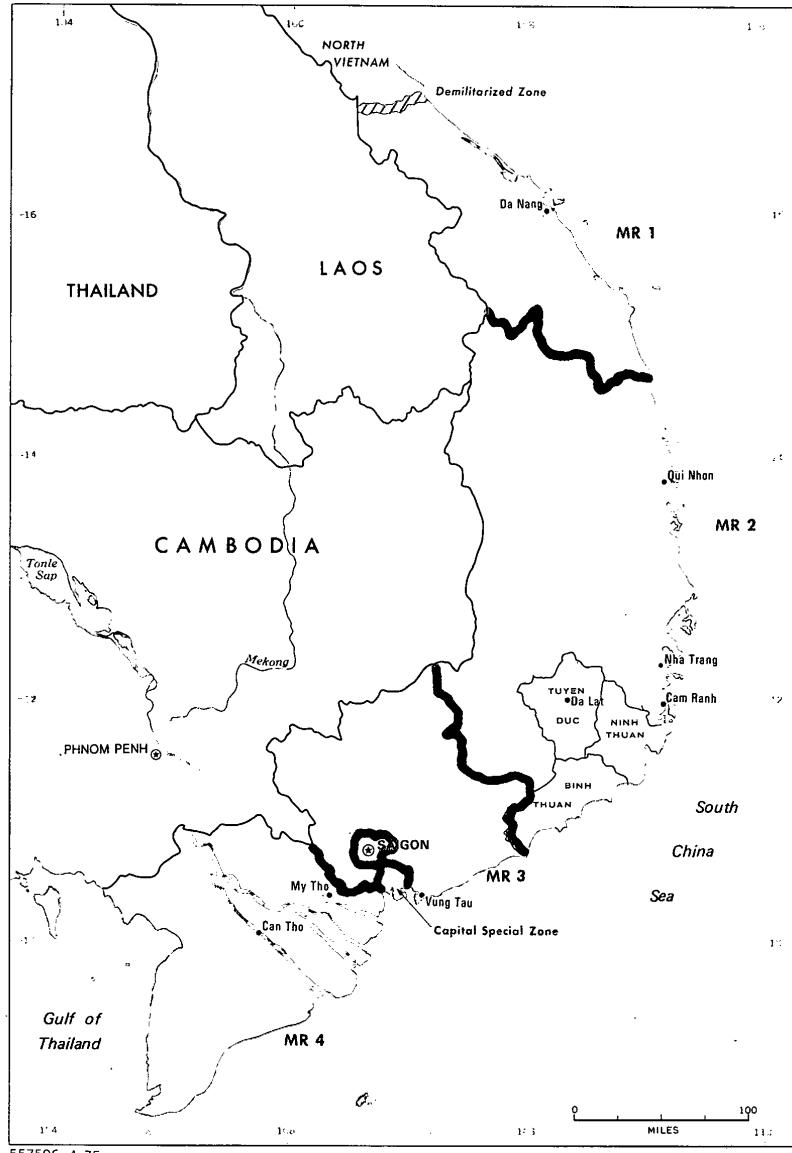
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Saudi Arabia: King Khalid has announced his intention to reorganize the government by forming a "consultative council." (Page 5)

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SOUTH VIETNAM

Vietnamese communist forces now control virtually all of Military Region 2, including its southern provinces. Rumors of a major political change are rife in Saigon.

Since the loss of Qui Nhon and Nha Trang yesterday, the government has apparently abandoned the coastal provinces of Ninh Thuan and Binh Thuan. There are no South Vietnamese regulars in Tuyen Duc Province, including the resort city of Da Lat, and much of the population has fled.

Unconfirmed reports indicate that Cam Ranh also has fallen. The fate of the civilian refugees recently taken to Cam Ranh is unclear following the movement on to Vung Tau of the approximately 9,000 marines just evacuated from Da Nang. These marine units are to be reorganized for deployment near Saigon by the end of next week. Efforts to refit and reorganize some 4,000 troops from the South Vietnamese 2nd Division, now heading for Military Region 3, are being slowed by the lack of replacement equipment.

In the delta provinces, the communists are giving new priority to cutting the major highways in order to block the movement of military supplies south from Saigon and foodstuffs north to the capital. This operation may have delayed planned attacks against Can Tho and My Tho cities. Nevertheless, some units of the communist 8th Division are in position to attack these major urban centers at any time.

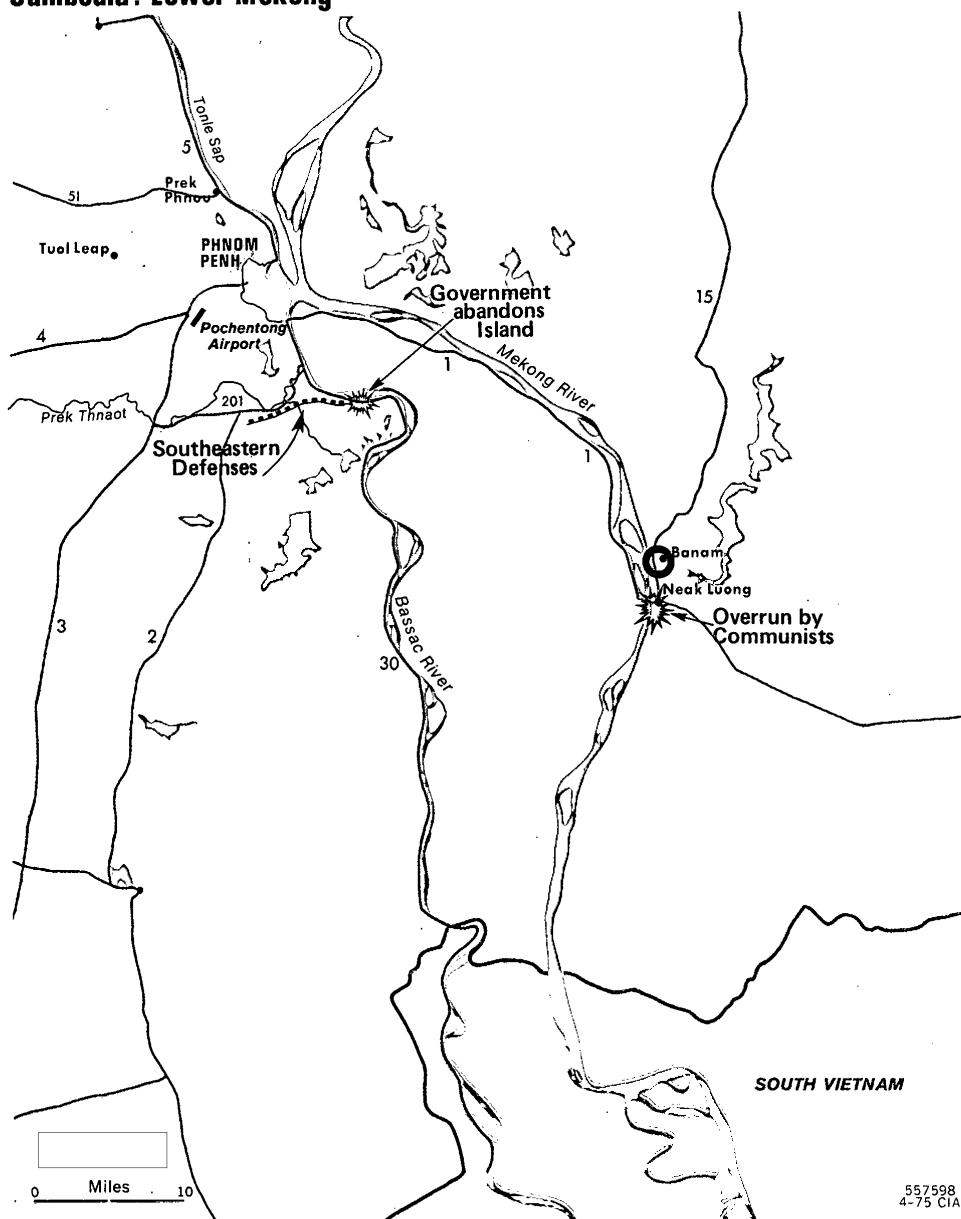
Rumors of an imminent, major political change have begun to circulate in Saigon. [redacted]

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[redacted] a group of generals has given President Thieu 48 hours to step down. Another claims that Prime Minister Khiem has handed in his resignation in protest over Thieu's handling of the war. Thieu has privately denied the latter and said he would not step down. Despite government efforts to spike such reports, it is likely that the rumors will increase as news of defeats continue to disturb the capital.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

Cambodia: Lower Mekong



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CAMBODIA

The Khmer communists have overrun the government enclave that included Neak Luong and nearby Banam, the last government holdings on the Mekong between Phnom Penh and the South Vietnamese border. The two neighboring towns were defended by over 4,000 troops. The loss is a major defeat.

After the communists have eliminated remaining pockets of resistance in the Neak Luong - Banam area, they will be able to redeploy toward Phnom Penh a substantial number of the 6,000 to 7,000 troops they now have along the lower Mekong.

An intercepted message of April 1 discloses that the communists are calling in units--at least four battalions so far--from northern provinces for use against Phnom Penh. The message indicates that the orders had come from the Khmer communist central committee, which earlier had been informed of President Lon Nol's departure.

If units from the north, and from outlying provinces in other areas of the country, begin moving immediately, it would take them at least two days to reach the Phnom Penh area. Preparations for combat might take several more days. It is clear from the intercepted message that the communists see Lon Nol's departure as a sign that the government is weak, and they are trying to make a greater effort to achieve military victory.

Inconclusive fighting continued on most other battlefronts around Phnom Penh, except along the Bassac River to the southeast, where government units abandoned positions on an island some four miles from the capital's outskirts. Communist reinforcements moved into this sector last week and government units have been gradually losing ground ever since. Communists forces yesterday fired over 30 rockets at Phnom Penh's Pocheutong Airport, but again failed to affect airlift operations.

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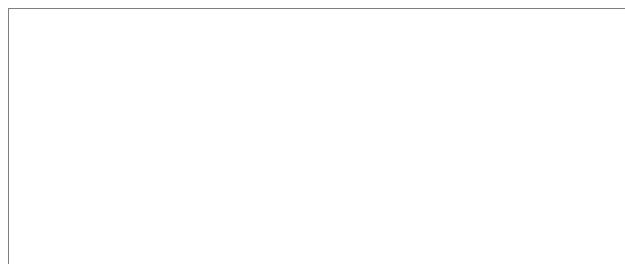
The Thai government is having second thoughts about continuing to permit the airlift of military supplies from Thailand to Cambodia.

Last week, after first coming out publicly against the flights, the Thais decided to look the other way and allow them to continue. Now, however, Foreign Minister Chatchai Chunhawan is reported to fear that a Cambodian collapse may be imminent and that ammunition sent to Cambodia might end up eventually being used against Thailand. Bangkok has no alternative, Chatchai said, but to seek accommodation with those in power in the region.

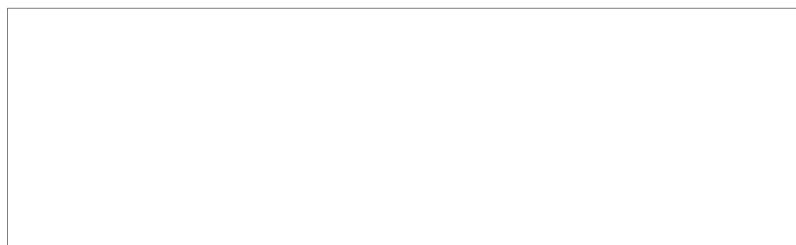
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EGYPT-ISRAEL



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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY**SAUDI ARABIA**

King Khalid announced on Monday night, in the first major policy statement of his reign, his intention to "reorganize" the government's relationship to the people by forming a "consultative council."

The statement, broadcast by the Saudi radio, was read by Crown Prince Fahd, who continues to stand as the country's preeminent political leader now that Faysal is gone. The plan was attributed to the late King. Khalid alleged that Faysal would have established such a council had he lived.

In March 1974, Prince Fahd told Ambassador Akins that he was actively pushing within ruling circles for the adoption of several fundamental political changes in the kingdom, including a consultative assembly, the modernization of provincial government, and ultimately, the drafting of a constitution, dismissing the claim that the Koran was the only constitution Saudi Arabia needed. Fahd indicated, during the conversation, that he was opposed to an elective body, but favored an appointive assembly whose powers would be purely advisory. He implied that he would pick modernists and would keep the number of tribal sheikhs and religious leaders in an assembly to a minimum.

King Khalid's recommendation in his statement Monday night for changes in provincial government has also been discussed before. In fact, a thorough revamping of provincial government was drafted in 1963, at the direction of Faysal, who was then crown prince. It was, however, never implemented.

Elsewhere in the statement--which generally stressed continuity with Faysal's policies--Khalid made a point of emphasizing Saudi Arabia's commitment to the liberation of Jerusalem "from the claws of Zionism." By stressing that Jerusalem must be the first step in dealing with the Palestine question--not something to be taken up when everything else is out of the way--the new leaders probably intend to signal their support for a firm Arab position following the end of the step-by-step negotiations. They presumably want to stiffen Egypt's resolve to hold out for an Arab, not just Egyptian, settlement.

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Khalid mentioned in passing that his government would continue to strengthen its armed forces and provide them with the necessary equipment to defend Saudi Arabia and the "Arab nation."

Khalid also called for Islamic solidarity, Arab unity, and the recovery of the occupied territories. With respect to the country's oil reserves, he talked about avoiding confrontation and not letting "selfishness" affect world prosperity; he supported the resolutions of the OPEC summit conference in Algiers.

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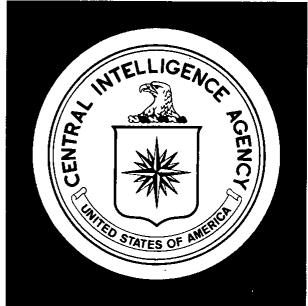
The appointment of Prince Saud, the 34-year-old fourth son of the late King, as minister of state for foreign affairs should bring some improvement to the conduct of Saudi Arabian foreign affairs.

Our embassy in Jidda reports that the appointment could be of some benefit to the US, because Saud's "inside" knowledge of national policy should provide us better access to the decision-making processes of the government. The embassy points out, however, that the extent of Saud's authority in foreign affairs will not be clear until Crown Prince Fahd's overall responsibilities become known.

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April 3, 1975

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Exempt from general
declassification schedule of E.O. 14176
exemption category 5B(1)(2)
declassified under instruction of
the Director of Central Intelligence

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

April 3, 1975

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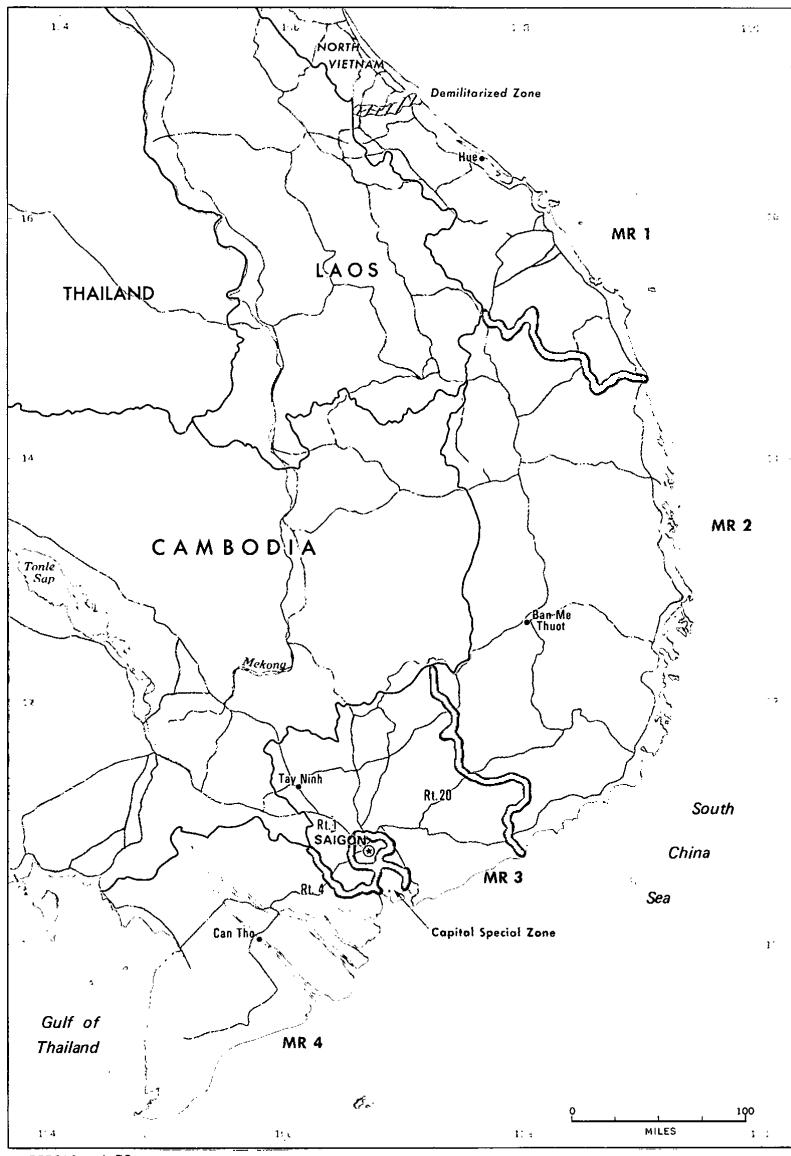
Middle East: Egypt wants "at least one" nonaligned country to participate in a reconvened Geneva conference. (Page 7) 25X1

Syria-Israel: [redacted] 25X1
[redacted]

Note: Greece (Page 9)

At Annex we present an intelligence community assessment of "Likely Political Developments in Vietnam."

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

VIETNAM

North Vietnam is continuing to send manpower to consolidate its hold over the northern two thirds of South Vietnam and to augment its forces around Saigon.

In addition to maintaining a moderately heavy rate of troop infiltration--more than 1,000 men per day and far more than is needed to replace losses--Hanoi has now dispatched the fourth of its seven strategic reserve divisions. The recent move south by the 338th follows the dispatch of the 320B Division--parts of which are already around Hue. These two divisions could arrive in Military Region 3 in less than two weeks, especially if they move down Route 1 to attack Saigon's eastern flank.

Hanoi sent south its first strategic reserve divisions during February. The 341st is now in the area north of Saigon and the 316th is in the southern portion of Military Region 2, where it helped capture Ban Me Thuot in mid-March. The other three strategic reserve divisions--the 308th, 308B, and the 312th--have remained in their normal bases in North Vietnam. There have been tenuous indications, however, that the 312th Division may be preparing to move south.

A large number of air defense units have moved to southern North Vietnam in conjunction with the shift of air defense forces already present in northern South Vietnam, and intercepts suggest Hanoi may be moving additional artillery or anti-aircraft--possibly as much as a full division--to the southern portion of South Vietnam.

Details on developments in military regions 1 and 2 are trickling south, despite the government's jamming of communist broadcasts and its efforts to prevent refugees from reaching major cities like Saigon and Can Tho.

The panic that contributed so much to the collapse in the north has not yet seized Saigon's troops in military regions 3 and 4. At the moment, the government has an edge in numbers of troops and

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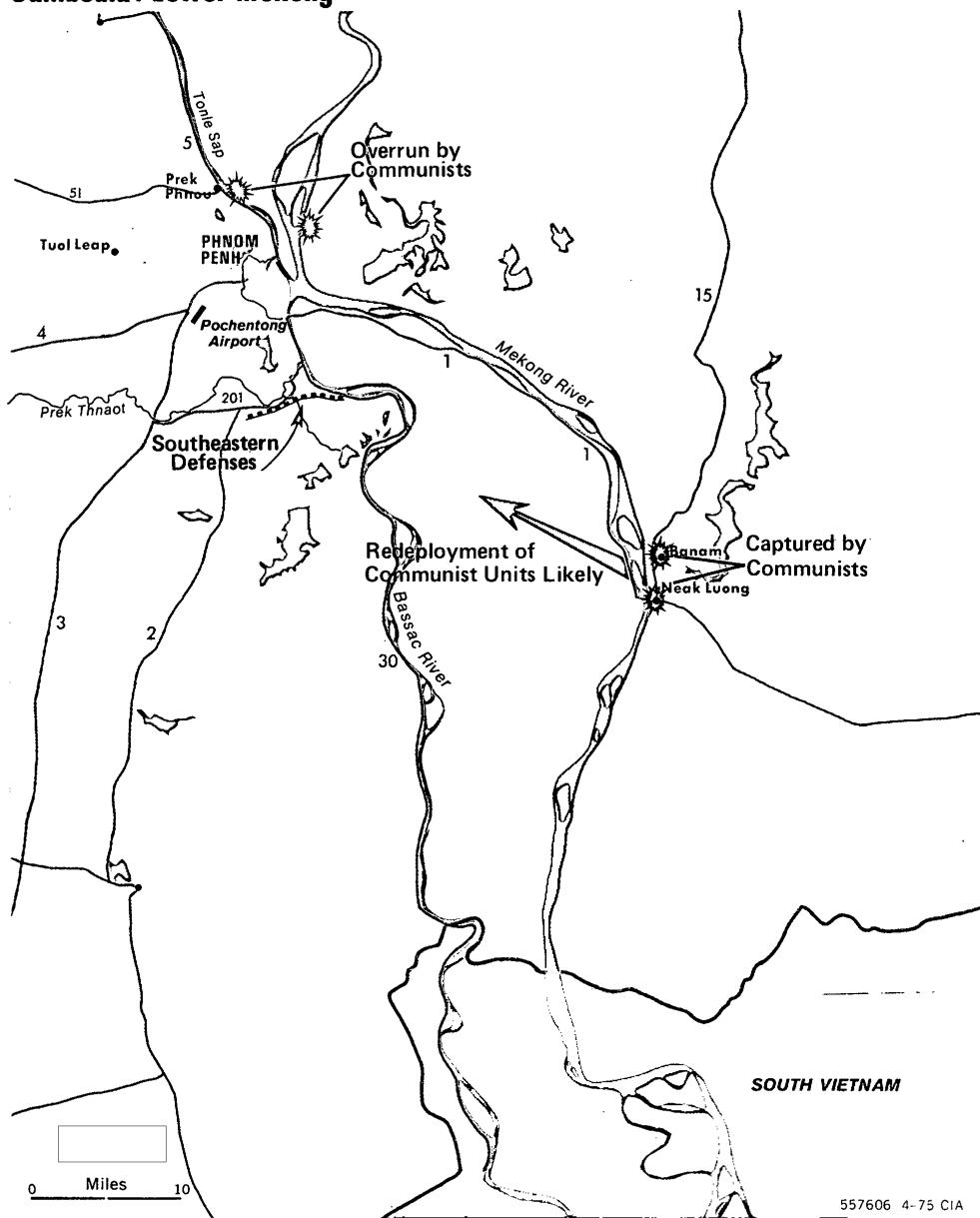
FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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in firepower, and, while the regional commanders are worried, they are trying to gird their forces near Saigon for a stand. The general commanding the 25th Division defending Tay Ninh city is staying with his division in the field, making personal visits to his units, and taking care to rotate his battalions from the front lines periodically. East of Saigon, the 18th Division has been conducting small, but successful, operations to reopen routes 1 and 20. In the delta, senior officers are apprehensive about a communist attack against Can Tho city, and are actively preparing their defenses. Their main concern is to protect the major towns and Route 4, which connects Saigon with its rice supplies.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

Cambodia: Lower Mekong



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CAMBODIA

Cambodian army units around Phnom Penh can now do little more than react to communist initiatives, all the while suffering losses of territory and erosion of their defenses.

The Khmer communists are expected to shift an estimated 4,000 to 5,000 troops, previously committed to operations along the lower Mekong, to Phnom Penh's southern defenses within a week. Understrength government units in this sector probably cannot withstand attacks by such a force.

The communists are continuing to fire 107-mm. rockets at Pocheontong Airport, and they resumed artillery fire yesterday. A DC-8 was hit by machine gun fire west of the airport.

Defenses northeast of Phnom Penh have been weakened because units have been withdrawn to reinforce the northwest. The communists broke into the defense perimeter at a point some five miles northwest of Phnom Penh last night; more government reinforcements have been sent to the area.

Communist forces overran a government position on the east bank of the Mekong on Tuesday. Farther north, government troops withdrew from a position on the east bank of the Tonle Sap. Defenders in this area are becoming increasingly vulnerable to numerically superior insurgent forces.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

THAILAND

The Thai do not believe that a communist take-over in Cambodia and Vietnam would pose an immediate threat to their own security, but they believe that the long-run implications will make it necessary for them to make foreign policy adjustments.

These adjustments are likely to include:

--Sharply accelerating Thailand's efforts to move away from identification with US policy in Indochina, a process that began several years ago.

--Exploring alternatives to Thailand's long reliance on the US for its security.

Khukrit Pramot's government, in office less than two weeks, has already signaled its intent to dissociate itself from US policies toward Indochina. Convinced that Phnom Penh's collapse is inevitable, Thai officials have made much publicly of opposing the US airlift of arms to Cambodia from bases in Thailand. [] Prime Minister Khukrit is willing to look the other way while the flights continue, but this position could change suddenly if he feels himself under public pressure. His foreign minister already argues that halting the flights will put Thailand in a better position to deal with a communist regime in Phnom Penh.

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Some officials [] have begun to explore possible alternatives to reliance on the US for Thailand's security. Top policy planners in the Thai foreign ministry have concluded that the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, still a fledgling regional organization, may be Thailand's only possible alternative. Foreign Minister Chatchai apparently has accepted their recommendation to convene an immediate meeting of the five nations of the association--the Philippines, Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore, and Thailand--to discuss the impact of the Indochina situation on their countries. In this forum, Chatchai will probably push his idea of getting the big powers to endorse Thailand's neutrality. This concept could easily be widened to include all of Southeast Asia.

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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The Thai will probably make stronger efforts to improve relations with their communist neighbors. They may push ahead their timetable on recognition of Peking. There is evidence that in recent days the Thai have renewed their approaches to Hanoi in an effort to open a dialogue, although there is almost certainly little optimism in the Thai foreign ministry that such efforts will soon overcome Hanoi's basic hostility toward Bangkok.

US interests in Thailand are certain to come under critical scrutiny in the months ahead. The Khukrit government already is on record as favoring the withdrawal of all US forces from Thailand within one year. On this issue, too, Khukrit and Chatchai have indicated to US officials that the government's private position is more flexible than its public posture, but their views may stiffen once the impact of the situation in Indochina sinks in.

Even the Thai military, who have been the staunchest defenders of the US presence, have been expressing their disappointment in recent days that Thai-based US aircraft have not been sent into action over Indochina. Having long identified these aircraft with the US security commitment to Thailand, they may now begin to question the utility of keeping the US bases.

There is little reason to believe that a communist take-over in Indochina will cause the Thai to seek a complete reversal of their long-standing close relations with the US. The Thai continue to see even a limited US presence and involvement with Southeast Asia as a useful counterbalance to the interests of Moscow, Peking, and Hanoi. Moreover, the Thai still harbor immense goodwill toward Washington, and they will look to the US for basic support for their armed forces, especially badly needed spare parts.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

LAOS

Communist leader Souphanouvong has gained a role in connection with King Savang that may enhance Souphanouvong's stature as a national leader and potential next prime minister.

The coalition cabinet recently announced that King Savang has accepted Souphanouvong's invitation to pay an official visit to the communist zone this year, and that the King has also decided to be crowned formally no later than the end of 1976. Souphanouvong is to be in charge of arrangements for both the King's visit to Sam Neua, which may take place soon after the Lao New Year's festivities in mid-April, and for his coronation.

Since his accession to the throne in 1959, the King has maintained that he would be crowned only when Laos was unified under a single administration. The announcement that he now intends to proceed represents a sharp break with his past attitude and has little relationship to the real situation in the country.

The 67-year-old King, however, may have come to view a coronation--with Lao communist involvement--as a means of ensuring the survival of the monarchy beyond his reign. He may also feel that a visit to Sam Neua would be a symbolic gesture welcoming the Lao communists as loyal subjects back into the national fold.

The King's recently announced decisions probably evolved from lengthy discussions with Souphanouvong and Prime Minister Souvanna during the Prime Minister's extended convalescence in the royal capital of Luang Prabang. For his part, Souvanna probably is attracted to the idea of involving the King--who is held in awe and respect by all Lao groups and factions--in what could be major steps toward national reconciliation. Such an involvement might also help to dispel long-standing rightist distrust of the Lao communist leader and improve Souphanouvong's chances of being accepted by non-communists as a future head of government.

Souvanna has consistently maintained that Souphanouvong is more of a Lao nationalist than communist. Recent battlefield developments in South Vietnam and Cambodia will have only reinforced Souvanna's conviction that a policy of political accommodation with the Lao communists is the only alternative to a communist military takeover.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

EGYPT

In announcing Egypt's official request on Tuesday that the US and the USSR reconvene the Geneva conference, Foreign Minister Fahmi also expressed Cairo's desire that France, the UK, and "at least one" of the nonaligned countries participate. Fahmi recently met with the ambassadors of Yugoslavia and India to discuss a possible role by those countries in negotiations.

President Sadat fears that participation by only the US and the USSR would immediately doom the conference; the Soviets would support the Arabs and the US would back the Israelis. Sadat apparently believes that broader participation will place greater pressures on Israel and might provide a safeguard against what he calls "polarization" of the superpowers' positions at Geneva. He wants the US to play the role of mediator, not only defender of Israel, and he is equally determined to avoid having Moscow alone speak for the Arabs.

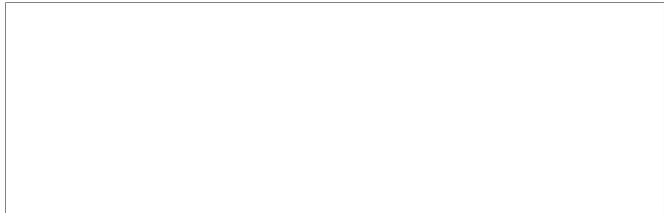
The addition of the other countries Sadat and Fahmi have mentioned would have the undoubted benefit for Egypt of stacking the deck against Israel. The French, the nonaligned countries, and to a lesser extent the British, support the basic tenets of the Arab position. The UK and France are nonetheless far less rigid in their backing of the Arabs than the Soviets, and Sadat may believe that their presence would prevent polarization and assure the US more room for maneuver in attempting to accommodate Arab as well as Israeli positions.

By being first on the list with a formal request for a reopened conference, the Egyptians undoubtedly also hope to steal a march on the Syrians and other Arabs who have disparaged Sadat's reliance on US mediation, and who will be still more suspicious of rumors that both Egypt and Israel are interested in reviving the bilateral talks.

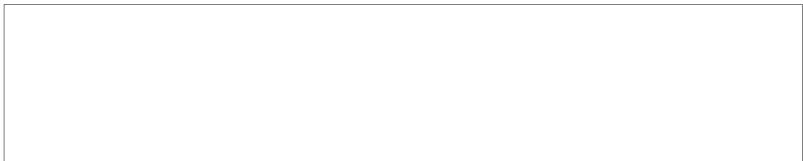
Whatever Sadat's intentions, the addition of outside participants is likely to complicate rather than facilitate negotiations.

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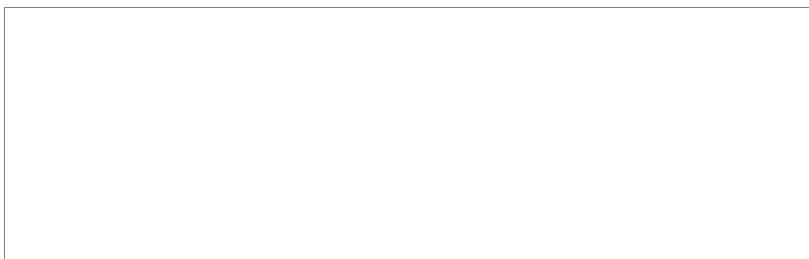
SYRIA-ISRAEL



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NOTE

Returns from last weekend's municipal elections indicate that the urban electorate in Greece may lean more strongly toward the center-left parties than the parliamentary election last November suggested.

Candidates in the larger cities backed by the left opposition significantly outpolled conservatives and nonpartisans. The opposition has been trying to make political capital out of the results, even though these elections did not affect the government's overwhelming majority in Parliament. The strength of extreme leftist and centrist forces, which are collaborating at the moment, will be tested again in parliamentary by-elections on April 20.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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VIETNAM

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We present below an intelligence community assessment of Likely Political Developments in Vietnam.

The political viability of the present government in South Vietnam has rested heavily on strong US support of President Thieu and his effective resistance to a communist takeover. To most Vietnamese, these conditions no longer exist. As a result we believe that major political changes will occur in coming weeks and may be imminent; these changes would eventually lead to a settlement on communist terms. If the South Vietnamese military situation is not stabilized, however, Saigon may collapse militarily before arrangements to replace Thieu or to attempt negotiations can materialize.

Thieu's prestige has been irreparably damaged by the military debacle in the northern half of the country and his effectiveness undermined by a growing sense of inevitable communist victory. Decisive and visible leadership is needed, but Thieu appears isolated from his own government and increasingly suspicious of the loyalty of his senior commanders. For example, he has placed Military Region 3 commander General Toan under surveillance since a meeting last weekend between Toan and General Weyand.

Thieu's suspicions are understandable; criticism of the president is mounting within the military establishment.

--The Chairman of the Joint General Staff, General Vien, reportedly is agitating in senior military circles for Thieu's removal.

--Close associates of the president, such as his Special Assistant for Military and Security Affairs, General Quang, appear deeply pessimistic over Thieu's ability to remain in power.

--General Truong, the Military Region 1 commander, is bitter over Thieu's decisions which led to the collapse of his command.

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We have no evidence, however, of a concrete move afoot within the military to replace Thieu. The most important point in the president's favor is the absence of any rival strong enough to oust the president and willing to step into his position. But, given the dissatisfaction that now exists within the military, a move to force Thieu's resignation or ouster by an individual or group of military officers could occur at any time. The likelihood of such a move will increase the longer political indecision continues and military deterioration is unarrested.

There is little agreement within the civilian opposition on a successor to Thieu. Former South Vietnamese leaders, such as Nguyen Cao Ky, Duong Van "Big" Minh, or former premier Pham Huy Quat, do not command enough support to serve as a rallying point. Moderate nationalists--such as labor leader Tran Quoc Buu, Senator Tran Van Lam, and Deputy Prime Minister Pham Quang Dan--who have continued to support Thieu while maintaining a degree of independence, probably hope that a new military successor government would have a place for them. But they are not likely to be prime movers in any immediate change of political leadership in Saigon. The more radical opposition leaders such as the An Quang Buddhists' Thich Tri Quang and the militant Catholic priest Father Thanh could precipitate an early military move if they take to the streets in all-out opposition to Thieu.

Thieu's departure would not in itself necessarily lead to an immediate unraveling of South Vietnamese morale and will to resist. A new military leadership, perhaps with some infusion of civilian opposition elements to broaden its base, might make at least temporary headway in shoring up public confidence and rallying the South Vietnamese armed forces. But in our judgment, such a change of leadership at this time could not reverse the fundamental political and military trends now running against Saigon. Even if the South Vietnamese are successful in rallying their forces and consolidating their immediate military position, the respite will be brief because Hanoi now is deploying overwhelming military force for a *coup de grace*.

Given this situation, defeatist sentiment in South Vietnam is bound to snowball. This process is already well under way as refugees and news of successive military reverses trickle south. As a consensus begins to emerge in Saigon that communist victory is in sight, there should be no shortage of

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individuals eager to protect their personal interests or their various political and religious groups as best they can by participating in a settlement on communist terms. In time, we believe mounting demoralization will lead to military acquiescence in the formation of another government prepared to seek and accept the best terms it can obtain from the communists. In the event of a rapid South Vietnamese military collapse, however, even the possibility of a transitional non-communist administration would disappear.

One by-product of the demoralization process now under way has been a rising level of anti-American feeling. Anti-US feeling already appears to be running high among the military units and refugees escaping from the north. As hope for more US assistance fades, President Thieu or any successor would have little reason to resist the temptation to point to US responsibility for the present situation.

The Communist View

Hanoi almost certainly was surprised by the extent and rapidity of the South Vietnamese military collapse. The tone of its propaganda and the speed with which it has redeployed its forces to take advantage of the South Vietnamese retreat, however, make it apparent that Hanoi now sees victory as certain. Indeed, Hanoi is continuing to move additional elements of its strategic reserve to the South.

Hanoi clearly senses that the possibility of a final psychological and political collapse in the South would allow it to realize its final objectives without the cost of a major assault against Saigon. The communists are offering amnesty to South Vietnamese military and government personnel who join the "revolutionary side." And in an obvious effort to encourage political upheaval in Saigon, the communists have been emphasizing their willingness to reopen negotiations. Hanoi is indicating, however, that the cost of peace will be high--Thieu must be removed and a new South Vietnamese government formed that is prepared to accept "national concord and strict application of the Paris Agreement" before negotiations can begin. Furthermore, communist statements make no mention of the coalition government envisioned by the Paris Agreement, but only declare that new negotiations would result "in the speedy settlement of the affairs of South Vietnam."

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This terse offer reflects the radically altered strategic situation in Vietnam. Hanoi no longer sees the need for a lengthy intermediate stage of negotiations and coalition rule in the South prior to the achievement of its basic objective--the unification of Vietnam under communist rule. Although North Vietnamese strategy probably still involves the establishment of a transitional southern government, perhaps with token participation by neutralist "third force" elements, it seems fairly clear that Hanoi is now interested in providing only the merest fig leaf for a North Vietnamese takeover in the South.

In the event of such an arrangement, there would undoubtedly be a fairly widespread elimination of key South Vietnamese government and armed forces personnel, particularly those who had been closely associated with the US. In addition, many thousands of others would be killed, either by conscious communist policy or by the action of zealous local communist commanders and troops. The prospect would generate massive efforts to escape Vietnam, involving hundreds of thousands of people. Nonetheless, the communists would be faced with the massive problems of trying to re-establish order out of chaos and panic, and they would probably keep some functionaries in place for the task.

Hanoi's shortened timetable in the South has obvious implications for the role of the Viet Cong's Provisional Revolutionary Government. We believe that there has been a basic downgrading of the provisional government in North Vietnamese thinking. The North Vietnamese will soon have little incentive to maintain it as a separate political entity.

We believe Hanoi intends to push its military advantage forcefully, but we are unsure as to the exact timing. We expect sharp communist attacks in the provinces around Saigon and in the delta in the next few weeks and believe that the communists intend to maintain or escalate military pressure. We believe that in a matter of months, if not weeks, Saigon will collapse militarily or a government will be installed that will agree to a settlement on communist terms.

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The President's Daily Brief

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Exempt from general
declassification schedule of E.O. 11652
exemption category 5B(1), (2), (3)
decided by the Director of Central Intelligence

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

April 4, 1975

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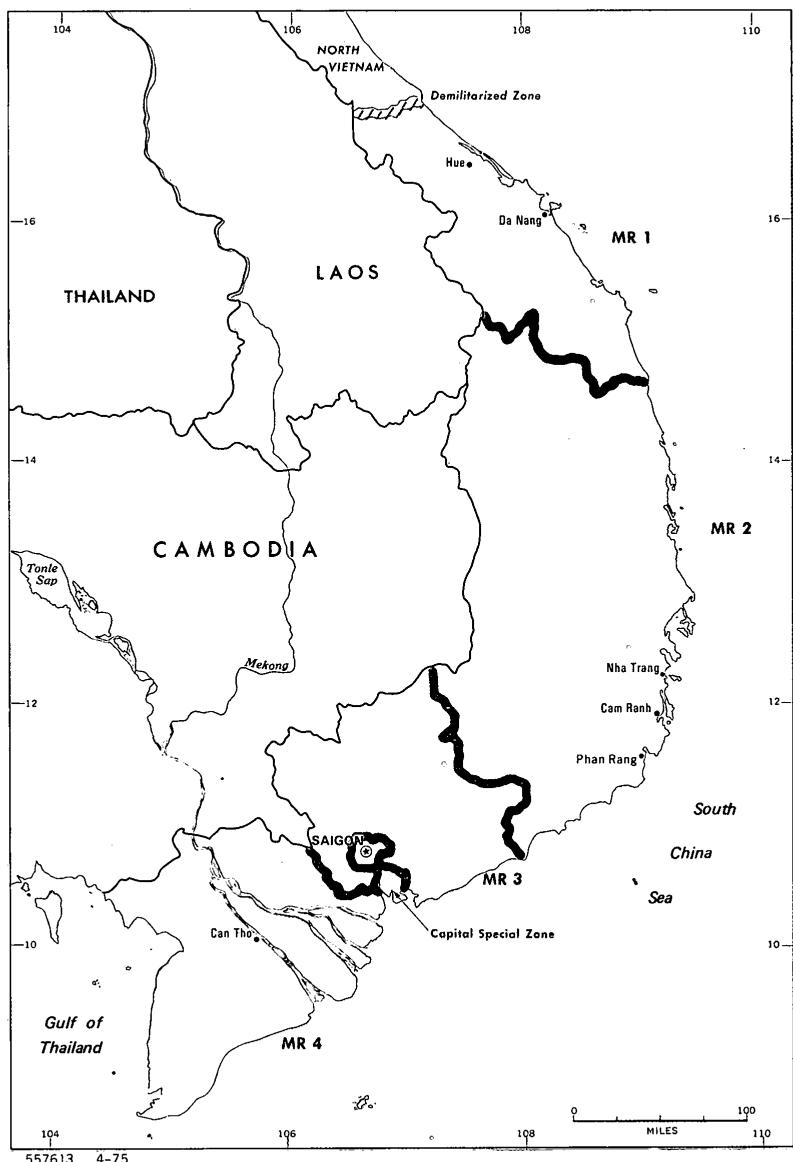
Israel: Prime Minister Rabin has expressed strong interest in bilateral discussions with Egypt before a Geneva conference reconvenes. (Page 4)

USSR - Middle East: Soviet officials are not so eager for an early reconvening of the Geneva conference now that it is a real prospect.
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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY



FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

SOUTH VIETNAM

President Thieu is acting to thwart moves to arrange his ouster, but pressure for his resignation is certain to grow.

The maneuvering against Thieu is being spearheaded by Senate president Tran Van Lam and former vice president Ky. This morning, a former presidential adviser identified with the Ky-Lam group and several other lesser figures were arrested.

Thieu earlier had requested Lam to make proposals for the reorganization of the government. Lam, armed with a unanimous Senate vote expressing no confidence in Thieu and calling for a change in leadership, is moving far ahead of what the president had in mind.

Lam proposed that the current government be replaced by a new "executive council" headed by former vice president Ky and including Lam and other "elders in politics and the army." Thieu might continue to occupy the presidency in a figure-head capacity, but Lam is suggesting that Thieu's resignation and complete withdrawal from the political scene would be preferable.

Lam's plan has the support of Ky and some senior officers such as General Vien, the chairman of the Joint General Staff. A major question, however, is whether or not Ky can command support among senior troop commanders, who would have to back a move against Thieu if it is to be successful. Ky himself does not appear to be totally confident on this score. In a conversation yesterday with an American official, Ky maintained that Thieu is unlikely to step down voluntarily, and that his removal will occur only after strong pressure is brought to bear from the South Vietnamese military or from the US.

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There have been no further serious setbacks for the South Vietnamese in the past 24 hours, but small-scale communist attacks have been increasing in both the provinces near Saigon and in the delta.

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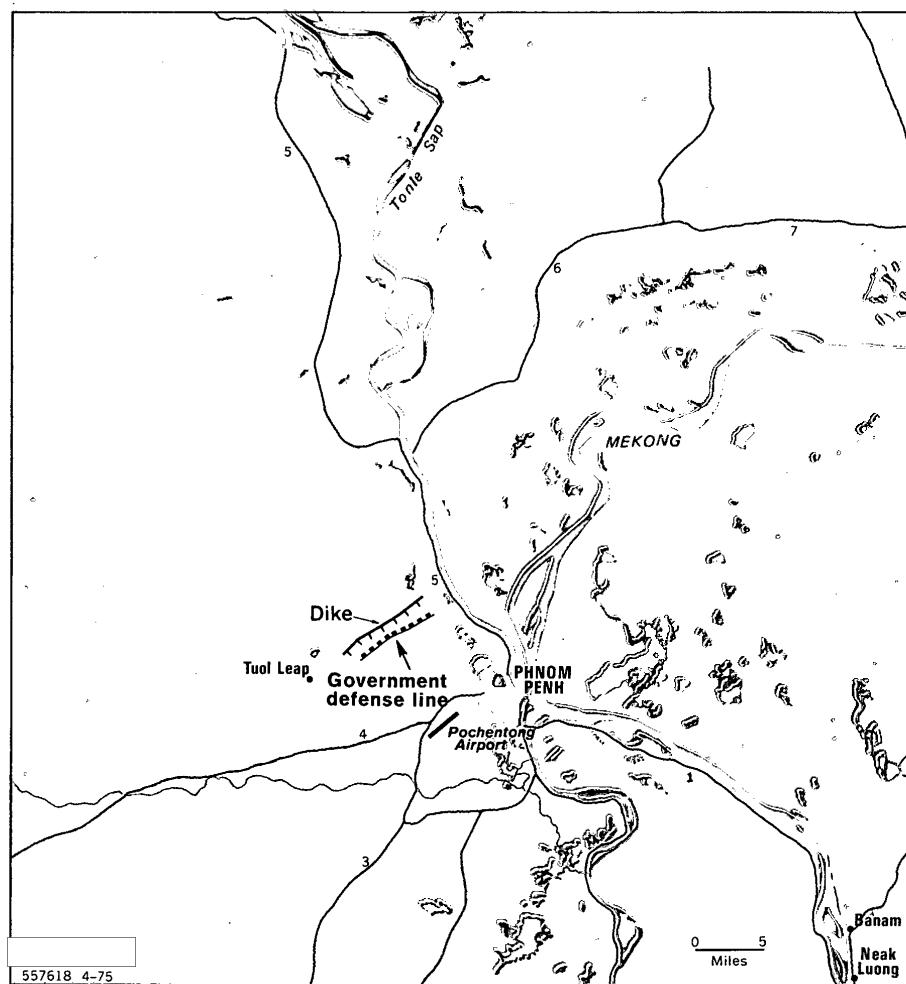
Although action in the delta has been low in intensity, most of it is concentrated on the outer defenses of Can Tho city and adjacent military complexes which regional officials believe to be a priority target for the communists.

Saigon, meanwhile, is taking some steps it hopes may shore up the combat effectiveness and morale of the armed forces. A nine-point program has been prepared by the Joint General Staff and may soon be implemented. Among the steps to be taken is the reorganization of all ranger groups into three infantry divisions, the reassembling of armor units for the general reserve, the integration of all territorial forces into the army, and reformation of units that have been evacuated from the northern provinces.

In Military Region 2, the North Vietnamese still have not occupied Nha Trang in force and some remnants of government units remained at Cam Ranh airport as of late Wednesday. Several hundred marines, airborne troopers, and remnants of other army units have been filtering down to Phan Rang and are assembling on the town's airstrip.

North Vietnamese helicopters have been noted flying into Hue and Da Nang during the past few days. Communications from these aircraft suggest that passengers, including VIPs, are being flown into South Vietnam. It is likely that North Vietnamese civil cadre are being brought in to cope with numerous problems of organizing the civilian administration.

CAMBODIA: Phnom Penh Area



FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

CAMBODIA

Khmer communist attacks late on Wednesday forced government units to abandon positions on the dike that has formed part of Phnom Penh's northern defenses. Counterattacking government troops yesterday regained some ground in this area but not the dike itself. Inconclusive fighting continued on most other battlefronts around the capital.

Intercepted messages indicate that the communists captured a number of 105-mm. howitzers at Banam and Neak Luong on Tuesday and that insurgent forces along the lower Mekong have begun moving toward Phnom Penh.

Communist gunners fired over 20 rockets at Phnom Penh's Pocheutong Airport yesterday. US airlift operations were not affected, but two Khmer air force aircraft were destroyed. The air force's steady losses are being reflected in a much reduced level of tactical sorties, and in declining morale.

Even if the airport remains open, funding for ammunition and airlift flights themselves will be exhausted shortly after midmonth. Ammunition stocks in Phnom Penh will not last through the month and certain types of ammunition will begin running out in two weeks.

Ambassador Dean reported yesterday that he and his staff believe that the government's military position will collapse completely within 48 hours to a week. They based their judgment on the movement of additional communist units toward Phnom Penh and the likelihood of increased artillery attacks against the city and the airport.

Although government officials and senior army officers are continuing to function normally, US defense attachés have noted a deterioration of morale and a mood of resignation among units in the field. Ambassador Dean also reported that the general population in Phnom Penh has remained calm only because it is ignorant of the true state of affairs.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

ISRAEL

Prime Minister Rabin expressed strong interest in bilateral discussions with Egypt before resumption of the Geneva conference during a long broadcast interview he gave on Wednesday. He gave little indication, however, that Tel Aviv is prepared to take the initiative or to be very flexible.

Rabin acknowledged there is little chance that discussions at Geneva can be successful unless "sufficient" preparations are made. Egypt, he thought, was keeping all its options open, including the possibility of bilateral talks with Israel. The recent indirect negotiations through Secretary Kissinger, he claimed, clearly demonstrated that direct contacts would be better because they reduced the chances of "misunderstandings."

The Prime Minister emphasized that the basis of Tel Aviv's negotiating position remains as expressed in last month's talks. There are three main Israeli proposals:

--A separate Israeli-Egyptian peace treaty based on an Israeli withdrawal from most of the Sinai.

--A broad interim agreement based on an Israeli withdrawal east of the Gidi and Mitla passes and the Sinai oil fields in return for termination of the state of war.

--A limited agreement based on a withdrawal from the oil fields and only the western end of the passes in return for an Egyptian "undertaking" not to use force to solve its conflict with Israel.

Although Rabin claimed Israel would not change these proposals, he did hint at flexibility by saying that they contained a wide range of "nuances." He said a detailed discussion of these could lead to progress toward peace. Reflecting an attitude

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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that has long colored Israel's approach to the Middle East conflict, Rabin reiterated that Israel could only negotiate from a position of strength. He argued that the government must proceed slowly under present circumstances because, he claimed, Israel's willingness to negotiate in the wake of Egypt's recent rejection of Tel Aviv's proposals could be interpreted by the Arabs as a sign of weakness.

Rabin expressed confidence that US disappointment with the lack of results in last month's negotiations would not adversely affect US-Israeli relations over the long term. He suggested that the unhappiness of some US administration "officials" with Israel was perhaps partly attributable to their desire for a Middle East agreement to compensate for problems in "other spheres and areas." The Prime Minister drew on his long experience as ambassador to Washington to judge that the US public is aware of Israel's unique situation.

Rabin's remarks, as well as numerous press articles highlighting Israel's desire for pre-Geneva talks, have already drawn the ire of Israel's conservatives, who detect a possible softening of the Israeli negotiating position worked out last month. One commentator with good contacts among senior conservatives in Rabin's Labor Party yesterday pointedly asserted that Rabin was speaking only for himself.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

USSR - MIDDLE EAST

Soviet officials still formally support an early reconvening of the Middle East peace conference, but a strong note of caution has crept into their comments now that this has become a real prospect.

In part, this attitude can be traced to the Soviets' surprise over the sudden breakdown in the disengagement talks. Even up to the last days of Secretary Kissinger's mission, Soviet officials talked as though they expected the peace conference to be held after the parties had reached further agreements.

Beyond their surprise, however, the Soviets are clearly suspicious that the US will continue to dominate the negotiations. Their apprehension can only have grown when both Israel and Egypt recently suggested that the US could go on mediating outside of Geneva.

The Soviets must be chagrined by Cairo's recent pronouncements indicating that Geneva is not the only negotiating avenue, and by its invitations to the UK, France, Yugoslavia, and India to participate in the conference. The Soviets have probably been disabused of any notion that the disengagement breakdown would cause Egypt to be more amenable to Soviet views.

Another thorny problem for Moscow is the question of Palestinian representation. Moscow has appeared hopeful that a Syrian-Palestinian command might provide a way out of its commitment to participation of the Palestinians at some stage in the conference.

In addition to tactical problems, the Soviets must be wary of the implications of a failure at Geneva. Having invested substantial capital in the idea that Geneva provides the only solution to the Arab-Israeli problem, they probably foresee considerable damage to their prestige if the conference fails.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

GREECE-TURKEY

The likelihood of a serious incident in the Aegean Sea is growing as Greece and Turkey appear increasingly ready to risk confrontation to back up their conflicting claims in the area.

Our embassy in Athens has been informed by the Greek government that two Turkish aircraft violated Greek airspace yesterday, while another 18 Turkish planes flew a patrol nearby. Greek aircraft in the area were ordered by higher authorities not to engage the Turkish planes. Antiaircraft batteries on the islands opened fire, but apparently were not effective.

The Turks, meanwhile, reportedly are planning to "take strong retaliatory action" to any Greek attempts to intercept Turkish aircraft. [redacted]

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[redacted] The Turks are said to be locating Greek military concentrations in order to retaliate with bombings if the Greeks open fire on Turkish planes.

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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CYPRUS

Greek and Turkish Cypriot leaders apparently have agreed to resume their interrupted peace talks on April 25 in Vienna.

Initial press announcements did not state who would participate in the talks, but Rauf Denktash and Glafkos Clerides probably will at least open the negotiations. Denktash, who now holds the position of president of the recently proclaimed Turkish federated state of Cyprus, may be replaced with an individual of lesser stature. This would suit Cypriot President Makarios, who would like to be able in turn to replace Clerides, whom he has criticized as too lenient a negotiator.

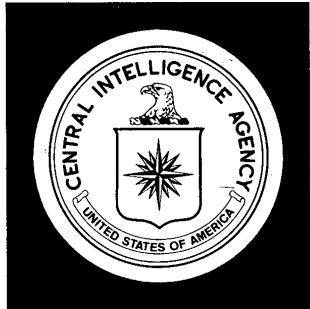
The Turks, who had previously balked at an active role for UN Secretary General Waldheim, have agreed to let him participate in the first week of the negotiations.

Greek Prime Minister Karamanlis remains anxious to get the Cyprus problem behind him, and would probably show some flexibility if the Turks were willing to withdraw from some areas they now hold. The Greek Cypriots continue to hope that the cutoff of US military aid to Turkey will make the Turks more amenable to concessions.

Although there is a consensus in Ankara that territorial concessions are necessary, the US embassy in Nicosia reports indications that the Turks continue to move toward a de facto separation of the two communities on the island. The Turks have now settled virtually all of the migrants from the south in former Greek villages in the north, and are in the process of making the north self-sufficient in such things as electrical power.

A Turkish Cypriot constitution--drafted in mainland Turkey--was completed on March 26 and has been forwarded to the island's Turkish Cypriot constituent assembly for approval. The draft constitution provides all the accoutrements of an independent state; the only concession to the Greek Cypriots is an admission that the constitution may be amended "when the constitution of the federal Republic of Cyprus is put into force."

Top Secret



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Exempt from general
declassification schedule of E.O. 14176
exemption category 5B(1), 12(1),
decided orally on approval of
the Director of Central Intelligence

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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Greece: The Greeks have informed our embassy in Athens that they are lodging a strong protest in Ankara against unauthorized Turkish overflights of Greek islands. (Page 5)

Portugal: Prime Minister Goncalves has stated in an interview that Portugal will not permit the US base in the Azores to be used against Arab countries. (Page 6)

USSR - Southeast Asia: Moscow is still treating communist successes in South Vietnam in a way intended to mitigate any possible backlash on relations with the US. (Page 8)

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At Annex we present an assessment of the military situation in South Vietnam.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

SOUTH VIETNAM

President Thieu, in a public address yesterday, blamed recent government setbacks on a variety of causes--the lack of US political and economic support, the undisciplined actions of military commanders, panicky civilians, and Viet Cong infiltrators among the refugees. He faulted everyone but himself.

Thieu maintained he had not made any secret deal with the communists and, to push this point home, claimed he would not agree to a coalition government. He did say, however, that his new government would be willing to resume discussions in Paris as called for in the cease-fire agreement.

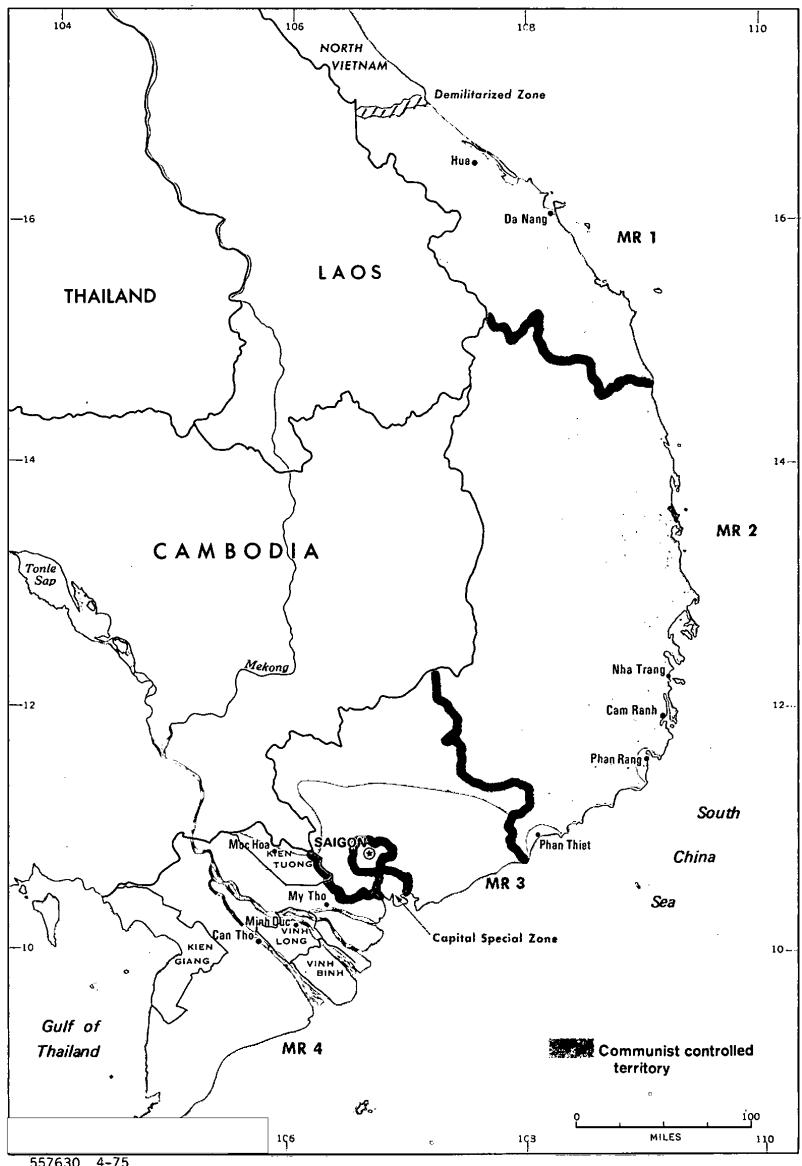
Thieu appealed to the people to rally behind the government and maintained he would soon be meting out stiff punishment to those army commanders who abandoned their posts. He warned that additional communist attacks could be expected soon and that the government must be prepared to defend its remaining territory.

His speech did not have the ring of a man who intends to resign. Moreover, it comes in the wake of additional arrests yesterday morning of individuals charged with coup plotting. The only person of any prominence among the nine or ten people arrested was Nguyen Van Ngan, Thieu's former political adviser and organizer. Ngan is believed to have been associated with efforts by Senate president Tran Van Lam and General Nguyen Cao Ky to force Thieu from office. The arrests were quickly announced over Saigon radio, probably as a warning to others who might be entertaining similar ideas.

Thieu also announced during his speech that Prime Minister Khiem had resigned and that lower house leader Nguyen Ba Can had been appointed to form a new government. Thieu did not provide any details on who is to be in the new cabinet.

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY



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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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The North Vietnamese are rapidly deploying major command and combat units to take advantage of the new situation in the south. The North Vietnamese 1st Corps, for example, appears to be moving south from its normal garrison area in Thanh Hoa Province, and the 2nd Corps, which has been active in South Vietnam's two northern provinces for more than a year, has also begun shifting farther south. Several North Vietnamese SA-2 surface-to-air missile units and antiaircraft artillery units are moving south.

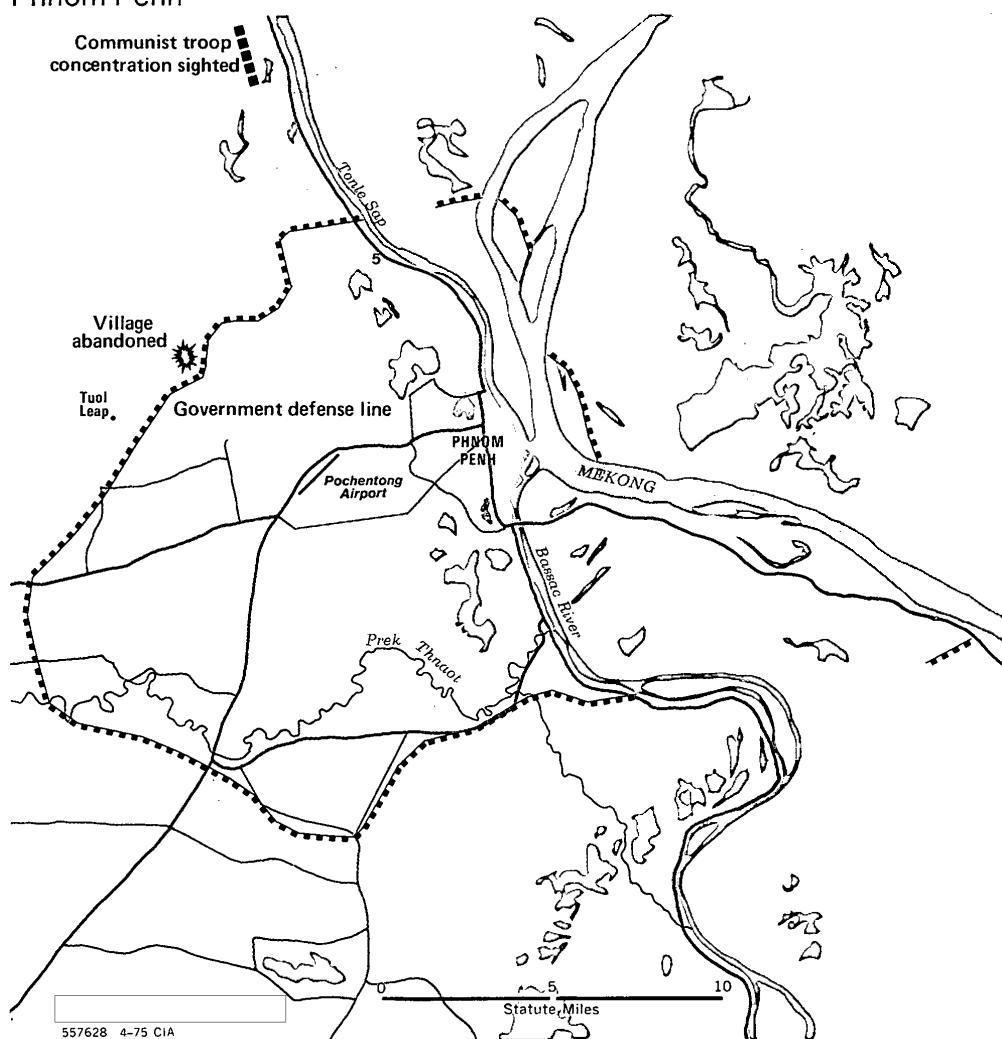
The level of communist military action continues to rise in the delta provinces. For the first time in several years, the communists fired four rockets into Can Tho City. Sharp fighting erupted in Vinh Long Province early on April 4, and communist units have penetrated the defenses of Minh Duc district town.

Military Region 4 officials are becoming increasingly concerned about the communist threat to Can Tho City. Commanders are now less confident that their forces will be able to contain strong communist attacks because they suspect that morale may be unsteady and that their forces could fall apart under heavy communist pressure. They fear that, if any one of their seven regular battalions facing the North Vietnamese 4th Division should break, panic will set in and the entire city defense would collapse within hours.

In addition to the current threats to Can Tho and My Tho cities, regional commanders are now anticipating a major attack against Moc Hoa, the capital of Kien Tuong Province. Three regiments of the North Vietnamese 5th Division may be in place to attack the city. Regional officials feel there is good reason to believe that government forces defending Moc Hoa will hold, but they quickly point out that, if they do not, the 9th Division which is defending the town could become ineffective as a fighting unit. A defeat of this division could seriously undermine the confidence of other government units in the delta.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

Phnom Penh



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CAMBODIA

Ambassador Dean called on acting president Saukham Koy yesterday and found him deeply concerned about recent developments in the northwestern provincial capital of Battambang-- Cambodia's second largest city.

Communist forces have been closing in on Battambang for the past few weeks, and Koy reported that students there have issued a resolution calling for the surrender of the city and the return of Prince Sihanouk. If Battambang surrenders, Koy fears that government forces in other areas of the country will rapidly follow suit.

Koy also said that Lon Nol had delayed his departure too long and that it was impossible to reverse the current trend of events. In response to Ambassador Dean's questions about possible contingency plans, Koy said that, if a "solution" is not found soon, the remaining leaders in Phnom Penh may have to flee the country. Prime Minister Long Boret and Foreign Minister Keuky Lim are planning to return to Phnom Penh over the weekend, but their arrival will probably do little to boost morale. By that time, many Cambodians will presumably know of the partial US withdrawal from Phnom Penh.

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Government troops yesterday abandoned a village four miles northwest of Pochentong Airport, giving the communists another foothold within easy rocket and artillery range of the airfield. Nearby, other army units also pulled back from a position on the dike forming part of Phnom Penh's northern defenses, but repulsed insurgent efforts to push closer to the city.

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about 1,000 communist troops near Route 5 some ten miles north of Phnom Penh. These may have been

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some of the troops recently called in from the provinces to participate in increased attacks against Phnom Penh. Only six tactical aircraft were available to strike this troop concentration. In addition to the two aircraft destroyed by rocket fire against Pochentong on Thursday, four others suffered shrapnel damage.

Intercepted messages continue to reflect communist preparations for increased artillery attacks in the Phnom Penh area. Artillery emplacements are being constructed and howitzer ammunition--including some captured at Banam and Neak Luong--is being moved toward the capital.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

GREECE

The Greek government has informed our embassy in Athens that it is lodging a strong protest in Ankara against the unauthorized Turkish overflights of Greek islands on Thursday.

The protest may go beyond an earlier Greek warning to the Turks that in the event of further overflights Athens would take "all legitimate measures" allowed under international law. The Greeks are considering including in the demarche a warning that Greek aircraft will intercept Turkish aircraft if there are any further incidents. Athens will make parallel demarches in a number of other capitals.

The Turks, meanwhile, continue to deny any violation of Greek airspace. The press in Ankara announced yesterday that the Turkish air force will continue to fly in international airspace over the Aegean. It said Athens would be responsible for "serious consequences" if it attacked Turkish aircraft.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

PORUGAL

Portuguese press and radio are replaying a story from a Beirut magazine in which Prime Minister Goncalves is quoted as stating that Portugal will not permit the US base in the Azores to be used against the Arab countries. In the same interview, Goncalves also hedged for the first time on Portugal's continued participation in NATO.

Goncalves said that Portugal would never adopt a hostile attitude toward the Arab people and would never consent to such an attitude being adopted "from or through our territory." He probably emphasized this issue for his Arab audience, but his statement was the most explicit yet made by the Portuguese leadership on this subject. Goncalves' remarks also are in tune with the Third-World approach to foreign policy that is expected to get increasing play under newly appointed Foreign Minister Melo Antunes.

On Portugal's commitment to NATO, Goncalves reiterated the standard line of respecting treaty obligations, but added a qualifying phrase that NATO membership could not be imposed on the Portuguese people. "The people" are to make the decision through a parliament which Goncalves said would be elected soon.

Up to this time, Portuguese leaders have confined themselves to unqualified assurances that Portugal would continue to adhere to its NATO commitments. There has nevertheless been some irritation [redacted] over NATO's attitude toward Portuguese policies and Portugal's exclusion from the NATO Nuclear Planning Group.

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Press reports from Lisbon indicate that Portugal's political parties yesterday refused to endorse the guidelines presented to them two days ago by the Armed Forces Movement for a transitional constitution. The guidelines provide, among other things, that:

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--Most of the legislation of a future parliament will have to be approved by the all-military Revolutionary Council.

--The Revolutionary Council will define and enforce domestic and foreign policy and rule on the constitutionality of laws.

--The armed forces will approve candidates for prime minister and for the ministers of defense, economy, and internal administration.

Members of the center-left Popular Democratic Party claim they are supported by the Socialists, the center-right Social Democratic Center, and the center-left Popular Monarchist Party in opposing restrictions on the future parliament. One extreme left-wing group refused to sign because it does not recognize the authority of the Armed Forces Movement.

If the parties do not agree to the guidelines, they risk being criticized as opponents of the Movement. If they sign, they will have agreed to military domination of the government for the next three to five years.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

USSR - SOUTHEAST ASIA

Moscow is still treating communist successes in South Vietnam as justified retaliation for Saigon's violation of the peace accord, no doubt to mitigate any possible backlash on US-USSR relations.

In a recent conversation with a [redacted] diplomat, the deputy chief of the Southeast Asia division of the Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Y. Kuznetsov, argued that recent events were more the result of South Vietnamese collapse than of a major North Vietnamese offensive. Kuznetsov avoided criticizing the US role in Indochina and [redacted] that Moscow would welcome any US initiative on negotiating a settlement.

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Kuznetsov acknowledged, however, that Moscow backed the Provisional Revolutionary Government's position on negotiations, including the requirement for President Thieu's removal. Kuznetsov said that Moscow still favored a political rather than a military solution in South Vietnam, but he gave no indication that the Soviets were making such an argument in Hanoi.

The Soviets are also still talking about negotiations in Cambodia, although they clearly view them as nothing more than a means to transfer power to the communists. Kuznetsov said that Moscow recognizes that Prince Sihanouk will probably play some role in Phnom Penh after a communist victory. He denigrated Sihanouk's importance over the long haul, however, and repeated long-standing Soviet complaints of Sihanouk's unreliability.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY**NOTES**

The Ethiopian government's military situation in Eritrea Province has improved in recent weeks as fighting has dropped off sharply from the high level that prevailed in February.

Government forces now control Asmara and as much of the countryside as they choose to occupy in force at any given time. Army operations have denied the rebels sanctuaries and food supplies near Asmara. Nevertheless, the rebels continue to enjoy overwhelming popular support and remain a formidable guerrilla force. Elsewhere in the country, the overextended army and police are encountering new security problems. Intercepted Ethiopian messages show that a number of relatively small groups are active, and they are probably gaining strength as a result of the opposition to the ruling military council's land-reform program.

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Saudi Arabia	[redacted]	25X1
	Crown	25X1
Prince	[redacted]	25X1
	[redacted]	25X1
	[redacted]	25X1

Fahd told Ambassador Akins on April 1 that he wanted Khalid to retain the title of prime minister because it would look bad if Khalid were to lose all of Faysal's titles and powers and become a mere figurehead. Fahd claimed he will be the person who will review all governmental decisions and be the final arbiter. There is no indication as yet that Fahd will be seriously hampered in the exercise of power by the necessity to defer to Khalid in some respects, but the situation is potentially disruptive. At best, there will be a period of maneuvering before a new balance of relationships emerges.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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VIETNAM

We present below an intelligence community assessment of The Military Situation and Prospects for South Vietnam.

South Vietnam's military fortunes continue to decline. Its armed forces have relinquished well over half the country, lost nearly half of their regular combat forces, and suffered extremely heavy equipment and supply losses. The military leadership is demoralized, and the morale and discipline of remaining government forces are open to serious question. Taking all factors into account, the only question over the defeat of the Republic of Vietnam is timing--whether it will collapse or be militarily overwhelmed in a period of weeks or months.

The Current Situation

The North Vietnamese have recognized South Vietnam's vulnerability and appear determined to take rapid advantage of it.

At present, there are eight well-equipped and well-supplied North Vietnamese army infantry divisions in Military Regions 3 and 4 and an additional ten divisions farther north in South Vietnam. Moreover, Hanoi is committing the bulk of its remaining reserve forces to South Vietnam. The communists could deploy a decisive force to the battle area in about a month, if a crash move were ordered. Their logistic capabilities are sufficient to support such forces.

South Vietnam has seven infantry divisions, rangers, territorial forces, and the remnants of three divisions extracted from the north. Additional combat units will be formed from South Vietnamese forces evacuated from MRs 1 and 2, but their combat effectiveness, except perhaps for the marines, will be doubtful. Some territorial forces are now being integrated into regular Vietnamese army units. Finally, South Vietnam still retains a sizable air force.

We now see two general communist courses of military action.

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--The application of massive force to inflict final defeat.

--Envelop Saigon, cut off its supplies, and thereby bring the government of South Vietnam to its knees.

The communists would have two options within the first course of action. In one, the North Vietnamese army could choose to exploit to the maximum their current military momentum and the weaknesses of South Vietnamese forces. This would involve the rapid, albeit piecemeal, reinforcement of MR 3 and continuous large-scale attacks beginning at any time. This would entail risks for the communists because it would not confront the government of Vietnam with overwhelming force at the outset. Moreover, communist losses might be high, thereby weakening their military punch.

As a second option, the communists could delay an assault on the capital for a month or so, while consolidating their gains in the northern half of the country, deploying additional infantry divisions south, and preparing the battlefield. This would give Saigon time to rally its forces and population and to reconstitute some of the units evacuated from the north. With their backs to the wall, many South Vietnamese units would fight well. South Vietnamese confidence would be bolstered by accelerated US assistance and by evidence that the US will send more. Correspondingly, the deterioration and ultimate collapse of the Saigon government would be accelerated by a negative response on the part of the US.

Considering Hanoi's ability to mass greatly superior forces, however, we believe that under either of these options, the South Vietnamese government would collapse or be defeated by the end of June, if not considerably sooner.

The other major course open to the communists would be to envelop Saigon with augmented forces, cut off its supplies, and simultaneously attrite defending forces. The recent movement of elements of two North Vietnamese divisions from Tay Ninh Province to the northern delta is in line with such a strategy. At present, these units and others already in MR 4 are threatening major cities and the important rice distribution route from the delta to Saigon. This would add to the already formidable pressures on the city. We believe that this limited course of action might alone be successful so that the South Vietnamese government would fall by the end of June.

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Hanoi recognizes that political and military factors will continue to interact. Governmental changes in Saigon, South Vietnam's military performance, and the evolving state of public and South Vietnamese army morale will condition its final planning. The fact that there is little room for retreat may stiffen the resolve of Saigon's forces. Nonetheless, a sudden psychological unraveling along the lines that occurred in the northern half of the country is distinctly possible. In such an event, a communist victory would follow in short order.

In this regard, Hanoi probably hopes that a combination of the above factors will make unnecessary a final direct assault on Saigon. This would spare the communists the problems of feeding and housing the population of a city destroyed by a pitched battle. And it would minimize damage to vital facilities and resources which Hanoi would prefer to capture intact. These interests seem reflected by recent communist propaganda and by the 10-point policy toward "liberated areas" broadcast by the communists on April 3. Although primarily designed to bring order and stability to newly conquered regions as fast as possible, these pronouncements were probably also designed to increase pressures in Saigon for a "negotiated" settlement and to hasten the political crumbling that is already in train. Furthermore, the political advantages gained by South Vietnam's collapse without a major battle for Saigon would be substantial.

In sum, Hanoi is in good position to take whatever action it considers necessary to win the war. While a quick, decisive military stroke may be in the works, we believe that Hanoi will opt for a less costly and politically more expedient alternative, calculating that a South Vietnamese collapse from within is near at hand. At the same time, however, communist units will position themselves for a final attack should their preferred course fail. Whatever the case, South Vietnam's fate appears to be sealed. Taking all factors into account, the only question is timing--whether weeks or months.

Top Secret



The President's Daily Brief

April 7, 1975

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Exempt from general
declassification schedule of E.O. 11652
exemption category 5B(1),(2),(3)
declassified only on approval of
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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

April 7, 1975

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South Vietnam: President Thieu's intention to stay in power has produced mounting dissatisfaction, but there is no firm evidence of a serious move to force him out. (Page 1)

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

SOUTH VIETNAM

President Thieu's obvious intention to stay in power has produced mounting dissatisfaction in both military and civilian circles, but as yet there is no firm evidence of a serious move to force him out.

After taking a limited opinion poll, the embassy in Saigon reports that most Vietnamese are taking a wait-and-see attitude. They welcome the departure of Prime Minister Khiem, but doubt that lower house speaker Can is capable of forming a new cabinet. Although Can is a respected and intelligent politician, he is a close associate of Thieu and has few contacts among the military. As a national leader, most [redacted] question whether he can persuade an impressive group to join the government.

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The reactions [redacted] may best reflect the general political situation in the country. [redacted] efforts to persuade Thieu to step aside in favor of an "executive council" headed by General Ky had failed. Moreover, [redacted] despite [redacted] universal dissatisfaction with Thieu, the President still had the trump cards and "he is playing them coolly."

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Military men are reluctant to move against Thieu, because failure would bring disgrace to them and reprisals against their families. Religious groups, especially the Catholics, do not want to take any action that would help the communists. Thus, [redacted] so long as Thieu retains the loyalty of a few high-level military officers and the police, his removal will not be easy.

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The attitudes of South Vietnam's military leaders will of course be crucial in determining the government's and Thieu's durability. Former prime minister Khiem's actions will also be important. Although there are no reliable indications that senior military commanders or Khiem--a former military commander and by rank South Vietnam's senior general--are ready to move against Thieu, the feeling seems to be growing that some way must be found either to force Thieu from office or to persuade him to step aside.

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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We have comments from three separate sources, all made to US officials with the knowledge that their remarks would be passed to Washington, suggesting that moves against Thieu could develop quickly. South Vietnam's press director, Nguyen Ngoc Bich, told a US official on Saturday that reaction to President Thieu's speech the day before among "many air force officers" was one of extreme anger and that there was talk of a "bloody solution." Bich interpreted these comments to mean that a bombing of the palace or an assassination attempt might be made shortly. He claimed that "all armed forces" are now beginning to rally around former vice president Ky, but that Ky himself is not among those plotting violence.

Bich also stated that Military Region 3 commander General Toan had tried unsuccessfully all day Saturday to get an appointment with Thieu. Toan reportedly wanted to assure the President of his personal loyalty, but intended nevertheless to ask him to step down for the good of the country.

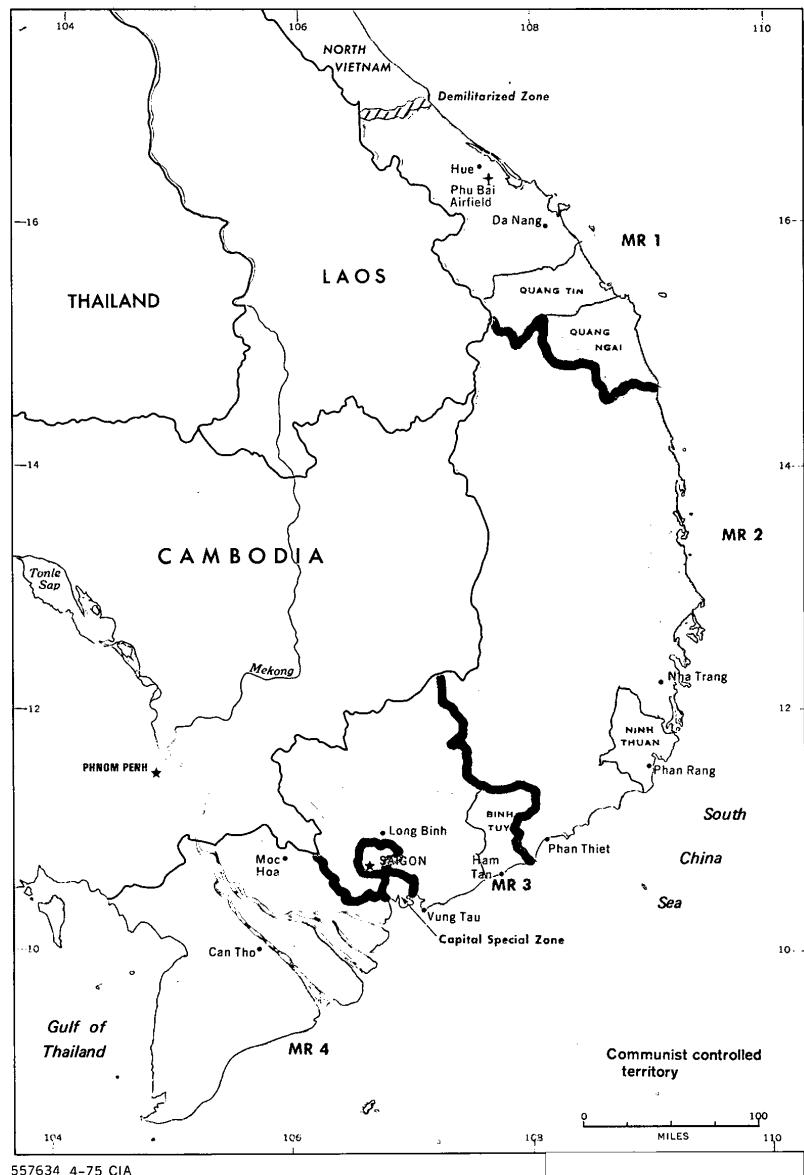
There are also indications that General Nam, Military Region 4 commander, may be ready to end his support for Thieu. According to Nam's chief of staff, General Quay, Nam would support Joint General Staff chief Vien in a power struggle against Thieu. Quay emphasized, however, that Nam would not take the initiative in such a move, but that his support could prove decisive in any confrontation between Thieu and the generals.

An initial survey of reactions to Thieu's speech by the embassy reflects widespread agreement with Thieu's charges of US abandonment. On Thursday, moreover, a special assistant in the ministry of national defense, Major General Nguyen Ngoc Loan, warned that some attempts would be made to prevent Americans from leaving South Vietnam.

* * *

There was practically no fighting in the provinces near Saigon over the weekend, but the level of communist-initiated military action increased somewhat in the delta. Officials in the delta are pleased with their newly adopted blocking tactics, however, and with the increased and more effective air support. Some officials feel that if the communists do not take Can Tho in the next few days, they will have to fall back.

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

The South Vietnamese have reinforced their forces defending Moc Hoa, a tiny provincial capital just south of the Cambodian border in the northern delta. Here too, the communists have been slow in getting under way and their forces are being struck hard by government air and artillery. The balance of forces there now favors the government, and some officials feel this battlefield could be the first big test of the resolve of Saigon's forces in the remaining third of the country.

The commander of the South Vietnamese marine division, which was recently evacuated from Da Nang, is now regrouping his units at Vung Tau along the coast. One of the three brigades being reassembled and rearmed will soon move closer to Saigon to bolster the confidence of the population in the capital.

Parts of the airborne brigade that were brought out of the northern provinces have been resting and refitting at Long Binh. One battalion was sent on April 4 to reinforce government units at Phan Rang in Ninh Thuan Province. The government is still holding small enclaves at Phan Rang and Phan Thiet, largely because the North Vietnamese have been slow to occupy these weakly defended areas of southern Military Region 2. There have also been reports that the communists have not yet moved into Nha Trang in force, but Saigon's military presence there is weak.

Much of the South Vietnamese 2nd Division, which fled from Quang Ngai and Quang Tin provinces in Military Region 1, is now in Binh Tuy Province. The commander is encountering difficulties in reorganizing the division's 4,000 or so troops because they have been reluctant to turn in their weapons. Some troops have been stealing and looting in the provincial capital of Ham Tan, a seacoast city deluged with military personnel and civilians arriving by boat from the northern provinces.

Hanoi, meanwhile, has begun flying transport aircraft into the recently captured Phu Bai airfield between Hue and Da Nang. The North Vietnamese have been flying helicopters into northern South Vietnam for several weeks, but this is the first time transports have flown into this area. Hanoi is probably trying to move in additional administrative and technical personnel to stabilize the civil situation in the northern provinces.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

CAMBODIA

Acting president Saukham Koy met with US Congressional staff members yesterday and made an impassioned plea for supplemental aid. Khmer communist forces are now reported to be about three miles from Pocheutong Airport.

President Koy said that a favorable vote on the aid question would buy him time to arrange an orderly surrender. He said that under the present circumstances the "best feasible solution" would be for the government to give in to Sihanouk's demands and invite the Prince back to Phnom Penh. He envisioned tying the "invitation" to an agreement prohibiting communist forces from entering the city and allowing the continued delivery of relief supplies.

Koy warned that the government would have no choice except to surrender unconditionally if the supplemental aid is not provided. Undoubtedly trying to shock his guests, Koy spoke of the possibility of a "bloodbath" if the insurgents are allowed to enter Phnom Penh. His comments indicated, however, that government officials now realize the severity of the situation and that any hope of a compromise solution has vanished.

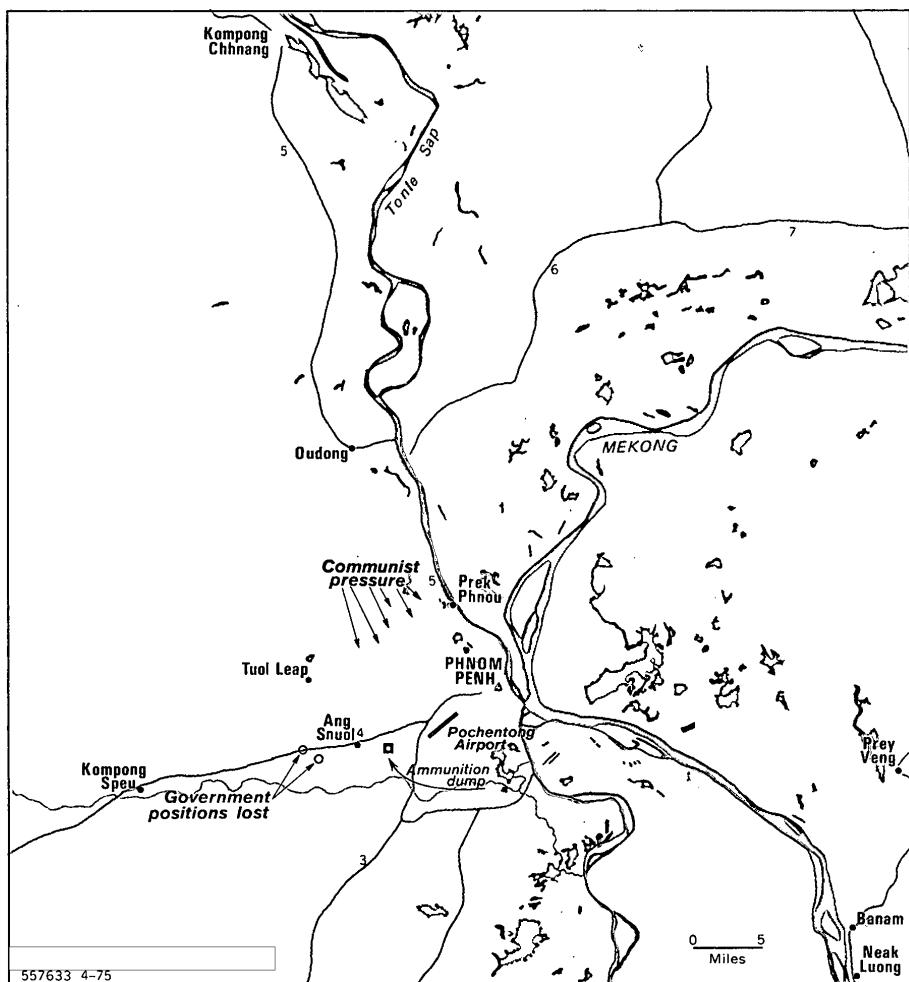
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Ambassador Dean reduced the US mission staff in Phnom Penh to 58 persons over the weekend. Another 102 private US citizens remain in the city, and the embassy has advised them to leave. So far, none of the over 600 Cambodians on the embassy's evacuation list has left. Ambassador Dean believes that the departure of significant numbers of government officials and Cambodian employees of the US mission would be read as a sign of defeat and make it difficult to complete evacuation plans. The ambassador is also deeply concerned over the possibility of major insurgent artillery attacks against the capital in the near future and warns that the "final extraction" may have to be carried out under "hostile fire."

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

CAMBODIA: Phnom Penh Area



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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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The Khmer communists kept steady pressure on Phnom Penh's outer defenses over the weekend. West of the capital, insurgent ground attacks forced government troops to withdraw from two positions on Route 4. Much military equipment was lost in the withdrawals and 200 government troops are missing. The front lines in the sector are now only six miles from the army's main ammunition dump.

Fighting also increased on the Route-5 front north of Phnom Penh. Government troops have given up some ground, and US defense attachés report that defenses along the highway and on the peninsula just across the Tonle Sap River are very porous. The communists also launched new ground attacks against army units directly north of Pochentong Airport where they gained ground.

The US airlift operations continued uninterrupted over the weekend, although communist rocket and artillery attacks damaged four Khmer air force aircraft and wounded a number of pilots. Intercepted messages continue to reflect communist preparations for increased artillery attacks against the airfield or Phnom Penh itself.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

NATIONALIST CHINA

President Chiang Kai-shek's death on Saturday will not result in any immediate or dramatic policy changes by the Taipei government.

Vice President Yen Chia-kan was sworn in as president yesterday, but he will be largely a figurehead. Real power will rest with the late president's eldest son, Premier Chiang Ching-kuo, who gradually assumed leadership after his father became seriously ill in 1972.

The main points of Premier Chiang's domestic and foreign policies have closely paralleled those of his father and there is little reason to expect dramatic changes now. Since the younger Chiang assumed effective control of the government, there has been no weakening of the Nationalists' staunch anti-communist stand or their claim to represent all of China. Chiang has shown no sign of willingness to reach an accommodation with Peking, and there is little likelihood that his attitude will change in the near future.

Premier Chiang, however, has placed less emphasis in recent years on the "return-to-the-mainland" theme with which his father was so closely identified. He also has attempted to obtain greater participation in the government by native Taiwanese.

Taipei's ties with the US are still a key concern to the Nationalists. Premier Chiang can be expected to try to gain reassurance of US commitments to Taiwan, especially in the light of recent developments in Indochina. Foreign Minister Shen Chang-huan, in fact, approached the US ambassador in Taipei on Sunday with a "private" request for "some reassuring gesture" from you regarding US "solidarity" with the Taipei government.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

NOTES

A Soviet attempt early Saturday morning to orbit a Soyuz spacecraft with two cosmonauts aboard ended in failure.

The mission was aborted when a problem developed with the booster shortly after the third stage was ignited. A Tass announcement yesterday confirmed the failure and said that the cosmonauts were recovered in good health. [redacted]

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The spacecraft was expected to rendezvous and dock with the Salyut 4 space station, after which the crew would have boarded the space station for an extended stay in orbit.

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The meeting in Paris of oil producing and consuming states that begins today seems likely to be a fairly successful affair.

Representatives of industrialized states, developing countries, and major oil producers attending the week-long session will probably make some progress on both the agenda and the list of participants in a major conference later this year. A successful meeting in Paris, in fact, could be a watershed in relations between the oil producers and consumers and open the way to broader international recognition of the economic interdependence of oil importers and exporters.

Top Secret



The President's Daily Brief

April 8, 1975

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Exempt from general
declassification schedule of E.O. 11652
exemption category 5B(1),(2),(3)
declassified only on approval of
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April 8, 1975

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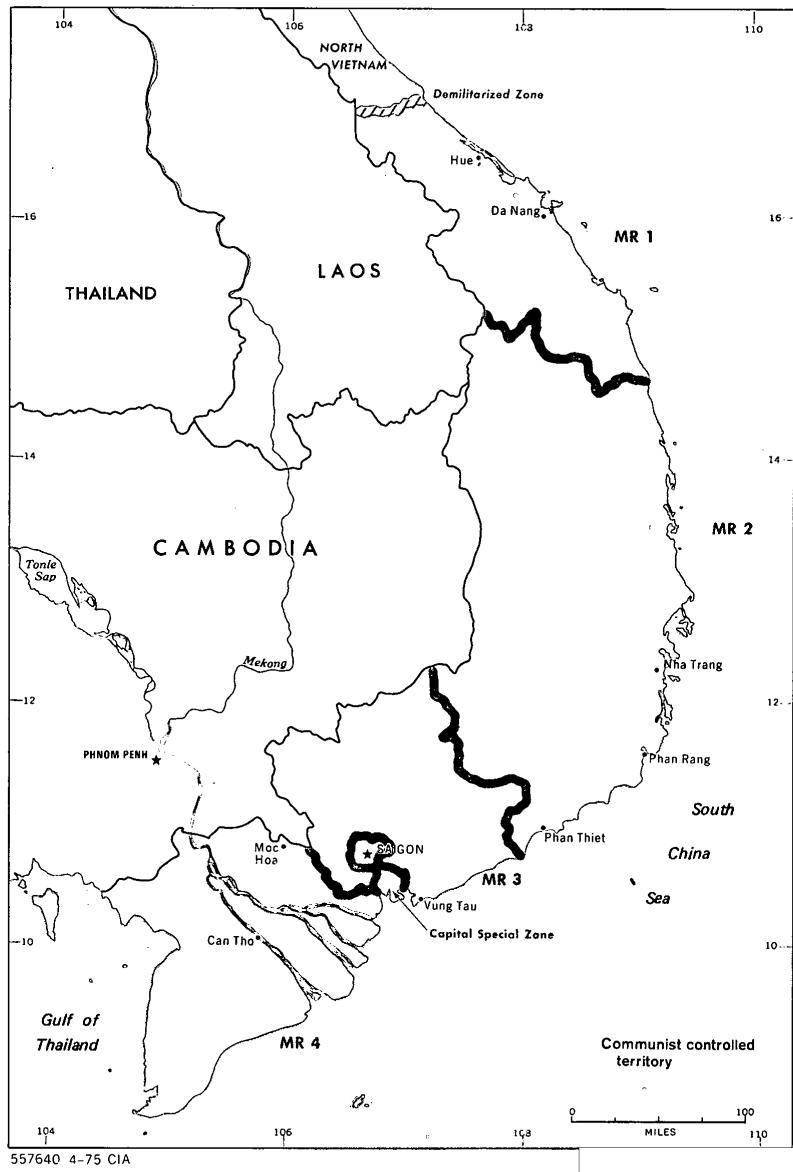
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CSCE: Another troublesome issue may soon be resolved. (Page 9)

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY



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SOUTH VIETNAM

The attempted bombing of the presidential palace this morning does not appear to have been part of a major conspiracy against President Thieu. Even so, it will be sure to heighten tensions among South Vietnamese military leaders.

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[redacted] Thieu suspects his old rival, General Nguyen Cao Ky, of responsibility for the attempt. This seems borne out by Thieu's subsequent public statement blaming the bombing on a "group or faction" that had been unable to generate sufficient support to oust him and had thus turned to an assassination attempt.

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[redacted] government security forces are now deployed around the homes of various political opponents of Thieu-- including Ky's--but no arrests have been made. Thieu has also ordered the Military Region 3 commander, General Toan, to assume direct control of Bien Hoa air base and to exercise strict control over air force operations.

The bombing occurred at about 8:30 a.m. Saigon time, shortly after two South Vietnamese air force F-5s took off from Bien Hoa air base north of Saigon for a bombing run near Phan Thiet City. One of the planes veered over Saigon and dropped two bombs, the closest of which landed about 30 yards from the palace. US officials in Saigon report that there were no fatalities.

There was no appreciable public disorder after the incident, but Saigon has been placed under curfew and Tan Son Nhut Airport temporarily closed.

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Most military action is still focused on the delta. The communists began their assault on the Moc Hoa front early yesterday against a government position less than eight miles from that provincial capital. Communist-initiated activity is also growing in other parts of the delta, particularly in Dinh Tuong Province. The North Vietnamese 4th Division is exerting pressure on Can Tho City defenses, but has made no appreciable gains. The communists also have not had much success with their increased sabotage operations against the major delta highways.

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

General Toan, commander of the provinces around Saigon and now responsible for the few remaining government enclaves in the central coastal provinces, made an inspection tour of these areas last weekend and has taken steps to shore up the government's positions. He has established a forward command headquarters at Phan Rang, in Ninh Thuan Province. Toan found that most of the government's territorial forces were still in place around the Phan Rang area.

General Toan [redacted]

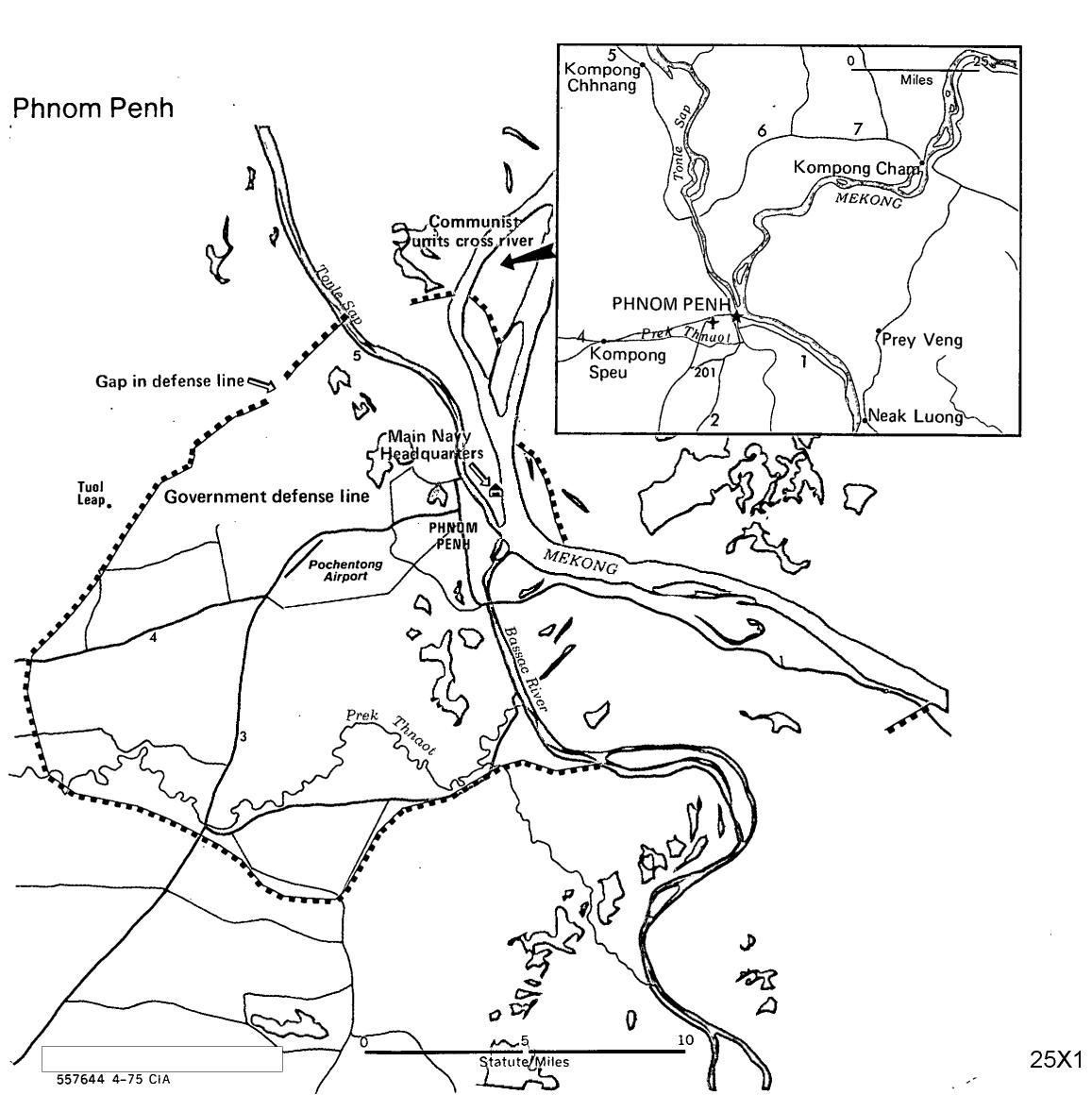
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[redacted] is checking the situation north of Phan Rang and may consider moving forces there if he can reorganize his troops rapidly enough--and if the communists do not move first. Some government naval units have moved into the Nha Trang area and are reported to be holding positions at the port and at the airfield.

General Toan claims he is satisfied that all returning government units and stragglers at several locations east of Saigon are under control, and that progress is being made reorganizing them into usable military units. In addition to the Marines and 2nd Division troops that are being regrouped, over 7,000 officers and men of the South Vietnamese 22nd Division--perhaps a half of that unit's former strength--have reached the Vung Tau area.

Hanoi, meanwhile, is sending one of its last three reserve divisions to South Vietnam. The headquarters of the 312th Division was detected yesterday in the panhandle near the South Vietnamese border. This division belongs to the North Vietnamese 1st Corps and is the third division of that command to move south in recent weeks.

The 1st Corps and its divisions may well be headed for the Saigon area. Most of these troops could reach the provinces north of Saigon in about a month. They have been training in conventional tactics for about two years, and are considered good units. The arrival of this force in southern South Vietnam would sharply tilt the military balance in favor of the communists.



FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY**CAMBODIA**

Khmer communist ground attacks have forced further government withdrawals in the area north of Pocheutong airport. Our defense attachés, who visited the area yesterday, reported that Cambodian officers have expressed their belief that "the end is near."

Government troops located on the Mekong River northeast of the capital claim that insurgent forces are crossing the river. This may portend a major communist ground push south toward the main navy headquarters. Southeast of the capital, government reinforcements are moving into blocking positions on Route 1 in anticipation of increased attacks by communist forces moving up the highway from the Neak Luong - Banam area.

In the countryside, the southwestern provincial capital of Kompong Speu and the southeastern provincial capital of Prey Veng are seriously threatened. The army high command stripped Kompong Speu of its best units several weeks ago to reinforce Phnom Penh's defense, and the communists have been making steady gains against the territorial units that are defending the town. Insurgent units briefly penetrated the town's market place on Sunday before being pushed back. At Prey Veng, communist attacks have forced government troops to abandon positions north of the town, and some fighting has occurred along the city's outskirts. A recent intercepted message indicates that government troops at the northern provincial capital of Kompong Cham have contacted local communist forces to discuss the possibility of surrender.

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Thai Foreign Minister Chatchai's claim yesterday that Cambodian "negotiations" would be held soon in Bangkok is probably unfounded. Prince Sihanouk's son, Prince Yuvaneath, was scheduled to arrive in Bangkok yesterday at Thai government invitation. Chatchai may have arranged a meeting between Yuvaneath and Cambodian Prime Minister Long

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

Boret, who also arrived in Bangkok yesterday on his way back to Phnom Penh.

Even if Chatchai manages to bring the two Cambodians together, it is highly unlikely that any substantive discussions will take place. Prince Yuvaneath [redacted] would be unlikely to have any real authority to speak for his father, let alone the Khmer communists. In discussions with the US chargé last week, Chatchai himself admitted that the chances for any breakthrough are "slight." At best, Yuvaneath might relay some message from Boret to his father. Under present conditions, however, Boret would appear to have little to offer the other side except surrender.

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USSR

The Soviets are patrolling the Pacific Ocean area where the Glomar Explorer raised part of their submarine and are again patrolling the site in the Atlantic Ocean where one of their submarines sank in 1970.

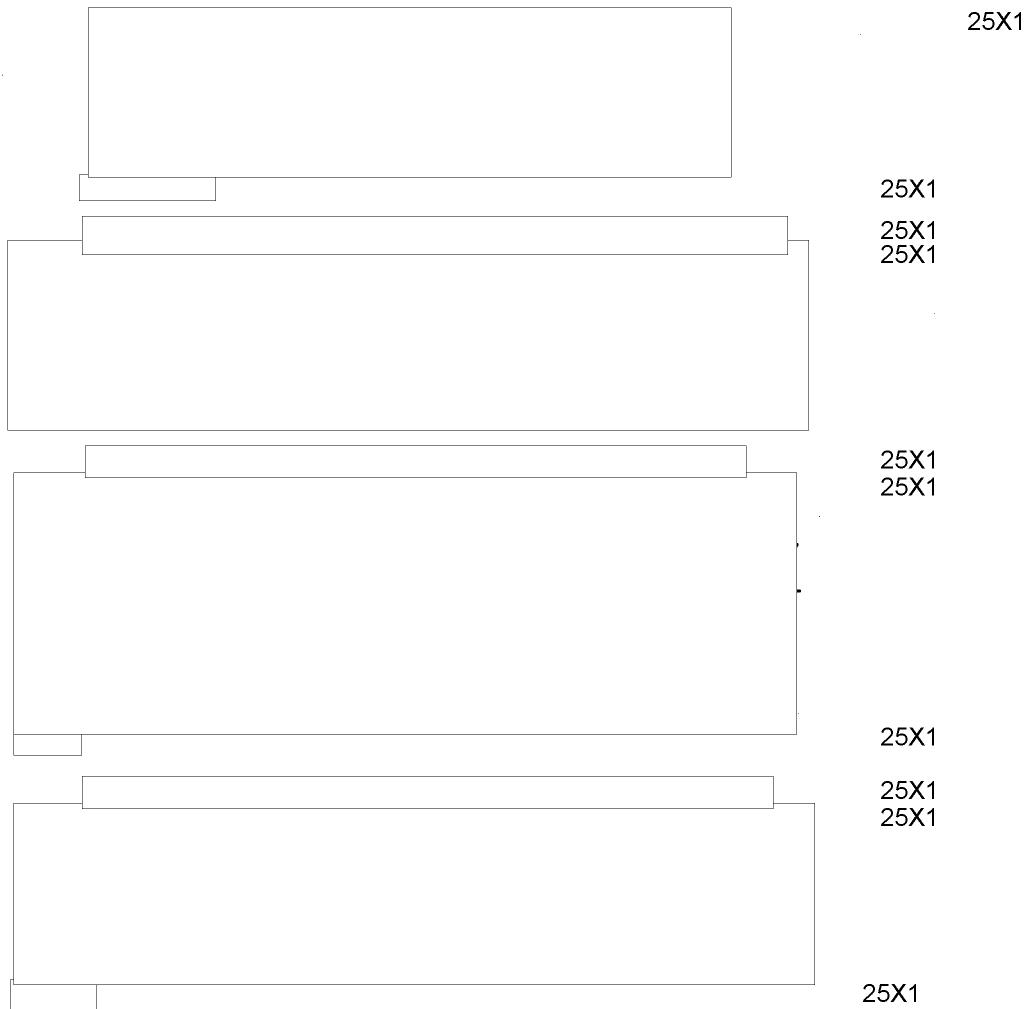
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The Soviets still have made no public mention of the Glomar Explorer story, and it is becoming clearer that they want to avoid the subject if possible.

Last week, the Soviet delegate to the Law of the Sea conference in Geneva told his US counterpart that the Soviets "do not want to say anything" about the Glomar Explorer. He was pleased when the US official said we did not intend to bring the subject up at the conference.

During a reception in Moscow last Friday, Premier Kosygin greeted Ambassador Stoessel with what the ambassador called "ostentatious cordiality." Within earshot of many Soviet and East European bigwigs, Kosygin assured the ambassador of the Soviet Union's desire to continue on the path of detente despite "those" who try to drive a wedge between the two countries. Kosygin expressed pleasure that Governor Harriman, an "old friend," is coming to the USSR for V-E Day. He said he is looking forward to economic talks this week with Secretary Simon and asked that his and General Secretary Brezhnev's warmest wishes be passed to you and Secretary Kissinger.

SAUDI ARABIA



FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY**EGYPT**

Palestine Liberation Organization Chairman Yasir Arafat is in Cairo attempting to repair strained relations with Egypt. In meetings with President Sadat, Arafat almost certainly is arguing against Egyptian participation in another round of step-by-step negotiations and seeking assurances that Egypt will insist on a role for the PLO if the Geneva talks resume.

Arafat conferred briefly with Sadat at the funeral of King Faysal late last month and may have received some indications that Cairo would now be more receptive to Palestinian desires.

Sadat, who within a few months must face an Arab summit and the prospect of a Geneva conference, wants to reduce the level of Palestinian opposition to his negotiating tactics, but this will not prompt him to make major concessions to the PLO. Sadat will probably seek Arafat's agreement that the other Arabs should be allowed to negotiate the terms and timing of the Palestinians' attendance at Geneva. Sadat is likely to refuse to defend actively the Palestinians' preference for an independent PLO delegation. The Egyptians will probably repeat--at least for bargaining purposes--their earlier suggestion that the Palestinians could be represented by the 20-member Arab League.

Arafat and other PLO leaders most likely would not agree to be represented by the Arab League, or to the incorporation of Palestinian representatives into the delegation of a single Arab state. The relatively moderate leaders of the PLO would, however, probably be willing to endure the wrath of their radical colleagues by accepting a formula that designates the PLO as one of several members of a single, joint Arab delegation.

The two parties are unlikely to settle the representation issue--or much else--during Arafat's visit. The visit, however, probably will reduce some of the friction in Egyptian-Palestinian relations, thereby relieving Arafat of the need to rely so heavily on Syria for political support.

Arafat's aim, during the current period of diplomatic uncertainty, is to get on good terms with all of his traditional backers. He has visited six Arab states in the past week, and reportedly plans an early trip to the USSR.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

SYRIA

The Syrian Baath Party congress, which opened last Saturday, is expected to elect a new party executive group that will be more responsive to President Asad than was the outgoing executive.

The congress will also debate and probably endorse whatever approach Asad now decides to take on Middle East peace negotiations.

The President and his supporters have taken a number of measures over the past few weeks to ensure that the congress is stacked in their favor. It now seems likely that the charges of conspiring with Iraq lodged against some 250-300 party members in mid-March were, at least in some cases, part of this political maneuvering.

The arrests have generated an undercurrent of uneasiness in Damascus and produced a bumper crop of coup and counter-coup rumors.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

CSCE

Another troublesome issue at the European Security Conference in Geneva may soon be resolved. The Western allies and neutral delegates are ready to accept in principle a Soviet proposal that would end the deadlock over one of the major military-related "confidence-building measures."

In mid-March, Soviet representatives hinted that Moscow could accept the Western idea of providing advance notice about national and multinational maneuvers to all conference participants, providing such notification is given on a voluntary basis. They also suggested that Moscow would make some concessions concerning the size and site of maneuvers to be affected by the agreement reached in Geneva.

Last week, most of the NATO allies agreed that they should hint to the Soviet delegates that the West would accept the idea of voluntary notification if the Soviets are forthcoming concerning the issues of size and area of maneuvers.

Resolution of this issue would increase the optimism of both Eastern and Western delegations. The Soviets have recently shown some signs of flexibility on other outstanding issues and seem anxious to finish this stage of the conference in time for a final summit-level meeting on June 30. The increasingly weary Western delegations also are anxious to conclude the conference. They are now discussing the possibility of completing this stage by the end of May or mid-June.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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NOTE

The approximately 875 Jews who emigrated from the Soviet Union in March were the fewest to leave in one month in more than three years.

The number of emigrants has been dropping steadily this year; the first quarter total of just over 3,000 was nearly 50 percent below the comparable figure for 1974. Soviet officials are reducing the flow by discouraging applications, rather than by increasing outright refusals. At the same time they are cutting back the number of emigrants, the Soviets are applying the carrot and the stick to Jewish activists. Recently, several have been allowed to emigrate, for example, but two others have been exiled to Siberia because they took part in a brief Moscow street demonstration. Moscow's policy may be to get rid of the most articulate Jewish activists, particularly those who are well known in the West, and to intimidate the others.

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declassification schedule of E.O. 11652
exemption category 5B(1),(2),(3)
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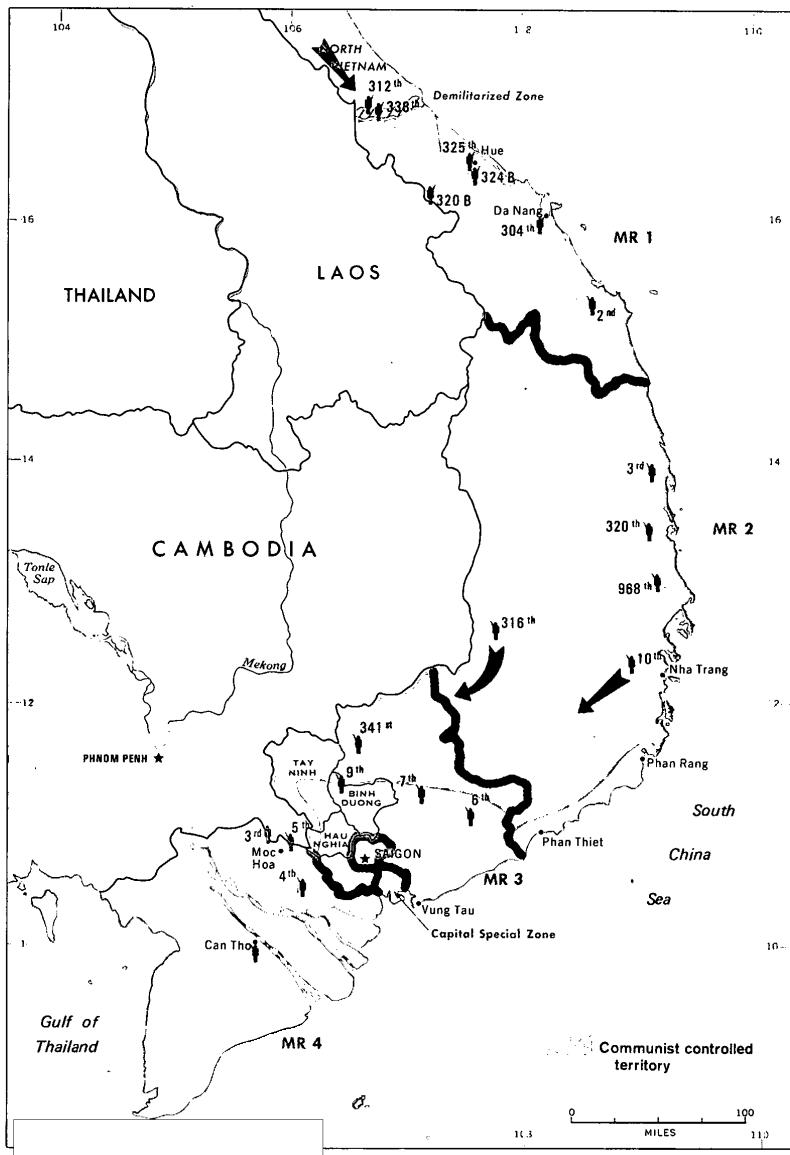
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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

VIETNAM

New instructions to communist cadre in South Vietnam call for a continuation of the present offensive until "total victory" is achieved this year, [redacted]

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[redacted] The new orders, issued on April 3, bring up to date an earlier document, which had indicated that victory was not anticipated until 1976.

The instructions leave little room for political solution to the conflict. Talk of negotiations or the formation of a tripartite coalition will be used "merely as stratagems." [redacted]

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[redacted] the orders maintain that "the most opportune moment for the communist side has arrived" and that attacks to "liberate" Tay Ninh, Hau Nghia and Binh Duong provinces will be conducted this month.

The communists may now be moving into position for such attacks. They currently have eight divisions in military regions 3 and 4; at least four of them are positioned in an arc north of Saigon and the others are threatening population centers and supply routes in the delta.

The North Vietnamese 5th Division has pulled back from the Moc Hoa battlefield in the northern delta and may join units of the 3rd Division along the Cambodian border to prepare for fighting in Hau Nghia and Tay Ninh provinces. North of Saigon, the 9th Division has observed radio silence for the past few days, and South Vietnamese officials fear that it is moving closer to the capital. The 6th, 7th, and 341st divisions pose a threat northeast of the capital. The 341st has arrived in the area only recently from North Vietnam. Two divisions in the central highlands show signs of shifting toward Saigon. They could move into Military Region 3 in a matter of days.

The communists could shift additional combat units to the south from central South Vietnam. They probably will need to keep a large force in the northern two thirds of the country, however, to eliminate pockets of South Vietnamese resistance and establish firm control over the population.

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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Radio direction-finding indicates that two North Vietnamese reserve divisions have shifted toward the Demilitarized Zone from Thanh Hoa. They appear to be following in the tracks of another division which is in northern South Vietnam. All three belong to the North Vietnamese Army 1st Corps, which is moving south; its headquarters was recently spotted near the Demilitarized Zone. A fourth division--also subordinate to the 1st Corps and last noted in the Hanoi area--shows signs of moving. The most likely destination for these combat units is in provinces around Saigon; they could reach the Saigon area in about a month.

These communist moves, together with the heavy losses sustained by the government since early March, add up to an irreversible shift in the strategic balance in South Vietnam. In comparison, the South Vietnamese have only seven infantry divisions, together with rangers, territorials, and the remnants of three divisions extracted from the northern part of the country. The government is now reorganizing these units and preparing them for combat.

* * *

On the political front, South Vietnamese Prime Minister Nguyen Ba Can [redacted] 25X1
[redacted] hopes to have a new cabinet by this weekend. 25X1
[redacted] it would include members of the civilian 25X1
opposition, although [redacted] he was having difficulty 25X1
persuading Buddhist and Catholic groups to participate.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

CAMBODIA

Cambodian Prime Minister Long Boret returned to Phnom Penh yesterday and told Ambassador Dean there are no prospects for an immediate political solution or a cease-fire.

In Bangkok, Boret met Prince Sihanouk's son, Norodom Yuvaneath, who said Sihanouk "will not negotiate" and suggested that his father be invited back to Phnom Penh, presumably to restore the monarchy. Boret could not agree to this on his own authority; he instead emphasized that his government desired an early political solution in which Sihanouk would play the key role.

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In Indonesia, Boret obtained Jakarta's help in interceding with Sihanouk through Algerian Foreign Minister Bouteflika. Boret said Bouteflika had also agreed to help and that if the slightest encouragement from Sihanouk were forthcoming, Boret would be available immediately to work out the details.

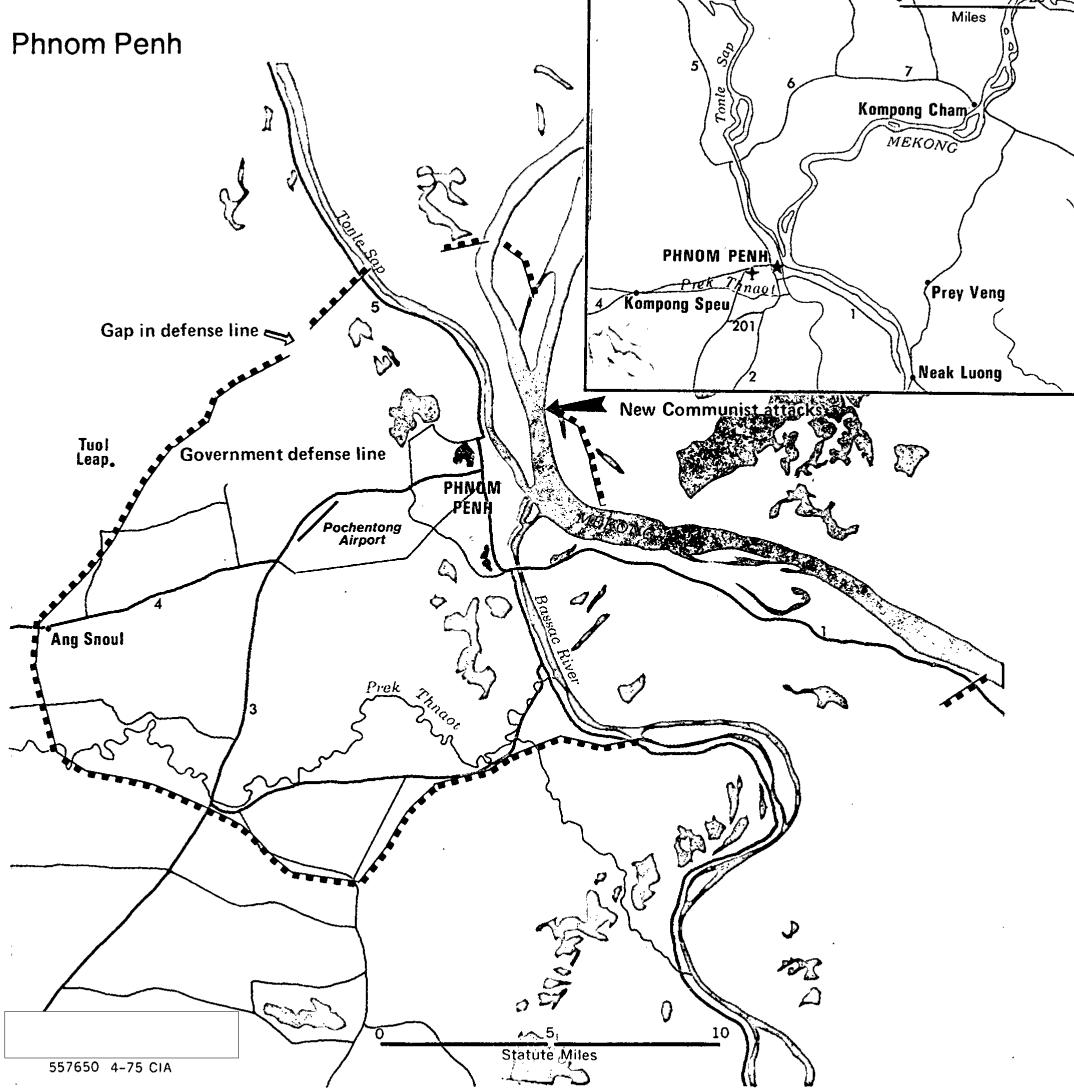
Sihanouk publicly denied yesterday that any "authorized representative" had met Boret in Bangkok. He earlier criticized Indonesian President Suharto for "meddling" with the Cambodian situation.

In his conversation with Ambassador Dean, Boret also discussed evacuation plans in the event of a collapse in the defense of Phnom Penh. Two days earlier, Cambodian President Koy also asked Dean about the evacuation of Khmer leaders under such circumstances. The ambassador told both officials that some space would be available aboard US aircraft, but that he was not in a position to determine who or how many could be accommodated.

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

Phnom Penh



FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

* * *

Khmer communist forces launched new attacks against government units on the east bank of the Mekong River near Phnom Penh yesterday. Fighting on the more important battlefronts north and west of the city was limited to inconclusive shellings and skirmishes. Shelling attacks against Pochehtong airport also slackened, although the proportion of artillery rounds to the less accurate rockets increased.

Intercepted messages reveal that the communists are scouring outlying battlefields for more howitzer ammunition and that communist units are beginning to move toward Phnom Penh from a number of widely separated provinces. The deployments are occurring slowly, however, and it is apparent that many units will not arrive in the capital area before next week.

In the countryside, stiff fighting continued yesterday around the southwestern provincial capital of Kompong Speu. Several positions just outside the town are isolated. In the southeast, the communists are keeping steady pressure on the defensive perimeter around the provincial capital of Prey Veng, but government units there appear to be holding their own.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

SYRIA-EGYPT

Relations between Damascus and Cairo have come under greater strain. The Syrians, who had welcomed the breakdown of Egyptian-Israeli negotiations, now are angry with President Sadat for seeking to reconvene the Geneva peace conference. They suspect that Sadat is still trying to obtain a separate Sinai disengagement agreement, and they cite as evidence Sadat's unilateral extension of the UN mandate in the Sinai and his pledge to reopen the Suez Canal.

[redacted] 25X1
[redacted] 25X1

Sadat's call for a return to Geneva is a ploy to buy Cairo more time to pursue indirect negotiations with the Israelis. [redacted] Sadat's decision to reopen the Suez Canal on June 5 was a tip-off that Cairo has no intention of letting the UN observer forces' mandate in the Sinai expire in late July. [redacted] Sadat might already have a "deal with the Israelis in his pocket."

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The Syrian President [redacted] [redacted] irked at Sadat for assuming to speak for all the Arabs in calling for a resumption of the Geneva talks and inviting members of the UN Security Council to participate. The Syrians gave [redacted] [redacted] the clear impression that Damascus had been caught flat-footed by Sadat's recent actions and did not know what tack to take next. Sadat's tendency to act unilaterally has long fed Syrian distrust and dislike of the Egyptian President.

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The Syrians have yet to say anything publicly about Sadat's moves. After calling for the resumption of the Geneva talks for so long, they are hardly in a position to criticize Sadat. Instead, they have vented their frustrations largely at the US. The controlled press has attacked US Middle East policy and expressed strong skepticism that a US policy reassessment will lead to any real change in Washington's approach to negotiations.

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

The Syrian press also has lately demanded a prior commitment from Israel to withdraw to the 1967 borders and recognize the legitimate rights of the Palestinians before the Geneva conference is reconvened. Asad is said to have told King Husayn that he does not want to go to Geneva simply to watch the Egyptians and Israelis sign another disengagement accord. For the present, Asad said, Syria takes the position that it would go to Geneva only if the other parties were ready to discuss an overall, final settlement.

The Syrian leader somewhat surprisingly played down the importance of his proposal for a joint Syrian - Palestine Liberation Organization command. Although Asad reportedly said that he doubted the PLO would follow through on his offer because it would mean the subordination of the PLO, we believe he will continue to advocate more formal Syrian-Palestinian ties simply because he seems to have few other ways at present of influencing Cairo.

Asad nevertheless is unlikely to want to go it alone, and he probably sees no alternative to trying to work with Egypt to obtain his objectives. His government's actions over the next few months are likely to be aimed, at least in part, at trying to fence in Sadat and to force him to coordinate his moves more closely with the Syrians.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY**CYPRUS**

The last hurdle to reopening the Cyprus intercommunal talks in Vienna late this month has been cleared. Rauf Denktash, leader of the Turkish Cypriot sector, announced yesterday that agreement had been reached on the role of the UN Secretary General and the venue of the talks and that he--Denktash--would act as the Turkish Cypriot negotiator in at least the first sessions. Secretary General Waldheim will play no substantive role in the talks, but may assist on subjects agreed on by the negotiators.

The talks are scheduled to be held April 28 through May 2, providing little time to reach agreement on the sensitive issues to be discussed. The talks may continue in Vienna at a lower level after May 2, or could be transferred back to Nicosia.

Clerides' role as the negotiator for the Greek Cypriots is clouded as a result of a dispute with Archbishop Makarios over negotiating strategy. Clerides has been sharply attacked by the pro-Makarios press and political groups after a speech he gave last week setting out the realities of the situation as he saw them.

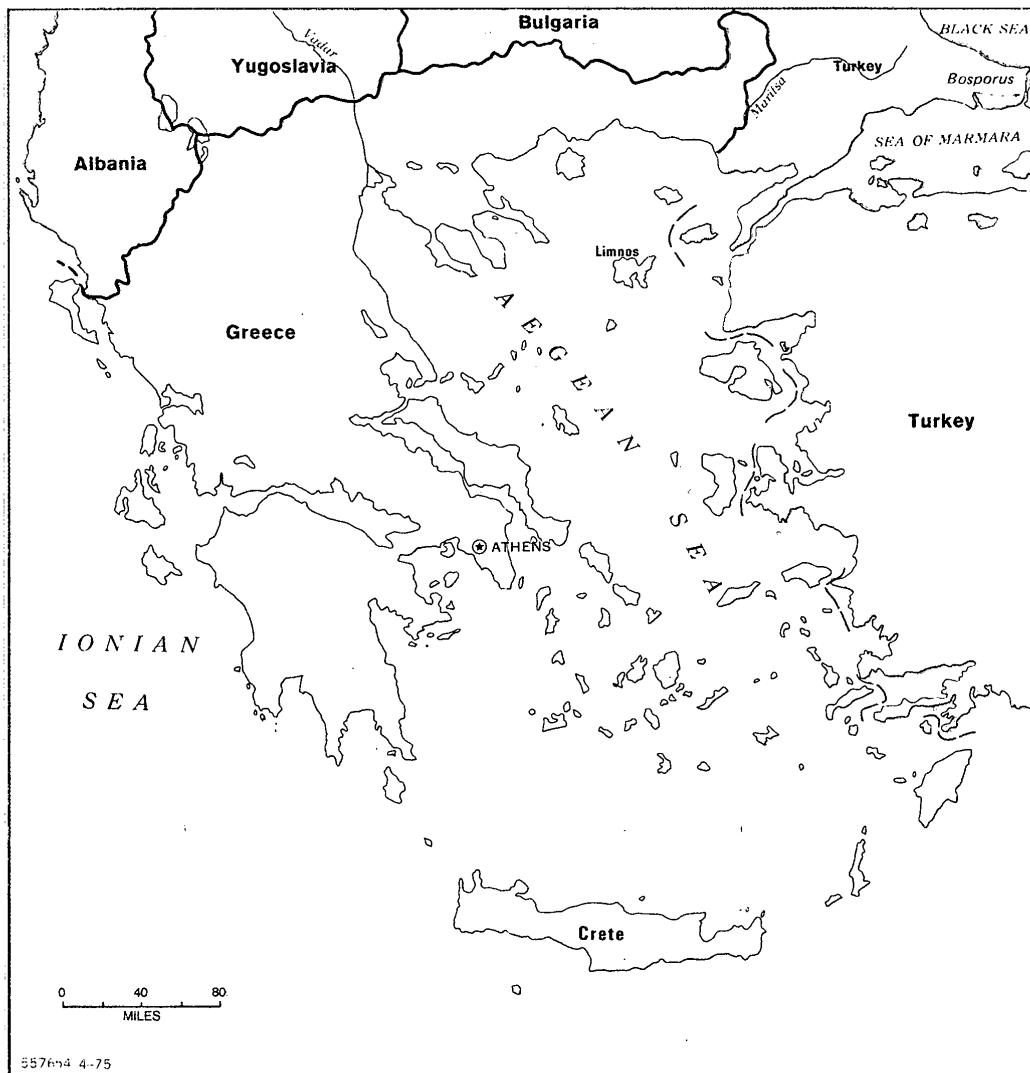
He argued that a bizonal federation, as desired by the Turks, would probably offer the Greek Cypriots the best opportunity to regain some of the territory lost last summer and to achieve strong guarantees for the future. He also took issue with the concept of a "long-term struggle," a phrase used by Makarios, which Clerides feels is tactically poor and likely to freeze the Turkish position.



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Clerides himself is not above using the threat of resignation as a tactic, perhaps in an effort to gain assurances of support that will tie Makarios, and possibly the Greek government, to the unpopular concessions Clerides will have to make to obtain a settlement. Reports have already surfaced that Greek Prime Minister Karamanlis has asked Clerides to stay on.



FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

GREECE-TURKEY

Greece and Turkey are still at loggerheads over the Aegean; each side is maintaining that its actions are justified because of a threat from the other.

A high Greek Foreign Ministry official has admitted to the US embassy that his government has sent military forces, including aircraft, to the Dodecanese and other Aegean islands in contravention of international treaty. He said Turkish leaders had repeatedly made threatening statements about the islands.

The official said that Greece could not allow more Turkish overflights, which he claimed caused panic among the civilian population and created uncertainties which had economic implications throughout Greece, such as bank withdrawals, hoarding, and discouragement of tourists.

The Turks view Greek fortification of the islands as clear provocation. Turkish Foreign Minister Caglayangil told the US embassy on Monday that Ankara simply cannot have "armed aircraft carriers" so close to its shores. He said that it was essential for Turkey to monitor the situation.

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The Turkish government yesterday again denied that it had violated Greek air space and publicly charged Greece with a military buildup on the islands. It said that Turkish aircraft will continue to fly over the Aegean in accordance with the rights given it by international law.

The Greeks believe that the Turks are trying to intimidate them, as well as to establish a de facto role for the Turkish armed forces in the Aegean. [redacted]

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

NOTES

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	Moscow	25X1
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Japanese Foreign Minister Kiichi Miyazawa, who arrives in Washington today, will be primarily interested in discussing Middle Eastern issues and the possibility of another Arab oil embargo.

In connection with developments on Indochina, Miyazawa may seek Secretary Kissinger's views on Japan's support of Thai and Indonesian efforts to broker a Cambodian settlement. The foreign minister probably will also seek a reaffirmation of US security commitments in Japan. For Tokyo this subject is linked to the problem of nuclear weapons on visiting US warships. Despite some differences of opinion with us, Miyazawa comes as a long-time friend and supporter of the US-Japanese alliance. Moreover, with the Miki government still uncertain of its political strength and facing important local elections, the foreign minister will try to avoid any indication that Japan's relations with a major ally are not in good order.

* * *

The USSR reportedly agreed to supply \$500 million worth of military equipment to India during Soviet Defense Minister Grechko's February visit.

This would be the largest agreement ever concluded between the two countries, amounting to about one third of total Soviet military commitments to India since the aid program began in the early 1960s. Such an agreement underscores Moscow's commitment to maintain India's military preponderance on the sub-continent. The bulk of the equipment is naval, including three large combat ships. Ground force equipment includes tanks, artillery, and SA-6 and SA-7 surface-to-air missiles. New Delhi probably did not make any political or military concessions during Grechko's visit, such as endorsing Moscow's Asian collective security scheme or granting base rights to the Soviet navy.

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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Prince Juan Carlos is becoming increasingly concerned over the problems Spain will face unless Franco can be persuaded soon to initiate the transfer of power.

In a recent conversation with Ambassador Rivero and Senator Scott, Juan Carlos spoke with intensity of the mounting desire in Spain for Franco to step down. The Prince expressed confidence in the full support of the army and said that many officers wanted an early transfer of power. He noted in passing, however, that some younger officers have a tendency to favor the communist-inspired Democratic Junta--a coalition of illegal, largely leftist, opposition parties. We have no evidence, however, of significant sympathy among younger officers for the Democratic Junta, although these officers are increasingly interested in politics. Juan Carlos made a strong plea for US understanding and support, especially in the area of relations with other Europeans. He also said he hoped the US could help the Spanish armed forces with equipment.

* * *

A majority of the NATO representatives have reacted favorably to the idea of a conference of heads of government in connection with a regular meeting of NATO foreign ministers on May 29 and 30 in Brussels.

The representatives, meeting in Brussels yesterday, agreed to consult their governments and convey the response to NATO's Secretary General by April 15. The US representative thinks that Canadian Prime Minister Trudeau is likely to be the only dissenter among the heads of state.

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Exempt from general
declassification schedule of E.O. 11652
exemption category 5B(1), (2), (3)
Declassify only on approval of
the Director of Central Intelligence

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

April 10, 1975

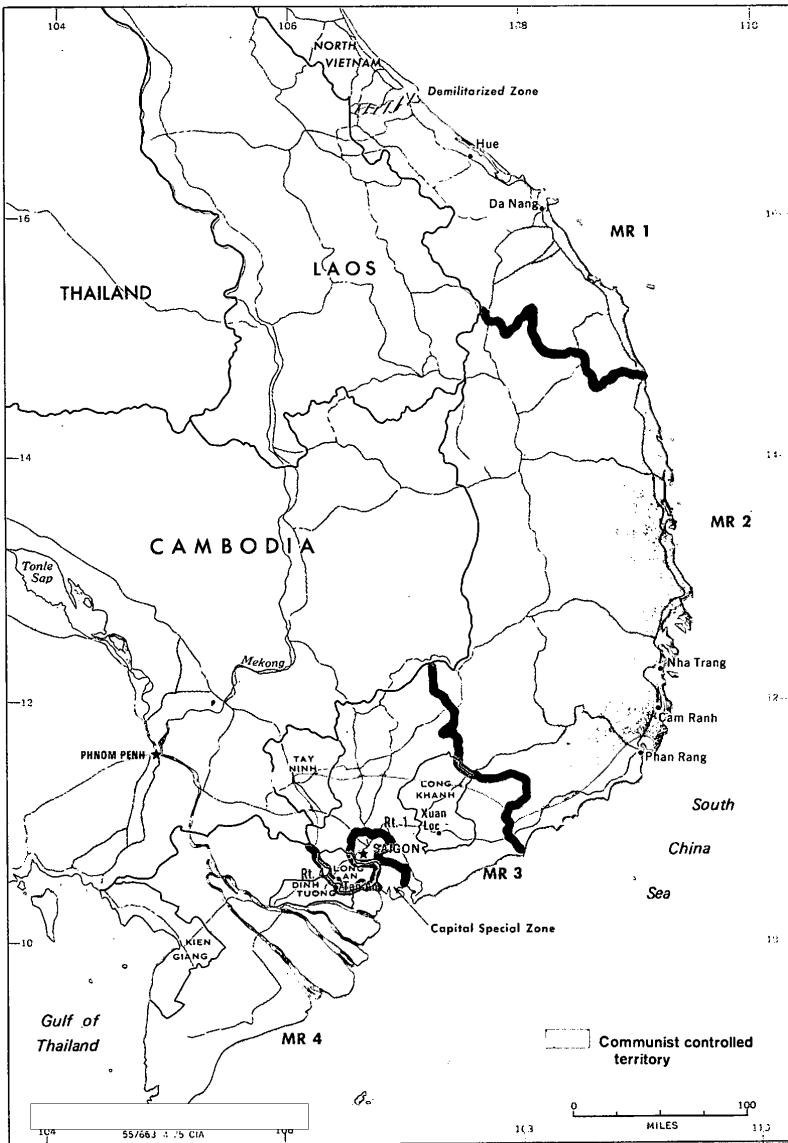
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ably formalize military dominance of the government.
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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY



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SOUTH VIETNAM

The communists are increasing military pressure on the approaches to Saigon. Sharp communist attacks against two key provincial capitals to the east and southwest of the capital city yesterday may be the prelude to a larger operation nearer Saigon.

The ground attack against the provincial capital of Xuan Loc and surrounding areas was conducted by units of the North Vietnamese 6th and newly arrived 341st divisions, and was preceded by a heavy bombardment. Most of the attackers were forced out of the city yesterday, but heavy fighting resumed today. Communist units nearby hold positions overlooking Route 1 leading to Saigon. If they can block the road, a large number of government troops will be cut off.

Government regional commanders reacted quickly and moved units of the South Vietnamese 18th Division from outlying field positions into Xuan Loc. Armored units were sent to the new front from Tay Ninh Province, and airborne division reinforcements came from Saigon.

To the southwest of Saigon, small advance elements of the North Vietnamese 5th Division struck the Long An Province capital of Tan An, its nearby airfield, and several stretches of vital Route 4 connecting the capital with the delta provinces. This attack was swiftly repulsed and Highway 4 is open.

A widespread increase in communist military action throughout much of the delta may be imminent. At the moment, the level of fighting is about the same as in the past few days; the heaviest communist-initiated activity was concentrated in Dinh Tuong and Kien Giang provinces.

It is doubtful that within the next week the communists will feel strong enough for an all-out assault against Saigon. They probably will wait

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until additional units arrive from the north before attempting such a move.

Meanwhile, one of Hanoi's last two reserve divisions--the 308th--may soon follow the North Vietnamese Army 1st Corps and three other reserve divisions to South Vietnam. Communications between the division and the 1st Corps--which together with the 312th, the 320B, and the 338th divisions has already reached northern South Vietnam--strongly suggest that the 308th will follow. If these four divisions and their command headquarters are indeed bound for the Saigon front, they could arrive in about a month.

The communists are now in complete control of Nha Trang and are busy collecting abandoned weapons and equipment.

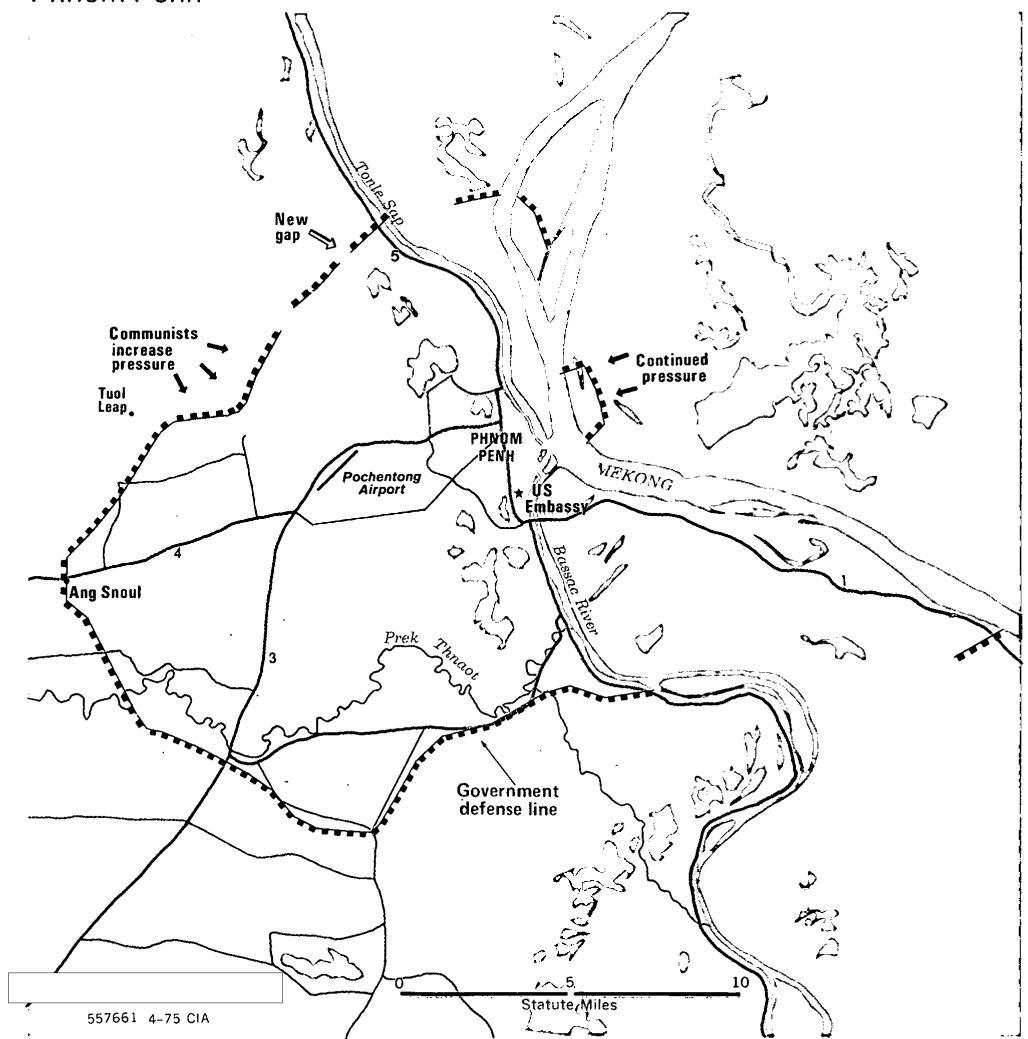
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[redacted] at least half of the shops are open, Saigon's currency is still being used, and North Vietnamese flags are flying over all former government civil and military offices in the city.

The communist occupation of Cam Ranh was apparently slow, taking place some days after the retreat of South Vietnamese forces.

Phnom Penh



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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

CAMBODIA

The erosion of Phnom Penh's outer defenses has reached a point at which a major Khmer communist penetration and/or a general collapse of government units could occur with little warning.

Khmer communist forces made their closest advance yet toward Pochehtong airport late Tuesday by forcing government troops to abandon a village only four miles from the airfield. Counterattacking government units have failed to retake the village, and US defense attachés report that government forces in this area may wilt rapidly in the face of continued insurgent attacks.

Although only rocket and artillery rounds landed near Pochehtong yesterday, the captured village is within recoilless rifle range of the airport terminal and control tower. A US aircraft was badly damaged by artillery fire this morning; air-lift operations were at least temporarily interrupted.

The communists also opened a new gap in the defense line six miles north of the airfield, following the unauthorized withdrawal of a government unit. Intercepted voice radio messages disclose that the communists are planning to move through the gap toward the Tonle Sap River and isolate a number of government units and artillery positions.

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The communists are also maintaining pressure on government units on the east bank of the Mekong River near the capital. Government holdings in the area have now been reduced to a relatively small enclave directly opposite the city and a few other isolated positions. Recoilless rifle or mortar fire from the east bank has begun to fall near Phnom Penh's waterfront, and communist gunners may soon be within range of the heavily populated sections of the city, including the US embassy.

Communist forces along Route 4 west of Phnom Penh do not yet pose a direct threat to Pochehtong airport or to the city itself. Fighting along the highway yesterday remained heavy, however, and another outlying government position was abandoned. Further government withdrawals in this sector could endanger the army's main ammunition dump just south of the highway.

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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We summarize below Ambassador Dean's brief assessment, received yesterday, of the government's dire military straits and of the general mood in Phnom Penh.

Although it is not yet apparent when or how the communists will strike against Phnom Penh, there are a number of possibilities, among which are the following:

--A massive artillery barrage against Phnom Penh proper, designed to cripple the city and cause panic, followed by a demand for immediate surrender.

--Similarly heavy artillery attacks directed against Pochentong airport to halt the US airlift and starve the city and its defenders into submission.

--An all-out ground assault, possibly timed to coincide with Khmer New Year holidays beginning on April 13.

A number of recent incidents at Pochentong airport during the evacuation of Cambodian employees of the US mission indicate that the level of anti-American feeling in Phnom Penh is rising. As for the mood of senior officials in Phnom Penh, they appear determined to maintain public morale until Congress has acted on the supplemental aid question. In the event of a negative vote, government leaders will use the US as a scapegoat for impending defeat. Government leaders have warned that wholesale panic would follow a negative congressional vote and that the government would collapse within 24 hours.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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PORUGAL

Most of the major political parties will probably accept the Armed Forces Movement's demands this week and seal the military's dominance of the government for at least the next three to five years.

The more moderate of the political parties--the Socialists, the center-left Popular Democrats, the Monarchists, and the center-right Social Democratic Center--have serious misgivings about the Movement's "Platform for Understanding." They seem prepared, however, to sign up rather than risk being labeled as opponents of the Movement. These parties will try to salvage what they can from the election on April 25 in hopes that the Movement can eventually be persuaded to give civilians a greater role in ruling and to curb communist influence. Only five small parties of the extreme left have announced they will not sign.

Movement leaders have long been impatient with the inability of the parties to work together, an impatience that probably accounts in part for the military's unwillingness to turn the government over to civilians. Admiral Rosa Coutinho, an influential member of the Revolutionary Council with an excellent chance to move into a top position, told reporters last week that the parties were "too busy to lead the revolution" and were leaving the responsibility to the Movement, which he called ill-equipped for the job.

Coutinho suggested that a new party, a "civilian Armed Forces Movement," be formed to "exchange ideas, analyze the situation, and construct the future Portuguese socialism." As envisioned by Coutinho, the new party would include several of the parties that now cooperate with the Movement. It would be ideologically situated between the Portuguese Communists and Socialists. An effort to form such a party might be made after the election of April 25.

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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The new government, meanwhile, is concentrating on Portugal's economic problems. In a press conference on Tuesday, Prime Minister Goncalves announced that an emergency economic plan will be completed within three weeks. It will aim at curbing rising unemployment and stabilizing the cost of living.

Goncalves warned about Western attitudes toward Portugal and of a possible economic boycott by nations that disapprove of the direction Portugal is taking. He cited the departure of several international businesses in the past year as evidence of the lack of Western support.

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Exempt from general
declassification schedule of E.O. 11652
exemption category 5B(1), (2), (3)
Declassified only on approval of
the Director of Central Intelligence

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Vietnam: The communists evidently intend to do as much damage as possible to South Vietnamese forces without waiting for reinforcements.
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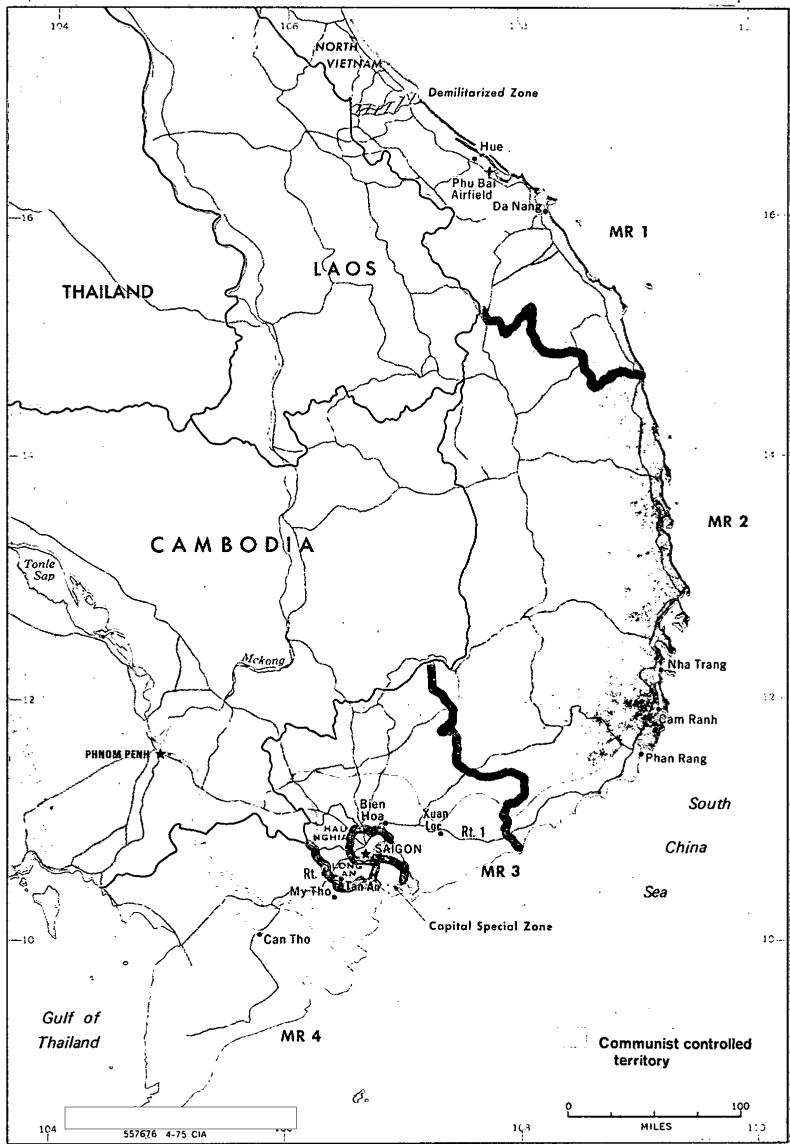
Cambodia: Phnom Penh's outer defenses appear to be collapsing. *(Page 3)*

Egypt-PLO: President Sadat conceded little to PLO chairman Arafat during their meeting in Cairo this week. *(Page 5)*

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Notes: Sikkim; Turkey *(Page 9)*

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VIETNAM

The communists evidently intend to do as much damage as possible to South Vietnamese forces without waiting for more divisions to arrive from the north.

The North Vietnamese may be trying to force the defenders of Saigon to concentrate east and west of the capital in order to weaken the defenses to the north where the communist 9th Division is deployed.

Both sides appear to regard the ongoing battle for Xuan Loc on Saigon's eastern flank as critical and are committing substantial units to this area. The city was heavily bombarded again yesterday with artillery and rockets, and the communists are expanding their holdings on the outskirts and strengthening their blockade of Route 1 leading to Saigon.

Parts of three North Vietnamese divisions--the 6th, 7th, and the 341st--have been identified in the action. If the entire 7th Division were committed to the action, the situation would become even more critical. The South Vietnamese are committing all of the 18th Division on this front. This unit has not earned much respect as a tough fighting outfit, but with the option of retreat down Route 1 at least temporarily shut off, it has incentive to stand and fight.

West and southwest of Saigon, pressure is building rapidly, and a second major battlefield may develop close to the capital. The South Vietnamese now believe that most of the North Vietnamese 5th Division and parts of the 3rd Division are moving into the western districts of both Hau Nghia and Long An provinces. Small advance units of the North Vietnamese 5th Division have been attacking near the Long An Province capital of Tan An for the past two days. The communists give a high priority to cutting Route 4 south of Saigon, and recent shifts of the North Vietnamese 8th Division suggest that it could soon be in a position to block Route 4 north of My Tho. The South Vietnamese are shifting sizable forces in reaction to the growing threat to the west.

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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Recent reporting suggests North Vietnamese party boss Le Duan may now be visiting communist-controlled areas of South Vietnam to make a first hand assessment of the situation.

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Intercepted messages and aerial photography confirm that the North Vietnamese are strengthening their air defenses in South Vietnam. Photography reveals several pieces of SA-2 missile equipment in northeastern Cambodia near the South Vietnamese border. Intercepts had earlier indicated that four SA-2 regiments were located near the Demilitarized Zone and in northern South Vietnam. The communists are likely to continue their buildup of air defenses in the newly "liberated" areas and may even move SA-2 firing units into the provinces north of Saigon.

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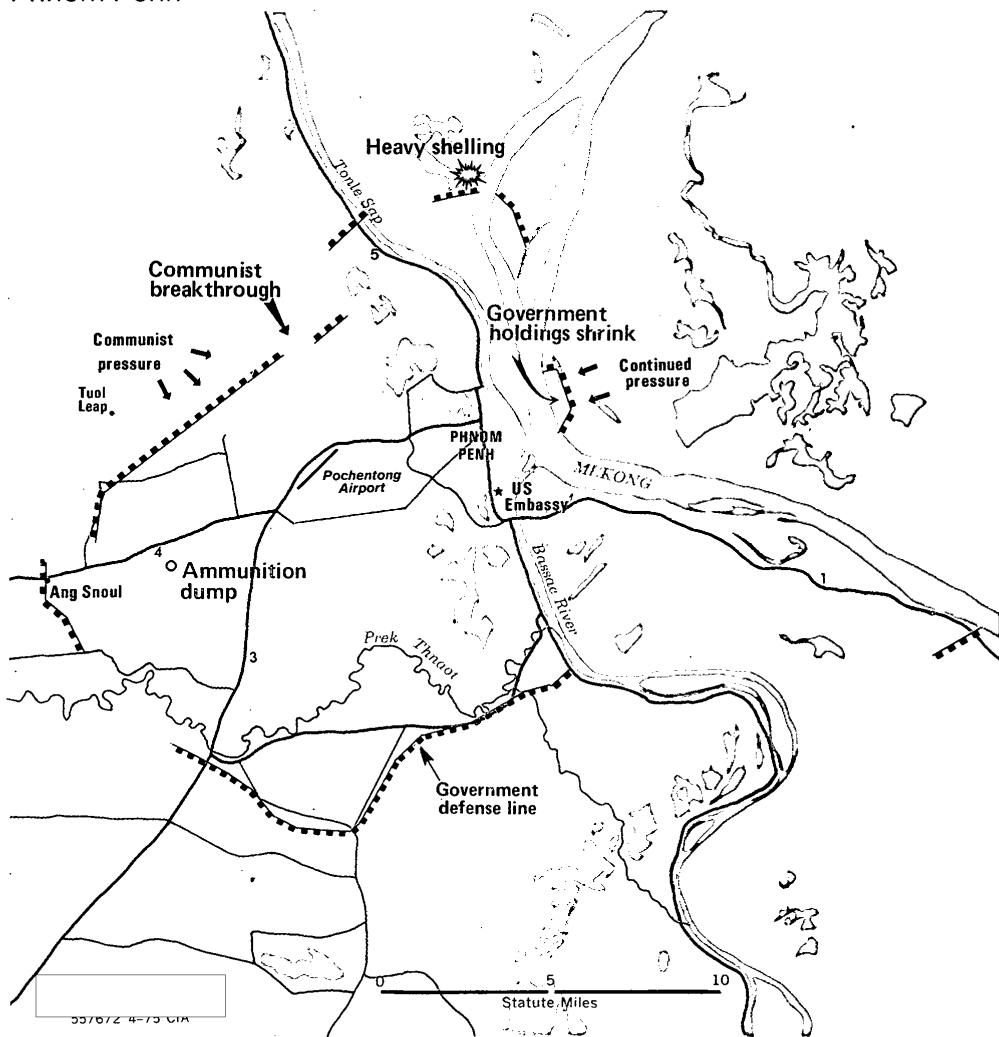
Preliminary information on Prime Minister Nguyen Ba Can's new cabinet suggests that it will do little to breathe new life into the anti-communist resistance. Several appointees are holdovers from the Khiem cabinet. The new faces are technicians or political associates of Can with little national prominence. They all are solidly pro-government. Several of the most important portfolios--foreign affairs, defense, interior--have yet to be announced, possibly because Thieu and Can have not yet agreed on individuals who are willing to serve.

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[redacted] the full cabinet will be selected by April 11 and sworn in the next day. The first working session is scheduled for the 13th, a date which seems optimistic, since several positions are still vacant.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

Phnom Penh



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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

CAMBODIA

Phnom Penh's outer defenses appear to be collapsing. Khmer communist forces yesterday moved through gaps in the defense line north of Pocheutong airport and attacked government forces from the rear. Cambodian army commanders are trying to organize a counterattack, but US defense attachés do not believe that enough troops are available to push back the insurgents.

Heavy combat is also continuing northwest of Pocheutong airport where government units have lost another position within four miles of the airport. To the west, seesaw fighting persists near Route 4 and the army's main ammunition dump. The communists have not yet begun to hit airport facilities with recoilless rifle or mortar fire, but rocket and artillery attacks have increased.

Some government units on the east bank of the Mekong River opposite Phnom Penh broke yesterday, following another day of steady ground attacks. The Khmer navy has picked up a number of troops forced into the river, including the acting commander of one of the two government brigades on the east bank. The communists are firing recoilless rifles at Phnom Penh's waterfront from newly won positions on the river. Along the river to the northeast, government positions upstream from the main navy headquarters were the targets of intense shellings early yesterday.

A recent intercepted message reveals that the communists have already begun planning for the occupation of Phnom Penh. Orders have gone out that public facilities--which will become the property of the "People's Revolutionary Government"--are to be protected and those who "ravage" will be punished. The communists are clearly worried that wholesale chaos will follow the collapse of the government in Phnom Penh, and the message mentioned the possibility of evacuating civilians from the city "in order to stabilize the situation." The message also gave

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

strict orders for the safekeeping of "foreign nationals, such as Frenchmen and various embassy personnel," saying that they would be "kept to be used to carry out foreign affairs matters in the future."

* * *

Acting Cambodian president Saukham Koy yesterday called an emergency session of the cabinet. Just before the meeting, Koy indicated to Ambassador Dean that he would ask Prime Minister Long Boret to step down. Koy planned to ask Chau Sau--the leader of the Democratic Party--to form a new government and arrange immediately a "humanitarian solution" to the conflict. All of this could come to naught given the rapidly deteriorating military situation and the possibility that key government leaders may soon leave aboard US evacuation aircraft. At this point, 148 US citizens and 449 Cambodians and third-country nationals remain on the US mission's evacuation list.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

EGYPT-PLO

Egypt's President Sadat conceded little to Palestine Liberation Organization chairman Yasir Arafat in Cairo this week.

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[redacted] the president promised only that Egypt would continue its efforts to "guarantee" PLO participation at Geneva.

The two also agreed to work toward an early meeting of the "confrontation forces"--Egypt, Syria, and the PLO--to coordinate their strategies. Such a meeting is likely before the Arab summit in June.

Arafat may have given more in Cairo than he received. [redacted] the PLO must attend the Geneva conference if the substance of the Palestinian problem was to be discussed.

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[redacted] the military secretariat of the 20-member Arab League could speak on behalf of the Palestinians if the conference considered only another round of military disengagement agreements.

If this is true, Arafat has shifted significantly toward the position held by Sadat, who suggested recently that the Arab League could represent the Palestinians at Geneva. Sadat considers this a possible way around Israel's objections to negotiating with the PLO.

Arafat's reported conciliatory stance may have resulted from a harsh dressing down delivered by Sadat, first to Arafat's deputy Salah Khalaf and later to Arafat himself at King Faysal's funeral in Riyadh late last month.

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Sadat derided Arafat's weakness within the PLO and declared he would refuse to receive any Palestinian official in Cairo. Only after the intercession of Algeria's President Boumediene did Sadat agree to meet Arafat in Cairo.

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

Sadat has long been dissatisfied with Arafat's inability to make hard decisions on behalf of the entire PLO or to force compromises on the organization's leadership. Sadat finally lost patience with Arafat and the PLO early this year when they began openly attacking Egypt's reliance on US mediation.

Despite claims of a healing in the Egypt-PLO rift, Sadat probably is not confident that he has won lasting concessions from Arafat. The continued strain is reflected in the treatment of the Sadat-Arafat meeting in the Cairo press, which said that complete harmony on strategy and tactics is always "a difficult matter" even among those with common objectives.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

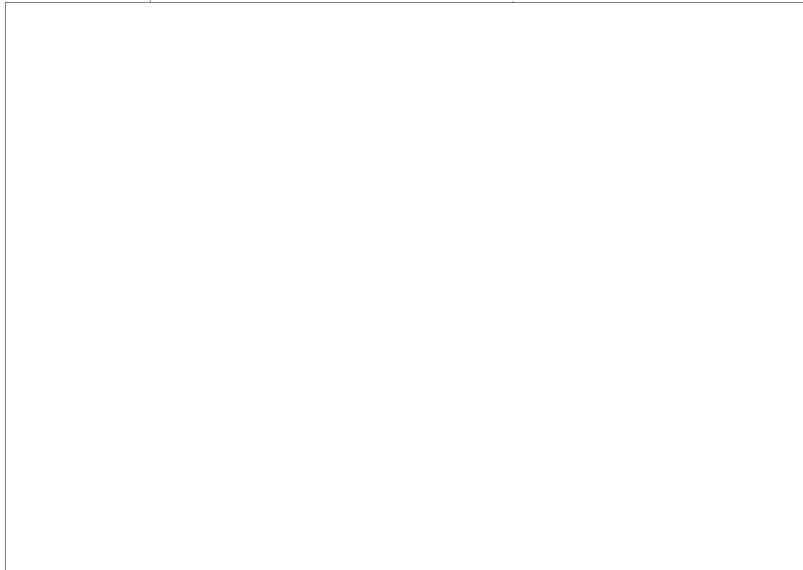
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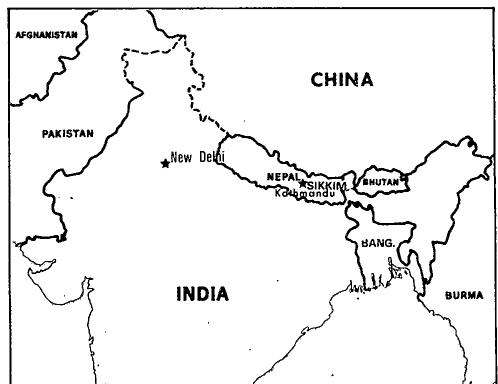
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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY



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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

NOTES

The Indians this week, responding to demands from the dominant political groups in Sikkim, moved to tighten their grip on the tiny kingdom.

On Wednesday, Indian troops stationed in Sikkim disarmed and disbanded the 400-man palace guard loyal to the hereditary ruler. The Sikkimese legislature yesterday voted to abolish the figurehead monarchy and seek to become an Indian state. The legislature, controlled by antiroyalists who won a landslide victory in elections a year ago, now plans to hold some form of referendum, reportedly next week, to obtain popular endorsement of its latest actions. China, which sharply criticized India's moves in Sikkim last year, is likely to be even more critical of the Indians for their role in the latest developments. The developments in Sikkim will also worry the Nepalese who are uneasy about India's intentions toward them.

* * *

The Turkish National Assembly has completed its debate on Prime Minister Demirel's new government program and has scheduled a vote of confidence for Saturday.

Demirel's chances now appear no better than even. There have been transfers and defections among the political parties supporting his right-wing Nationalist Front, and additional party shifts could change the picture again before the vote is taken.

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Notes by D.C.I.

4/12/75



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April 12, 1975

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exemption category 5B(1), (2), (3)
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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

April 12, 1975

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South Vietnam: Heavy fighting continues in the Xuan Loc area. The North Vietnamese army 1st Corps and 312th Division are making rapid progress in their move south. (Page 2)

Thailand-USSR: Army commander Krit Siwara believes Thailand must seek closer links with the Soviet Union. (Page 4)

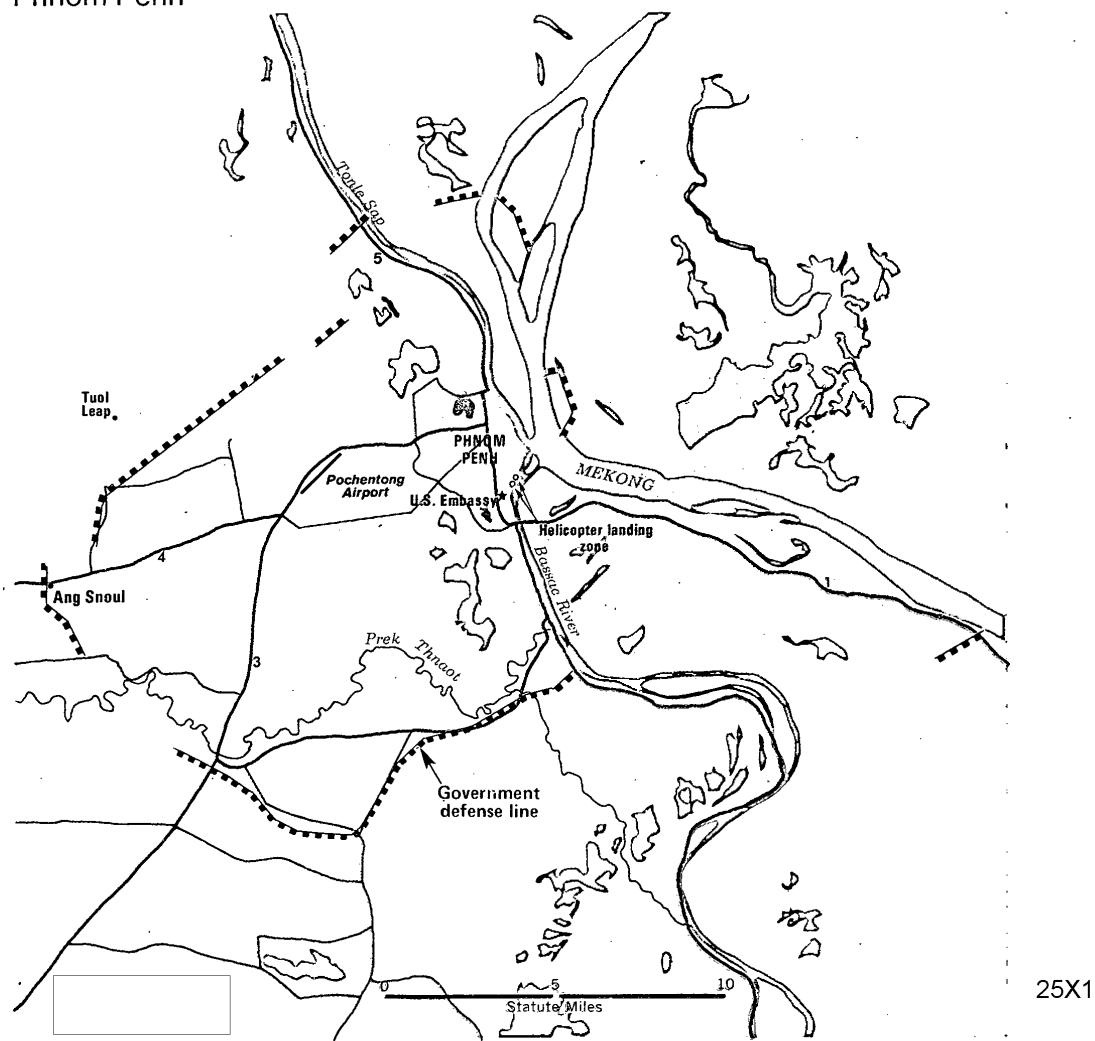
China: China reportedly plans a significant reduction in military manpower in 1975. (Page 5)

Portugal: The major political parties have formally given up any opportunity for civilian control of the government for at least three years. (Page 7)

Notes: USSR; Syria; Belgium (Page 8)

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

Phnom Penh



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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

CAMBODIA

The evacuation of Phnom Penh went smoothly last night. The entire operation took little more than four hours. Some 260 persons were evacuated, including about 140 Americans. Several American newsmen apparently chose to remain.

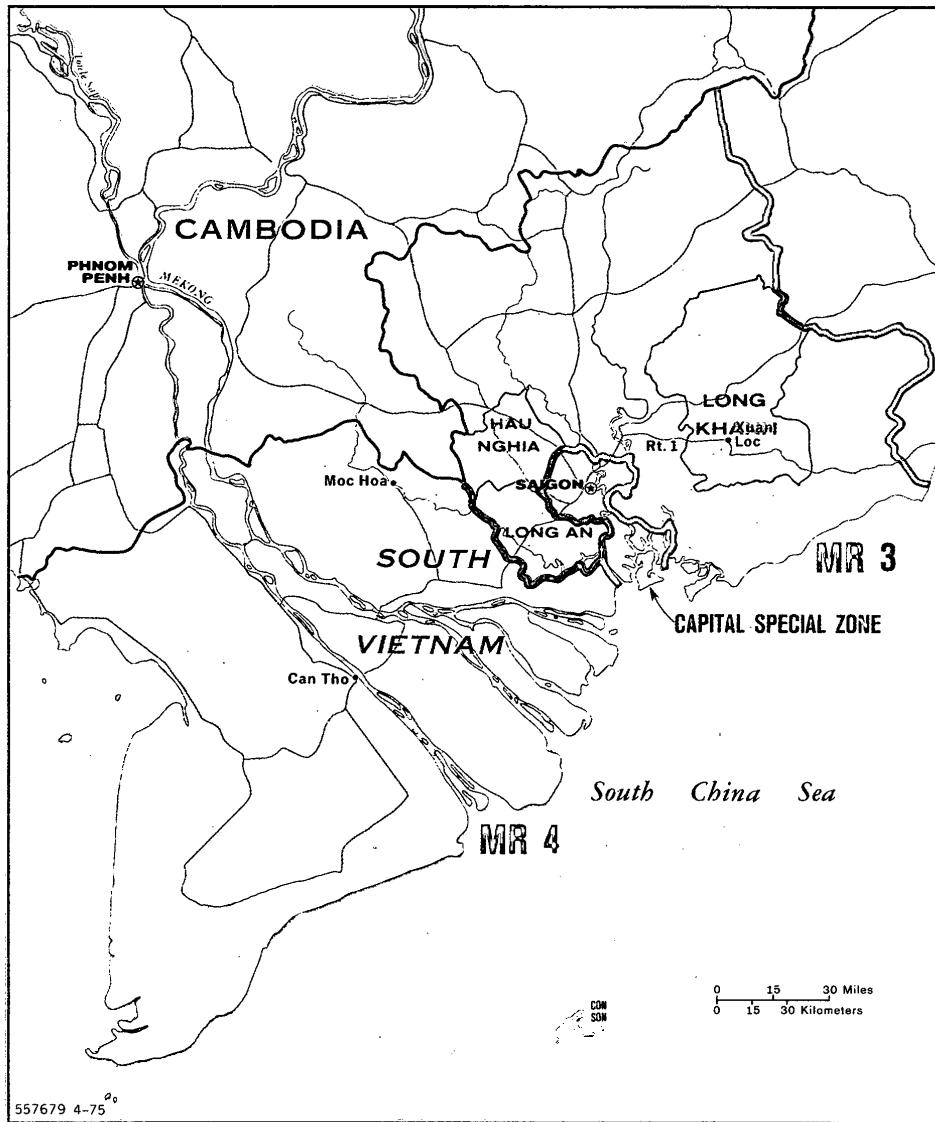
There was no panic in the city. The last helicopter was fired on; no Americans were hit, but one Cambodian was killed and seven were wounded.

Ambassador Dean, in a telephone conversation with Saigon just before he left, reported that a number of Cambodian officials had placed their families aboard the helicopters but that most of the cabinet members elected to stay. Republic Party strongman Sirik Matak--who ranks high on the list of "traitors" the communists say they will execute--was the only high ranking official specifically mentioned as staying. Acting president Saukham Koy was one of the few officials who left. Ambassador Dean reported that the cabinet was meeting to decide its next course of action.

* * *

According to the last reports of the US defense attachés in Phnom Penh, communist forces have widened the gap in government defenses north of Pochentong airport, but so far have made no effort to push closer to the airfield. Inconclusive ground fighting occurred on other battlefronts around the capital. Intercepted messages indicate that the communists are nearly ready to launch heavier attacks, including shelling of the city from the east bank of the Mekong River.

Artillery and rocket fire on Pochentong airport intensified yesterday, forcing cancellation of the last two DC-8 flights from Saigon. As of yesterday, Phnom Penh had an 11-day supply of ammunition, 10 days of rice, and 13 days of fuel.



FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

SOUTH VIETNAM

Heavy fighting is continuing in the Xuan Loc area, and the government reports this morning that it has pushed the North Vietnamese out of the town for the third consecutive day.

South Vietnamese airborne troops arrived in Xuan Loc yesterday, and a relief column is also fighting its way eastward along Route 1 toward the town. The reinforcements will give the government the equivalent of about two divisions at Xuan Loc, and the region commander plans to launch a major counterattack today against the three communist divisions there.

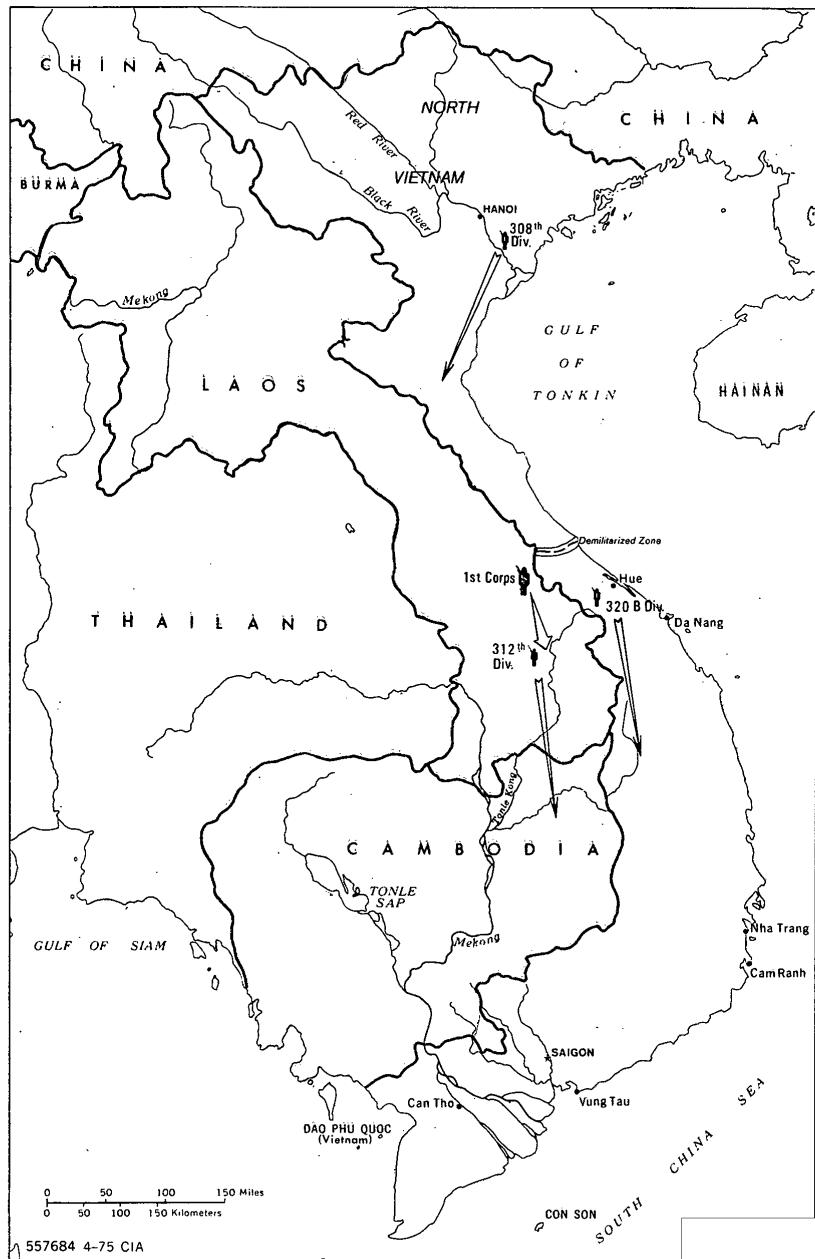
Communist attacks have declined in the northern delta, and the government appears to have the initiative. South Vietnamese troops overran a communist base area near the Cambodia border, killing several dozen communists and capturing a substantial amount of supplies. This probably will temporarily disrupt communist plans for attacks in Hau Nghia and Long An provinces. Farther south, the communists early today continued to probe government defenses around Can Tho, and also attacked two district towns along Route 4.

* * *

The North Vietnamese army 1st Corps and 312th Division are making rapid progress in their moves south. Radio direction finding placed the corps headquarters in the Laos panhandle on April 9 and the 312th headquarters farther south near the Bolovens Plateau on April 10. Both were near the Demilitarized Zone a few days ago. The movement through eastern Laos indicates that the 1st Corps and its subordinate divisions are going to the Saigon area. The 312th could arrive in the next two weeks, and other units of the corps could reach the provinces north of Saigon even sooner. The 320B Division, the lead unit of which crossed into northern South Vietnam in late March, has not been spotted since then. Some of its units could now be approaching the southern part of South Vietnam.

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY



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Hanoi has bluntly rejected your request for a cease-fire. It charged that you are asking the South Vietnamese people to deprive themselves "of their legitimate right to punish the enemy," (presumably the Saigon government) in order to protect the Paris Agreement.

South Vietnamese reaction to your address to Congress appears to be one of limited encouragement, coupled with disappointment that the speech did not go further. [redacted]

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[redacted] to play down as much as possible "or even ignore" references to the evacuation of Americans and South Vietnamese.

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THAILAND-USSR

Army commander Krit Siwara, who has been a strong supporter of the US role in Southeast Asia, [redacted] has reluctantly concluded that Thailand must seek closer links with the Soviet Union. [redacted] this is necessary to balance Chinese and North Vietnamese influence in the area. Krit's views on the subject, however, are not likely to become official Thai policy soon.

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[redacted] Thailand must seek a solution similar to that adopted by India, which has turned to the Soviet Union as a means of offsetting Chinese influence. [redacted] moving closer to the Soviet Union would be a delicate task and that the Thai should make only such accommodations as are necessary to balance the activities of China and North Vietnam. [redacted] move was a "sad alternative" but a necessary one since it was clear that Thailand cannot depend on the US to keep its commitments in the future.

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There does not appear to be any strong endorsement within the Thai foreign ministry for Krit's views on the need for a counterweight to China. Indeed, [redacted] the foreign ministry is moving to improve relations with Peking and Hanoi in response to events in Indochina. The foreign ministry probably estimates that better relations with the Soviet Union--should Bangkok choose to proceed in that direction--could at some point enhance Thailand's "neutralist" credentials, but that rapprochement with China is of greater importance at this time. Should Thailand eventually decide to alter its relationship with the US by moving toward the Soviets, Krit's support would be crucial.

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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CHINA

Peking reportedly plans a significant reduction in military manpower in 1975 in order to reduce military expenditures.

[redacted] a decision to demobilize one million men in 1975 was announced at a recent military conference presided over by Politburo member and veteran military leader Chu Te. We cannot precisely estimate the size of any net reduction of China's military forces. Our estimates of China's routine annual recruitment and demobilization range from 500,000 to 1,000,000 men; to what extent the one million [redacted] includes this usual turnover is unclear. [redacted] reference to reduced spending suggests that, in contrast with previous years, some of the troops demobilized in 1975 would not be replaced.

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China's military forces are currently estimated at well over four million men. The army alone has over 3.5 million men; the deepest cut obviously would have to come there.

If a large-scale reduction occurs, it would suggest that the Chinese believe there is a reduced threat of imminent hostilities from both the USSR and the US. Although they almost certainly would continue to maintain large numbers of troops in the four northern military regions, the Chinese would have fewer troops immediately available as reinforcements.

Peking did not call up additional recruits following the Sino-Soviet border incidents of 1969, but it postponed demobilization of all the troops then under arms. This action served to swell the ranks of the army, and the reported demobilization this year might be designed in part to offset that increase. In recent years, demobilization of men whose terms of service were completed and induction of replacements appear to have taken place in normal fashion.

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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During the past several years, Peking has made strong efforts to return the military to the barracks and to reduce its role in political life. Peking may have determined that it now has more troops than can be economically and effectively used.

A significant reduction of forces probably would not be without incident. Many soldiers probably see the army as a stepping stone to employment in the country's major population centers. They would naturally resent being sent to farm jobs in rural areas. In fact, there have been numerous incidents lately involving demobilized servicemen demonstrating over the leadership's failure to give them the benefits they expect.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

PORUGAL

The major political parties yesterday signed an agreement presented to them by the ruling Armed Forces Movement, formally giving up the opportunity for civilian control of the Portuguese government for at least three years.

The signing of the pact means that the election on April 25 will not have a significant impact on the substance of the new constitution, which will be approved by the assembly but prepared under guidelines dictated by the Armed Forces Movement. The election nevertheless should be an important indication of the political sympathies of the Portuguese people.

The Popular Democrats and the Socialists, for instance, hope their showing will influence the Movement to look upon them more favorably and to turn away from the communists. Three embassy sources have reported, however, that enemies of the moderate left parties may move to prevent them from collecting a large portion of the vote. They indicate that the committee of inquiry into the March 11 coup has reached preliminary conclusions that may implicate these parties. The committee's report will probably be published a few days before the election, and even unsupported charges could hurt the Popular Democrats and the Socialists at the polls.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

NOTES

The Soviet failure last weekend in their attempt to orbit two cosmonauts in a Soyuz spacecraft has once again raised some serious questions about the overall reliability of Soviet systems and the safety of US astronauts in the Apollo-Soyuz test project.

The Soviets have assured the US that the problem was unique to an "older" booster and will have no effect on the "newer" booster to be used for the test project launch. While it is true that some modifications have been made, we have no evidence to indicate that the booster has been changed or improved significantly.

* * *

Syria's ground forces have intensified combat training over the past few months and have begun to integrate defensive operations into their battlefield training plans.

The ground forces are already well ahead of the training cycle of previous years. They have been practicing such tactics as the controlled withdrawal from an area while under fire, preparation of ambushes, avoidance of enemy strongpoints, and the resupply of armored units under combat conditions. This last was a particularly serious problem for Syrian forces during the 1973 war, when many Syrian tanks were abandoned on the battlefield.

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Belgian

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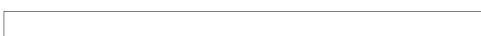


The President's Daily Brief

April 14

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Exempt from general
declassification schedule of E.O. 11652
exemption category 5B(1),(2),(3)
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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

April 14, 1975

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Egypt: The cabinet resigned yesterday to clear the way for President Sadat's anticipated economic program. (Page 4)

Syria-Iraq: Relations continue to deteriorate. (Page 5)

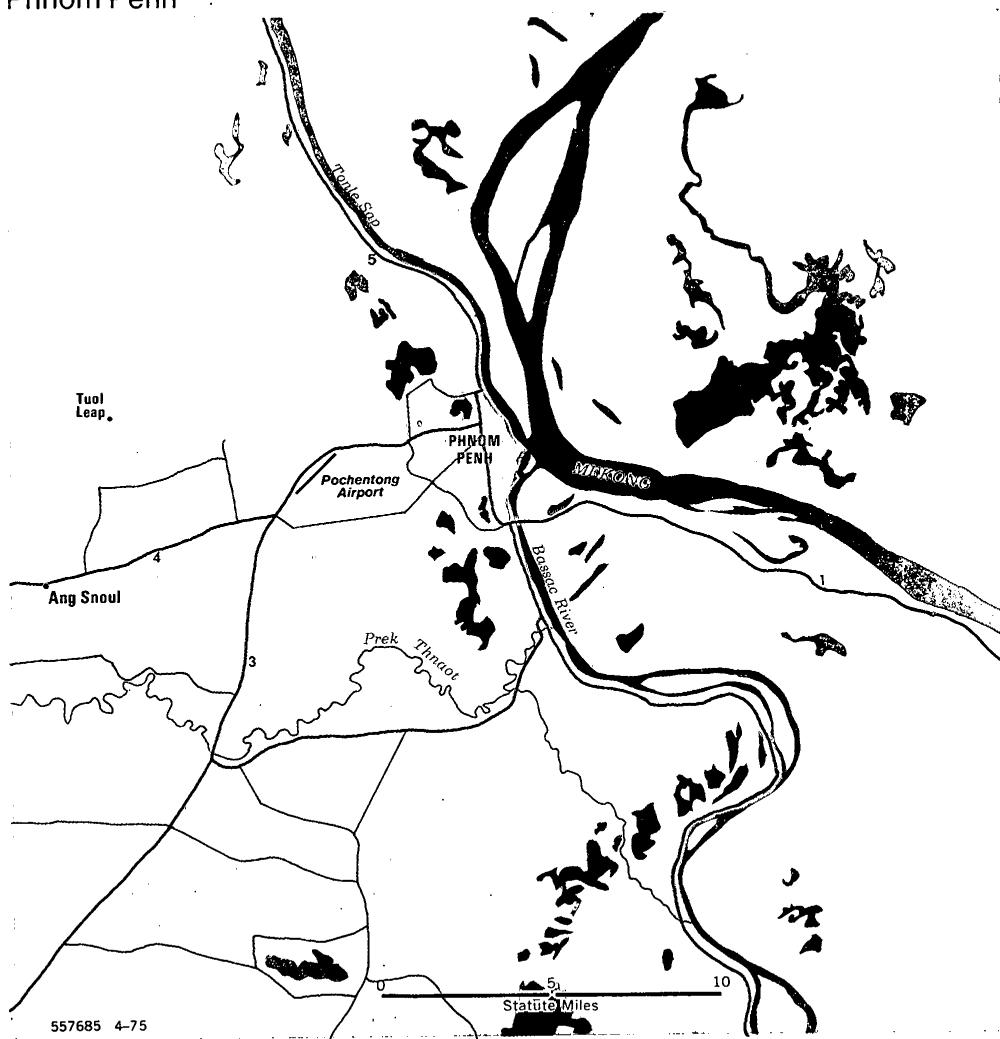
USSR-Iraq: Iraqi strongman Saddam Husayn begins a visit to the Soviet Union today. (Page 6)

Portugal: The Revolutionary Council announced its intentions to continue nationalizing "basic sectors" of the economy amid rumors of a new power play. (Page 7)

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

Phnom Penh



FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

CAMBODIA

Intercepted communications continue to reflect communist preparations for a major push against Phnom Penh; unconfirmed press reports suggest the push began this morning. The new leadership in Phnom Penh appears determined to hold on as long as possible.

Intercepted messages have indicated a buildup of communist units in the capital area and last-minute preparations for an assault. According to press reports, insurgent gunners began shelling Phnom Penh early this morning and communist ground forces were advancing on the city from several directions.

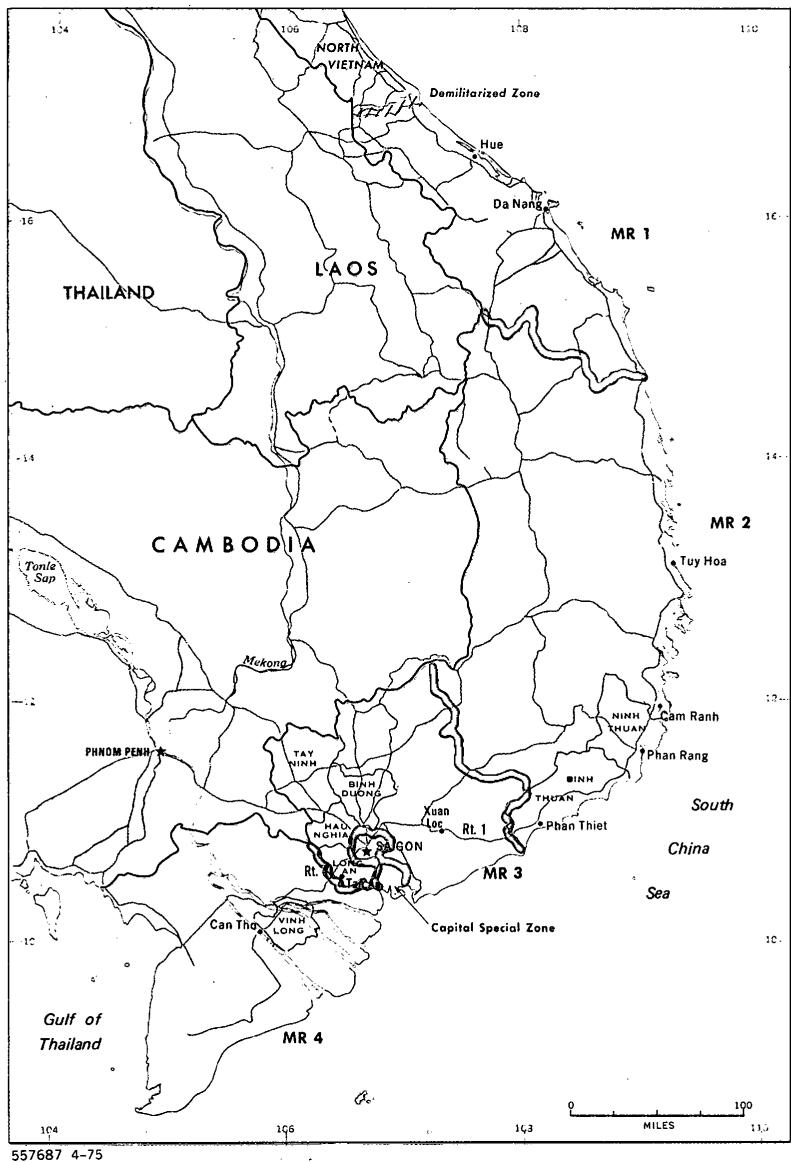
Sak Sutsakhan, president of the governing "Supreme Council," announced over Phnom Penh radio this morning that a T-28 fighter aircraft had dropped two bombs on the general staff headquarters compound in the capital. Sak said that he and his colleagues were unhurt, but that seven persons had been killed and a number of others wounded. He called on the populace to remain calm and imposed a 24-hour curfew. The bombing appears to be the act of a lone individual, rather than a revolt by the air force; the air force's commander is a member of the seven-man ruling council.

In announcing the formation of the Supreme Council and the imposition of martial law over the weekend, Sak Sutsakhan and Council Vice President Long Boret both pledged to strengthen the military and political position of the government with the aim of achieving a "peaceful solution" through negotiations. Despite its resolution, the government will run out of the wherewithal to continue fighting within two weeks.

Government defenses around the southeastern provincial capital of Svay Rieng reportedly collapsed on Saturday in the face of heavy insurgent attacks. Some government units were still holding on yesterday, but local officials reported that the fall of the city was imminent.

Cambodian army officers described the situation at the southwestern provincial capital of Kompong Speu as "critical."

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY



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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

SOUTH VIETNAM

Heavy fighting continues in the Xuan Loc area. The city's reinforced defenders have beaten back strong communist attacks. Effective air and artillery support has contributed significantly to the South Vietnamese efforts to stand and fight.

Route 1 connecting Xuan Loc and Saigon is still blocked by communist forces. The regional commander, however, has decided to launch a major operation today, involving two armored task forces and an infantry regiment, to reopen the highway. Meanwhile, the South Vietnamese are using the C-130 to bomb enemy troops massed around Xuan Loc, and along interdicted sections of Route 1 west of the city.

In the delta, strong counterattacks by elements of the government's 7th Division have forced the North Vietnamese to curtail temporarily their drive to cut Route 4 southwest of Saigon. Three regiments of the North Vietnamese 5th Division are committed to the effort to interdict the highway, which is the rice lifeline to Saigon.

The communists are moving additional forces into position for an assault on the western approach to Saigon. Most of the North Vietnamese 9th Division and supporting air defense units have been detected shifting into northeastern Hau Nghia Province. The communists now have almost three full divisions--the 3rd, 5th, and 9th--along Saigon's western defense perimeter, and this could force the South Vietnamese to shift reinforcements to this front.

The most significant action over the weekend in Military Region 4 was in the central delta. Government counterattacks against two communist regiments which had been blocking Route 4 just north of Can Tho in Vinh Long Province succeeded in reopening the highway early this morning. Communist losses were described as heavy.

Government holdings in coastal Ninh Thuan and Binh Thuan provinces are likely to be seriously challenged soon. Elements of the North Vietnamese 968th Division were detected on April 11 along Route 1 near Cam Ranh. This division has moved south to link up with the North Vietnamese 10th Division, apparently in preparation for attacks on

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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the cities of Phan Rang and Phan Thiet. The South Vietnamese believe the North Vietnamese 320th Division may also be moving into attack positions west of Phan Rang.

* * *

The government is making considerable progress in rebuilding the combat units extracted from northern and central South Vietnam, and many of them will soon be ready for combat. The best of these units, the Marine Division, already has two brigades ready. A third brigade is scheduled to complete its reorganization in a week, and a fourth about a week later.

The 2nd Division has four operational battalions, and several others are scheduled to be ready for combat late this week. Parts of two reorganized regiments have been dispatched to Phan Rang and Phan Thiet cities.

The 3rd Division has only one battalion ready for combat so far. Three ranger groups should become operational later this month, and new artillery units are being created for assignment to the rebuilt infantry regiments and divisions.

* * *

President Thieu's principal economic adviser has stated that your address to Congress implied that the US wants South Vietnam to "do all it can to stabilize the military situation," and that "some military victories" before April 19 would improve chances of Congressional approval of the aid package. Such an attitude probably explains in part the large numbers of troops and amounts of equipment the South Vietnamese are committing to the battle for Xuan Loc.

North Vietnamese and Viet Cong media are giving more attention to the evacuation of Americans. Both have charged that the "protection of the safety of Americans" is a pretext for military intervention and warn that such a scheme will be "severely punished." In a statement broadcast yesterday, the Provisional Revolutionary Government maintained that if the US would withdraw its personnel from South Vietnam immediately, these withdrawals "will certainly not encounter any difficulties or obstacles."

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

EGYPT

Prime Minister Hijazi and members of the cabinet submitted their resignations to President Sadat yesterday. This action apparently is intended to clear the way for the President's anticipated "internal action program" to treat the country's economic ills.

According to Cairo radio, the President will address the nation today to outline the required work on the domestic front "in the coming phase." Sadat may also announce the composition of a new cabinet, although this step could be delayed several days. Even the promise of cabinet changes would serve his immediate purpose, which is to draw attention away from the breakdown of peace negotiations toward his plans for economic development.

The future of Prime Minister Hijazi, who has had overall responsibility for the economy, is uncertain. He has been doing a good job recently, and the President has few obvious alternative candidates from whom to choose. Cairo newspapers report that Sadat has turned aside suggestions that he should assume the post of prime minister as he did in 1973 and 1974. The most extensive cabinet changes probably will come in the technical and economic ministries.

The most important figures in the cabinet--Foreign Minister Fahmi and War Minister Gamassy--are likely to retain their posts. Sadat has gone out of his way recently to demonstrate his regard for Fahmi; only last week he announced that the foreign minister would go to Moscow on April 19.

According to the Cairo press, Fahmi will discuss with the Soviets preparations for a possible resumption of the Geneva peace conference. Fahmi reportedly is preparing for comprehensive talks that will range from the nature of a final settlement to such procedural questions as how to arrange Palestinian participation in the conference.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

SYRIA-IRAQ

Syrian-Iraqi relations continue to deteriorate. Syrian Foreign Minister Khaddam has rejected Iraq's call for a meeting of Arab foreign ministers to discuss Baghdad's charges that Syria is diverting water from the Euphrates River, although he did agree to consider the dispute at a technical level. Syria probably is withholding water from Iraq to retaliate for Baghdad's apparent involvement in a recent attempt to overthrow Syrian President Asad.

Syria does not want relations to worsen to the extent that Iraq might refuse military support to Damascus in the event of renewed hostilities with Israel. Unless Damascus receives some indication that Baghdad plans to limit its interference in Syria's domestic affairs and to moderate its propaganda attacks on Asad, however, Syria is unlikely to allow technical experts to "solve" the water dispute.

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As of last week, Syrian authorities reportedly had arrested approximately 400 Syrians for their involvement in the alleged Iraqi-sponsored conspiracy to oust or assassinate Asad. [redacted]

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[redacted]

The Iraqi ambassador and his staff are reported to be under 24-hour surveillance, and lower level Iraqi diplomats are being harassed by Syrian authorities. The Syrian Baath Party congress last week condemned the Iraqi government for collusion with Iran, sabotage of Arab solidarity, and abandonment of the Palestinians.

Syria reportedly has moved two armored regiments and some paramilitary units into the Euphrates Dam region to forestall any Iraqi military thrust in the area. [redacted]

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[redacted]

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

USSR-IRAQ

Iraqi strongman Saddam Husayn begins an official visit to the Soviet Union today--his fifth since 1970. Providing a background to his talks is the USSR's concern that its influence in Iraq may decrease. Just now, the Soviets' worry is focused on the agreement Iraq signed with Iran last month in Algiers.

Moscow presumably sees its anxiety over the accord justified by the rapid collapse of the Kurdish rebellion and the easing of Iraqi-Iranian tensions. Even before the agreement in Algiers was negotiated, the Soviets were upset with Iraq's efforts to attract Western technical expertise and to buy Western arms. Certainly over the short term, however, Iraq will continue to look to the USSR for military spare parts, technical assistance, and training for its predominantly Soviet-equipped military.

The two governments will probably maintain their different approaches to Arab-Israeli affairs. Baghdad has repeatedly refused Moscow's suggestions that Iraq moderate its rigid opposition to a negotiated settlement with Israel and support the Soviet approach to the Geneva peace talks.

Iraq is likely to press for Soviet support in its dispute with Syria over the water flow in the Euphrates River. Baghdad complains that the Soviet-built Euphrates Dam in Syria diverts Iraq's share of the river. The Soviets, who once proposed an agreement to Baghdad and Damascus to regulate the water flow, may view mediation of the dispute as one way to maintain influence in Iraq.

New economic agreements may be announced during the visit. Iraq, which has over \$300 million in unused Soviet credits, has been negotiating with Moscow recently on numerous irrigation projects. Baghdad may give the Soviet Union a major role in a \$2-billion, five-year irrigation program.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

PORUGAL

The Revolutionary Council announced this weekend intentions to continue nationalizing "basic sectors" of the economy. Rumors of a new power play, now circulating in Lisbon, indicate that political tensions are again on the rise.

Leaders of the Armed Forces Movement have designated private interests in communications and transportation as next in line for nationalization. The Revolutionary Council reiterated its concern over Portugal's sagging economy; it has already pledged that the new cabinet will present an emergency economic plan within three weeks.

The US embassy reports that rumors of a new power play are widespread in Lisbon although little specific information is available. It is increasingly clear that the Armed Forces Movement regrets its promise to hold elections, now scheduled for April 25, because of fear that the results will show poor support for the Movement's program. Moderates remain concerned that an effort will be made to cancel or delay the elections, and there are rumors that some Movement leaders are considering a roundup of opposition politicians of both moderate and conservative persuasions.

The Movement has alienated several extreme left-wing parties that have voiced opposition to its institutionalization and to the election process. The Armed Forces Movement has banned one party, prohibited another from participating in elections, and suspended access to radio and television to a third for five days.

Further contributing to the general tension is the ambition of Admiral Rosa Coutinho to be first among equals within the Movement's leadership. Coutinho suggested last week that the performance of the civilian political parties had been so poor that the Movement should form its own party. He proposed that ideologically it should lie somewhere between the Communist and Socialist parties.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

NOTE

In Turkey, the Demirel government--a four-party, right-of-center coalition--won its initial parliamentary vote of confidence on Saturday by a vote of 222 to 218.

The closeness of the vote illustrates the fragile nature of the alliance Demirel has pieced together. It is questionable whether the weak government can remain in power for an extended period.

Top Secret



The President's Daily Brief

April 15, 1975

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~~Top Secret~~ 25X1

Exempt from general
declassification schedule of E.O. 11652
exemption category SR(1)(2)(3)
Declassify only on approval of
the Director of Central Intelligence

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

April 15, 1975

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South Vietnam: The government still holds Xuan Loc, and a strong defense around Can Tho appears to be forcing the North Vietnamese to pull back. (Page 1)

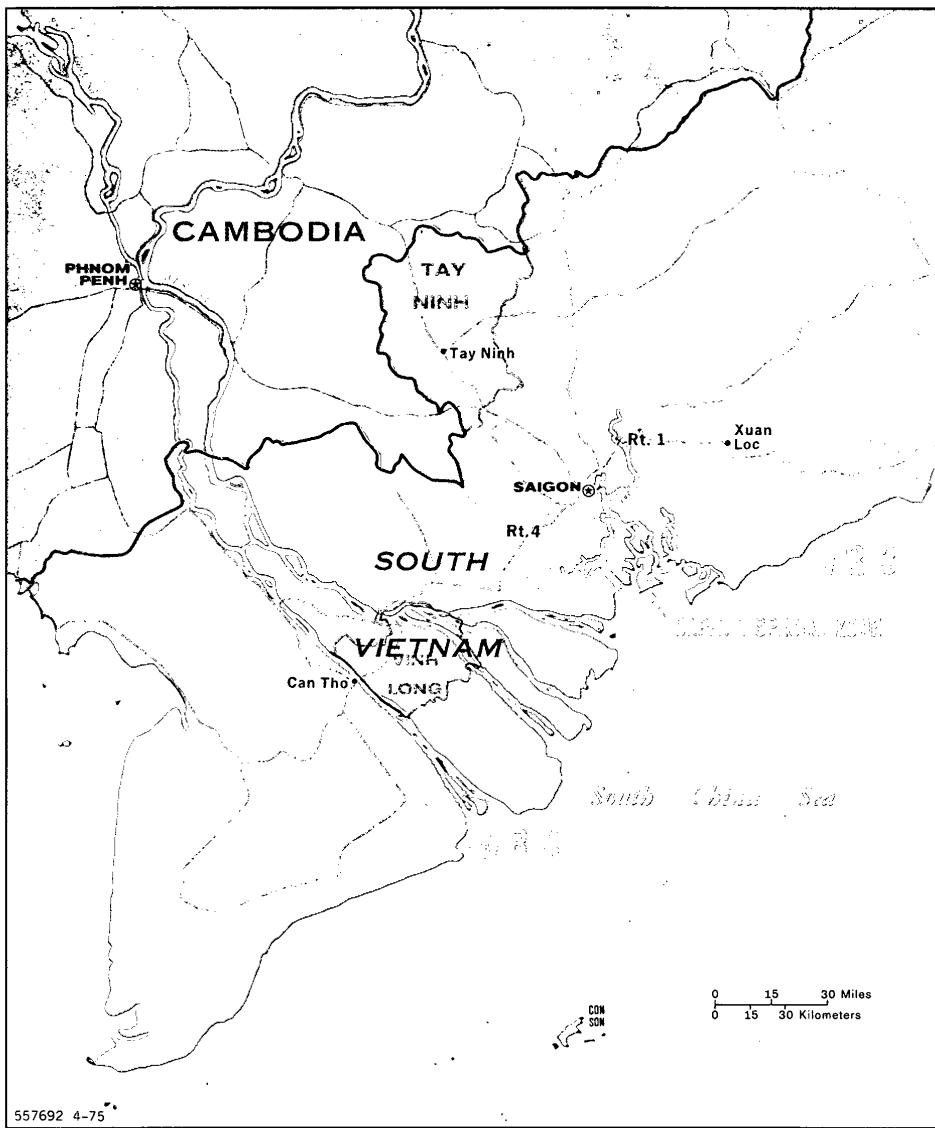
Cambodia: The communists, pressing closer to Phnom Penh from the northwest, have launched major attacks southeast of the city in an apparent final effort to force the government's capitulation. (Page 3)

Egypt: Newly appointed Prime Minister Salim will be no better able than his predecessor to solve Egypt's basic economic problems. (Page 4)

Israel: Foreign Minister Allon's two-week visit to the US is viewed with some misgivings in Israel. (Page 5)

Notes: Turkey-Greece; Israel; Lebanon (Page 6)

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY



FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY**SOUTH VIETNAM**

The South Vietnamese still hold Xuan Loc, and their strong defense around Can Tho appears to be forcing the North Vietnamese to pull back in some disorder.

The communists continue to hit Xuan Loc with artillery fire, but they have been beaten back on the ground. The South Vietnamese 1st Airborne Brigade has been clearing the southern approaches to the city with the help of artillery, and a regiment from the 5th Division has joined forces clearing the roads west of the town. One government battalion has been cut off, however, and a government rescue force is attempting to reach the isolated unit.

Nearer Saigon, communist gunners last night and early this morning shelled Bien Hoa airbase. No casualties were reported, but two runways were damaged and closed temporarily. Communist sappers set off explosions in a bomb storage area, wounding 29 South Vietnamese personnel, according to preliminary casualty reports.

In the delta, government units in recent days have driven attacking communist forces back from positions threatening populated areas and major highways. Delta officials think that the North Vietnamese 4th Division threat to Can Tho City has been substantially reduced. Although orders from the 4th Division continue to refer to preparations for battle, most of the division is pulling back. In some cases, the withdrawing units have left behind much of their equipment, ammunition, and food; some units reportedly broke and ran.

In addition to reopening Route 4 just north of Can Tho, seven South Vietnamese infantry and armor battalions have moved into communist-held areas of Vinh Long Province, driving enemy forces away from some of the artillery positions used to shell Can Tho.

Strong communist artillery attacks and the appearance of tanks just north of Phan Rang suggest the communists are getting ready to launch a frontal attack there soon. Military Region 3 Commander

(continued)

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

General Toan, who is now also responsible for Phan Rang and Phan Thiet cities, is unhappy with Saigon's order to withdraw the 2nd Airborne Brigade from Phan Rang and replace it with a reorganized element of the 2nd Division. Toan would like to hold the airbase, from which air strikes are being launched, but concedes that without the airborne his troops are no match for the communists.

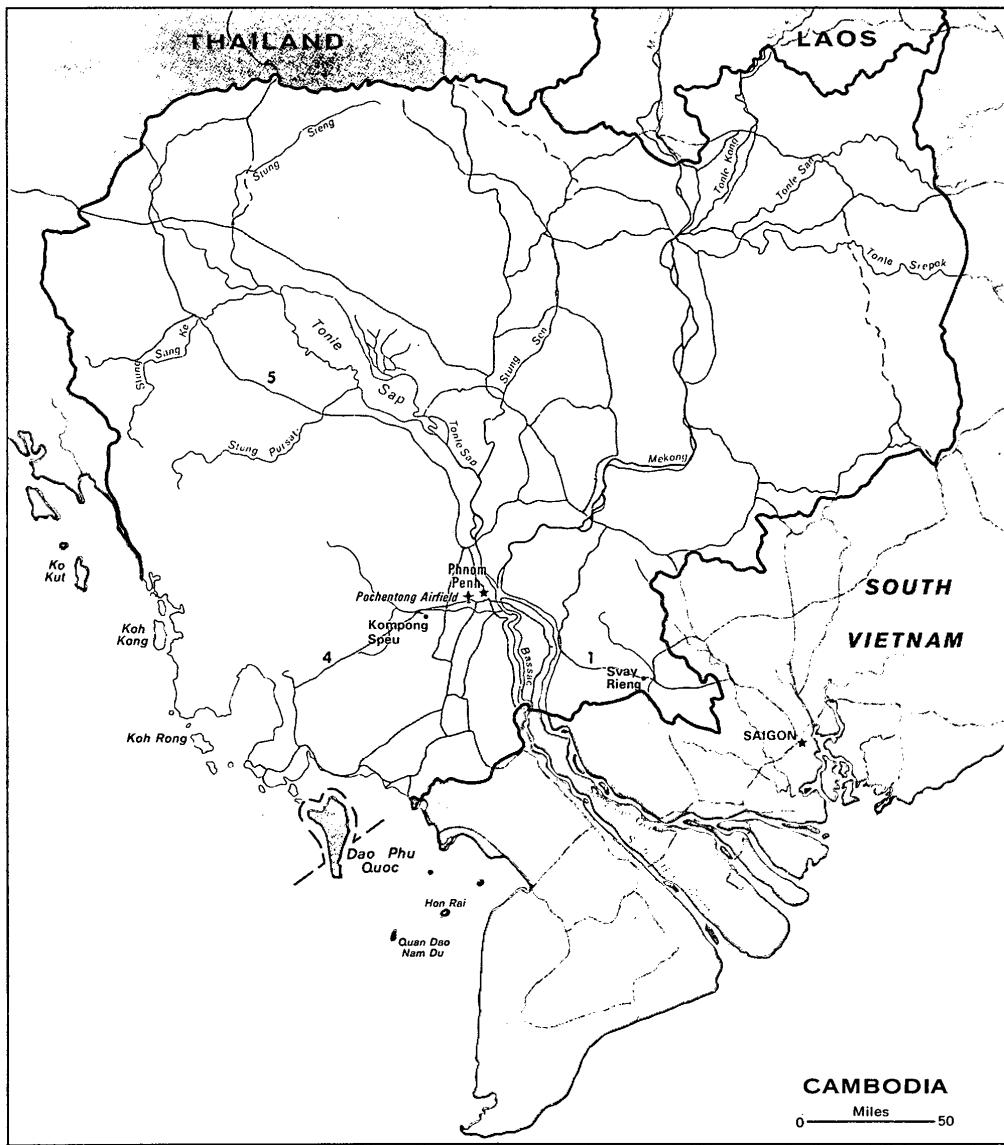
The communists fired some 50 rocket and artillery rounds into Tay Ninh City yesterday, damaging a hospital and destroying an ammunition dump. Only one regiment of the South Vietnamese 25th Division remains in the city--the remainder has been deployed south to protect the roads linking Tay Ninh with Saigon. The communists currently have enough manpower left in northern Tay Ninh Province to challenge the city's defenses, especially since Saigon has shifted its armored units to the Xuan Loc battlefield.

[redacted] communist plans to carry out attacks from inside Saigon in the near future. While the communists have the capability of infiltrating small units such as sappers into the capital area, there are no indications yet of communist main force units moving into position for direct attacks on Saigon itself.

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[redacted] "armed units" are now infiltrating Saigon, but that they will not begin their attacks until government units have been defeated in battles outside the city. According to the source, the communists hope to get the South Vietnamese to commit all of their reserves along major approaches to Saigon, leaving the city with few defensive forces.

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

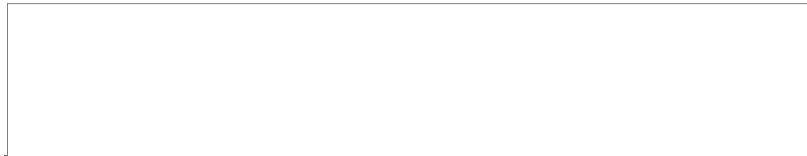
CAMBODIA

The Khmer communists, pressing closer to Phnom Penh from the northwest, have launched major attacks southeast of the capital in an apparent final attempt to force the government's capitulation.

Heavy fighting west and northwest of the capital is reportedly forcing large numbers of refugees and some government troops to flee into the city. Communist forces may be infiltrating into the capital under cover of the heavy flow of refugees.

Communications intercepted yesterday indicated that the insurgents had gained control of the market area at the northeast edge of Pochentong between the airfield and Phnom Penh. A civilian aircraft attempting to land at the airfield late yesterday reportedly found it and the control tower deserted. Unconfirmed reports state that government forces early today reopened the road between Phnom Penh and Pochentong and that the airfield remains operational. The communists, for their part, claimed in a radio broadcast today that they have captured the airfield.

* * *



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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

EGYPT

In a move intended partly to divert popular attention from the suspension of peace negotiations, President Sadat last night appointed former interior minister Mamduh Salim as prime minister and said he would announce members of the new cabinet tomorrow.

Salim replaces Abd al-Aziz Hijazi, who has been the chief target of public criticism over continuing economic ills. Hijazi is a competent economist, but has been overburdened with both responsibilities as prime minister and specific economic duties and has been unable to speed the process of economic revitalization.

Manifestations of economic discontent usually surface in Egypt during periods of diplomatic stagnation in Arab-Israeli affairs. Sadat appears intent on reassuring the Egyptian people that there will be no letup in the government's program of economic development. At the same time, the appointment of Salim, the former head of Egypt's security apparatus, will signal malcontents that public disturbances will not be tolerated.

Salim will be no better able than Hijazi to solve Egypt's basic economic problems. He and Sadat are expected to appoint a more efficient economic team, however, than the one in the outgoing cabinet. Such a group conceivably could overcome some of the bureaucratic ineptitude that has obstructed economic development.

President Sadat will continue to formulate and guide policy. Salim is a loyal Sadat partisan with apparently little personal political ambition.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

ISRAEL

Foreign Minister Allon's two-week visit to the US, which began yesterday, is viewed with some misgivings in Israel.

Conservatives, including several within the cabinet, apparently believe the trip, only three weeks after the suspension of indirect Egyptian-Israeli negotiations, suggests that Tel Aviv's resolve to stick to its negotiating demands may be weakening. [] the government is [] unnecessarily exposing itself to high-level US pressure for new Israeli proposals to revive the peace talks with Egypt. []

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Tel Aviv has emphasized that the basic rationale for Allon's US trip--which includes several appearances at Jewish fund-raising rallies--is to explain and justify Israel's position on negotiations with the Arabs. A major Israeli information campaign in the US is already under way, and several prominent Israelis--including ex-foreign minister Eban and Prime Minister Rabin's wife--left for the US yesterday to participate. Others, such as former information minister Yariv and ex-defense minister Dayan, arrived earlier.

Allon, nevertheless, clearly will seek a reading from US officials in Washington on the possible implications for Israel of the current US policy reassessment. Tel Aviv, in fact, appears to be awaiting the outcome of Washington's policy reassessment before making any new moves of its own.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY



FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY**NOTES**

The chances of a serious incident in the Aegean has eased for the moment because Turkey has called off [redacted] flights over three Greek islands in the eastern Aegean.

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[redacted] Ankara has stopped the flights because it now has sufficient information on Greek armaments, fortifications, and manpower on Lesbos, Samos, and Chios. Turkish military leaders have scheduled a two- or three-day planning session [redacted] that will include the development of a strategy for invading the three islands should the Greeks take some aggressive action. [redacted] Ankara will continue its public complaints about the Greek reinforcement of Rhodes and the other Dodecanese islands, but [redacted] does not view the arming of these islands as a threat to Turkey.

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Israel may have begun series production of its "super Mirage" fighter aircraft.

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[redacted] last week that he believed about eight of the aircraft have already been built. He based his conclusion on sightings he made of new serial numbers of Mirage-type aircraft. Yesterday the aircraft was shown to the public for the first time.

* * *

Armed clashes in Lebanon between radical fedayeen elements and members of a conservative Lebanese political group--the Phalanges Party--come at a particularly bad time for the government of Prime Minister Sulh.

Sulh, who has been in office for six months, had scheduled a parliamentary vote of confidence for today. The unrest will delay the vote and could prompt Sulh to resign. The Phalangists advocate strict Lebanese control of Palestinian refugee camps and have repeatedly clashed with the fedayeen. The leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organization, while publicly attacking the Phalangists, appears to be helping behind the scenes to contain the situation.

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~~Top Secret~~ 25X1

Exempt from general
declassification schedule of E.O. 11652
exemption category, 5B(1)(2)(3)
decided by the Director of Central Intelligence

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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South Vietnam: Government forces are expanding their holdings both east and west of Xuan Loc, but may be leaving themselves dangerously vulnerable elsewhere. (Page 1)

Cambodia: Unconfirmed reports suggest that the remnants of the Cambodian government may be trying to arrange a surrender today. (Page 4)

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USSR:

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(Page 5)

25X1

Lebanon: Fighting between the fedayeen and Phalangist militia continued in Beirut yesterday. (Page 6)

Egypt-Israel:

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(Page 7)

Ethiopia:

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(Page 8)

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Notes: Cyprus; Romania-USSR (Page 9)

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

SOUTH VIETNAM

South Vietnamese forces are expanding their holdings both east and west of Xuan Loc, but Bien Hoa airbase came under renewed communist artillery shelling early today and is apparently temporarily closed.

The government units attempting to open the road from Xuan Loc to Saigon are still meeting determined communist resistance, and their progress has been slow. Some of the civilians who fled from the city to the surrounding countryside are beginning to trickle back.

Along South Vietnam's central coast, government airborne and ranger troops defending Phan Rang airbase came under heavy North Vietnamese armored attack early today. Phan Rang city, about five miles southeast of the base, was also reported to be under heavy attack. Late press reports state that government forces have abandoned both the airbase and the city, and are being evacuated by sea.

In the delta provinces, fighting has been fairly heavy in Vinh Long Province as the communists continue to threaten Route 4 north of Can Tho. The North Vietnamese 8th Division has been redeploying in preparation for its long-expected campaign to cut Route 4 in Dinh Tuong Province. If the 8th Division coordinates its attacks on Route 4 with the North Vietnamese 5th Division farther north in Long An Province, the South Vietnamese 7th Division will be hard pressed to keep this vital link to Saigon open.

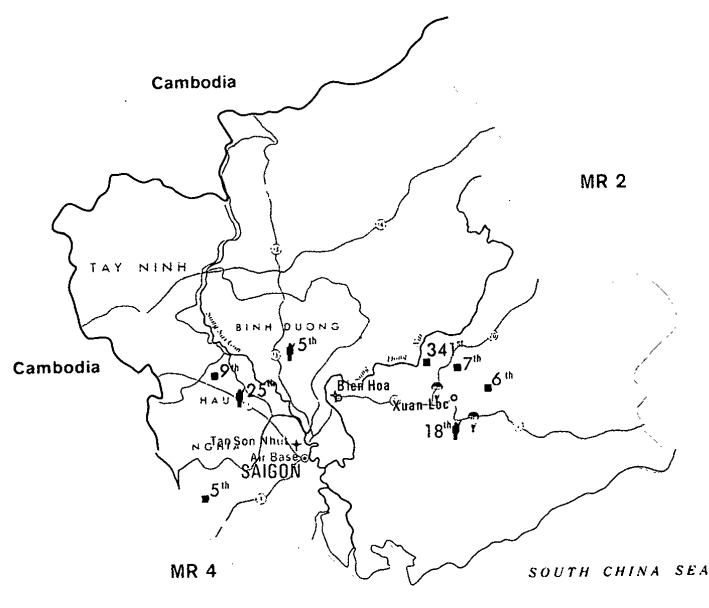
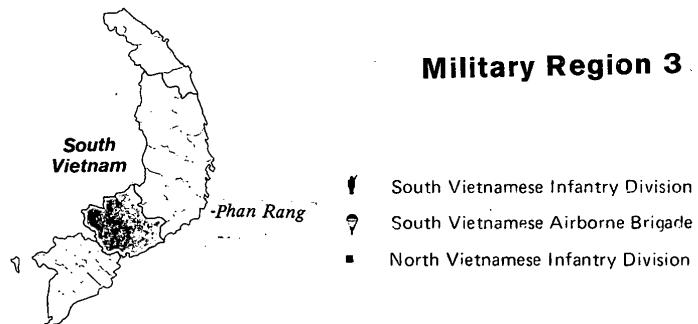
The South Vietnamese have contained the communist drives east and southwest of Saigon, but may be leaving themselves dangerously vulnerable to heavy new attacks from the north.

In an attempt to meet the communists head on and defeat them well away from the capital, the government has had to shift a large part of its reserves from Saigon to the Xuan Loc area. While the South Vietnamese stand at Xuan Loc provides a much needed morale boost, there is still danger

(continued)

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

Military Region 3



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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

that the reinforced South Vietnamese division there will be isolated and destroyed by the communists, who have more than three full divisions in the area. Even if the battle continues to go well for Saigon, it will continue to tie down a large force and leave the South Vietnamese with relatively few main-force units to defend other approaches to the capital.

At the moment, the government appears most vulnerable in the provinces north of Saigon. The South Vietnamese 25th Division is in Tay Ninh and Hau Nghia provinces, and the rest of the 5th Division is in Binh Duong Province. Those units appear to be a sufficient blocking force against existing communist units in the area, but at least six communist divisions, including four from North Vietnam, appear to be moving toward Military Region 3. Advance elements from two divisions--the 312th and the 320B--could already be in the area north of Saigon. All or most of the communist reinforcements could be in place and ready for action in a matter of weeks.

[redacted] communist plans to attack Saigon itself in the next few days. While there are no signs that any large communist force is moving into position for a direct assault, the communists do have the capability to sneak sappers into the city. Moreover, the recent shellings of Bien Hoa airbase suggest that the communists also now may be planning to shell the outskirts of Saigon and the Tan Son Nhut airbase with their heavy field guns. An offensive by newly arrived divisions north of Saigon, coupled with sapper attacks and shellings of the city itself, might lead to a rapid crumbling of the government's position.

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* * *

A sampling of South Vietnamese opinion since early April reflects a mood of deep pessimism within official circles.

The sampling was made before your address to Congress last week and the recent creditable showing by the South Vietnamese military at Xuan Loc and in the delta. It seems unlikely, however, that these developments, in themselves, have been enough to alter what appears to be a general conviction that adequate US support will not be forthcoming and a fear that the communists may prove too strong for the South Vietnamese military to hold indefinitely.

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

The most immediate concern of most South Vietnamese, especially those who have worked closely with the Americans, is "what happens if." Reassurances that they will be evacuated are much sought after. [redacted]

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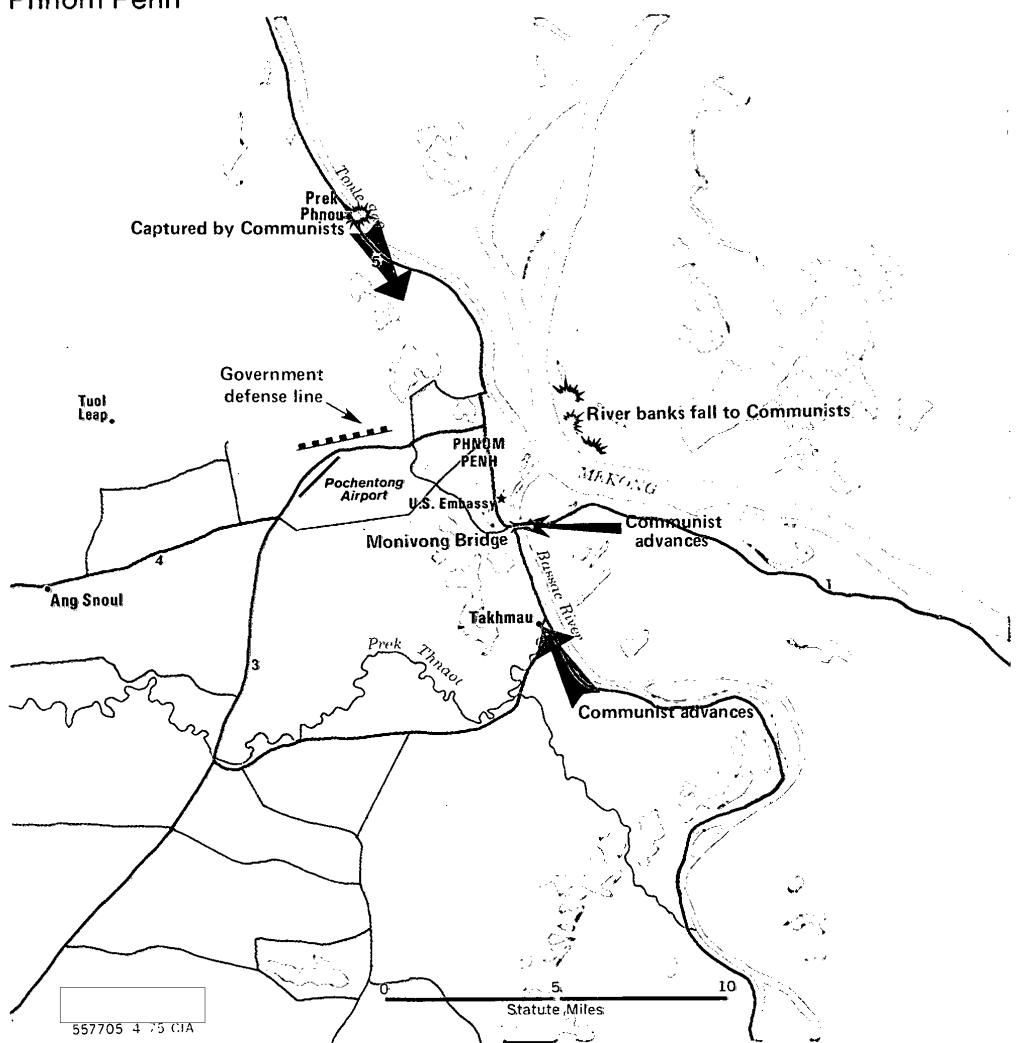
[redacted] believes that large-scale evacuation would be nearly impossible and that once it begins, government troops would fire on anyone trying to leave. Another [redacted] feels that as soon as the communists begin hitting the government's defenses around Saigon, there will be wholesale panic similar to that at Da Nang and that evacuation from Tan Son Nhut airport would not be feasible because of the chaos.

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A sense of impending disaster also permeates the military. [redacted]

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Phnom Penh



FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

CAMBODIA

[redacted] 25X1

the remnants of the Cambodian government may be trying to arrange a surrender today, apparently on the condition that the insurgents agree not to enter Phnom Penh.

Khmer Communist units yesterday reportedly reached the eastern end of the Monivong bridge leading into Phnom Penh and also entered the southern suburb of Takhmau. Khmer navy officers reported by telephone that government forces have abandoned all positions on the east bank of the Mekong River opposite the city's waterfront.

[redacted] 25X1

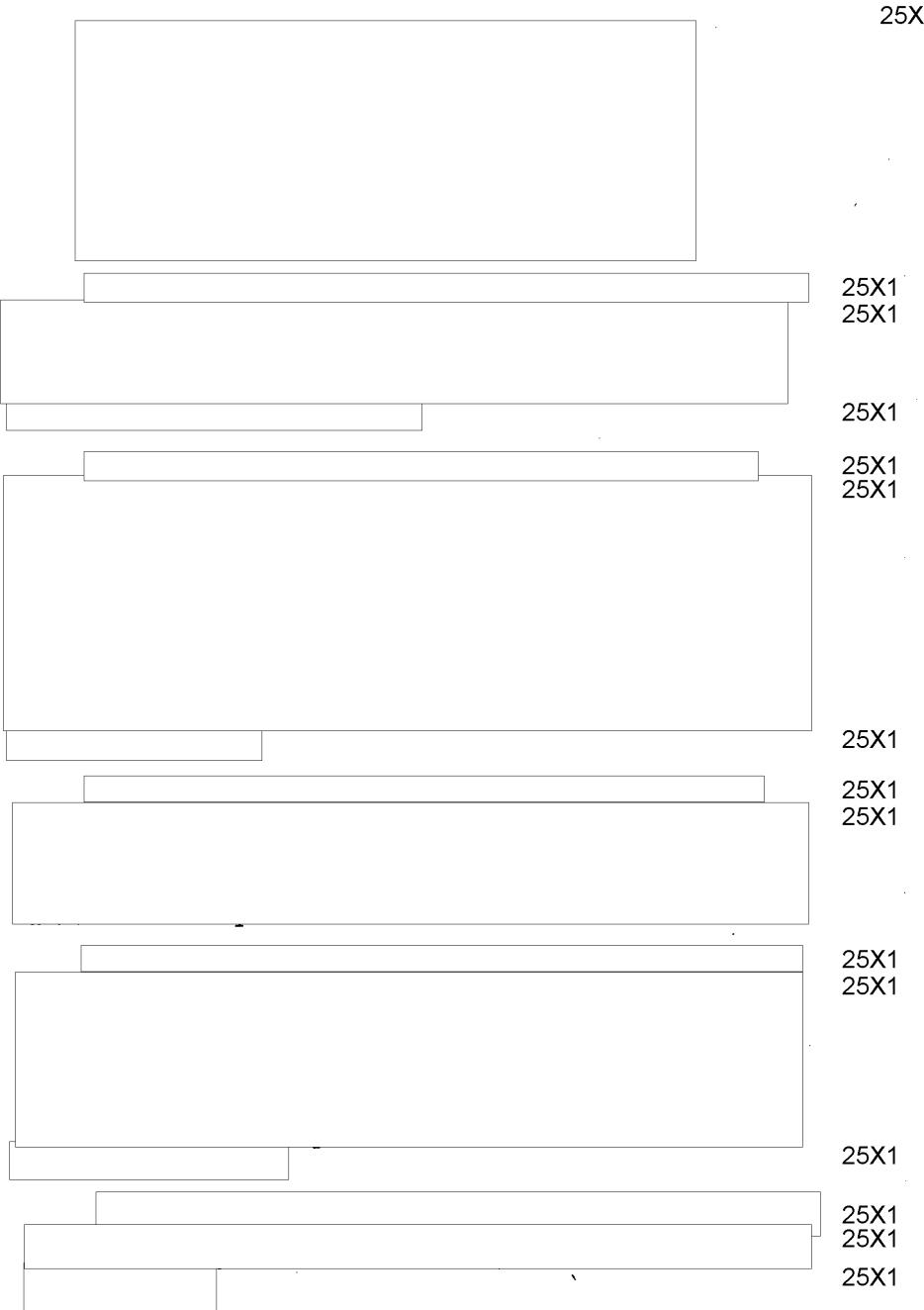
On the opposite side of the city, battle lines are running roughly along a railway embankment about a mile north of Pochentong airport.

On Route 5, the Communists have apparently destroyed or captured the military fuel depot at Prek Phnou.

Although communications between Phnom Penh and the outside are beginning to break down, the domestic radio station in the capital remained on the air yesterday. Government officials were issuing periodic reports on the military situation. Some military commanders have also been issuing orders to their units via radio broadcasts.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

USSR



FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

LEBANON

Fighting between the fedayeen and Phalanges Party militia continued in Beirut yesterday, leaving at least 100 dead. Shooting also occurred in Sidon and Tripoli, while a general strike went into effect in all major cities.

President Franjiyah met personally yesterday with Pierre Jumayyil, head of the Phalanges Party, almost certainly to appeal to Jumayyil to help halt the fighting. The President's initiative is good evidence that the country's Christian leadership feels seriously threatened by the continuing violence. Lebanon's delicate constitutional system has operated, in effect, to give the Christians control of the government. Franjiyah is in the hospital recovering from major surgery; even when in good health he has usually refused to become involved in disputes involving the country's political parties and the Palestinians.

The Lebanese cabinet has authorized Prime Minister Suh to call on the country's 19,000-man army to put down the dispute, if necessary. For the moment, however, the Prime Minister is pursuing talks with political leaders in hope of negotiating an end to the fighting.

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A small number of commandos from the less radical groups--Fatah, Saqa, and the Popular Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine--have already entered the fray, although the bulk of the fighting has been carried by fedayeen from the smaller, more radical groups.

Palestine Liberation Organization chairman Yasir Arafat has stayed generally aloof thus far.

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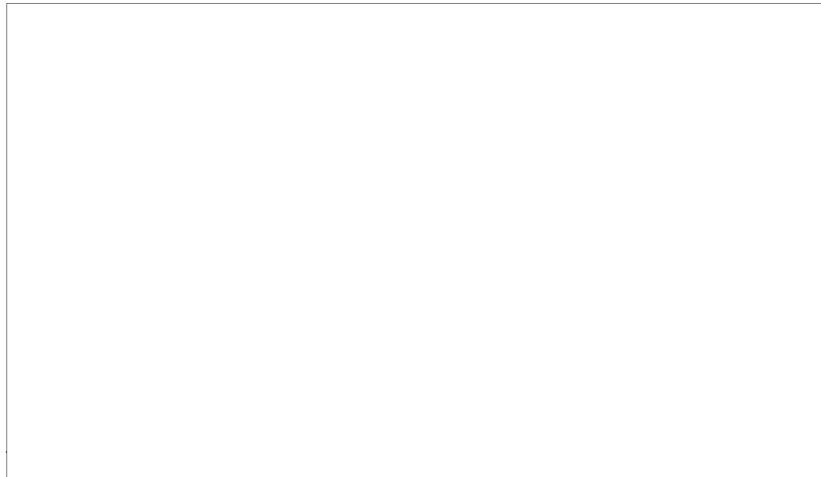
FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

EGYPT-ISRAEL



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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

ETHIOPIA



FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY**NOTES**

Prospects for resuming the Cyprus negotiations in Vienna on April 28 still are clouded by the uncertain status of Greek Cypriot negotiator Glafkos Clerides.

Clerides [redacted] intends to turn in his resignation within two days and [redacted] give up his position as president of the House of Deputies. Clerides has argued for a realistic strategy that accepts the Turkish Cypriot demand for a bi-regional federation in return for Turkish Cypriot concessions on other issues. Makarios claims that such a major concession should be made only after a period of long, hard bargaining. Clerides' latest threat to resign is probably designed to produce stronger expressions of support from Greek Prime Minister Karamanlis and Makarios. In the event such expressions are not made, Clerides may well follow through and step down from his position as negotiator.

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Tensions in Romanian-Soviet relations have recently increased.

A Romanian diplomat in Moscow says that in addition to differences over the European security talks, CEMA policies, and the proposed pan-European communist party conference, Bucharest is now resisting Soviet efforts to expand the political coordinating role of the Warsaw Pact. The Soviets are reported to be pushing for the establishment of a permanent Pact committee of foreign ministers. Moscow apparently wants to set up a secretariat--similar to NATO's political organization--that would be headed by a Soviet secretary general. The Romanian diplomat speculates that once the European security conference is over, Moscow will increase its stress on ideological orthodoxy within the Pact--a move clearly intended to force Romania to identify more closely with Soviet policies and pronouncements.

Top Secret



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Exempt from general
declassification schedule of E.O. 14176
exception category: 5B(1)(2)(3)
declassified under authority of
the Director of Central Intelligence

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Cambodia: The government surrendered this morning.
(Page 1)

Vietnam: Deputy Prime Minister Tran Van Don [redacted] is in contact with a spokesman for the Viet Cong's Provisional Revolutionary Government. (Page 2)

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USSR: A Central Committee meeting yesterday signals the beginning of preparations for the next party congress. (Page 6)

NATO: All members have agreed in principle to hold a summit-level meeting at the end of May.
(Page 8)

Argentina: Leftist guerrilla groups plan increased terrorism to protest the coming visit of Secretary Kissinger. (Page 9)

Lebanon: Palestinian commandos and Phalanges Party leaders yesterday agreed to a cease-fire in Beirut. (Page 10)

Thailand: Foreign Minister Chatchai is encountering problems in his efforts to hasten establishment of formal ties with China. (Page 11)

Notes: China; MBFR; Libya; Portugal (Pages 12 and 13)

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

CAMBODIA

The Cambodian government surrendered this morning. A cease-fire reportedly is in effect, and the capital is described as calm.

The situation in the countryside is unclear, but the government has instructed all of its provincial commanders to lay down their arms and stop fighting.

Some 30 Westerners, including a number of US journalists, were at last report holed up in a Phnom Penh hotel. The Red Cross in Geneva declared the hotel a neutral zone yesterday. The communists have repeated their earlier orders for the safekeeping of foreign nationals in the city.

Intercepted communist messages confirm plans to evacuate large numbers of civilians from Phnom Penh. The commander of one communist administrative unit reported yesterday that he is ready to "accept responsibility" for between 400,000 and 500,000 people.

Cambodian military aircraft that escaped have begun arriving in Thailand. Three planes carrying nearly 90 officers and dependents landed at Utapao airbase yesterday and more are expected. So far, there is no word on whether any senior government officials have escaped.

On the international front, a number of governments are moving to recognize Prince Sihanouk's regime. Turkey announced its recognition yesterday. Iran, Sweden, Finland, and Australia are likely to follow soon. Canberra has pledged "substantial" postwar reconstruction aid.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

VIETNAM

*Deputy Prime Minister Tran Van
Don [redacted] is in contact
with a spokesman for the Viet Cong's
Provisional Revolutionary Government.*

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[redacted] Don was reminded that the Viet Cong would never consider negotiations while Thieu remains president. Such discussions could begin only with a government headed by a "neutral" figure and composed of "third force" personalities and "leftists." This new government could include "pro-American politicians." [redacted]

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[redacted] the PRG spokesman stated that communist strategy "at the moment" is to isolate Saigon. The communists allegedly do not want to attack Saigon directly, preferring to "take their time" in assuming control, meanwhile allowing evacuations to proceed in an "orderly" fashion. If communist troops should move into the city quickly, evacuations for "everyone" would be "impossible."

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[redacted] Don was informed that he should assume control of the government "within 72 hours" and call for a cease-fire. All Americans would be permitted to leave the country except for a "core" that would be needed to run the US embassy. In addition, any Vietnamese who wished to leave, including those at Hue and Da Nang, allegedly would also be given safe passage.

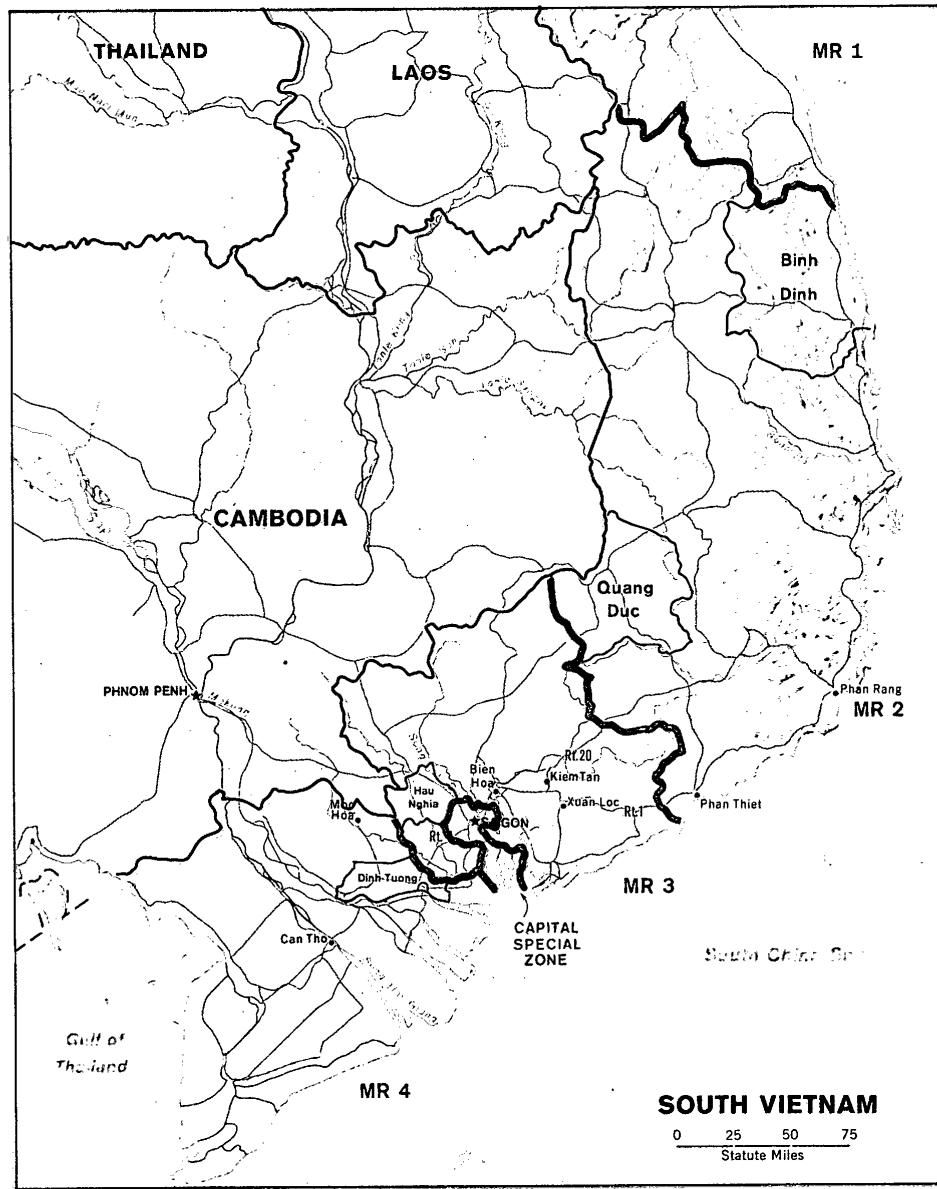
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The PRG spokesman indicated, however, that the communists might be running out of patience and that the "next week or two" would be crucial. Saigon would be safe for that period, but, if talks had not begun by then, communist forces would be "in position" to take over the city.

[redacted]
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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY



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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

The scenario [redacted] 25X1
 [redacted] from [redacted] PRG contact could be a communist effort 25X1
 to persuade someone in senior South Vietnamese government circles that a political settlement of the conflict is still possible. [redacted] 25X1
 [redacted] 25X1

The warnings [redacted] 25X1
 [redacted] conform to the line passed by PRG representatives overseas [redacted] 25X1
 The latter have maintained that the communists do not want to attack Saigon but prefer a "political solution," but that this is impossible with Thieu still in power. 25X1

* * *

The arrival of additional combat units north of Saigon, coupled with heavy government losses east of the capital, is setting the stage for strong new communist attacks within the next two weeks along the western, northern, and eastern approaches to Saigon.

[redacted] the communists will waste little time in exploiting their overwhelming advantage in terms of troops and firepower. [redacted] the communist 9th Division, which has recently moved south into Hau Nghia Province, will soon attack the South Vietnamese 25th Division guarding Route 1 and the western approaches to Saigon. [redacted] 25X1
 communist units, probably sappers and artillery, will attack the capital itself. 25X1

[redacted] 25X1
 [redacted] communists have issued instructions 25X1
 calling for "final" assaults on remaining government positions, including Saigon. [redacted] 25X1
 [redacted] fresh combat units have arrived in the provinces around Saigon and [redacted] all communist resources will be used to achieve final victory by May 19--the anniversary of Ho Chi Minh's birth. 25X1
 25X1

Radio direction finding of April 16 confirms that the headquarters of both the North Vietnamese 1st Corps and its subordinate 312th Division are rapidly approaching Military Region 3. The corps

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

headquarters is now in northwestern Quang Duc Province, while the 312th headquarters is along the Cambodian border just north of the region. These units left North Vietnam less than two weeks ago. Three other subordinate divisions are on the move south.

The communists also are moving divisions into the region from farther north in South Vietnam. Documents captured near Xuan Loc indicate that elements of the North Vietnamese 325th Division have arrived in that area. Two other divisions in the southern highlands--the 10th and the 316th--have shown signs of shifting into Military Region 3.

South Vietnamese forces are still holding Xuan Loc, but government positions around the city and the roads west of the town are rapidly becoming indefensible.

The North Vietnamese launched strong new attacks on the airborne brigade just outside of Xuan Loc yesterday. Since other government units defending the perimeter of the city were not attacked, regional officials believe the communists have deliberately struck the strongest unit, hoping to inflict a major loss and thereby sap the resolve of the remaining forces.

The communists have also been putting heavy pressure on the junction of routes 1 and 20 west of Xuan Loc and now control the intersection and much of the surrounding terrain. A series of sharp attacks yesterday on a South Vietnamese regiment forced the unit to destroy its artillery and disperse.

With the recent fall of Kiem Tan district town on Route 20 and the rout of the South Vietnamese regiment, the communists now have complete control of this highway and can bring additional combat units directly to the battlefield from the southern highlands. The communists may decide to leave the city isolated and move much of their force west toward Bien Hoa and Saigon.

Communist forces also routed government defenders at Phan Rang yesterday. Some remnants of a recently rebuilt 2nd Division regiment were apparently evacuated by sea. The few survivors of the airborne and ranger units assigned there are believed to be trying to withdraw overland toward Phan Thiet, which may be the communists' next target.

(continued)

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

Some regional officials are blaming President Thieu for the defeat at Phan Rang because he personally ordered the deployment of the now-shattered forces to that exposed northern enclave.

In the delta, at least two additional North Vietnamese regiments have moved into Dinh Tuong Province from the Moc Hoa - Cambodian border area,

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[redacted] the North Vietnamese could have as many as nine infantry regiments concentrated in the province, and Saigon could soon lose control of Route 4, its lifeline to the delta.

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The commander of the delta region realigned some of his forces yesterday to counter this new communist buildup. He has assigned both the South Vietnamese 7th and 9th divisions to the most threatened areas in the northeast of the region.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

USSR

A Soviet party Central Committee meeting in Moscow yesterday signaled the beginning of preparations for the next party congress. The removal of trade union chief Aleksandr Shelepin from the Politburo by the central committee eliminates one of the potential runners in the long-term race to succeed General Secretary Brezhnev, but otherwise does little to clarify the succession picture.

Brezhnev was clearly in charge at the plenum. He delivered a report on plans for the congress, which is now set to open on February 24, 1976. Foreign Minister Gromyko delivered a report on foreign affairs. This report is usually given by Brezhnev, and the change continues the trend toward greater collectivity in the leadership that has been apparent since the General Secretary's illness this winter.

The decision setting the date for the party congress came earlier and more smoothly than it did for the 24th congress in 1971. This suggests satisfaction on the part of the leaders with present political conditions and confidence in their ability to set the course of the Soviet Union over the next five years.

The announcement of the opening date for the congress is likely to trigger a cycle of party meetings beginning at the lower levels in the fall and continuing up through successively more important party organizations, ending by late January or early February. Personnel shifts will probably be occurring from now on at all levels within the party, and the outcome of these shifts will determine the relative political strengths of the various Soviet leaders for the next several years.

Shelepin has long been regarded warily by some of his colleagues as a man with a dangerous combination of ability and ambition, and his departure from the Kremlin removes a potential element of instability in the leadership. Ever since he mounted a serious but unsuccessful challenge to Brezhnev's leadership in 1965, his career has been on a precipitous slide. In 1967 he was removed from the party Secretariat and given the trade union post--traditionally a powerless figurehead position.

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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The plenum also issued a resolution expressing satisfaction with the fruits of Moscow's four-year "peace program" and endorsing the continuation of detente. The resolution attributed the success of Soviet foreign policy to Soviet economic and military strength, while noting that "forces of war and reaction" are still alive.

The resolution approved further progress in the force reduction talks and strategic arms negotiations by holding that political detente must be accompanied by military detente, including arms reductions. It also noted the continuing importance of bilateral and multilateral summitry.

It made no mention of China or Vietnam. The omission of the former may reflect a decision to avoid the appearance of polemics with Peking when the Soviet Union is trying to pave the way for an international conference of communist parties. In leaving out Vietnam, the Soviets could be showing some sensitivity to the implications for detente of communist gains there.

The plenum's emphasis on foreign policy jibes with reports that Moscow has begun a broad assessment of Soviet relations with the West in preparation for the party congress.

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they have reached the following preliminary conclusions:

--World developments since the last party congress in 1971 have demonstrated the correctness of detente, and the policy should be continued.

--The capitalist powers retain great strength and resilience, and will rebound from their current economic crisis.

--The economic rewards of detente, especially the increased import of Western technology, will not in themselves obviate the need for changes in the Soviet political and economic structure if the USSR is to close the technological gap with the West.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

NATO

All NATO members have now agreed in principle to hold a summit-level meeting at the end of May, but some have reservations about its usefulness. The French, among the more skeptical, may be represented by someone other than President Giscard. West Germany, Great Britain, Norway, and Belgium definitely favor holding the meeting.

The Canadians and Dutch in particular fear that the NATO summit will affect adversely Western chances for obtaining meaningful results from the European security conference in Geneva. They reason that the Soviets might view the summit as evidence of a Western desire to wind up the conference quickly, and that Moscow will therefore refuse to offer any compromises on outstanding issues.

France recognizes the importance of your reaffirming the US commitment to the Alliance even though, according to the French ambassador to NATO, it has "difficulty" in seeing the value of a summit. France therefore will contribute to preparing a communiqué and will assist in the public relations aspects of the meeting. Paris may send Premier Chirac or Foreign Minister Sauvagnargues to the conference. Portuguese representation may also be at a level lower than head of government.

All NATO representatives seem to agree that the agenda for the meeting should be broad, and the communiqué short but substantive. They appear to be moving toward a consensus that the foreign ministers should do the preparatory work on May 29 and that the heads of government should meet formally only on May 30.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

ARGENTINA

Leftist guerrilla groups are planning an escalation of terrorism over the next several days to protest the coming visit of Secretary Kissinger.

[redacted] massive security precautions are being arranged

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During the past few days terrorists have struck several military installations throughout the country and tried, for the second time, to kill the chief of the Federal Police. These particular attacks probably are a result of the growing concern among terrorist leaders over the threat posed by right-wing death squads.

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The Peron government has scored some successes against the well-organized extremists, but a turning point in the struggle is not yet in sight. As many as 300 people may have been killed in political violence this year. Until the security services achieve a significant intelligence breakthrough--and are able to follow up on it--the running battle in the streets between right and left will continue.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

LEBANON

Palestinian commandos and Phalanges Party leaders yesterday agreed to a cease-fire in Beirut. The accord is to be enforced by the Lebanese internal security services, rather than the army which has managed to stay out of the fighting.

President Franjiyah and other Christian leaders apparently persuaded Phalanges Party leaders that prolonged fighting would draw in major fedayeen units that could quickly overwhelm the Phalangists. The radical Palestinian groups presumably agreed to the cease-fire when they realized that the larger fedayeen organizations, Fatah and Saqiya, did not plan to enter the fighting in force.

The moderate Palestinians refused to involve their organizations almost certainly because they believed that a major encounter with the Lebanese army would play into the hands of Arab "rejectionists" and further reduce the likelihood that the PLO would be invited to the Geneva talks.

Action taken by the head of the Syrian-controlled Saqiya organization to keep his followers out of the dispute also suggests that the Syrian government counseled restraint.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

THAILAND

Foreign Minister Chatchai is encountering problems in his efforts to hasten establishment of formal ties with China. He now considers it unlikely that relations can be normalized before the end of the year.

One of the most formidable difficulties confronting Bangkok concerns the legal status of Thailand's 800,000 overseas Chinese. Many of these people have kept their citizenship with the Nationalist government on Taiwan. They would seem to have the alternatives of either switching their citizenship to Peking once Bangkok severed its ties with Taiwan or applying for Thai citizenship. The offer of Thai citizenship to this group, whose political loyalties have long been suspect, is a highly controversial issue within the government. The Thai foreign ministry reportedly intends to consult Malaysian officials as to how Kuala Lumpur dealt with this problem when it recognized Peking.

Chatchai is under pressure from military and police officials to move slowly in normalizing relations lest a Chinese embassy in Bangkok serve as a center for espionage and subversion. He will also have to take into consideration the views of the politically powerful Chinese businessmen, many of whom have extensive commercial dealings with Taiwan.

Chatchai is encountering opposition from within his own ministry. A recent meeting of the China policy committee overruled his plans for a self-initiated trip to Peking.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

NOTES

China's first original comment on the South Vietnam refugee situation, a People's Daily "commentator" article on April 13, continues the low-key, moderately worded coverage that has characterized Chinese treatment of recent developments in South Vietnam.

In language similar to that employed in earlier press coverage of the US role in Vietnam, the article warns the US that it will have failed to "learn the lessons of history" if it continues to "intervene" in the south. The article also refers to the "futility" of US expenditures in Vietnam, reflecting Peking's recent stress on US "misuse" of its resources in Indochina when the areas of primary concern in Peking's eyes should be Europe and the Middle East. Recent Chinese propaganda has suggested that the US would be better served if it dedicated its resources to areas where the Soviet "threat" is greater.

* * *

The fifth round of the Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions talks in Vienna ends today. There has been no progress in resolving basic differences, and the talks remain stalemated. They will resume in mid-May.

Both East and West marked time during this round. Neither side has shown signs that it is overly disturbed by the lack of progress. The Soviets have never appeared to be under time pressure, and various Soviet officials have implied that there would be no movement in Vienna until the European security conference in Geneva concludes in a satisfactory manner. Moreover, there is some evidence that the Soviets are aware that the US is considering making an offer to withdraw from Europe some nuclear warheads and delivery systems. They apparently are content to await such an initiative. The West Europeans, who have expressed some concern about the stalemate in the past, apparently are also willing to wait for a formal US proposal along this line.

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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Libya has again signaled an interest in improving relations with the US. This time it has asked for US approval of an ambassadorial nominee and has lifted the numerical ceiling on US embassy personnel it imposed in 1972.

The Libyan foreign ministry official who informed our chargé early this week of the latest move said the decision had been made by President Qadhafi and the Revolutionary Command Council. The official--probably under directions from his superiors--did not directly link the move with Tripoli's interest in improving ties with Washington, but did offer his "personal" hope that the gesture would "keep the ball rolling." As in the case of Libya's decision in January to lift its oil embargo against the US, this latest move will not be publicized nor will a formal notification be issued. Qadhafi's willingness to engage in a dialogue with the US will have limits, and probably he will continue to avoid any discussion of his policy toward Israel.

* * *

The Portuguese cabinet yesterday announced measures to nationalize more basic industries, control prices, and begin agrarian reform.

As in the nationalization of banks and insurance companies last month, foreign businesses are largely unaffected by the latest measures. Meanwhile, Prime Minister Gonclaves has tried to raise tensions by warning that Portugal should prepare itself for a possible international "economic boycott" designed to obstruct the revolution.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

Top Secret



The President's Daily Brief

April 18, 1975

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~~Top Secret~~ 25X1

Exempt from general
declassification schedule of E.O. 11652
exception category 5B(1)(2),3
declassification under authority of
the Director of Central Intelligence

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

April 18, 1975

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South Vietnam: The government's position on the Xuan Loc battlefield is deteriorating rapidly, and the threat is shifting to Bien Hoa. (Page 1)

Cambodia: A number of military and civilian leaders made eleventh-hour escapes from Phnom Penh, where the communist take-over is proceeding. (Page 2)

Syria-Israel: [Redacted]

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[Redacted]
25X1

Portugal: Admiral Coutinho has promised that elections will be held but says the Armed Forces Movement will not be a "prisoner of the results." (Page 5)

[Redacted]
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Zambia: [Redacted]

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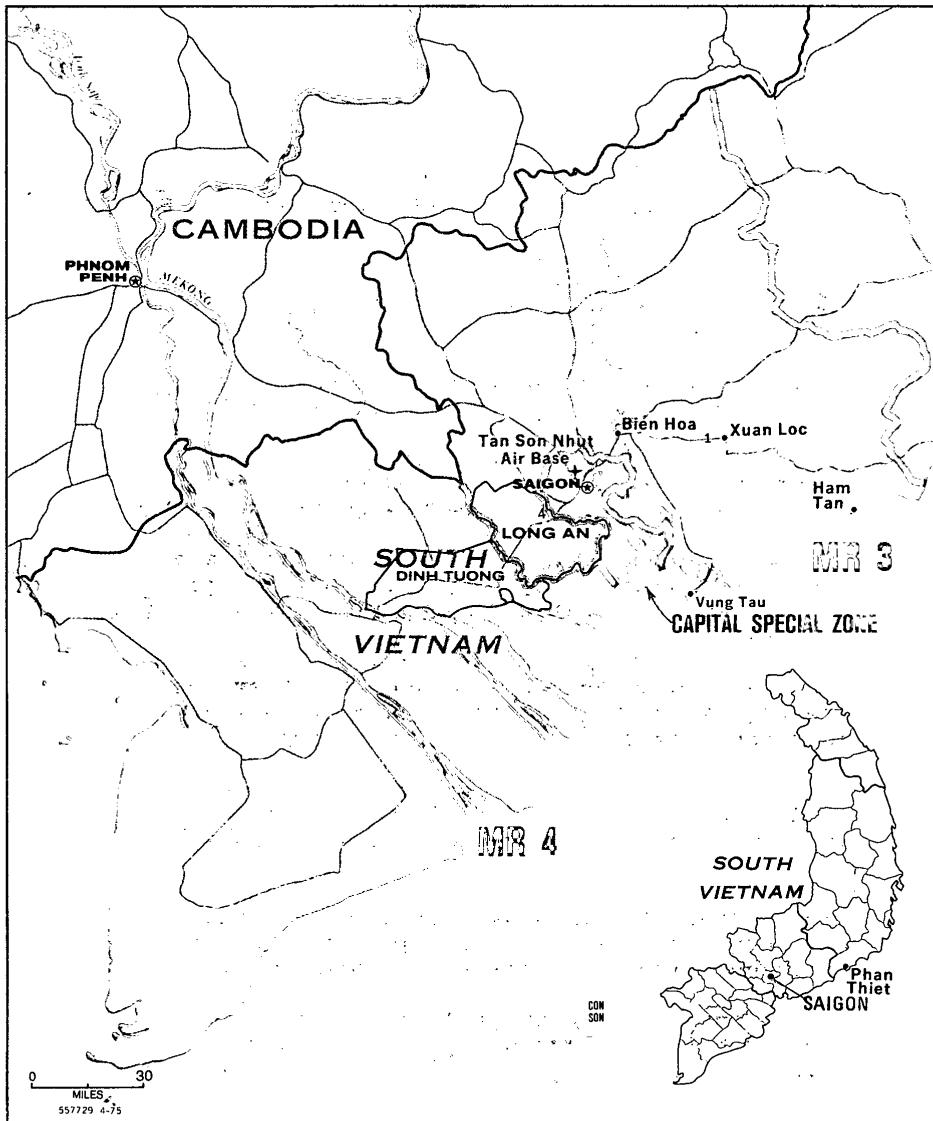
[Redacted]
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Libya-Egypt: Tension flared again this week with both governments publicly threatening to sever diplomatic relations. (Page 11)

Laos: Pathet Lao forces have become increasingly aggressive near a strategic crossroads town 100 miles north of Vientiane. (Page 13)

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY



FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

SOUTH VIETNAM

The government's position on the Xuan Loc battlefield is deteriorating rapidly and the threat is quickly shifting to Bien Hoa.

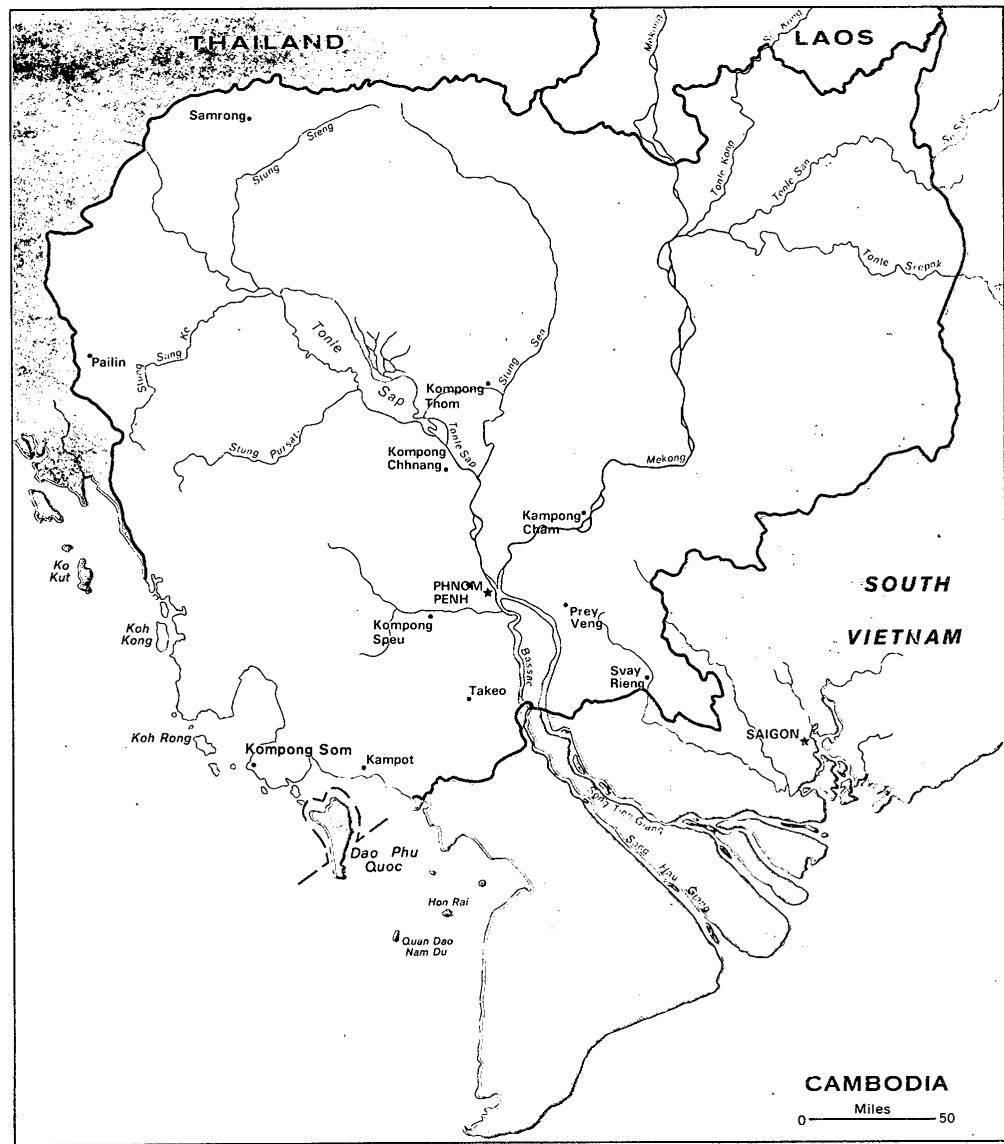
Two communist sapper regiments reportedly are approaching Bien Hoa from the north and northeast, and South Vietnamese commanders believe there are at least six other communist regiments now close enough to attack the city and nearby airbase in a matter of hours. Most of the combat support aircraft at Bien Hoa have already been transferred to Saigon's Tan Son Nhut airbase, but Bien Hoa remains an important facility for aircraft maintenance and munitions supply.

With a large share of Saigon's forces being chewed up at Xuan Loc, the government appears to have insufficient fighting units remaining to stop the communist thrust toward Saigon from the east.

Although South Vietnamese units in the delta provinces have been fighting well and have successfully repulsed communist efforts to sever Route 4, a key highway to Saigon, the developing situation looks grim. The communists have massed a substantial force--more than three divisions--in Dinh Tuong and Long An provinces just southwest of Saigon. With such a large force in position, the communists soon may try to overpower the two government divisions defending the road, isolate other South Vietnamese units south of Dinh Tuong, and begin a major drive against the capital.

Press reports say that communist sappers attacked the government's communications center at Phu Lam in Saigon's southwestern suburbs last night, but were driven off by South Vietnamese ground forces and helicopter gunships.

The South Vietnamese have decided to evacuate their last enclave in Military Region 2, Phan Thiet, which came under heavy communist tank and infantry attack early today. The abandonment of Phan Thiet will open coastal Route 1 for communist forces to move south into the provinces east of Saigon. The North Vietnamese began heavy tank and infantry attacks against Phan Thiet early today. A communist onslaught in this area would encounter little resistance from government troops still regrouping along the coast at Ham Tan. The communists then could move quickly on to Vung Tau--the last remaining important port on the eastern coast.



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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

CAMBODIA

A number of leading Cambodian military and some civilian leaders, including former Supreme Council president General Sak Sutsakhan, made eleventh-hour escapes from Phnom Penh. Former prime minister Long Boret, Republican Party strongman Sirik Matak, and former president Lon Nol's younger brother, Lon Non, are among those who remain in the capital, presumably in communist hands.

Long Boret and his family were left behind by helicopters making a dramatic last-minute departure from Phnom Penh's stadium. Lon Non played a part in arranging the surrender and was reportedly taken into custody by the communists. Sirik Matak apparently made no effort to escape.

The communist take-over appeared to be proceeding in an orderly fashion, although press reports early this morning claim that large numbers of Cambodians were attempting to leave Phnom Penh. The French ambassador in Bangkok reported that more than a thousand Cambodians have sought refuge in the French embassy in Phnom Penh. An exodus of large numbers from the capital could be part of an earlier reported communist plan to move people into the countryside to ease the strain on supplies in Phnom Penh.

An insurgent radio message intercepted yesterday directed that all foreigners, including Americans, were to be kept together. UN officials in Phnom Penh report that the communists are keeping the hotel where most Westerners were staying as a neutral zone.

Some newsmen are still managing to file stories from the capital, but the communists will probably clamp down on external communications as they consolidate their control.

So far, there has been no formal announcement of a new regime in Phnom Penh. An earlier intercepted message had indicated that the insurgent leadership would not enter the capital until the

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

occupation was complete. Prince Sihanouk told reporters in Peking yesterday that he would return to Cambodia "maybe in a couple of days, maybe in a couple of weeks."

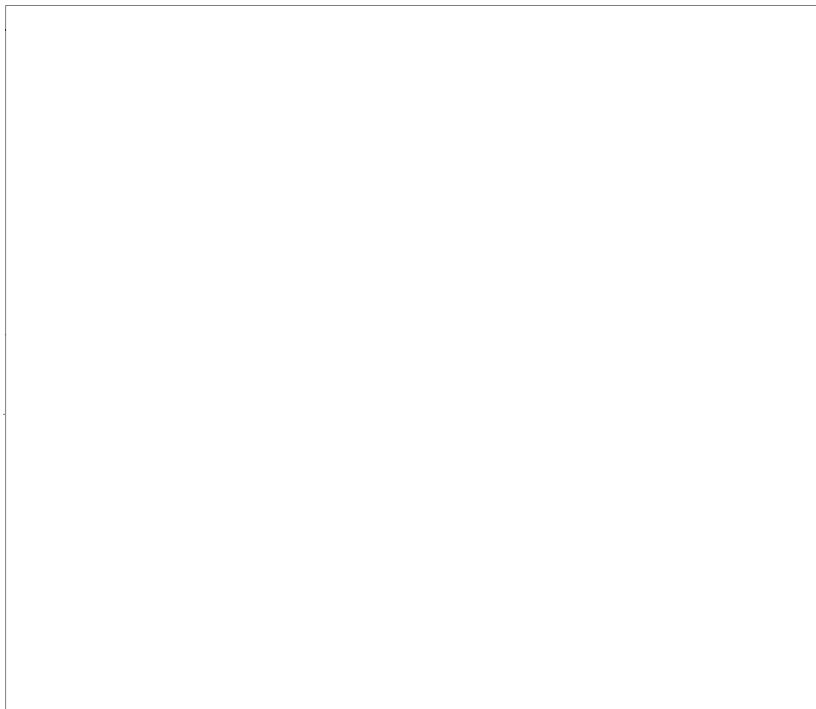
The situation outside Phnom Penh remains confused. The government garrisons at Kompong Speu and Kompong Cham have surrendered, but government commanders at Kompong Som, Kompong Chhnang, Kompong Thom, and a number of towns in the northwest claim they will fight as long as possible.

We have received no word on the status of the isolated enclaves of Kampot, Takeo, and Svay Rieng, but they would appear to have little choice but to surrender. Communist units near Prey Veng yesterday were cautioned to be "gentle in every way possible" during the occupation of that town.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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SYRIA-ISRAEL



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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY**PORUGAL**

Admiral Antonio Rosa Coutinho, rapidly emerging as a dominant member of the 28-man Revolutionary Council, promised on Tuesday that elections will be held, but that the Armed Forces Movement will not allow itself to be a "prisoner of the results."

In an hour-long televised interview, Coutinho tried to counter widespread suspicion that the Movement might cancel or delay the elections out of fear that the results would show that the people do not support the Movement's policies. Coutinho said that elections must be held. He added, however, that the elections will not affect the Movement's decision to move toward socialism and stay in power for at least the next three years.

Coutinho, a 49-year-old career navy officer who served until recently as head of the governing junta in Angola, has appeared more and more frequently as a Movement spokesman. This week he was appointed executive director of the Revolutionary Council, a powerful position that includes authority to spend up to \$400,000 without government approval.

[redacted] Cou-
tinho will soon be named armed forces chief of staff,
a position now held by President Costa Gomes [redacted]
[redacted]

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Socialist leader Mario Soares has [redacted] identified Coutinho as the leader of the leftist socialist faction within the Revolutionary Council. Soares believes that this is the most important group in the Council and that it is slightly larger than Prime Minister Goncalves' pro-communist faction. Coutinho is frequently mentioned as the leading contender to replace Prime Minister Goncalves should he falter.

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He is now in charge of the inquiry into the March 11 coup attempt. The preliminary results of the investigation are to be published next week. Some civilians may be implicated, and members of the moderate Socialist and Popular Democratic parties fear that disclosures just before elections will hurt them at the polls.

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

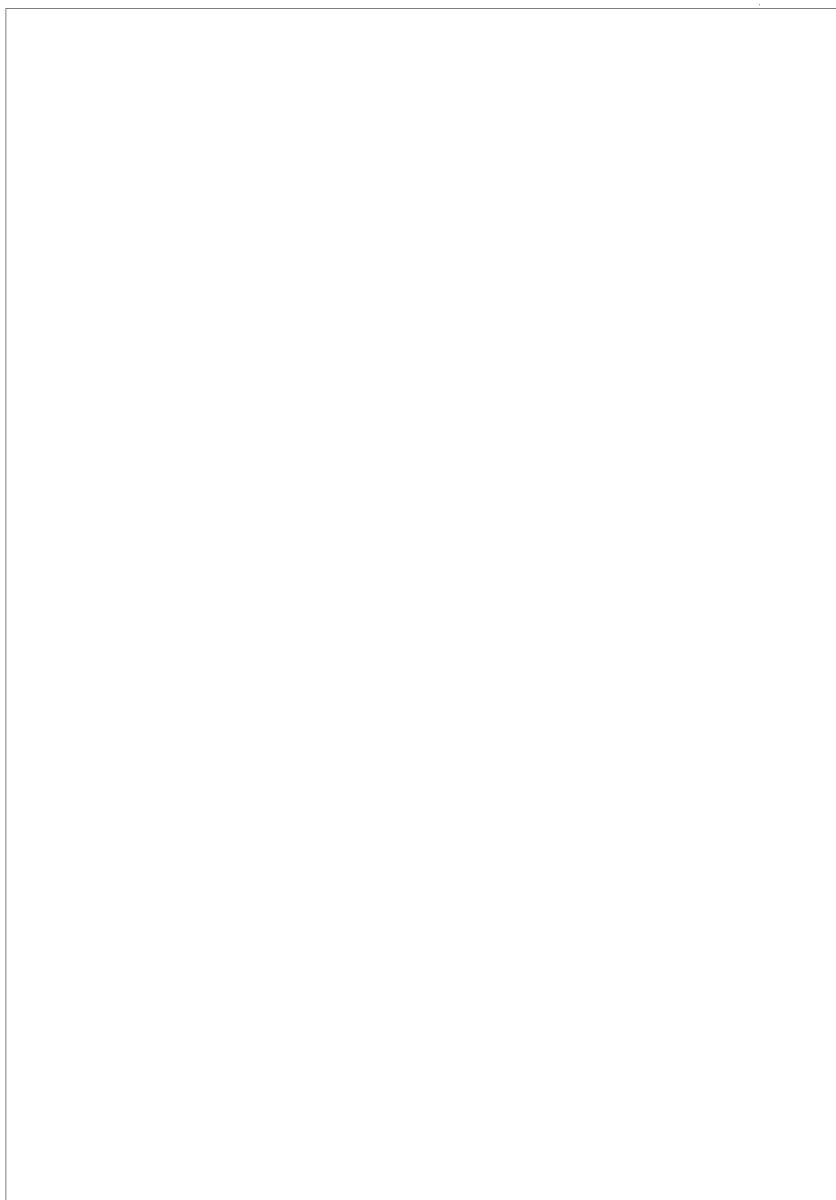
Coutinho created a stir last week by calling for the establishment of a new political party--described as a "civilian Armed Forces Movement"--to which the Movement could gradually transfer some of its powers. Coutinho openly admits his distaste for Soares, whom he sees as too conservative, but he even more strongly opposes the influence the communists now enjoy in the government. His proposed new party would fall ideologically somewhere between the Socialists and the communists and, in his view, eliminate bickering and fighting among the parties.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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USSR

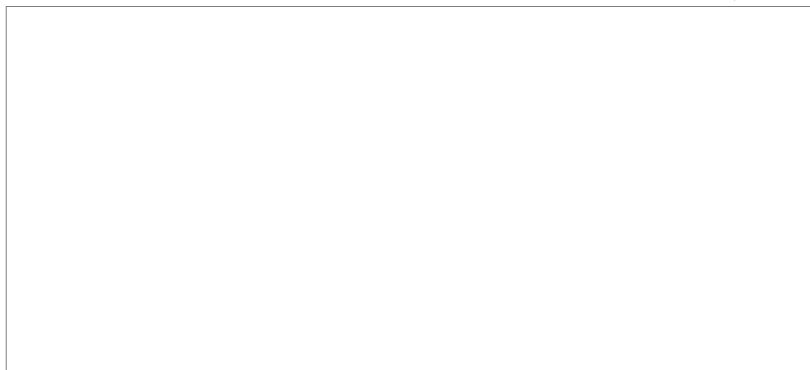


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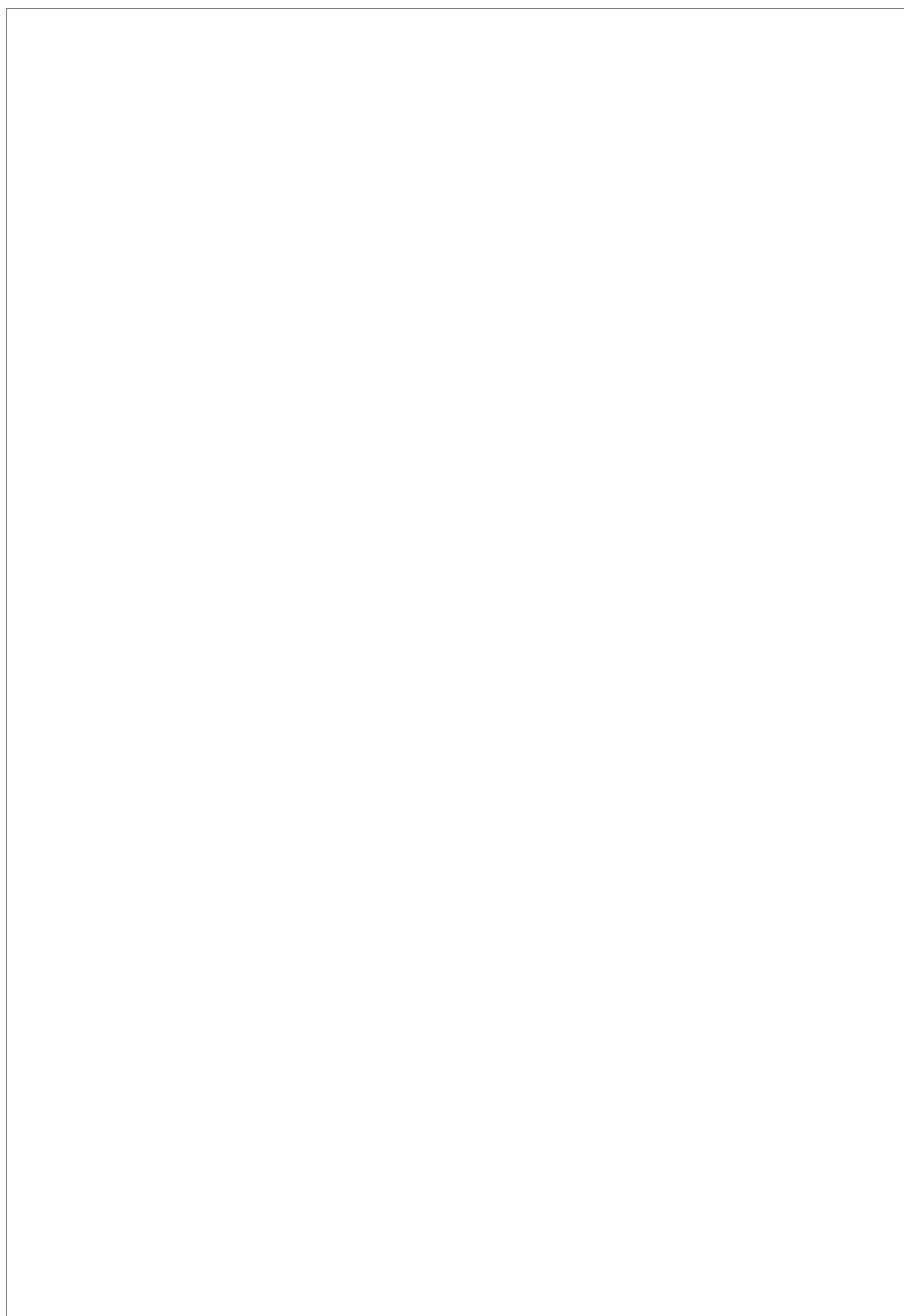
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ZAMBIA

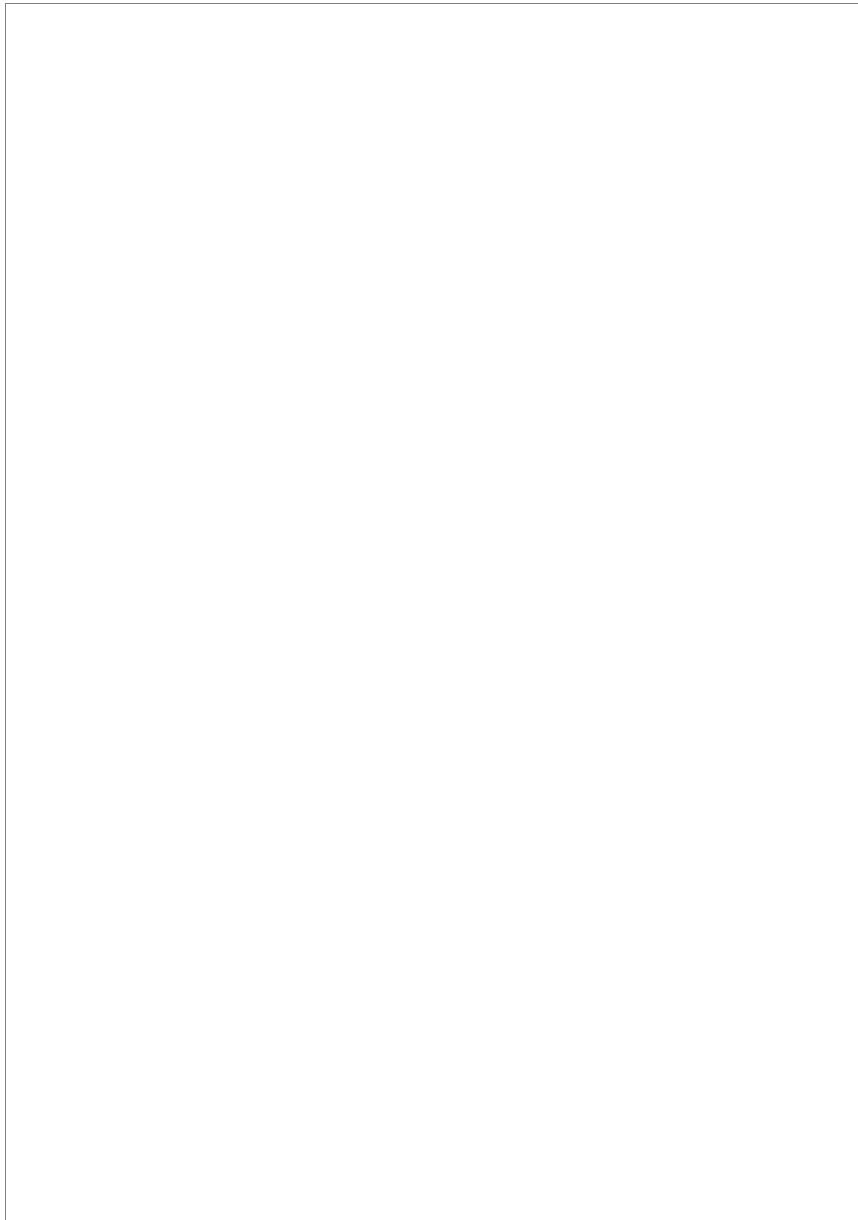


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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

LIBYA-EGYPT

The gradually building tension between Libya and Egypt flared up this week with both sides publicly threatening to sever diplomatic relations.

The Libyans, apparently infuriated by President Sadat's recent public characterization of President Qadhafi as "insane," issued a formal protest to the Egyptian ambassador on Wednesday, charging Sadat with "flagrant intervention in Libyan affairs." The message warned that Qadhafi and the Revolutionary Command Council were firmly united and that Sadat's "campaign" to drive a wedge between them could lead to a break in relations.

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The Libyan protest note drew a quick message from Cairo rejecting the Libyan note and holding the Libyan leadership directly responsible for the safety of the resident Egyptian community of 200,000 persons.

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US officials in Tripoli believe many Libyans are eager to go on an anti-Egyptian rampage that could quickly get out of control. Qadhafi, however, will move cautiously with regard to resident Egyptians, without whom Libyan schools, hospitals, and the economy itself could not function.

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In such a highly charged atmosphere, it is problematical whether practical economic and political considerations will constrain the two sides.

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

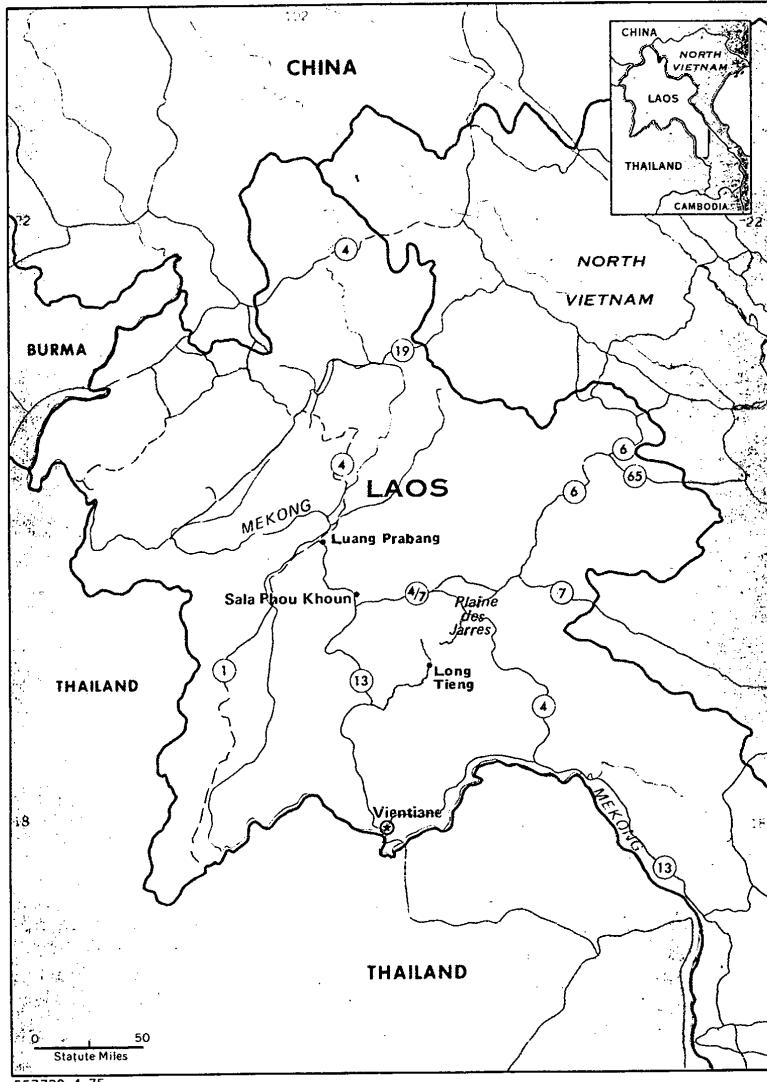
FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

Resentment of Egypt is one of the few issues that can firmly unite the Libyan leadership and its people and fuel their most irrational tendencies. Having been rebuffed repeatedly in his attempts at reconciliation with Sadat, Qadhafi now probably feels only the barest need for restraint.

Sadat's recent outbursts against Qadhafi probably stem from a genuine fear that the Libyan is willing and able to conduct subversive operations in Egypt. In periods such as the present, when Sadat and his policies are under attack in the Arab world, he feels vulnerable to subversion by Libya and fearful that other Arabs will join forces with Libya in an attempt to upset his negotiating strategy.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

Northern Laos



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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

LAOS

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[redacted] Pathet Lao forces have become increasingly aggressive in the Sala Phou Khoun area of northern Laos. Sala Phou Khoun is a strategic crossroads town located at the junction of routes 4/7 and 13, approximately 100 miles north of Vientiane. It has been controlled by the non-communists since the February 1973 cease-fire in Laos.

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[redacted] Pathet Lao forces launched a series of attacks earlier this week, forcing the non-communists to abandon all their positions east of the town. Attacks, allegedly involving at least two tanks, artillery, and ground forces, were also reported against the non-communists' command headquarters at Sala Phou Khoun itself. Fighting in the area subsided yesterday, however, with the non-communists still in control of the junction and nearby positions along Route 13.

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[redacted] senior non-communist military leaders will almost certainly interpret the actions at Sala Phou Khoun as an indication that the Pathet Lao have been emboldened by communist battlefield successes in Cambodia and South Vietnam into adopting a more militant posture in Laos. There is no evidence at this point, however, that the incidents at Sala Phou Khoun represent anything more than the kind of localized skirmishing that has periodically punctuated the two-year-old cease-fire.

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Prime Minister Souvanna Phouma, for his part, does not appear to be overly concerned with developments at Sala Phou Khoun.

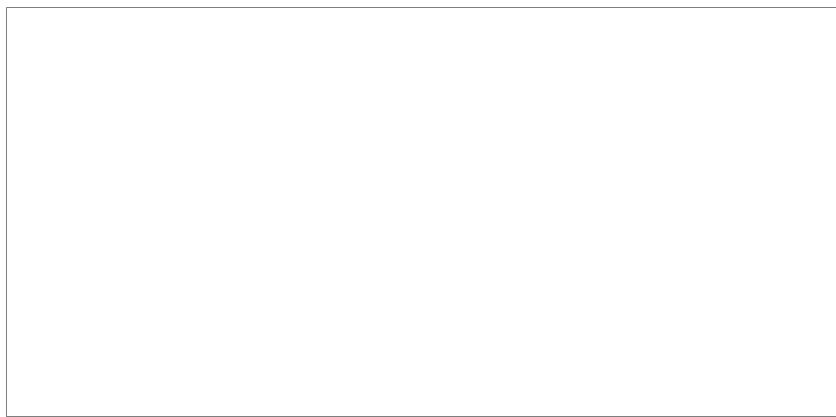
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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

NOTES

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Turkish Cypriot leader Rauf Denktash is facing his first serious challenge in the continuing debate over a constitution for the Turkish sector of Cyprus.

He is reportedly being challenged by four opposition groups who have been working together in the constituent assembly to curb the powers of the presidency which Denktash is expected to assume. He has also encountered resistance within his own cabinet. Denktash still enjoys Ankara's support, but he probably faces increased political opposition from the formerly cohesive Turkish Cypriot community now that the threat from the Greek Cypriots has so diminished. This could lead Denktash to assume a tougher stance in the intercommunal talks in an effort to restore his popularity. He could still be overruled, however, by Ankara.

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April 19, 1975

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Exempt from general
declassification under E.O. 14176
exemption category 5(a)(1), (2), (3)
declassified only on approval of
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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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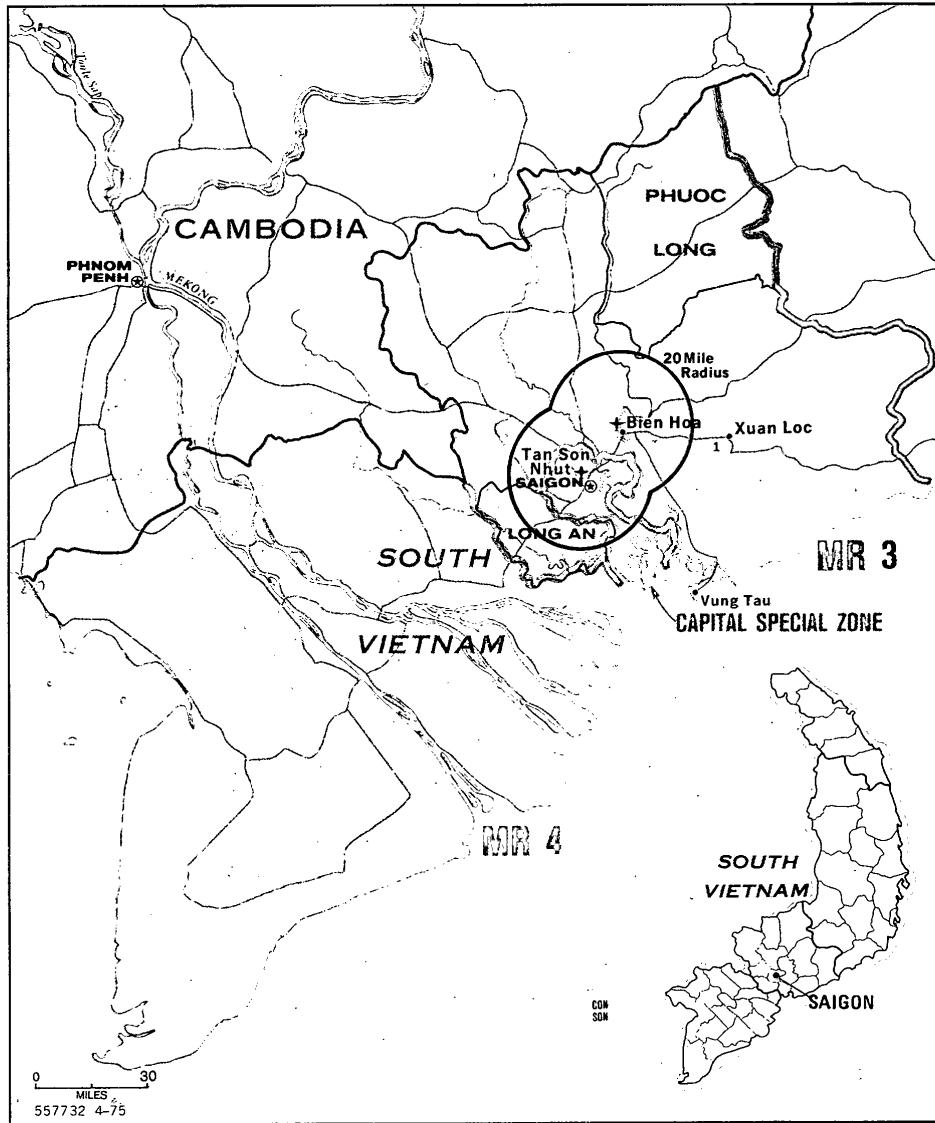
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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY



FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

SOUTH VIETNAM

The communists are tightening their noose around Saigon. In a matter of days, they will have 17 full divisions to commit against remaining government positions defending the capital and the delta, and will outnumber the government forces by about two-to-one.

The South Vietnamese have only seven divisions left and many of these have recently been hard hit. Three other divisions are in the process of rebuilding, but they will not be ready for combat in the next few critical days. Moreover, communist artillery attacks are threatening to close down government airbases close to the capital. Without air support, the South Vietnamese will be outgunned as well as outmanned.

At Xuan Loc, on the eastern end of Saigon's defense line, South Vietnamese forces are still crumbling in the face of sustained communist attacks. It appears likely that the South Vietnamese 18th Division and an Airborne brigade will be lost. At least one of the attacking communist divisions--the North Vietnamese 6th--already has pulled away from Xuan Loc and is swinging to the south, either headed for Vung Tau or around the government's southern flank and on toward Saigon.

A large gap in the defensive perimeter of Bien Hoa was filled yesterday when a brigade of Marines was moved into blocking positions to the north of the city. Despite airstrikes against North Vietnamese artillery positions, the Bien Hoa airbase has been hit again with large-caliber artillery and rockets.

To the south and west of Saigon, the communists are bringing the fight closer to the capital. During the past two days, a flurry of communist attacks in Long An Province spread to the outskirts of the capital. A number of smaller positions were overrun and many others were hit hard with shellings and ground attacks.

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

[redacted] the communists were [redacted] in a position to put military pressure on his forces which could not possibly be contained. [redacted] reserves, including parts of the Airborne Division, have taken heavy casualties, are exhausted, and cannot fight much longer.

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The communists are threatening to close down the government's two large airbases at Bien Hoa and Tan Son Nhut. The Bien Hoa airfield has already been hit by 122-mm. artillery, which has a range of 13 miles; the communists also possess the heavier 130-mm. field gun, which is accurate up to 17 miles. The North Vietnamese may also be moving SA-2 surface-to-air missiles toward the bases. [redacted]

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[redacted] The SA-2 missile, which is normally effective against aircraft above 1,000 feet, has a range of just under 20 miles.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

CAMBODIA

Radio Phnom Penh has been off the air since late Thursday. The French government's representative there is maintaining the only contact with the outside; he apparently is staying inside the French embassy compound and has provided few details on the communist occupation.

The French diplomat did report yesterday that all French newsmen were safe, thus casting some doubt on a rumor that the communists had executed 21 journalists.

Intercepted messages confirm that the communists are evacuating large numbers of civilians from the city. Most who have left are apparently headed for provinces north of the capital. The evacuation will reduce the capital's population to a more manageable level but will complicate any international relief effort.

There is no indication yet that senior Khmer communist leaders have entered Phnom Penh to set up a new regime. Their occupation plans call for the establishment of a temporary "revolutionary council" to consolidate control in the city, and press reports indicate that a "council" has been formed.

Prince Sihanouk is in Peking where he has received numerous congratulatory messages.

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The Association of Southeast Asian Nations--Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, and the Philippines--yesterday announced joint recognition of Sihanouk's government. Laos and Portugal made similar announcements. Japan followed suit today, even though Sihanouk had told a Japanese newsman that any such move would be rebuffed because of Tokyo's past support for the Lon Nol government.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

CHINA-CAMBODIA

Peking's major statements yesterday on the "liberation" of Phnom Penh re-emphasize China's solidarity with the rebels and the importance Peking attaches to Prince Sihanouk's past and future role in Cambodia.

An authoritative People's Daily editorial declared that the Cambodian people were successful because they rallied around a united front that included Sihanouk as well as the communists. Expressing its interest in Sihanouk's future role, the editorial asserted that the united front, formally chaired by Sihanouk, and the royal government "represents the interests of the Cambodian people."

Moreover, Peking's congratulatory message from Chairman Mao Tse-tung and other Chinese leaders was addressed to "head-of-state" Sihanouk, as well as to the prime minister and deputy prime minister of the royal government. These references clearly indicate that Peking expects the Prince to play a significant role in Phnom Penh; they may also mean that the Chinese hope to preempt any possible move to shunt Sihanouk aside.

The thrust of the Chinese statements is that Peking should be considered the new regime's most consistent ally. The editorial specifically contrasts Chinese support with the duplicity of the Soviets. The editorial carefully balanced criticism of the US role in Cambodia with an attack on the Soviets for supporting Lon Nol until the last minute. It said Moscow had been exposed as "a political gambler who has lost his all."

Neither the editorial nor the congratulatory message makes any direct reference to Hanoi--an indication that the Chinese may expect to find themselves in competition with the North Vietnamese for influence in Phnom Penh.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

CHINA-KOREA

Peking appears to be setting down a moderate tone for North Korean President Kim Il-song's visit, which began on Thursday.

Although the reasons for Kim's visit are not yet clear, the importance that the Chinese attach to it is obvious from the massive welcome Kim received and the fact that Kim met with Mao--in the Chairman's first appearance in three months--only hours after he arrived in Peking. The very fact that Kim has traveled to China, for his first official visit in 14 years, in itself suggests that issues of importance to both countries are under discussion.

A People's Daily editorial that appeared the day before Kim's arrival in Peking pledged support for the "correct policy" of peaceful reunification of the two Koreas. Treatment of the US role in Korea was perfunctory; the only reference to US troops in the south was a pro forma statement that they "must be withdrawn."

The editorial drew no connection between recent events in Indochina and the Kim visit. In fact, the references to "peaceful reunification," as well as the relatively restrained criticism of Seoul, strongly suggest that Peking is in no mood to support any thoughts Kim may have about increasing tensions on the Korean peninsula.

If Kim is in Peking to engage in military discussions--military aid negotiator O Chin-u was included in the talks with Mao--the Chinese will be careful in their response because of concern that the North Koreans will turn to the Soviets if they are cold-shouldered in Peking. Although Moscow has shown no disposition to encourage any Korean adventurism, the Chinese are especially sensitive to Soviet relations with Pyongyang.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

JORDAN

King Husayn and his prime minister have recently been pursuing a more activist foreign policy highlighted by closer contacts with Syria and a less hostile attitude toward communist states.

Within the past six weeks Jordan has:

--Embarked on an unprecedented, close relationship with Syria, including wide-ranging economic and trade agreements and active military and political consultations.

--Advertised its intention of seeking Soviet air defense equipment from Syria if its requests for US equipment are not met quickly.

--Entertained several Soviet economic and political delegations and lavishly welcomed Romanian President Ceausescu.

--Approved bids for diplomatic representation by Yugoslavia, East Germany, and North Korea.

In another of his periodic rounds of major army units this month, the King stressed the threat of war, Jordan's military needs, and its solidarity with other Arab states in demanding that Israel return Jerusalem and the West Bank to Arab control. He has been unusually strident on the subject of Jerusalem, and made a point of raising it during the official reception for Ceausescu.

[redacted] concern about the direction of Jordanian policy, fearing that the country will be drawn into costly entanglements abroad when it should be concentrating on internal development. [redacted]

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[redacted] if the King turns to Syria for air defense weapons, Syrian advisers might be stationed in Jordan. [redacted]

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Jordan's increasing involvement with Syria could invite a war with Israel for which the army and air force are unprepared.

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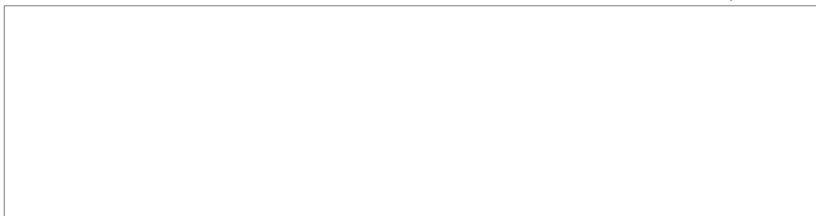
FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

The King and Prime Minister Rifai are due in Washington at the end of this month for a discussion of Jordan's military and economic needs, and much of their recent activity is designed to focus US attention on their aid requests. But their efforts to diversify and strengthen Jordan's foreign ties reflect a genuine concern that the US can neither prevent another Middle East war by a new diplomatic initiative nor provide Jordan with the means it considers vital to its defense.

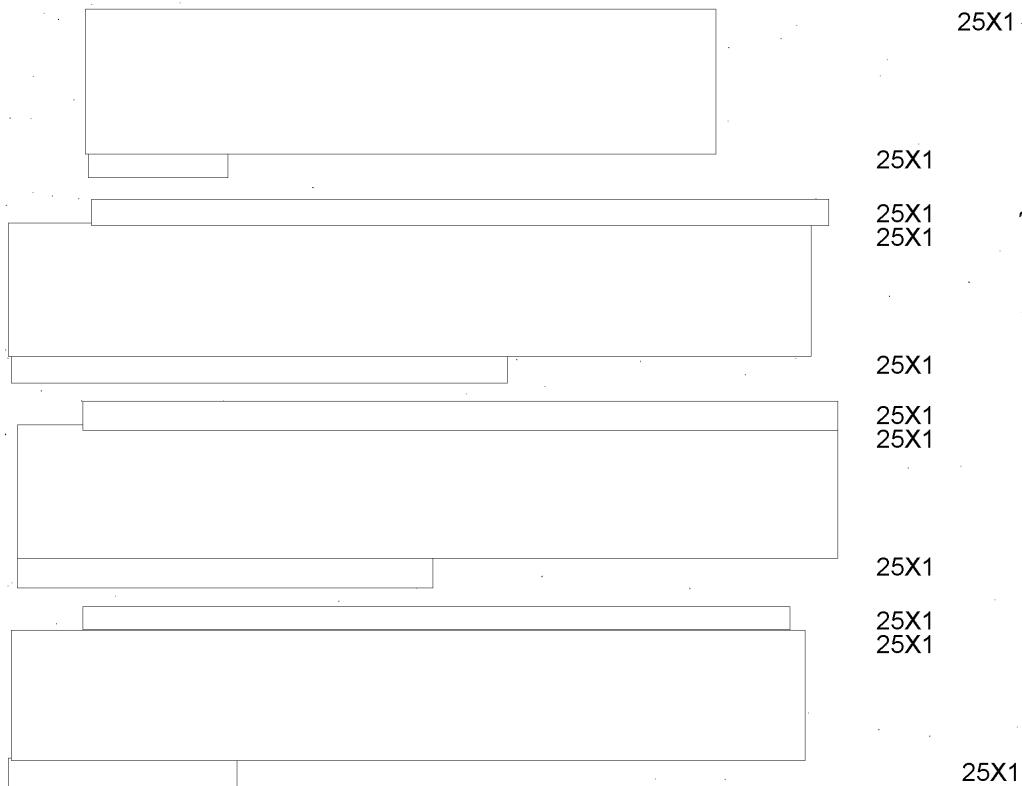
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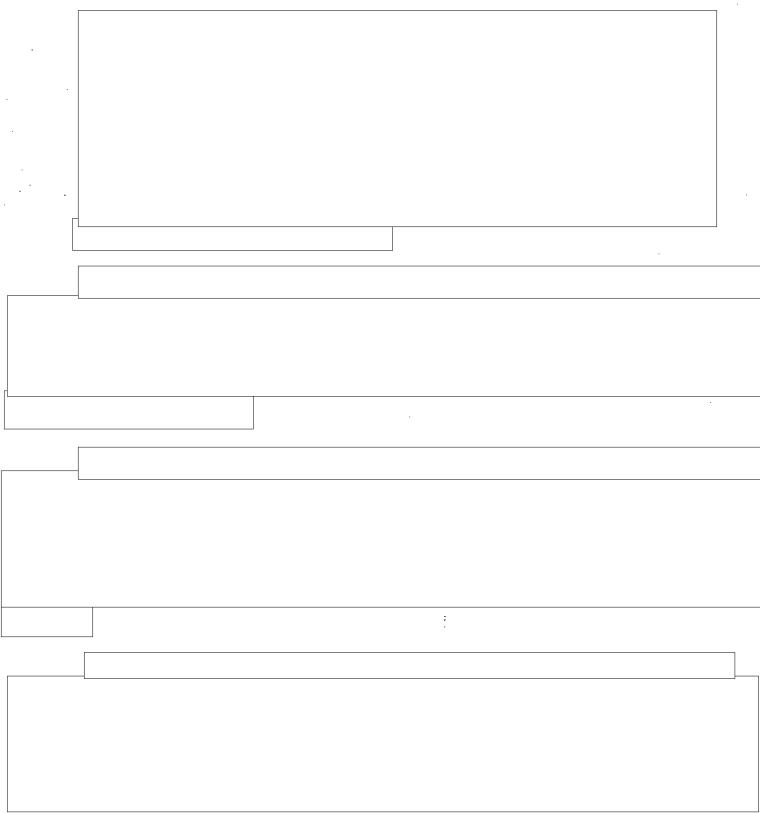
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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

SPAIN-US



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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

PANAMA CANAL TREATY

We present below the precis of a National Intelligence Estimate, "Panama Canal Treaty: The Likely Consequences of Certain Contingent Developments," which was approved by the United States Intelligence Board yesterday.

The purpose of this paper is to estimate probable reactions in Panama to three assumed outcomes of the present canal negotiations. The paper does not estimate the chances for successful conclusion of the ongoing negotiations, nor does it address the negotiating positions of the parties.

Scenario 1: A treaty is signed and both sides begin the ratification process.

The Panamanian government will be able to obtain ratification of a treaty that Torrijos endorses and energetically supports.

--Ratification in accordance with the 1972 constitution could come in as little as three months.

--Torrijos will probably act before the Senate does, hoping, among other objectives, to influence that body and to place the onus for rejection on the US.

A treaty signed and ratified by Panama could be denounced by a future Panamanian government, but this is unlikely.

Scenario 2: A treaty is signed, but the US Senate fails to act upon it for an extended period or refuses to approve it.

Extended Delay

Panama's reaction will depend on Torrijos' perception of the reasons for the delay and of the chances for eventual ratification, and on the extent of his continuing confidence in the US executive branch.

(continued)

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

--Under the best of circumstances, he would have difficulty living with an extended delay.

--Within a year or less, under growing nationalist pressure, Torrijos would openly criticize the delay, and there would be demonstrations and some harassment of US personnel.

--As long as he believed the door remained open for ratification, he would control the level of the Panamanian response.

Refusal to Ratify

Nationalistic feelings would be ignited and violence and rioting against US personnel and installations would occur.

As the initial disorders run their course, Panama would undertake more calculated actions designed to make operation of the canal difficult.

--There would be harassment and hostile acts, such as closure of the Canal Zone borders, and US personnel would be in physical danger.

--Terrorist groups would try to carry out acts against US interests.

--Torrijos would probably break diplomatic relations with the US and denounce the 1903 treaty.

International support for Panama would be extensive, particularly in Latin America.

--The prospects for an effective multilateral dialogue with Latin America would be dealt a severe blow, and the climate for bilateral relations would be adversely affected.

--Regional organizations excluding the US would be given impetus.

The Torrijos government would probably survive, and any future negotiations with Panama would be considerably more difficult.

(continued)

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

Scenario 3: The negotiators cannot agree on an acceptable treaty and the talks break down.

If Torrijos perceived that talks might be resumed on his terms, he would maintain a responsible image.

If talks were not resumed fairly soon, Panama would resort to tactics like those described in the case of Senate rejection.

Torrijos would move quickly to such tactics if he concluded at the outset that there was no hope for renewed negotiations.

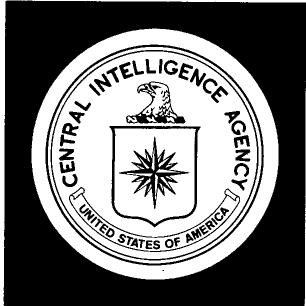
The chances are greater in this scenario that he would feel duped. This would lead to:

--A more emotional and aggressive response.

--A greater government role in organizing and directing it, and a greater chance of participation by members of the National Guard.

--Less prospect for meaningful communication between the US and Panama.

Top Secret



The President's Daily Brief

April 21, 1975

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Exempt from general
declassification schedule of E.O. 111652
exempt category: 5B (1)(2), (3)
declassification review agency: of
the Director of Central Intelligence

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

LATE ITEM

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South Vietnam

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

April 21, 1975

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Vietnam: The North Vietnamese have rapidly brought several corps command headquarters south to direct the assault on Saigon. (Page 1)

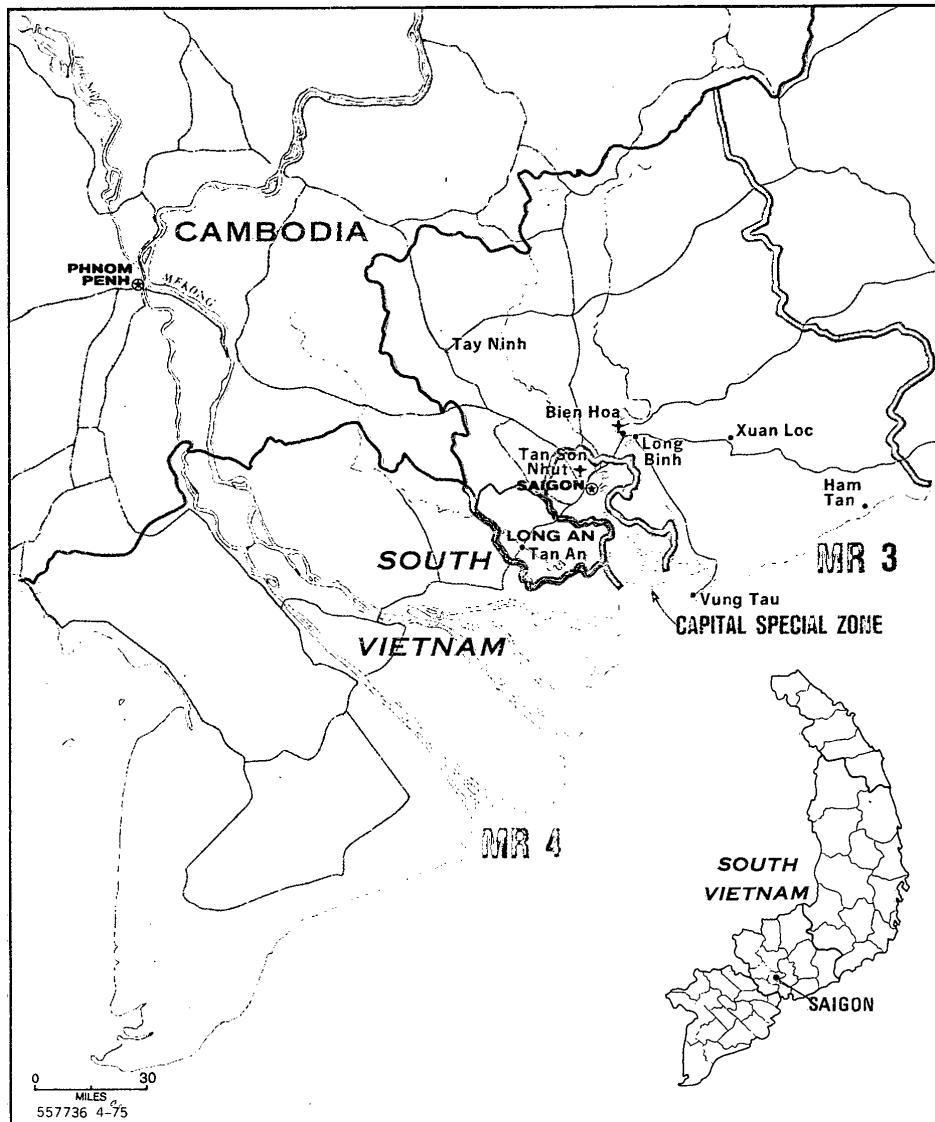
Cambodia: The fate of journalists and other foreigners in Phnom Penh remains uncertain. (Page 4)

Middle East: Egyptian President Sadat begins a visit to Riyadh today that may include a meeting with Syria's President Asad. (Page 5)

Latin America: Secretary Kissinger's forthcoming trip is focusing Latin American attention on the state of inter-American relations. (Page 6)

Notes: Israel; Thailand - North Korea. (Page 8)

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY



FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY**VIETNAM**

The North Vietnamese have rapidly brought several corps command headquarters south to direct the assault on Saigon. Two major commands from North Vietnam and the Hue - Da Nang area and the senior headquarters for the Central Highlands have joined one other corps command near Saigon to coordinate the attacks of some 17 divisions along the three major approaches to the capital--from the east, the north, and the south-west.

The defenders of Tan An, southwest of Saigon, have been pinned down while the communists send additional forces around them to new positions closer to the capital. The same has happened to the east, at Xuan Loc, which was abandoned by South Vietnamese troops today. North Vietnamese regiments that have bypassed Xuan Loc have driven toward Bien Hoa city.

Bien Hoa's main defense units--two brigades of marines who escaped from Da Nang--are newly re-grouped and have poor discipline. They are not expected to stand and fight. The nearby Long Binh supply depot contains about 60 percent of all government munitions. The loss of Bien Hoa city, and the air base and supply depot would likely lead to the rapid collapse of other government forces.

To the northwest, remaining South Vietnamese 25th Division battalions have been pulled out of Tay Ninh city to blocking positions closer to Saigon, but the North Vietnamese 9th Division is swinging around the southern flank of the 25th to threaten Saigon's western perimeter. Southwest of the capital, the North Vietnamese have moved additional forces up from the delta to challenge the main defenses of Long An Province. Other communist regiments are approaching the southwestern outskirts of Saigon.

The communists are also moving five sapper regiments into the Saigon area to disrupt government control, terrorize the population, and guide North Vietnamese regulars into the metropolitan area.

(continued)

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

Saigon no longer has any reserve forces available to help defend the city. The Joint General Staff does not consider it practical to attempt to bring any units that are deep in the delta closer to Saigon.

Communist forces have taken Phan Thiet and Ham Tan and are continuing their drive down the coast toward Vung Tau. They will probably capture the lightly defended port within a few days.

* * *

The communists appear to be ruling out any consideration of a genuine negotiated settlement of the conflict. At a press conference in Saigon Saturday, the Viet Cong's spokesman carefully avoided mention of negotiations with the present government or even a reconstituted one such as they had been demanding. Instead, he reiterated the Viet Cong's position of March 21 which called for the overthrow of Thieu and the immediate suspension of all US support as the only two preconditions which could bring about a "rapid settlement."

An equally tough line reportedly emerged [redacted]

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[redacted] the "whole thing" would be finished in a short time and that the communists would not agree to enter into negotiations, nor would they join any tripartite coalition government. [redacted]

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[redacted] the issue of US aid had become "academic," since victory would be achieved before the South Vietnamese could absorb any new "appropriations."

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On the government side, however, President Thieu still shows every sign of intending to stay in office. Within the next week, he plans to deliver a speech which will make this intention clear and which will challenge the US Congress to make a clear decision on future support to Saigon. Thieu reportedly intends to deny that he is an obstacle to peace, but will reiterate that he will never agree to a communist take-over in the South. In this regard, Thieu will maintain that he would step down only if this would ensure quick and sufficient US assistance, and only if the US agrees to "react vigorously against communist aggression."

(continued)

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

Despite Thieu's tough public stand, South Vietnamese opposition elements apparently are still trying to work behind the scenes to form a new government that could lead to negotiations with the communists. Catholic opposition leader Tran Huu Thanh, retired general Duong Van "Big" Minh, former Senate chairman Nguyen Van Huyen, and Buddhist opposition leader Senator Vu Van Mau plan to issue a joint proclamation on April 23, demanding the immediate resignation of President Thieu and calling for the formation of a "national leadership council." The new council would be headed by the same four leaders, with a cabinet composed two thirds of "rightists"--presumably military officers and others closely identified with the present government--and one third of "leftists"--presumably elements represented by the four opposition leaders.

The hazy plan of action for the proposed new government appears to consist of immediate negotiations with the communists and establishment of the National Council of Reconciliation and Concord called for in the Paris Accords. Under the opposition scenario, the "leftist" faction of the government would concentrate on political competition with the communists within the Council, while the "rightist" faction would attempt to stabilize the military situation in what remains of South Vietnam's territory.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

CAMBODIA

The fate of journalists and other foreigners in Phnom Penh remains uncertain.

A Khmer communist message intercepted last Thursday indicated that all foreigners, except Chinese and Vietnamese, were being held together. The message said that the foreigners represented a "political problem" that "must be resolved properly."

Another communist message of the same day ordered the execution of government officials in the provincial capital of Kompong Cham. Press accounts of a Khmer communist broadcast referring to the beheading of senior government leaders in Phnom Penh have not been confirmed.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

MIDDLE EAST

Egyptian President Sadat begins a visit to Riyadh today that may include a rare meeting between Sadat and Syria's President Asad.

Sadat, who avoided Asad during King Faysal's funeral, told Ambassador Eilts on Saturday that Asad had requested the meeting. He said that earlier this month PLO chairman Arafat gave him a letter from Asad in which the Syrian leader "explicitly admitted" that Egypt can make peace or war without reference to Syria, but that Syria could make neither peace nor war in isolation from Egypt. The US embassy notes that while Arafat was in Egypt, he said publicly that the Arabs need Egypt to make war, although he added that Egypt needs the Arabs to make peace.

Sadat's interpretation of the Asad letter may be self-serving, but if the two leaders do meet, it will be because Asad, probably prompted by the Saudis, has taken the initiative. The Syrians repeatedly have complained about Sadat's failure to coordinate his political and diplomatic strategems with them and his penchant for unilateral action.

Sadat, on the other hand, has been making no visible effort to ease his strained relations with Damascus [redacted]

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[redacted] He expects no improvement to come from the encounter. According to Ambassador Eilts, Sadat claimed to have told Arafat not to come to Riyadh because his presence would not contribute usefully to Syrian-Egyptian talks; presumably Sadat wants to avoid a Syrian-PLO effort to box him in on negotiating strategy as happened at the Rabat summit last October.

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Also today, the Arab League foreign ministers convene a meeting in Cairo. The main item on their agenda is to select a site for the next Arab summit, tentatively set for late June.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

LATIN AMERICA

Secretary Kissinger's forthcoming trip to the region and the OAS General Assembly meetings next month are focusing Latin American attention on the state of inter-American affairs. At the same time, events in Indochina have provided impetus for a new round of Latin commentary on broad aspects of US policy.

While attitudes range from close identification with the US to antipathy, a common thread among the Latins is discomfort over the need to adjust to a new US view of the world. US positions on a variety of international topics have been interpreted as tougher toward the nonaligned and less benevolent toward friendly governments. A few Latin governments, including Venezuela, Argentina, and Brazil, harbor some hope that reverses in Asia will turn US attention closer to home. Most seem to fear that current problems will make Washington less flexible in other areas.

Concern over reverberations from Indochina is highest in Latin countries that feel themselves embattled in an anti-communist struggle. Chile, for example, feels increasingly isolated in its effort to eliminate Allende's Marxist influence there. Taken together with the removal of Santiago from the Secretary's itinerary, events in Indochina have made Chile feel that its best option is to strengthen ties with neighbors in Latin America.

Uruguayans question the value of their long loyalty to and cooperation with the US because the Secretary plans to visit Buenos Aires, capital of an ostensibly nonaligned government, but not Montevideo. They view detente as an unwise accommodation to the communists and deplore Washington's change of heart about Cuba and Indochina.

(continued)

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

Panama's unique concern about the US mood has raised grave fear over the political fallout from the Indochina situation. Panamanians speculate that US public opinion, weary of setbacks, will not tolerate yielding the Canal Zone to Panama.

Elsewhere in the hemisphere, US attention to Asia has fortified the view that Latin America continues to have very low priority in US thinking. Few seem to expect that Secretary Kissinger's travels will restore the sense of rejuvenation that permeated inter-American events last spring.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

NOTES

Israeli Prime Minister Rabin focused on US-Israeli relations in a lengthy interview, apparently intended for both US and domestic audiences, that was published Friday in Israel's largest daily.

Rabin was plainly attempting to calm widespread fears in Israel that relations with the US have dangerously deteriorated. Defense Minister Peres, however, has openly labeled US-Israeli relations as in a state of "crisis," and Rabin, despite his efforts to play the matter down, is worried. Rabin said that Foreign Minister Allon will try to obtain a reading from Secretary Kissinger during their meeting today on the implications for Israel of Washington's policy assessment.

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* * *

Thailand has reportedly agreed to establish diplomatic relations with North Korea, the new Bangkok government's first move to improve relations with Asian communist regimes.

The Thai are deeply suspicious of the intentions of Hanoi and Peking in Southeast Asia, but they do not view Pyongyang as a potential threat to their security. Pyongyang views relations with Bangkok as another step forward in its diplomatic competition with Seoul, and as beneficial to Pyongyang's side of the Korean question at the UN.

Top Secret



The President's Daily Brief

April 22, 1975

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Exempt from general
declassification schedule of E.O. 11652
exemption category, SR(1)(2)(C)
decided by the Director or his/her designee of
the Director of Central Intelligence

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

April 22, 1975

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South Vietnam: Further political changes in Saigon may result in Senate President Tran Van Lam being named president of the country. Many military officers believe the situation hopeless. (Page 1)

Laos: Fighting continues in the Sala Phou Khoun area in the north. (Page 4)

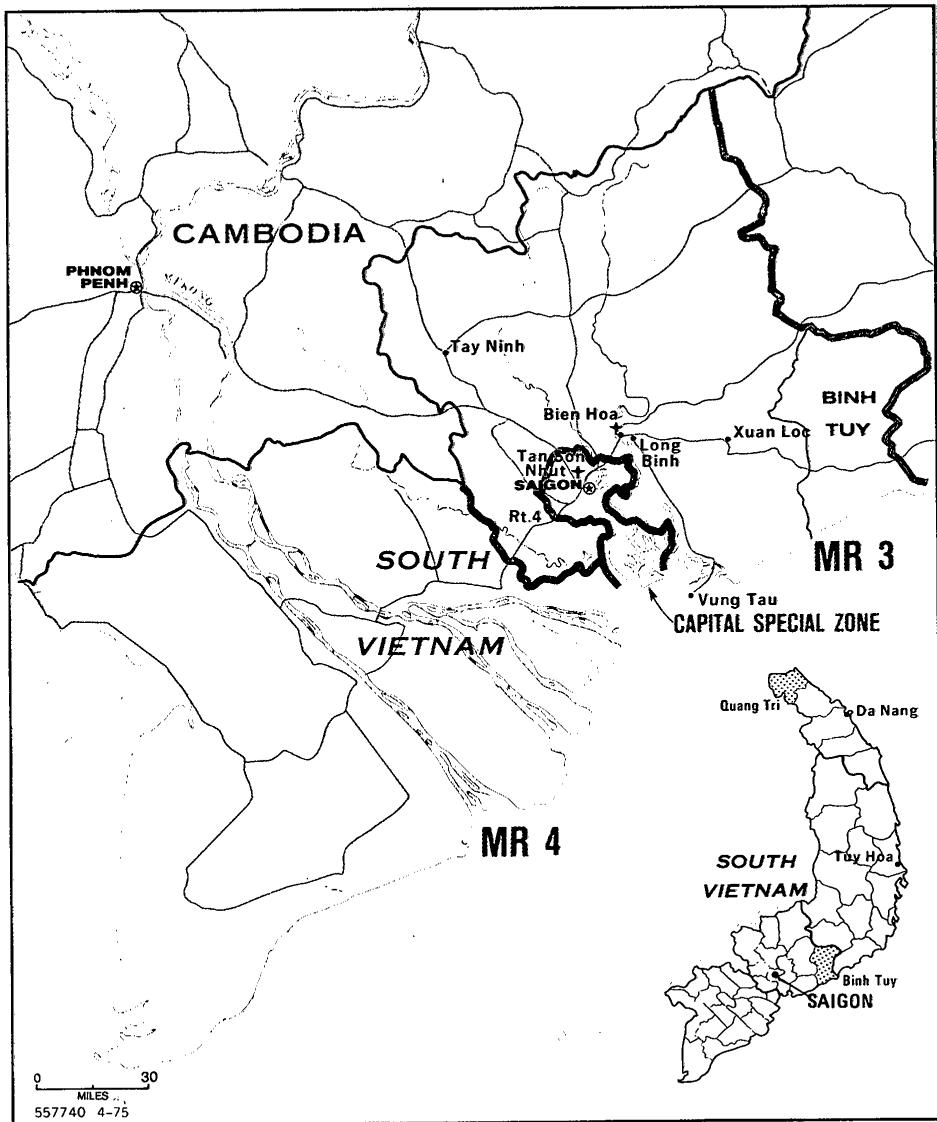
USSR-Egypt: Foreign Minister Fahmi's visit to Moscow appears to have eased tensions somewhat. (Page 5)

Portugal: The political campaign is drawing to a close amid conflicting rumors that a power play before Friday may result in cancellation of the election. (Page 6)

Greece: A large crowd of leftists yesterday damaged the US embassy in Athens. (Page 7)

Notes: Saudi Arabia; Cyprus; Peru-USSR (Pages 8 and 9)

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY



FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

SOUTH VIETNAM

Vice President Tran Van Huong, who was sworn in as president immediately after Thieu's resignation yesterday, reportedly is also to resign soon to make way for Senate president Tran Van Lam.

Lam apparently intends to form a new government, although there are as yet no indications who will be appointed. Presumably, Lam will turn to such staunch anti-Thieu personalities as General Duong Van "Big" Minh, Buddhist leader Vu Van Mau, and former senate president Nguyen Van Huyen in an effort to encourage the communists to negotiate a political settlement of the war.

The communists have ruled out any real compromise settlement, implying that nothing less than total surrender would be acceptable. Initial communist reaction to the Thieu resignation has continued this line. A Viet Cong spokesman in Paris has been quoted as stating that before negotiations could be considered, the US must "halt all interference in Vietnam" and that not only Thieu "but also his whole regime must be overthrown."

At this point, the very best a new South Vietnamese government might obtain is a negotiated surrender. Given the proximity of communist military forces to Saigon--and the very real prospect of a rapid disintegration of South Vietnamese military will in the wake of Thieu's resignation--time may already have run out for any such orderly transfer of power.

* * *

Communist pressure is being maintained on all sides of Saigon.

Fighting is continuing a dozen or so miles east of Bien Hoa and along Route 4 southwest of Saigon. The roads around Tay Ninh city remain blocked; the communists are shelling Tay Ninh and could easily overrun the lightly defended town at any time. In addition to the now routine artillery fire on Bien Hoa, the communists shelled a number of other government positions.

(continued)

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

The South Vietnamese have reportedly decided to move the two marine brigades south from Bien Hoa to Vung Tau because their discipline has broken down. Government commanders clearly want these units well away from Saigon. This will leave the defense of the Bien Hoa - Long Binh complex to the remnants of the South Vietnamese 18th Division, an armored brigade, and an airborne brigade--all of which have just been pulled back from the Xuan Loc battlefield. The combat effectiveness of these units is questionable, and Bien Hoa could fall quickly.

Many South Vietnamese officers believe it is futile to try to reorganize the defenses of Saigon. They believe the military situation is hopeless, and do not expect the troops deployed along the front lines to hold for long once heavy attacks begin. This gloomy assessment will undoubtedly soon spread to the troops, especially as units retreating from the Xuan Loc battlefield show up and are pressed into the Bien Hoa defensive perimeter.

The North Vietnamese have moved several of their three dozen gunboats south, and these could pose a threat to evacuation by sea. Recent intercepts suggest that some of these gunboats have moved farther south, possibly as far as Binh Tuy Province.

* * *

Information as to how the communists are administering the areas of South Vietnam which recently have come under their control is sketchy. The clearest public statement of communist policy to date was contained in a ten-point manifesto broadcast on April 3 by the Viet Cong's Liberation Radio. It appealed to government civil servants to remain at their jobs and guaranteed that private businessmen could continue their operations.

Limited information on the formation of "revolutionary committees" in cities like Hue and Da Nang indicates that at least a superficial effort in this direction is under way.

The communists are trying to create the appearance of non-communist participation in their new administrations. Aside from this gesture, the new communist administrations appear to have a distinctive military cast, suggesting that some areas have been placed under a sort of martial law.

(continued)

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

The communists are wasting no time in consolidating their control and dealing with any local resistance. Liberation Radio broadcasts of late March included instructions to "severely punish" anyone who was "concocting schemes" to oppose the new administrations.

It is impossible to estimate the scope of purges that have taken place so far, but certain members of the former government, such as the police, are particularly vulnerable. It is unclear whether the first initial executions were acts of local Viet Cong units or part of a systematic policy. An intercept from an unidentified North Vietnamese unit in Quang Tin Province recently ordered that "shooting on the spot" be restricted and that "military tribunals" first be established, suggesting that the North Vietnamese want to control the reprisal process.

In some areas where the Viet Cong traditionally have had a strong foothold, acts of violence do not appear to be prevalent.

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[redacted] the provincial capital of Tuy Hoa in Phu Yen Province, Viet Cong officials moved into the city and established administrative control within a day after the government left. Notices were issued to civil servants and teachers to report for work, promising there would be no revenge or punishment. North Vietnamese currency was immediately introduced, and citizens were ordered to exchange their old money. Many of the cadre [redacted] were familiar to local residents and were recognized as individuals who had left Phu Yen with the Viet Minh insurgents in 1954.

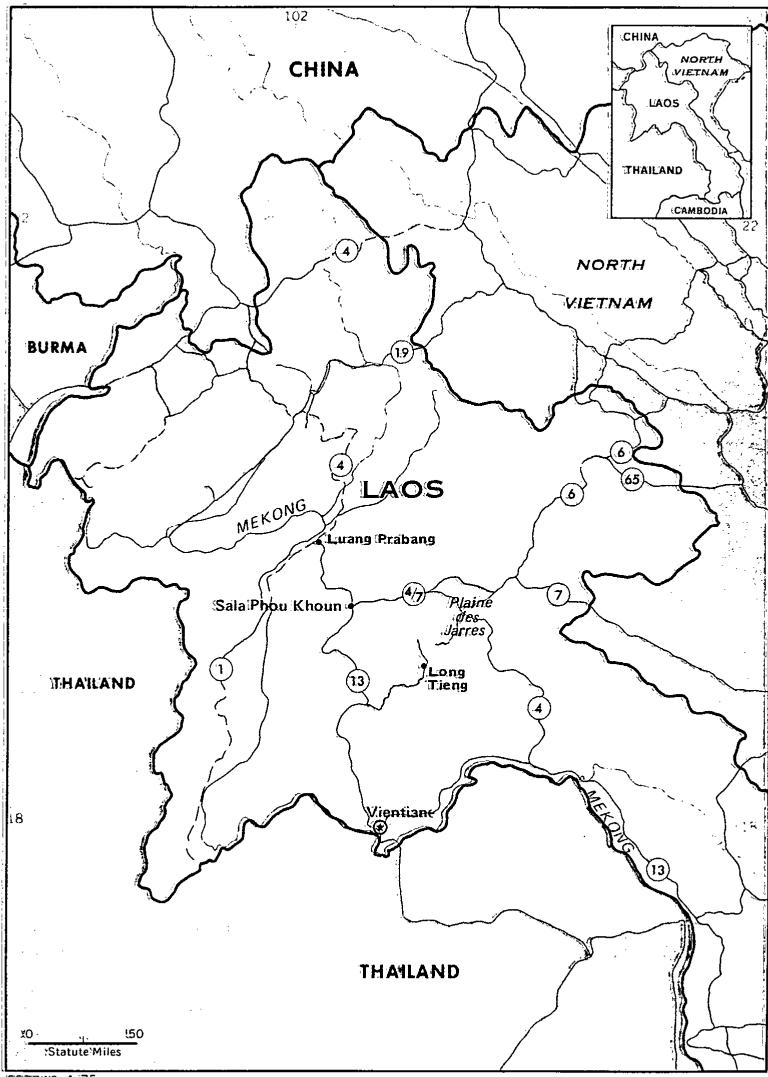
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There is as yet little evidence on the longer term question of whether Hanoi will opt for a relatively quick reunification of the north and south or will choose instead to establish a communist-controlled transitional regime in the south, ostensibly within the context of the Paris Accords.

To date the communists have simply labeled their new administrations "revolutionary committees," and the mix of North Vietnamese and southern communist control and participation is not clear. Hanoi may not have made final decisions on the precise complexion of a successor regime in Saigon.

Northern Laos



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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

LAOS

Regional commander General Vang Pao's counterattack to recapture positions lost last week east of Sala Phou Khoun has been turned back by stiff resistance from what are described as "several Pathet Lao companies." The abortive counterattack by one Royal Lao army infantry battalion was supported by a dozen air strikes.

Two additional positions manned by non-communist troops at the junction of routes 7 and 13 near Sala Phou Khoun reportedly fell to the Pathet Lao on Sunday.

Prime Minister Souvanna Phouma is apparently becoming more concerned about these developments.

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

USSR-EGYPT

Egyptian Foreign Minister Fahmi's visit to Moscow appears to have eased tensions somewhat, but not much progress appears to have been made on troublesome bilateral problems or on reconvening the Geneva conference.

Following a meeting with General Secretary Brezhnev yesterday, Fahmi waxed enthusiastic about progress in Soviet-Egyptian relations. The communiqué winding up the visit was more restrained, however, describing the talks as "friendly" and "businesslike." It failed to show progress on outstanding issues such as debt rescheduling and military aid. Foreign Minister Gromyko pointedly indicated in a speech given during Fahmi's visit that Moscow still views Cairo's independent policies as the major obstacle to improved ties.

On Geneva itself, Moscow and Cairo agreed that careful and serious preparations must precede reconvening the conference. Fahmi said the Soviets thought such preparations could be completed by June. The Soviets made clear that they do not favor an Egyptian suggestion that the conference be expanded to include France, the UK, and at least one non-aligned country.

Moscow and Cairo seemed deliberately to leave the question of Palestinian representation ambiguous. While they called for PLO participation "with the same rights as other participants," they did not specify when the Palestinians should attend nor did they appear to close the door to PLO participation as part of another delegation.

During the visit, Fahmi told newsmen that Egypt now rejects the step-by-step approach to negotiations. He was responding to a question about recent Israeli suggestions that disengagement negotiations might be revived under US auspices. It is not clear, however, whether he was rejecting the concept of a disengagement or simply another publicized round of withdrawal talks.

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The Soviets, meanwhile, will continue preparations for Geneva during the visit to Moscow tomorrow of Syrian Foreign Minister Khaddam. Soviet Deputy Defense Minister Kulikov left for Damascus yesterday. He may be seeking to reassure the Syrians of Moscow's military support in order to encourage their attendance at Geneva.

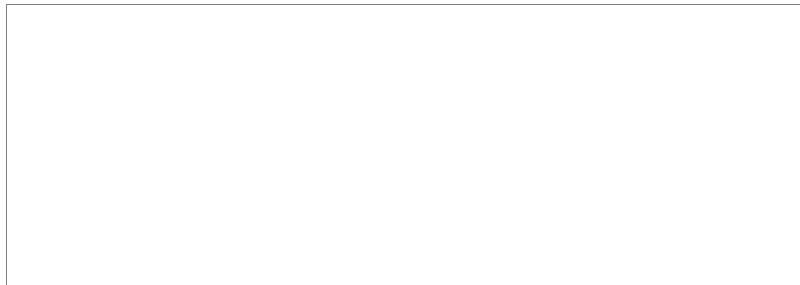
FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

PORUGAL

The political campaign draws to a close tomorrow amid conflicting rumors that a power play before Friday may result in cancellation of the elections.

The impending release of a preliminary report of Admiral Coutinho's investigation of the abortive March 11 coup has contributed to pre-electoral tensions. The report is likely to be most damaging to the moderate political parties, especially if they have no opportunity to rebut charges before the election.



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Twelve legal parties, meanwhile, have stepped up political activity in the final days of the campaign. Political violence, which has been infrequent, broke out yesterday between left-wing extremists and members of the center-right Social Democratic Center in northern Portugal. Over 25 people were injured; several were wounded when internal security troops fired to disperse the crowd.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

GREECE

A large crowd of leftists--estimated at 100,000 to 150,000--damaged the US embassy in Athens yesterday in protest of US support for the previous military regime. The demonstrators were eventually driven off by riot police.

The incident marked the first major test in crowd control for a weak government. Prime Minister Karamanlis must avert the kind of chaos in the streets that set the stage for the 1967 military "restoration of order"; he knows the military have been complaining of his "softness" toward demonstrators. The Prime Minister, however, cannot go too far; harsh measures would be likely to cause counter-demonstrations by the left, possibly leading to the fall of the government.

Last night's rally, initiated by youth organizations, communists, Maoists, and other radical leftists, was to commemorate the "black anniversary" of the coup that brought the junta to power in 1967. The demonstration began peacefully, led by the Socialist mayor of Athens. At the US embassy, most of the demonstrators merely shouted and threw paint and firecrackers, but about 500 of them--identified by a senior police officer at the scene as mostly Maoists--broke through police lines and caused considerable damage.

Embassy personnel were evacuated and none was injured. Some 15 policemen were hospitalized and about 25 demonstrators were hurt, according to police estimates.

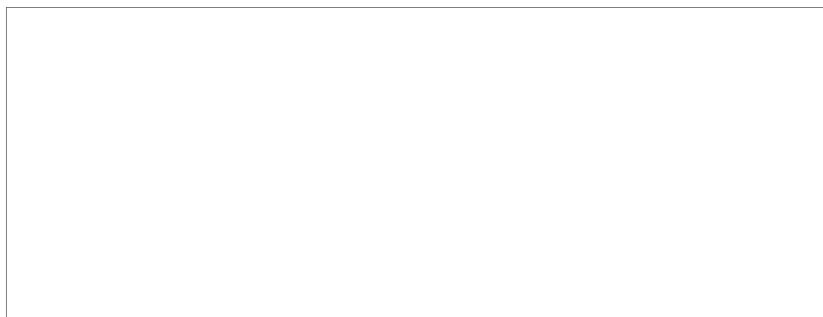
Early this morning, groups of demonstrators occupied other buildings in the city. Requests by the police for permission to dislodge the rioters have been denied by the Athens city prosecutor.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

NOTES

Saudi Arabian Crown Prince and Deputy Prime Minister Fahd has assumed control of all significant government business.



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Glafkos Clerides will continue as negotiator for the Greek Cypriot side in the intercommunal talks, thereby making it possible for them to resume as scheduled in Vienna next Monday.

Clerides apparently decided to stay on after President Makarios reaffirmed Clerides' negotiating mandate in the upcoming talks. Clerides noted in a statement last Saturday that in Vienna he would be discussing the Turkish Cypriot plan for a bi-zonal federation as well as the Greek Cypriot proposals for a multi-regional federation. Makarios told Ambassador Crawford yesterday that he wanted the Turkish delegation in Vienna to give specifics on what Ankara is prepared to do in such fields as refugee return, territory, and the powers of a central government.

(continued)

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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Peru has purchased 30 MI-8 helicopters from the USSR, after negotiations with the US ended inconclusively.

Delivery of the Soviet aircraft is scheduled to begin in July. Pilot training for the MI-8s is likely to present problems for Peru. Some Peruvian personnel have begun MI-8 pilot training in the USSR [redacted]

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As a result of the helicopter purchase, the small contingent of Soviet personnel now in Peru will probably expand. Heretofore, the USSR has sold land armaments to Peru, chiefly T-55 tanks and other ground equipment.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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The President's Daily Brief

April 23, 1975

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Exempt from general
declassification schedule of E.O. 11652
exemption category (b) (1), (2), (3)
declassified under authority of
the Director of Central Intelligence

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

April 23, 1975

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Vietnam: South Vietnamese officials are in unanimous agreement that President Thieu's decision to resign was a good one. The new government today called for negotiations with the communists, but the proposal was rejected immediately.

(Page 1)

Cambodia: The Khmer communists have called for national unity, but have not mentioned reconciliation with supporters of the former government.

(Page 4)

China: Strains in Peking's relations with Hanoi have become more evident in recent weeks.

(Page 6)

OPEC: Holdings of US assets by OPEC countries jumped from \$2.7 billion at the end of 1973 to an estimated \$14.5 billion at the end of 1974.

(Page 8)

Notes: Iraq-Syria; Producer-Consumer Talks; North Korea - South Korea; Honduras (Pages 9 and 10)

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

VIETNAM

There is near unanimous agreement among senior South Vietnamese civilian and military officials that President Thieu's decision to resign was a good one and that a new government should be formed immediately to attempt to arrange negotiations with the communists. Nguyen Ba Can [redacted]

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[redacted] would resign and assist in any way possible to form a new cabinet. Beyond this, however, there are few specifics on what form the new government will take or who will serve in it.

General "Big" Minh, probably the leading candidate to head a new cabinet, is calling for a new government, which would include staunch anti-Thieu members of the Catholic and Buddhist opposition groups. Former vice president Ky wants to lead a new government, which would include General Vien, the chairman of the Joint General Staff, and former prime minister Khiem. [redacted]

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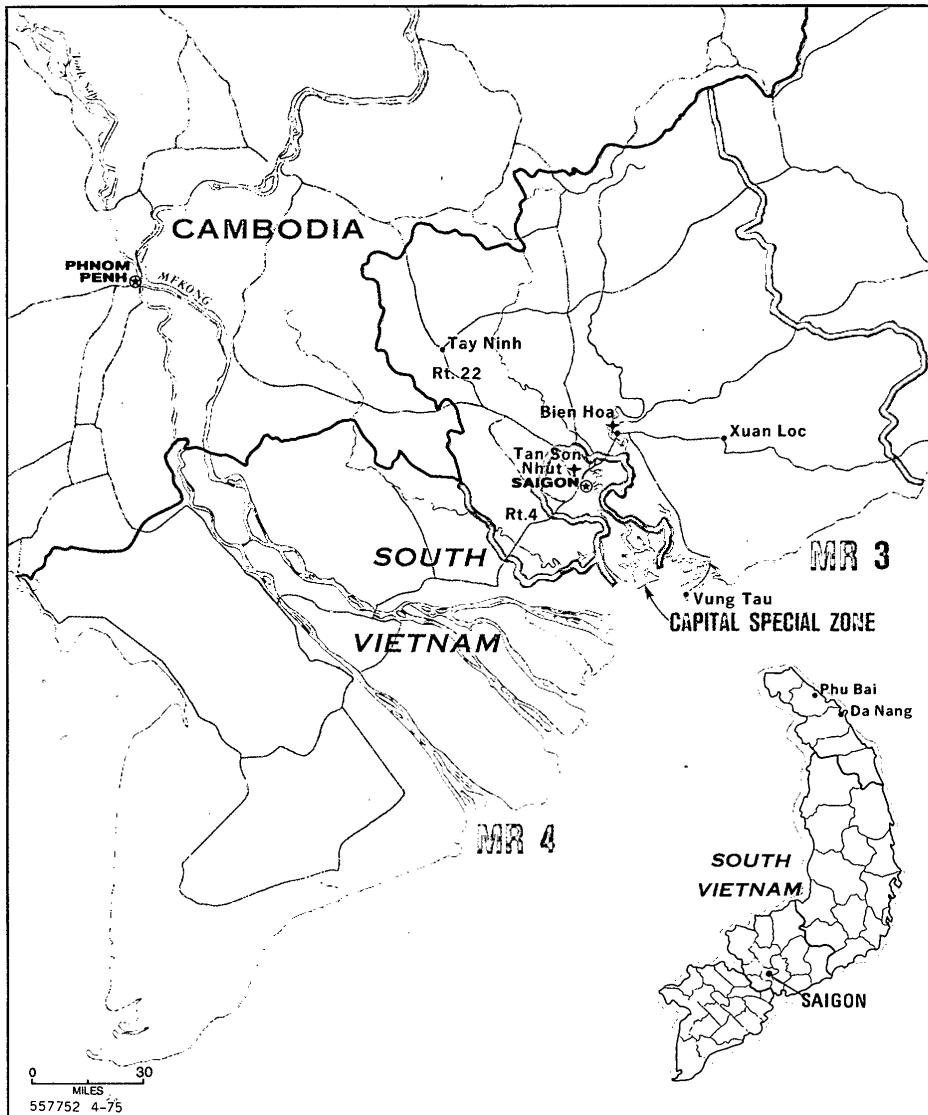
[redacted] There is also some maneuvering in the Senate to replace Tran Van Lam with Buddhist leader Vu Van Mau to allow Mau to become president when Huong resigns.

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The South Vietnamese foreign ministry today called for an immediate cease-fire and negotiations without preconditions for a political settlement.

The communists immediately rejected the proposal, however, and their reaction to Thieu's resignation provides no encouragement for the prospects of meaningful negotiations. The Viet Cong's Provisional Revolutionary Government dismissed Thieu's departure as a "clumsy and deceptive trick." Hanoi's radio and party daily, Nhan Dan, focused on the continuation of American support for the new government and stated that the US in effect had replaced one loser with another. The North Vietnamese commentaries also gave considerable attention to the withdrawal of Americans from South Vietnam. They stated that all Americans could be evacuated "in a very short time, even in one day, without any difficulty or obstacle." They went on to condemn strongly US expressions of concern about communist reprisals and warned against any US effort to evacuate large numbers of South Vietnamese. US naval

(continued)



FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

vessels moving toward South Vietnamese waters, it was stated, are far more than would be needed simply to evacuate Americans.

In short, the communists are continuing to demand a totally new South Vietnamese government and a quick and total US withdrawal as the price for a negotiated surrender. At least in their public commentary, there is no hint of give in their position, but there is the clear implication that time is quickly running out.

* * *

The level of communist shellings and ground attacks has fallen off sharply as both sides appear to be getting ready for the next round. The only significant military action yesterday was the re-opening of Route 22 south of Tay Ninh city, which allowed the remainder of the South Vietnamese 25th Division to withdraw from Tay Ninh city to government lines nearer Saigon.

A South Vietnamese estimate of communist intentions and capabilities as of April 22 indicates that the current lull in military activity is only to permit the communists time to prepare their forces and coordinate plans to launch simultaneous attacks on Saigon and Bien Hoa. The estimate of the ability of the government forces to resist the final thrust toward the capital city is bleak.

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[redacted] if the attack is well coordinated, the government's defenses could crumble in a matter of hours.

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The estimate views Saigon's remaining forces as battle-weary and understrength and unlikely to make a determined stand. Many South Vietnamese pilots are believed ready to fly out of the country, and the military planners are not counting heavily on their support in a final battle. It is also expected that most of the territorial forces, police, and many of the regular soldiers will desert to look after their families.

Reports of communist plans to move on Saigon include a coordinated attack of artillery, armor, sappers, and infantry against the city's Tan Son Nhut airbase.

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[redacted] the plan calls for a three-pronged attack against the base from the north, west, and southwest. The attacking force could include the North Vietnamese 9th Division, which has moved into position for an assault on Saigon from the west.

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(continued)

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

The communists also are moving on Saigon from the east in strength, following the abandonment of Xuan Loc by government forces. The communist plans apparently call for thrusts toward Vung Tau as well as direct moves at Bien Hoa and Saigon. The consolidation of forces and the steady overrunning of government field positions to the southwest of Saigon suggest the communists are about ready to move at least three divisions up the Route 4 corridor--the southwestern approach to Saigon.

The North Vietnamese are also moving their air defense units closer to Saigon.

[redacted] communists have moved an antiaircraft fire control radar to within eight miles of Tan Son Nhut airbase. Several transport aircraft were fired upon yesterday near Tan Son Nhut, but none were damaged.

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The North Vietnamese may soon reopen additional airfields in central South Vietnam. Communist ground units were ordered in an April 21 message not to fire on "our aircraft" which will be active at a number of southern airfields. The message did not specify the types of aircraft, but helicopters and transports probably will be the first to use the southern bases. Such aircraft have been flying into Phu Bai and Da Nang airfields on a daily basis for the past two weeks or so.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

CAMBODIA

In recorded statements carried by Phnom Penh radio yesterday, Defense Minister and Deputy Prime Minister Khieu Samphan and Information Minister Hu Nimm congratulated insurgent forces for "final victory...in the people's war" and thanked foreign allies for their support. The two leaders called for "national unity" to build an "independent, neutral, nonaligned, and prosperous" Cambodia, but omitted any specific mention of reconciliation with, or amnesty for, those who fought or served on the side of the former government.

There are indications that the communists are moving ruthlessly against former government officials and Cambodian army officers in at least some parts of the country. [redacted]

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There is no evidence so far that the communists are carrying out mass reprisals against the civilian population. A number of messages, in fact, have warned occupation forces against actions that would alienate the civilians. Nonetheless, communist forces in Battambang city--and presumably in other recently "liberated" urban centers--are segregating the population according to "class," a move which probably portends at least a period of indoctrination and "re-education."

(continued)

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

There is still no firm evidence as to the fate of senior figures captured by the communists in Phnom Penh, but most westerners in the capital are safe. Six UN staff members got word out yesterday that they were in the French embassy compound--the only foreign installation still operating in the capital. Twenty-six foreign journalists, including five US newsmen, are also there. The mood in Phnom Penh, however, appears to be far from hospitable.

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Prince Sihanouk still shows no sign of preparing to leave Peking.

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Most of the Prince's information is apparently coming from press services in Peking.

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

CHINA

Strains in Peking's relations with Hanoi have become more evident in recent weeks.

The rapid South Vietnamese military collapse, coupled with the Cambodian insurgents' victory, appears to have forced the Chinese to come to grips with problems they probably would have preferred to postpone. The Chinese seem to fear that Hanoi may extend its hegemony over Cambodia and Laos as well as South Vietnam. Peking also is wary of the possibility that Moscow will expand its influence in the area.

Speeches by Vice Premier Teng Hsiao-ping and Defense Minister Yeh Chieng-ying at separate functions in Peking over the weekend reflect the high level of Chinese concern over Hanoi's intentions. Both referred to the importance of the Paris Agreement--a theme the North Vietnamese recently have been downplaying--and Teng pledged Chinese support to the South Vietnamese communists in their efforts to "defend their national rights."

Moreover, throughout the ceremonies surrounding the visit of North Korean President Kim Il-song and the celebrations of the insurgent victory in Cambodia, there was a notable absence of any reference to Hanoi's role in recent Indochina developments. While the oversight is probably in part related to the fiction that only South Vietnamese are engaged in the fighting there, it is nevertheless striking that the Chinese failed to mention Hanoi during ceremonies that were intended to demonstrate Asian "revolutionary unity."

It is clear that Peking is concerned that Hanoi will now move promptly to unify Vietnam. Given Chinese concern that the North Vietnamese regime has tilted in the direction of Moscow, Peking probably hopes that reunification will be postponed until well in the future. The Chinese almost certainly recognize, however, that they can do little to thwart Hanoi on the reunification issue.

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

Chinese leaders also appear to be working earnestly to maximize Peking's influence over the new Cambodia government, as well as to limit both North Vietnamese and Soviet influence. By playing up the importance of their long-time ally Prince Sihanouk, the Chinese are clearly indicating that they hope the Prince will play an important role in the new government. The relationship appears to be reciprocal at this juncture. Sihanouk's Prime Minister Sarin Chhak has emphasized the importance--both past and future--of Chinese assistance to Cambodia, referring specifically to a recent statement attributed to Mao that the Chinese would stand by the Cambodian people "in the struggles ahead." The implication is that these "struggles" may involve the Vietnamese and perhaps the Soviets.

The Chinese have long appeared to have doubts about their influence with the Khmer communists, but probably believe they are in position to exploit some of the Cambodian rebel leaders' latent anti-Vietnamese hostility. [redacted]

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[redacted] The Chinese certainly believe that some Khmer communists are oriented primarily toward Hanoi.

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Both Teng and Yeh decried Soviet actions with regard to Cambodia. Yeh pointed out that Moscow had maintained diplomatic ties with the "Lon Nol clique" after Sihanouk's ouster and that it had changed its tune only at the last moment. Despite this, the Chinese are concerned, perhaps somewhat irrationally, that recent developments in Indochina will work to Moscow's advantage.

The North Vietnamese themselves seem to anticipate increasing difficulties in their relations with Peking, at least so far as Cambodia is concerned. [redacted]

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

OPEC

Holdings of US assets by OPEC countries jumped from \$2.7 billion at the end of 1973 to an estimated \$14.5 billion at the end of 1974. Last December, US holdings made up 20 percent of OPEC foreign assets, compared with 13 percent a year earlier.

Saudi Arabia, Venezuela, Nigeria, Kuwait, and Iran accounted for 85 percent of OPEC's US assets as of December 1974. The composition of their US assets differed substantially:

Saudi Arabia held about 50 percent in government securities, half of which were medium and long term.

Venezuela kept more than 90 percent in bank deposits, mostly time deposits.

Nigeria placed about 95 percent in short-term government securities.

Kuwait held almost 45 percent in the form of equities, real estate, loans, and corporate bonds.

Iran placed 90 percent in short-term assets, divided about equally between government securities and bank deposits.

Among OPEC members, Indonesia and Venezuela had the largest share of their assets in the US, 67 percent and 41 percent respectively. Holdings by Algeria, Ecuador, and Qatar were negligible.

The flow of OPEC investment almost certainly will decline during most of 1975, as demand for oil remains weak and the oil-producing countries continue to boost imports. OPEC's available surplus for 1975 as a whole will approximate \$55 billion, compared with \$58 billion in 1974. The US should attract a substantial portion of these funds in spite of the recent decline in US interest rates relative to rates in Europe and the drop in the value of the dollar. Barring a serious deterioration in Arab-US political relations, OPEC states probably will invest another \$10 billion in the US in 1975, raising their US holdings to \$25 billion.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

NOTES

The Arab foreign ministers, who met in Cairo Monday, agreed to form a technical committee to investigate Iraq's charge that Syria is withholding water from the Euphrates River.

Syria acknowledges that it took this step in March to retaliate for Baghdad's apparent involvement in a recent attempt to overthrow President Asad.



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the Syrian action is affecting 2 to 3 million people in the river valley. both Syria and Iraq are moving military units to the border area. While the Syrians are said to fear Iraq will try to sabotage the Euphrates Dam, the Iraqis might try to seize the oil and gas fields in northeastern Syria.

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The West European states, although disappointed at the breakdown of the producer/consumer talks in Paris last week, believe the oil-consuming nations could not have made further concessions to the Algerian-led coalition of oil-producing and developing states.

Some of the West European states--West Germany in particular--maintain that Algeria had intended from the start to bring about a collapse of the talks and was more interested in bolstering its claim to leadership of the Third World than in serious negotiations. The British and Dutch feel that the failure of the French-sponsored meeting will strengthen the International Energy Agency. France has indicated that it will continue to work with the agency.

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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The North Koreans are taking steps to strengthen their naval forces near South Korean waters and are increasing their naval exercises and training. We have no evidence that Pyongyang is planning aggressive moves against the South, but North Korea's navy is now better prepared to respond to any further incidents near the disputed islands off the west coast.

With 18 guided-missile boats and eight torpedo attack submarines, the navy is the North's only military service with a clear superiority over its Southern counterpart. Seoul's navy currently lacks both missile boats and submarines, and no South Korean ship can match the firepower of the 20 to 25-nautical-mile-range Styx missiles carried by Northern missile boats.

* * *

Honduran Chief of State Lopez, buffeted by the impact of a major scandal and the determined opposition of a group of reform-minded lieutenant colonels, was ousted yesterday by the Superior Defense Council.

His replacement, armed forces commander Juan Alberto Melgar, is likely to play only a temporary figurehead role because of his past close association with Lopez and because the ascendant lieutenant colonels have not yet agreed on a member of their own group to replace him. These officers represent the image of their country as a corrupt and backward "Banana Republic" and are determined to promote economic development and agrarian reform. They can be expected to maintain Honduras' close ties with the US.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

Top Secret

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The President's Daily Brief

April 24, 1975

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Exempt from general
declassification schedule of E.O. 11652
exemption category 5B(1),(2),(3)
Declassify only on approval of
the Director of Central Intelligence

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

April 24, 1975

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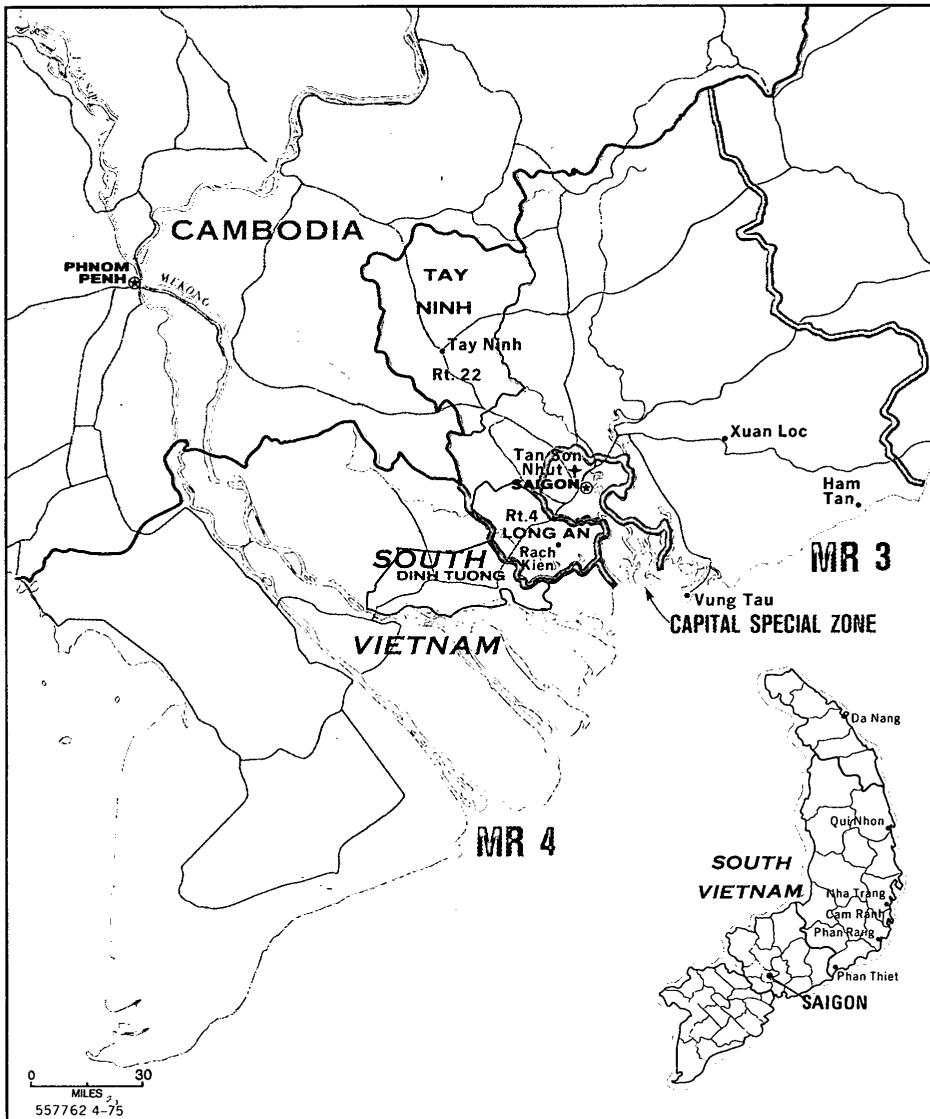
South Vietnam: The communist attack toward Saigon has slowed. (Page 1)

Egypt-Syria: Presidents Sadat and Asad may have papered over some differences during their summit, but serious disagreements apparently continue. (Page 3)

Syria-US: President Asad reportedly has affirmed his intention to pursue improved relations. (Page 4)

Notes: USSR-Portugal; PLO (Page 5)

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY



FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

SOUTH VIETNAM

The communist attack toward Saigon has slowed. Communist units are reportedly still having difficulty moving supplies forward, and there could be some additional delay before some units are ready to resume the attack. Most evidence, however, points to direct assaults on Saigon's outer defenses this week or by the end of April at the latest.

It is difficult for battalions to coordinate their arrival at assembly and attack positions, and a lull of several days before an attack by a number of divisions is not unusual. The communists must also have in mind that a pause, following Thieu's resignation, allows Saigon leaders time to move toward a surrender.

North Vietnamese counterattacks against government positions in Tay Ninh Province again closed the road to the provincial capital. The South Vietnamese were also forced from the Rach Kien District town in Long An Province just ten miles southwest of Saigon. A regiment of the North Vietnamese 8th Division--one of the two that led the communist sweep on the east side of Route 4--has been ordered to mount an attack against Saigon, according to recently captured prisoners.

On the central coast, the North Vietnamese are moving supplies and equipment by sea into ports as far south as Nha Trang. Aerial photography of April 21 shows a number of small coastal vessels and barges unloading there. Similar activity had previously been noted at Qui Nhon and Da Nang, and the North Vietnamese will probably soon begin using their newly acquired port facilities farther south, including those at Cam Ranh Bay and Phan Thiet.

Hanoi Radio announced yesterday that Lt. General Nguyen Vinh Nghi and Brig. General Pham Ngoc Sang have been captured. General Nghi was the commander of the Military Region 3 Forward Command, and General Sang led the South Vietnamese air force 6th Division--both headquartered at Phan Rang.

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

These officers and their staffs were unable to fly out of Phan Rang when it fell to the communists last week because rebellious Rangers seized and took off in the only available escape aircraft.

* * *

South Vietnam's new President, Tran Van Huong, still appears to be trying to open some sort of political dialogue. He met twice yesterday with the French ambassador to Saigon and recalled his chief negotiator in Paris, Ambassador Phong, for "urgent" discussions.

Huong appears hopeful that the Viet Cong will accept some offer of political dialogue short of surrender discussions. The French government, which has been in contact with communist representatives in Paris, apparently still believes such talks can be arranged. Ambassador Phong, whose opinion probably has been influenced by the French, shares that view.

Most political opposition leaders believe that the communists will not negotiate with the remnants of the Thieu regime and that the first order of business is to organize a government that might meet communist specifications. There is, however, considerable disunity within the opposition. Four principal leaders--Catholic Father Thanh, General "Big" Minh, former senate chairman Huyen, and Buddhist activist Vu Van Mau--met yesterday to prepare a joint statement demanding that President Huong step aside and allow a new cabinet to take charge, but the four were unable to agree on the procedures under which a new cabinet would operate.

Moreover, we are not certain that the military would support any arrangement on which the political opposition could agree. Despite the precarious situation in South Vietnam, the support of the military--or at least its agreement not to interfere--is still needed before a new government can be formed.

President Huong accepted the resignation of the Can cabinet yesterday. Huong says he hopes to have a new government formed by Friday.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

EGYPT-SYRIA

Presidents Sadat and Asad may have papered over some differences during their two-day summit in Saudi Arabia's capital, but the lack of specifics in the communiqué issued yesterday suggests continuing serious disagreements.

The communiqué affirmed that "political action during the coming stage demands the establishment of the closest cooperation between Syria and Egypt." It noted that "any action"--presumably meaning any negotiated agreement--on a particular front should be "part of" similar action on all fronts. These assertions are obviously designed to mollify President Asad, who has consistently demanded that Sadat refrain from making his own agreements with Israel and instead pursue an overall settlement that satisfies all Arab territorial demands.

The communiqué pointedly did not mention the Geneva conference, however, and made scant mention of the Palestinians. These omissions suggest that the two presidents found little common ground on the issues that are most basic to any formulation of a joint strategy. The communiqué referred only in passing to ensuring the "legitimate rights" of the Palestinians, but avoided standard Arab formulations on establishing a Palestinian state and guaranteeing the presence of the Palestine Liberation Organization at Geneva.

Sadat has been attempting to devise a formula that would defer the issue of PLO participation in the conference and, even when this is agreed upon, obscure the PLO presence by absorbing it in a broader Arab delegation. He has apparently had no success in pressing this position on the Palestinians and may have run into difficulty with Asad as well. The Syrians have hinted broadly in the past that they might boycott the conference unless the PLO is invited to attend from the start.

Following Asad's departure from Riyadh yesterday, Sadat began a brief round of bilateral consultations with King Khalid and the new Saudi leadership; he then flew to Tehran for a meeting with the Shah. He is scheduled to return to Cairo today.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

SYRIA-US

President Asad reportedly affirmed his intention to pursue improved relations with the US during the unpublicized sessions of the recent Syrian Baath Party congress. Asad sought to relieve the apprehensions of individual party members by offering assurances that his approach was advantageous to Syria and posed no threat to Syrian interests.

Syrian Army Chief of Staff Shihabi told Ambassador Murphy, in recounting the proceedings, that he had never before heard Asad address the issue of US-Syrian relations so categorically and that Asad's views dominated the discussion. At past party congresses, delegates had vied with one another in attacking the US.

Asad reportedly attempted also to inject a note of realism into the party's discussion of the extent of Syrian backing for the Palestinians. He said there is "no prospect of Israel changing its character as a Jewish state" and no possibility that Israel can be destroyed. The President repeated, however, that Israel must withdraw from all territory occupied in 1967 and that Palestinians should have the right to establish a Palestinian state on the West Bank and Gaza.

Shihabi could well have exaggerated Asad's position in hopes of favorably impressing the US during the current Middle East policy review. It would also be prudent for Damascus to preserve good relations with the US at a time when Syria's relations with Egypt are uncertain and when Asad has grown increasingly realistic about the limited chances for dramatic gains at a resumed session of the Geneva talks.

Asad's remarks on Israel are consistent with his private acknowledgment last February that he was ready to sign a long-term peace treaty, provided that the Israelis withdrew to the pre-June 1967 borders and accepted a Palestinian state. References by Asad to "historical realities" and to the indestructibility of Israel accord with other indications that Damascus is reluctant to take on Israel militarily and that Asad believes that negotiations--however difficult--provide the best chance for regaining occupied territory.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

NOTES

There is no conflict between detente and Soviet support for Portugal's "progressive" political course, according to articles in Pravda and Izvestia this week.

The Soviets cast themselves in the articles as the true supporters of democracy in Portugal and blame the West for meddling in Portuguese affairs. The Pravda commentary is particularly critical of social democratic leaders in West Europe, whom it accuses of undermining the Communists in order to advance the cause of the Portuguese socialists. The Soviet line is probably intended for domestic consumption, but it also puts the West on notice that detente considerations will not keep Moscow from assisting, and benefiting from, Lisbon's leftward movement.

* * *

The Palestine Liberation Organization is seeking permanent observer status at the Paris-based UN Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization as a means of further expanding its international representation and acceptability.

UNESCO has formerly permitted only non-member states--such as the Holy See--and intergovernmental organizations to appoint permanent observer delegates; no national liberation movement has ever applied for such standing. The PLO and their front men in Paris, the Tunisian delegates, may be encountering more opposition than they had expected. Black Africans are concerned that introduction of this issue, coming so soon after the controversy aroused by the actions taken against Israel last November, could further damage the organization, which, for the first time, is headed by an African.

Top Secret



The President's Daily Brief

April 25, 1975

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Exempt from general
declassification schedule of E.O. 11652
exemption category 5B(1), (2), (3)
decided by the Director of Central Intelligence

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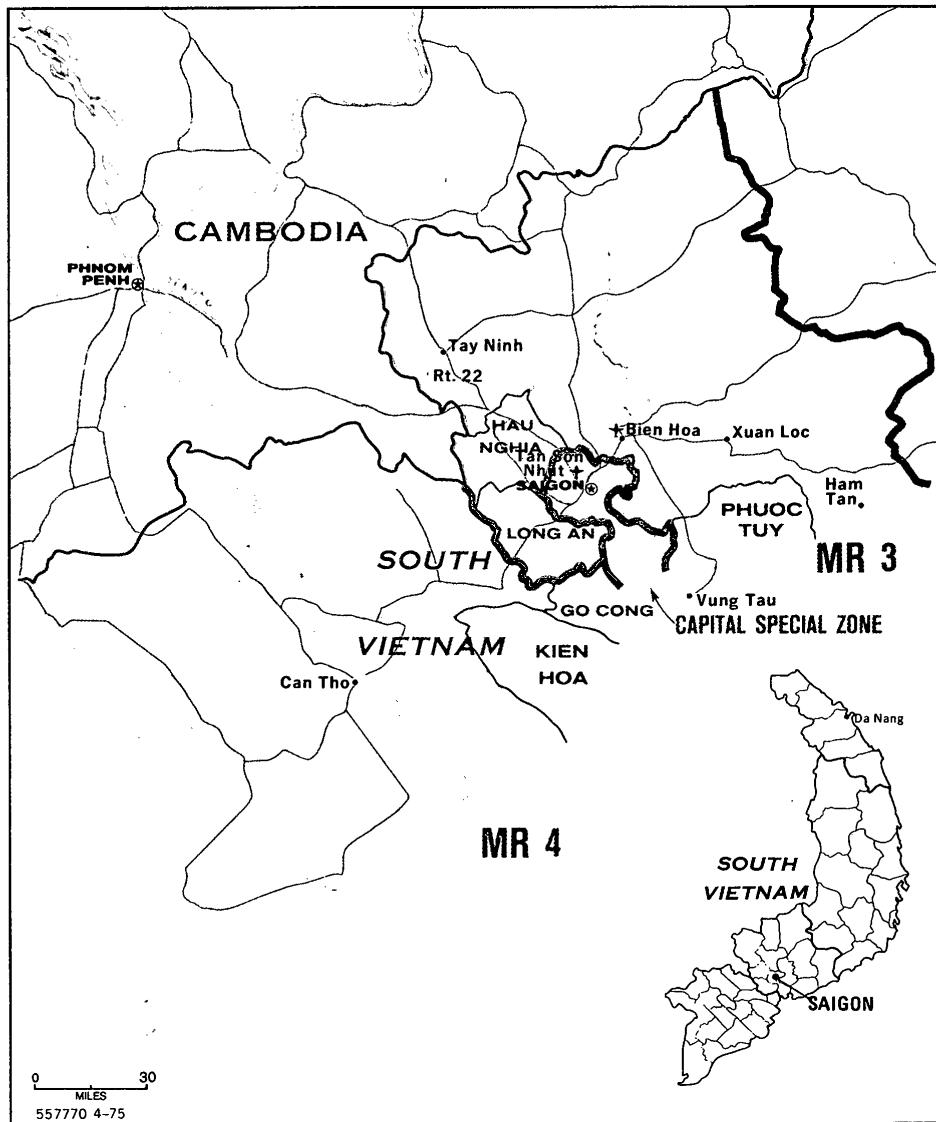
South Vietnam: Most communist combat initiatives remain concentrated on the western and south-western approaches to Saigon. (Page 1)

USSR-Somalia: A new airfield is under construction in Somalia within two miles of the Soviet missile storage and handling facility at Berbera. (Page 4)

Ethiopia: The ruling military council has arrested some of its members for allegedly plotting a coup. (Page 5)

Notes: Philippines; South Korea; USSR-Cambodia; Portugal; World Grain; West Germany (Pages 6, 7, and 8)

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY



FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

SOUTH VIETNAM

Most communist combat initiatives remain concentrated on the western and southwestern approaches to Saigon.

Communist units yesterday captured several government outposts in Hau Nghia Province. To the south, in Long An Province, the North Vietnamese 8th Division continued driving north, overrunning a number of government positions. These forces could reach the outskirts of Saigon within a few days if they maintain their present rate of advance.

The important port of Vung Tau at the mouth of the Saigon River, which has been considered an evacuation site, could fall within the next one or two days. The newly arrived North Vietnamese 325th Division, which helped capture Ham Tan several days ago, has moved west and is fast approaching the port city. Another division may be converging on the city from the north. The government has shifted the Airborne brigade and a regiment from the 18th Division extracted from Xuan Loc into Phuoc Tuy Province in an attempt to block North Vietnamese forces moving against the city, but these units and the forces closer to Vung Tau are no match for the communists.

Refugees have poured into Vung Tau each day this week--as many as 65,000 reportedly arrived in one day. Government officials are transferring many refugees by ship to the delta to relieve the crowded conditions and to prevent another panic situation such as developed at Da Nang.

Despite these actions, large numbers of people are likely to continue to head for Vung Tau in the belief that this is their best hope of escape. At last report, the road from Saigon was still open and civilian and military traffic was heavy.

The level of fighting is low in the delta. With the movement of some communist forces closer to Saigon, the balance of forces is now more in favor of the government in the delta, but some military officials now admit that the fate of the delta will be decided in Saigon. The defeatist attitude

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

prevalent in the military hierarchy at Saigon and Bien Hoa is now spreading to Can Tho, where the main topic of conversation among the military staff members is what to do when the communists win.

Air Support

The North Vietnamese may be trying to use several types of US-built aircraft captured from the government in recent weeks. One intercept noted that North Vietnamese pilots would be engaged in "training exercises" in which they would fly from a number of airfields in southern North Vietnam beginning April 23. The next day, "five A-37s" were noted "firing their cannons" and "dropping explosives."

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[redacted] the communists would use their aircraft as well as captured aircraft in the final assault on Saigon, although no MIGs have been detected flying into bases in South Vietnam.

The South Vietnamese are now able to fly about two thirds of their 1,500 aircraft, mostly from Bien Hoa, Tan Son Nhut, and Can Tho. Official estimates conclude that at the current rate of usage, there is enough ordnance remaining for 15 to 20 days.

* * *

Negotiations between General "Big" Minh and President Huong to organize a new government have hit at least a temporary snag.

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[redacted] Huong is unwilling to relinquish the presidency to Minh but instead wants him to serve as prime minister with "full civil and military powers." Minh, in turning down the offer, argues that the communists will continue to refuse to negotiate while Huong remains as president.

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Minh apparently has picked up some powerful support from among former members of the Thieu government. In a conversation with an American official yesterday, Minh said that Joint General Staff chief Vien agreed that Huong should resign. Former prime minister Khiem will also support Minh's bid and try to persuade Huong to step down. Khiem feels that with his and Vien's support, the military can be persuaded to accept Minh as president.

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

A Viet Cong commentary broadcast over Liberation Radio today hardened earlier communist demands for a new government and appeared to support Minh's argument that he is the only South Vietnamese nationalist of prominence with whom the communists might agree to negotiate. The commentary stated that any new government in Saigon must "not consist of those who have closely associated with Thieu." Such a government must demand that the Americans immediately withdraw personnel and support and remove "all US warships and Marines." The commentary also reiterated earlier communist concern about the US evacuations of South Vietnamese and implied that some action might be taken to stop them. It warned that the US would "be held fully responsible for all consequences" if it insisted on continuing its "present policy."

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

USSR-SOMALIA

[redacted]

a new airfield under construction at Berbera, Somalia, within two miles of the Soviet missile storage and handling facility. The runway will apparently be long enough to accommodate modern Soviet aircraft.

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[redacted] a gravel-like base material is being spread at one end of the runway. If the Soviets move ahead vigorously with the project, aircraft could use the field within a year. The Soviets, however, have taken two years to build an airfield for the Somali air force near Mogadiscio.

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Access to an airfield in Berbera will significantly improve the support capabilities of this port for Soviet naval forces in the Indian Ocean area. In addition to providing a capability for rapid resupply from the USSR, the new airfield adds to the growing complex of facilities at Berbera that support Soviet naval units.

The Soviet aircraft that flew reconnaissance missions over the Indian Ocean during the recent worldwide Soviet naval exercise operated out of an airfield at Hargeisa, some 100 miles inland from Berbera. When the new airfield is completed, the USSR's capability to conduct naval air operations over the Indian Ocean area will be improved.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

ETHIOPIA

The ruling military council has arrested some of its members for allegedly plotting a coup. The number in custody is not positively known.

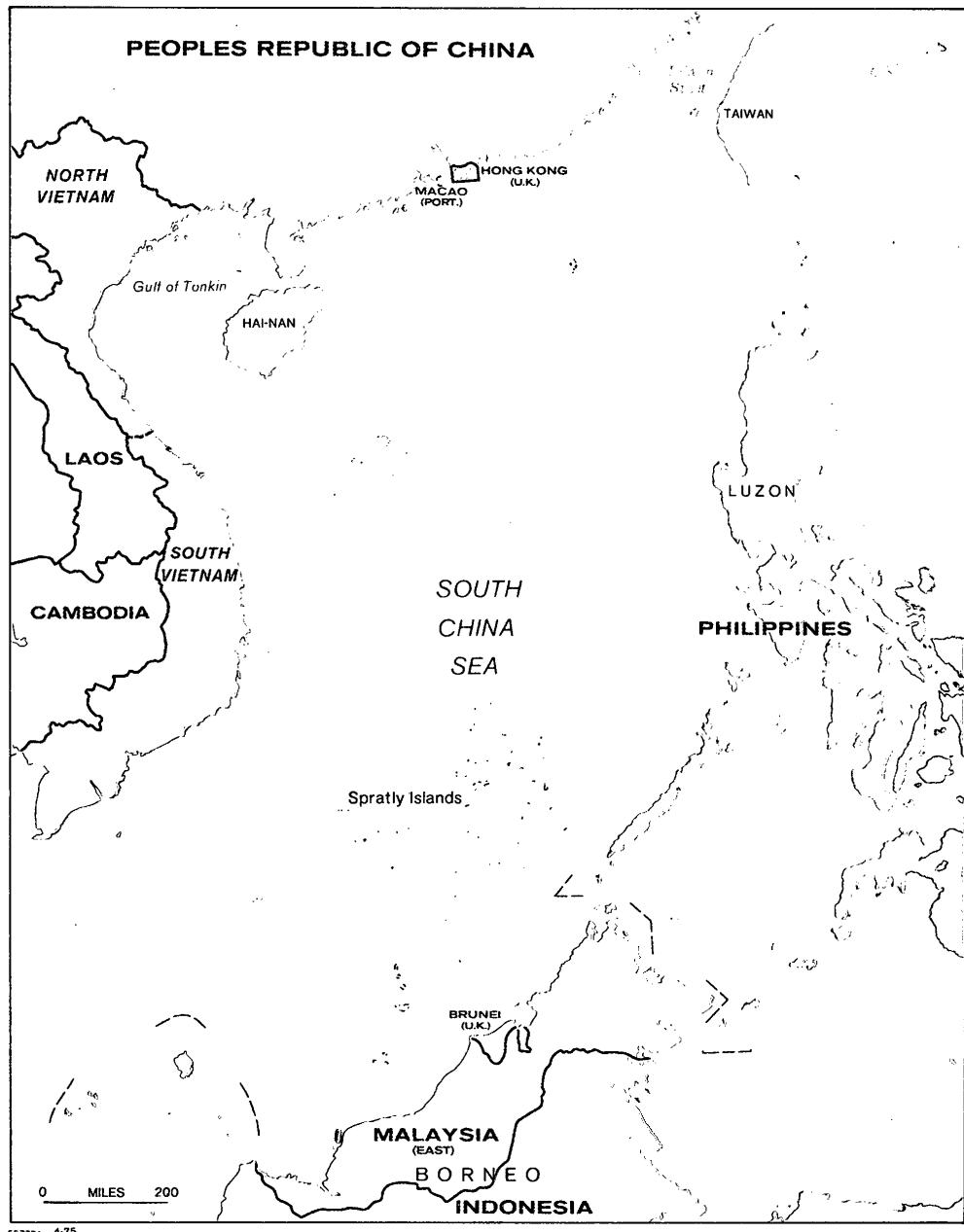
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The plotters apparently believed that a coup effort would be supported by most of the armed forces. The council in recent weeks has encountered increasing discontent in the military ranks, mainly because it has resisted repeated demands that the military be exempt from the revolutionary land reform decree. At least two of the army's four divisions have strongly protested the ban on private ownership of land, which would deprive military personnel of the land grants promised them under the Haile Selassie regime in lieu of retirement pensions.

The dispute and the arrests may bring to a head several other contentious issues between the council and armed forces units. These include grievances over pay and allowances, the living conditions in some garrisons, and the council's failure to consult the units on important decisions.

The US embassy reports signs of rising tensions in Addis Ababa. Guard forces at key buildings have been increased this week and additional checkpoints established on major roads.



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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

NOTES

Philippine President Marcos is seeking reaffirmation of US security commitments to the Philippines because of recent reports alleging a North Vietnamese attack on one of the Spratly Islands.

The Spratlys, located in the South China Sea, are claimed by several countries including the Philippines. Manila has stationed troops on some of the islands, while Saigon and Taipei have garrisons on others. Peking also claims the islands. Although it is still not clear what really happened in the area recently, Marcos hopes that he can use this occasion to elicit from the US a clarification of the scope of existing security agreements with the Philippines. The Philippine President is also miffed because recent public statements in Washington designed to reassure US allies have not specifically cited Manila.

* * *

South Korean President Pak Chong-hui, in the wake of developments in Indochina and Kim Il-song's visit to Peking, is concerned that the North Koreans may soon attempt a test of US military intentions in Korea.

A recent conversation with Ambassador Sneider was essentially a plea that the US do nothing at this time that might lead Kim Il-song to miscalculate the firmness of US reactions to such intrusions. Specifically, Pak requested indefinite postponement of a longstanding joint plan to deactivate the command under which US generals have directly controlled a major portion of South Korea's combat forces. Pak also requested additional military equipment.

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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Soviet	25X1
Cambodia	25X1
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The Portuguese government has pledged to respond quickly and forcefully to any attempt to disrupt the constituent assembly election today.

The left-wing fringe parties have made clear their distaste for this exercise in "bourgeois democracy" and may try to cause trouble at the polls. Public opinion samples, meanwhile, showed that even late in the campaign a large percentage of the electorate had not yet made up its mind. Should a significant proportion of the ballots be blank, the Armed Forces Movement will be encouraged in its claim that Portugal is not ready for democracy. Official election results are not likely to be released for several days.

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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Tentative government and private forecasts of the 1975/76 world grain situation point to only a slight easing of the tight supply/demand balance that has prevailed for the past two years.

World production of grain (excluding rice) is now projected at a new high of 997 million tons, up 9.7 percent. Total grain consumption is expected to increase to a record 972 million tons. While this is 43 million tons more than the low level of the current 1974/75 year, when cutbacks in grain feeding of livestock in the US were significant, it is only 5 million tons more than the previous peak year of 1973/74. Bumper harvests are predicted for the US, the USSR, and Canada, but weather remains a key factor in any grain production forecast made this early in the crop year.

* * *

Chancellor Schmidt probably enhanced his domestic political stock by the way he handled the terrorist attack on the West German embassy in Stockholm yesterday.

His tough stand against giving in to the terrorist demands has countered accusations that his government is unable or unwilling to preserve order and safeguard public security. He broadened responsibility for his decision by consulting with leaders of the four major political parties.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

Top Secret



The President's Daily Brief

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Exempt from general
declassification schedule of E.O. 11652
exemption category 3B(1), 2(a)(3)
declassified only under authority of
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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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SOUTH VIETNAM

President Huong asked the National Assembly today to decide whether he should turn over power to General Duong Van "Big" Minh. He appealed to the legislators to support his own efforts toward peace, but indicated he would resign so that Minh could become president if the assembly so votes. Huong has been under heavy pressure by influential Vietnamese of all political persuasions to step down in favor of Minh, and the assembly is likely to ask him to do so.

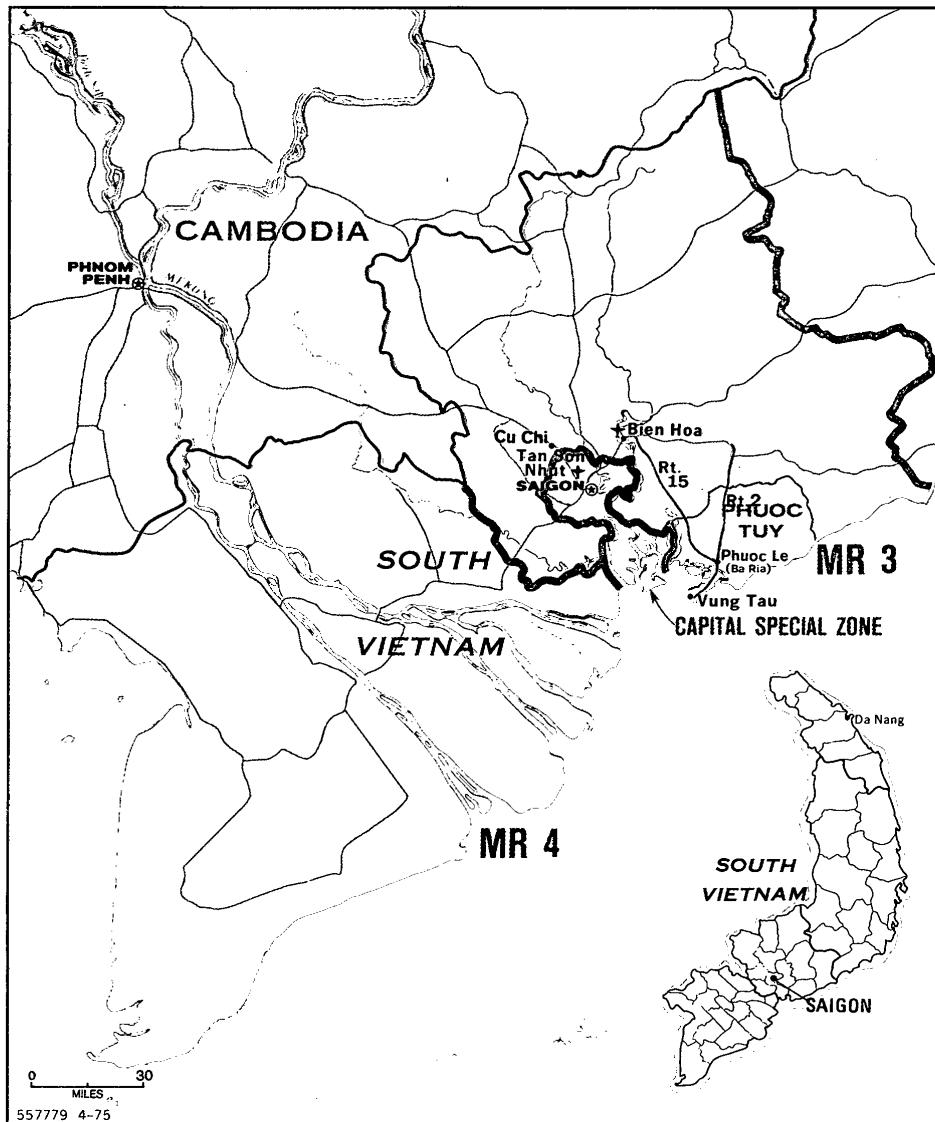
The Minh government's *raison d'etre* would be promptly to seek and accept whatever terms the communists offer. Buddhist leader Thich Tri Quang says that Minh's return to power would be only to "hoist the white flag." It is no longer possible to do more than "save the furniture."

To emphasize this point, Minh already has tentatively selected a government of surrender featuring leaders of South Vietnam's previously vocal opposition movements. Senator Nguyen Van Huyen, a moderate southern Catholic and outspoken Thieu opponent, has been chosen vice president in charge of negotiations. This selection is obviously designed to reassure Catholics and conservatives and encourage their support. Senator Vu Van Mau, representing the militant An Quang Buddhists, would serve as prime minister and foreign minister concurrently. In an obvious gesture of accommodation to the communists, Madame Ngo Ba Thanh--an American-educated lawyer and longtime leftist gadfly who has been involved for years in various antigovernment organizations--would become minister of justice.

The Viet Cong's Provisional Revolutionary Government, through its foreign minister, Madame Nguyen Thi Binh, has indicated that it would consider negotiations with a government headed by Minh. Minh's selection of individuals for his government complies with a PRG demand that the new Saigon administration must represent a clean break from the former regime and include no one who was sympathetic to former president Thieu. The communists also probably feel that Minh would accept their other demand that all US military support and personnel be withdrawn.

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY



FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

In a statement on April 24, the PRG used a formulation that at least suggested the communists might allow a residual US diplomatic presence to continue in Saigon; it stated that any new government must demand the immediate withdrawal of all American "military and intelligence personnel." This appears to be a refinement of earlier statements that the communists viewed all American civilians in South Vietnam as "disguised" military advisers and that all these must also be included in the total withdrawal.

* * *

The communists are maintaining pressure on Saigon's outer defenses with small-scale attacks along the main approaches to the city. As the communists continue to secure avenues of attack toward the capital, South Vietnamese bases and outposts west of Saigon are prime targets, and the shelling of these positions is heavy.

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[redacted] virtually all South Vietnamese artillery at two major government positions was destroyed. The Bien Hoa airbase and other targets northeast of Saigon are also being shelled regularly, and the South Vietnamese training camp on the city's outskirts has come under attack.

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Pressure is increasing on the port of Vung Tau. One regiment of the North Vietnamese 325th Division with supporting armor is moving down Route 2, just outside the Phuoc Tuy Province capital of Phuoc Le. This force could move against Phuoc Le at any time, but it will be difficult to move beyond Phouc Le to Vung Tau--a distance of 12 miles down a narrow peninsula that has only one road. An advance section of the North Vietnamese 320th Division has shown up to the north along Route 15, the main road linking Vung Tau with Bien Hoa and Saigon. This division could act as a blocking force in its present position, or it could move to attack Bien Hoa from the south or even shift westward toward Saigon.

Despite the relatively low level of combat on the battlefronts around Saigon, there has been no letup in indications of communist planning for increased fighting, which could lead to direct assaults on Saigon itself.

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

The communists reportedly were planning for a major attack against the South Vietnamese 25th Division at Cu Chi just 15 miles northwest of Saigon to begin late yesterday. Preceded by heavy shelling, the main thrust is to include armor and infantry attacks. Prisoners from the newly arrived North Vietnamese 316th Division have said that tanks and heavy artillery are being moved forward and will be used.

Communist radio messages also continue to discuss preparations for attacks on Saigon and the Tan Son Nhut airbase. One command recently requested "targeting charts" for areas close to the city so that "when we have a mission we will be able to develop it and prepare to move down into the area when conditions are right for the advance."

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

CAMBODIA

More than a week has passed since Phnom Penh's surrender, and there is still no sign that the new regime has been formally established in the capital.

Intercepted messages indicate that senior communist figures have been busy directing the occupation in Phnom Penh and provincial urban centers, and this may explain the delay in the formal investiture of a new government. Several recent messages do reflect, however, the movement of "national front" figures and "guests from the outside," suggesting that the new leadership may be gathering for some sort of a formal takeover ceremony in the near future.

Two Chinese Boeing 707s flew into Phnom Penh on Wednesday and Thursday, but so far there is no sign that Prince Sihanouk was aboard either aircraft.

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[Redacted]

Phnom Penh radio has been broadcasting special programs as part of an official three-day "victory celebration," but has made no mention of Sihanouk's arrival or the presence of any other notables. The broadcasts earlier in the week by Deputy Prime Minister Khiem Samphan and Information Minister Hu Nimm were recorded.

Sihanouk has said he is delaying his departure from Peking to be at the bedside of his ailing mother, Queen Kossamak. The Khmer communists may be deliberately keeping the Prince waiting both to prevent his stealing the "victory" show and to allow time for the communist administrative apparatus to become firmly entrenched.

Although a recent communist message mentioned "deporting foreigners," a number of Westerners apparently are still in the French embassy compound in Phnom Penh. A message from the embassy on Tuesday disclosed that French personnel from a hospital in the capital also have taken refuge at the compound. The French have reportedly been given food and water, but they are still seeking permission for an aircraft to fly into Phnom Penh with supplies.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

GREECE-NATO

The Greek delegate to NATO has outlined Athens' views on the future of the military relationship between Greece and NATO. A paper he presented yesterday to a private meeting of select NATO representatives is tentative and sketchy, but it indicates a flexibility on the Greek military role that Athens has previously not shown.

The paper states that, as a general rule, Greek forces will be under national command, but that in the case of a "clear threat" of aggression such forces as will be mutually agreed upon can be considered NATO reserve forces. In the event of imminent or actual aggression these forces would be assigned to NATO.

In order to facilitate the cooperation of Greek forces in NATO, the paper proposes that Greece participate in those NATO activities in peacetime that are "essential to the fulfillment of its agreed NATO mission." The paper does not define the nature and scope of this participation. The Greek delegate asked for an informal dialogue with the NATO representatives on the paper and for their suggestions on points that need to be clarified.

Issues such as the extent of peacetime cooperation are bound to be sticky. The Greek representative appeared most forthcoming on this point, but the Karamanlis government will have to move carefully in reestablishing open military cooperation with NATO if it wishes to avoid provoking strong parliamentary opposition. The NATO representatives are scheduled to discuss the paper again on May 12.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

THAILAND

We present below the principal conclusions of an Interagency Intelligence Memorandum on Thai Foreign Policy in the Post-Vietnam Period.

--The speed of the communist takeover of Indo-china has deeply shocked the Thai and accelerated trends away from reliance on the US security commitment.

--Events are still moving too fast for the Thai to have come to any firm conclusions on long-term adjustments of their foreign policy, but we believe that they will clearly move toward a neutral position.

-This is likely to be the case whatever government is in power.

--The special Thai-US rapport has ended.

-The Thai will probably attempt to keep a relatively close relationship with the US; in particular they will continue to look to the US as an important economic partner and for military assistance.

-Even so, we believe the Thai government will stick to its demand that US forces be withdrawn within 12 months.

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--Other US security interests in Thailand [redacted] will probably survive for two or three years if the US provides substantial military assistance to Thailand.

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--As the Thai put more distance between themselves and the US, they will move toward improved relations with Hanoi, Peking, and Moscow.

-Diplomatic relations with Hanoi seem probable; but not before US forces are withdrawn.

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

-Although there is general agreement on the need to improve relations with China, pressure from the military to go slow and problems over the status of Chinese aliens make it unlikely that formal ties can be established before the end of the year.

-The Thai are probably prepared now to make some gestures in the direction of closer relations with the Soviet Union, primarily as a means of enhancing Thailand's neutralist credentials in the eyes of competing communist powers.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

NOTE

Unofficial but nearly complete returns from Portugal's election yesterday show the combined votes of the three moderate parties at about 70 percent. The Communist Party and its close ally, the Portuguese Democratic Movement, have a combined total of about 17 percent.

Over 90 percent of registered voters went to the polls, only about 8 percent of them casting blank ballots. A carnival-like atmosphere prevailed in Lisbon, and only a few incidents of violence were reported.

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Exempt from general
declassification requirements of E.O. 14176
exemption category 5(b) (1)(D)
declassified only on approval of
the Director of Central Intelligence

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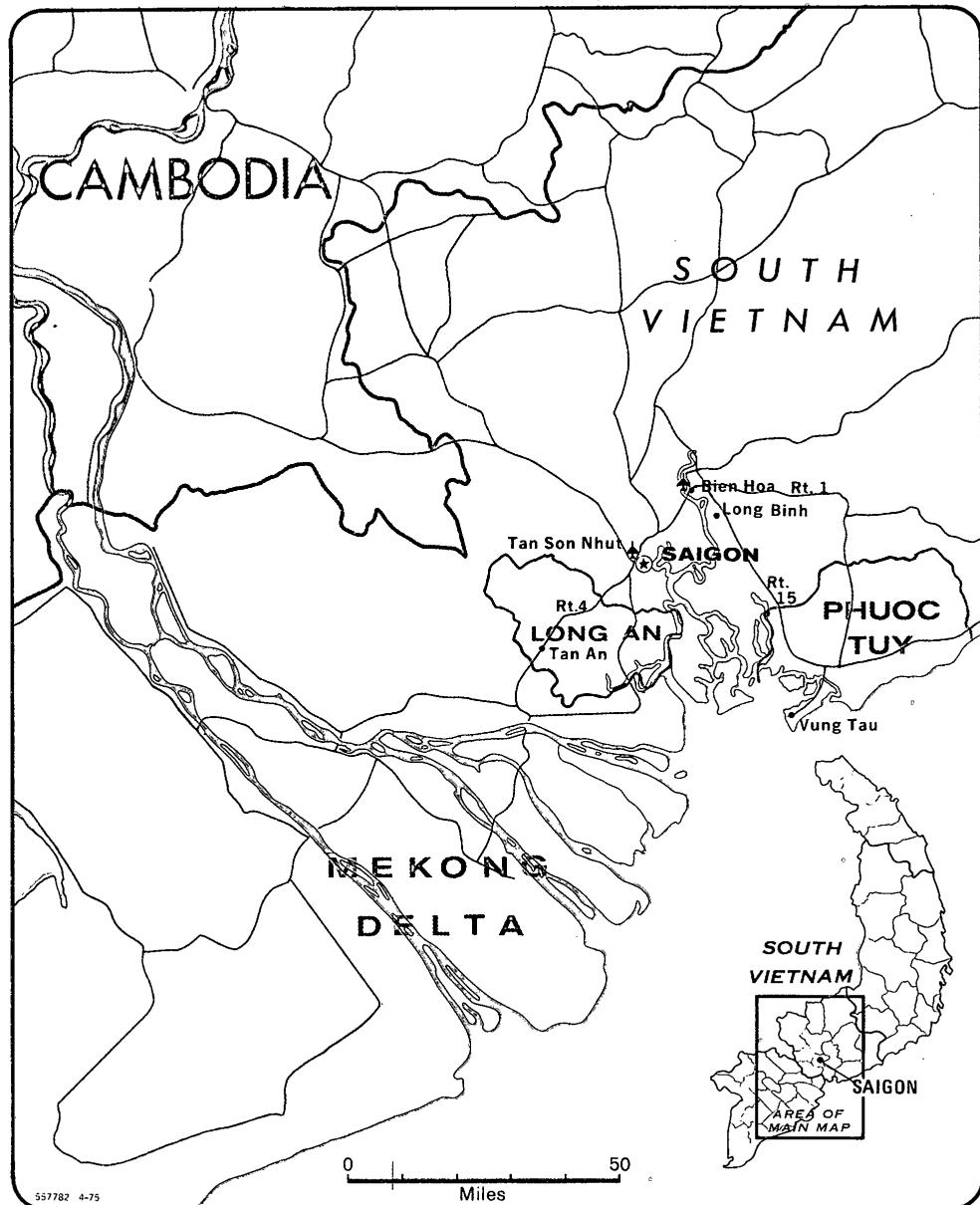
Portugal: The moderates, led by the Socialist Party, won a resounding victory over the Communists in the national constituent assembly election last Friday. (Page 5)

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Thailand-Cambodia: Bangkok is looking to diplomacy to avert a potential threat to its border from the new Cambodian government. (Page 9)

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY



FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

SOUTH VIETNAM

The National Assembly voted unanimously yesterday to turn the government over to General Duong Van "Big" Minh. The final vote followed a sharp escalation of communist military pressure, including the first rocket attack on Saigon in almost three years--presumably a North Vietnamese signal that it wants to hear from the new government quickly.

Minh is scheduled to be sworn in today. He reportedly plans to announce cabinet appointments today or tomorrow. His new government can do little more than arrange for surrender under the guise of a "political solution."

Initial communist reaction to his appointment has so far been a "no comment." A spokesman for the Viet Cong's Provisional Revolutionary Government in Saigon, when questioned by the press Sunday, only said that the communists insisted on three basic conditions: the removal of Thieu and his "clique," the complete withdrawal of the US, and the "elimination of the war machine." This last demand, broadcast for the first time Saturday over the Viet Cong's Liberation Radio, appears to be a call on the new Minh government to make it an early order of business to call on South Vietnam's military establishment to "stack arms" and cease further resistance.

* * *

The communists, meanwhile, are putting new pressure on Saigon's outer defenses, and the cities of Bien Hoa, Vung Tau, and Tan An may fall shortly. Northwest of Saigon, near the Cambodian border, Tay Ninh City came under attack last night by an estimated four communist regiments. The opening round of the new fighting began Saturday, when the North Vietnamese launched a series of strong attacks employing units from at least two divisions on Saigon's eastern front. These units cut Route 15 between the Vung Tau and Saigon and then moved north and south toward the two cities.

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

Sunday's action began with a six-round rocket attack on Saigon. The North Vietnamese expanded their holdings southeast of the capital, overrunning the capital of Phuoc Tuy Province and pressing closer to the city of Vung Tau. They also closed in on the government's logistic base at Long Binh, pushed along the Route 1 corridor to within sight of Bien Hoa, and moved infantry and armor into attack positions just north of the Bien Hoa air base.

Communist military activity also increased southwest of Saigon along Route 4. A major communist attack yesterday cut the highway both north and south of the Long An Province capital of Tan An and forced the government defenders to retreat from a number of strongpoints.

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[redacted] Tan An was to be attacked
[redacted] and the city would fall at any time.

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These weekend gains tighten the communists' grip around Saigon. The port city of Vung Tau is cut off from Saigon and is under attack; the major link between Saigon and the delta is probably permanently cut. The communists have also set up advance artillery positions from which they can direct more accurate fire on Saigon, Tan Son Nhut air base, Saigon's river access to the sea, and all remaining important government holdings in the Saigon area.

The headquarters of Military Region 3 at Bien Hoa [redacted] planned to pull out for Saigon this morning. The pressure on Bien Hoa has created some panic, and a number of government troops have been reported looting in Bien Hoa city. Communist activity along Route 1 on the outskirts of Saigon early this morning temporarily disrupted traffic between Bien Hoa and the capital.

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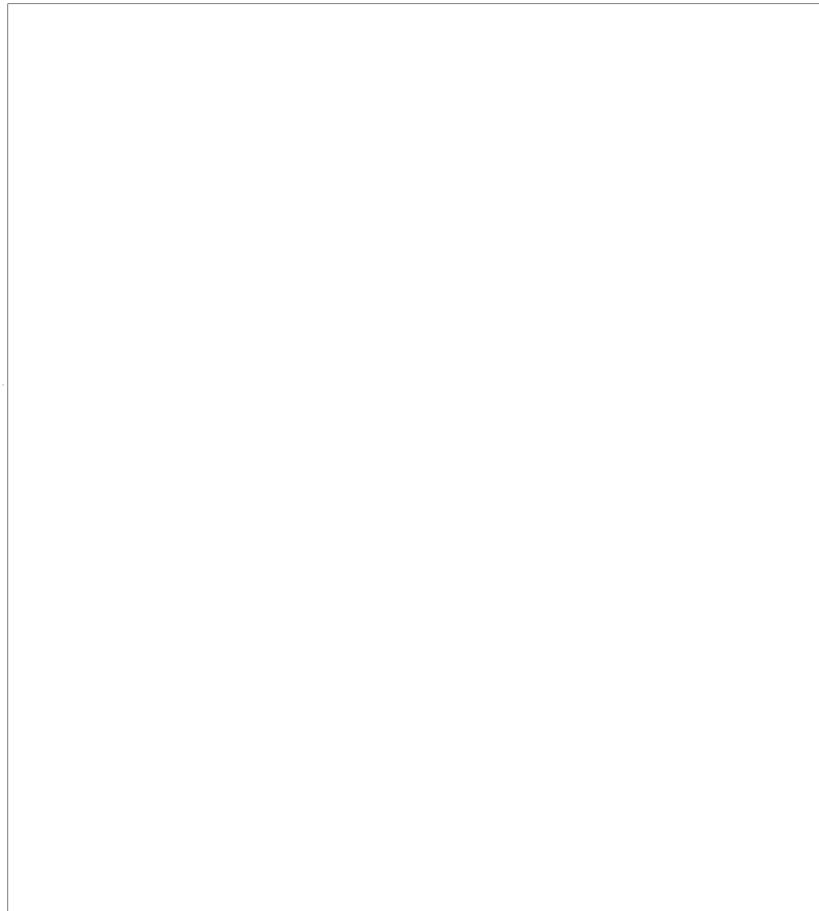
JORDAN



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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY**PORUGAL**

Portuguese moderates, led by the Socialist Party, won a resounding victory over the Communists in the national constituent assembly election last Friday. The Socialists' tally exceeded the party's highest expectations; they showed remarkable strength in all areas of the country.

Unofficial results gave the three moderate parties more than 70 percent of the vote: the Socialists received 38 percent, the center-left Popular Democrats 26 percent, and the moderate right-wing Social Democratic Center 8 percent. The Communists and their allies took a total of 20 percent, with 13 percent won by the Portuguese Communist Party. Over 90 percent of the registered voters turned out, most exercising the right to vote for the first time.

The Socialists' impressive showing will increase their political influence, even though leaders of the ruling Armed Forces Movement say the election was nothing more than a "pedagogical exercise." The terms of the constitution to be approved by the constituent assembly are a foregone conclusion, but that body's deliberations could have an impact on the policies of the military government. The Socialists are assured of over one third of the seats. Altogether, the moderate parties may control as much as 80 percent of the assembly.

The Socialists cannot exercise their status as the dominant civilian political force without the consent of the Armed Forces Movement. [redacted]

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[redacted] party chief Mario Soares is uncertain about how the Movement will react to the Socialist victory. He is trying to make it palatable to the Movement by describing it as a victory for "progressive" forces.

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Although press reports indicate that Soares may be interested in forming a common front with the Communists and the Popular Democrats, [redacted]

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[redacted] the party will make no formal alliances. Soares intends instead to emphasize the Socialists' independence and popular strength, and to build the party's support.

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

Movement leaders are pleased that the election was peaceful and that it boosted Portugal's international image. So far, they have played down the moderates' victory and stressed the political naivete of the Portuguese people. A spokesman said the Movement interpreted the vote as a victory for the Movement because the Socialists and the other top vote-getters had previously agreed to its platform.

The election may hasten the growth of factionalism in the Revolutionary Council. [redacted]
[redacted] the division between moderate and radical factions that existed before the unsuccessful March 11 coup have become more complex.

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How the Movement reacts to the moderate victory will largely depend on which faction comes out on top. A moderate election victory was feared most by the radical officers. Prime Minister Goncalves may well suffer politically as the result of the vote; he made no secret of his support for the Communist-dominated Portuguese Democratic Movement.

[redacted] 25X1

[redacted] President Costa Gomes is most likely pleased at the outcome, but he and the moderates still probably lack the power to turn the situation to their advantage.

The Communist Party and the Portuguese Democratic Movement stand to lose the most as a result of the election. After spending more money than anyone else and using their organization to get their supporters to the polls, they can hardly complain that the people were not aware of their program. The party will probably not protest the election, but will most likely complain that the "anticomunists" and "antidemocratic forces" sabotaged their campaign.

Communist leader Alvaro Cunhal summed up his party's approach by contending that its strength by far exceeds what is shown in the election figures. The Communists will encourage the Movement to belittle the election results; their success in the near future depends on their continued ability to influence the Movement leaders.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

CYPRUS

Greek and Turkish Cypriots will resume negotiations in Vienna today under the auspices of UN Secretary General Waldheim. There are indications that both sides may be more flexible than in previous rounds, but mutual suspicions and differences in approach could lead to more snags.

Greek Cypriot negotiator Glafkos Clerides and Turkish Cypriot negotiator Rauf Denktash will try to reconcile their respective position papers, which they submitted just prior to the suspension of the talks in mid-February. The documents, which reflect the maximum demands of the two sides, have few points in common and agreement will be difficult.

The Greek Cypriot proposals call for the establishment of a multiregional federation with a strong central government. The more vaguely worded Turkish Cypriot proposals call for a biregional federation with a weak central government.

Greek Prime Minister Karamanlis and Clerides, however, seem prepared to accept a biregional solution, provided the Turks are willing to make substantial concessions in other areas. Karamanlis and Clerides appear to have persuaded President Makarios at least to consider such a solution.

So far, the new government in Ankara--as a result of prodding from Washington--appears willing to consider a limited withdrawal from the territory it controls on Cyprus. It has been reluctant to provide specific details, however, and has emphasized that no concessions will be made except in the course of negotiations.

An immediate impasse could arise in the talks if Denktash insists that Clerides accept the principle of a bizonal federation as a precondition to further discussions. It is almost certain that the Greek side would not commit itself in advance to a bizonal federation unless the Turkish side is willing to give some idea of the amount of territory it is prepared to give up and the number of refugees that would be permitted to return to their homes.

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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Such an impasse might be avoided if the Greek side can be persuaded to give tacit acceptance to the idea of biregionalism in return for concrete proposals by the Turkish side on other issues. Even without a snag over this issue, however, the negotiations are expected to be long and arduous.

The Vienna sessions will last a week, after which the talks will likely be transferred to Nicosia. Ultimately, the final settlement is likely to be determined by direct negotiations between Ankara and Athens, possibly as part of a more general settlement of outstanding differences between the two countries.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

THAILAND-CAMBODIA

Bangkok is looking to diplomacy to avert a potential threat to its border from the new Cambodian government.

The Thai are clearly worried that their close association with the Lon Nol regime, in addition to their poor relations with Sihanouk during the 1960s, will prompt the new Cambodian government to take a hostile attitude toward Bangkok. The Thai [redacted]

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[redacted] are now fearful of Cambodian support for Thai insurgent bands operating near the Cambodian border. These groups have never presented a serious security problem to Thailand, but government officials in Bangkok are now concerned that an influx of Cambodian-provided arms and men could quickly heat up the situation.

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In order to avoid any trouble with Cambodia, the Thai [redacted] has decided to avoid contact with Cambodian dissident groups forming in Thailand; provide economic aid to the new Cambodian government; return refugees, with the exception of former high-ranking government officials, to Cambodia; and seek ways to get the US, the Soviet Union, and China to counter North Vietnamese domination of Cambodia. [redacted]

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

NOTES

South Korean President Pak Chong-hui is contending that North Korean President Kim Il-song's visit to China indicates Peking's tacit support for North Korean military adventures against the South.

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[Redacted] Pak's views on North Korean provocation have been provided to the Seoul press.

* * *

China has extended its first formal invitation to a US manufacturing group to visit Peking.

Officials of the Electronic Industries Association have accepted and will go to Peking in late July. In the past, Chinese dealings with US manufacturers have been limited to individual firms. The decision to invite the electronics manufacturing group probably stems from Peking's need for large quantities of modern electronic and telecommunications equipment and its desire to sound out the US market potential for Chinese-manufactured components. The Chinese may also attempt to lobby the US delegation for liberalized export restrictions, as well as for most-favored-nation treatment.

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Exempt from general
declassification schedule of E.O. 11652
exception category 5B(1)(2),3
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the Director of Central Intelligence

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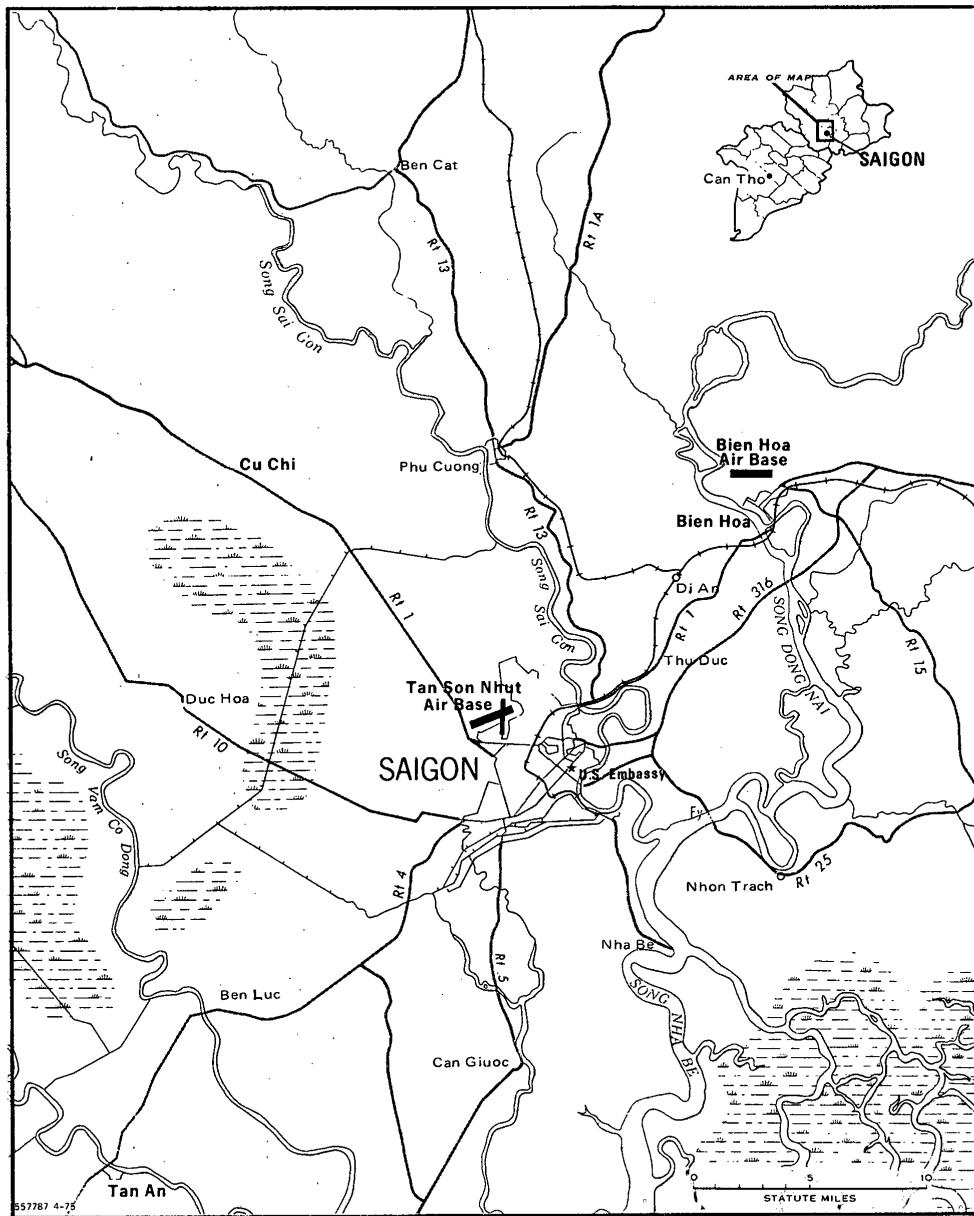
South Vietnam: The emergency evacuation of Americans is under way. (Page 1)

Cambodia: "A special national congress" has decided to retain Prince Sihanouk as nominal head of state and Penn Nouth as prime minister. (Page 3)

France-MBFR: The possibility that the US may withdraw nuclear warheads and delivery systems as part of a force reduction agreement has increased France's apprehension about the MBFR negotiations. (Page 5)

Notes: Israel-Jordan; France; Spain-NATO
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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY



FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

SOUTH VIETNAM

The US has begun the emergency evacuation of remaining Americans from South Vietnam. The effort encountered some problems initially. The communist assault on Saigon has closed Tan Son Nhut airfield and led to panic and chaos throughout the capital area.

The first US helicopters from a naval task force off the coast landed at Tan Son Nhut with a US marine security force, shortly after 2 a.m. EDT. The US commander of the evacuation operation reported that some Americans in downtown Saigon had been unable to reach an evacuation point, but later reporting indicates a large number of Americans had arrived at the US defense attaché compound.

According to a late report, more than 2,000 people including several hundred Americans now have been safely evacuated.

The evacuation of Americans from Can Tho has encountered resistance from South Vietnamese forces. The US consul general, together with 22 other Americans plus Filipinos and Vietnamese civilians, tried to flee down the Mekong by boat, but they were attacked by South Vietnamese helicopter gunships. Late reports indicate they too have been rescued.

Communist forces began their attack early this morning with massive artillery and rocket bombardments of Tan Son Nhut airfield. Many South Vietnamese aircraft were destroyed on the ground, but others managed to take off despite the rubble and heavy groundfire. Some aircraft participated in the defense of Saigon, while others flew to Can Tho. A number of government aircraft and helicopters flew to US ships off the coast or to bases in Thailand. At least three South Vietnamese aircraft were shot down over Saigon by SA-7 missiles.

The communists followed the Tan Son Nhut assault with a spate of small attacks on the suburbs of the capital. Government units just northwest of Saigon abandoned their positions, and a number of government outposts were lost as the result of ground

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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attacks. North Vietnamese sappers also penetrated the southern edge of Saigon and attacked a large military communications site. An intercepted message had indicated that the North Vietnamese 7th Division would try to take over Saigon's radio station, but there are no reports of such an attempt. The radio station is located a short distance from the US embassy.

North Vietnamese forces also launched large-scale attacks west and southwest of Saigon. A large communist force supported by tanks attacked the South Vietnamese 25th Division at Cu Chi, and intercepts suggest the communists hope to push on to the capital. Heavy fighting is occurring along Route 4 southwest of Saigon, and the communist forces attacking in that area could reach Cholon and the outskirts of the capital within hours.

East of Saigon, intercepted messages suggest the North Vietnamese have captured Vung Tau and Bien Hoa and are now pushing west.

The North Vietnamese assault on the capital came on the heels of the communist rejection yesterday of President Minh's call for negotiations. North Vietnamese and Viet Cong media have characterized the new Saigon government as just another "reactionary administration" and reiterated earlier demands that the government's administrative structure "be abolished," its "war machine" dismantled and that the US leave immediately. In a desperate effort to meet some of these demands, the Minh government today requested that all American personnel leave the country within 24 hours and announced plans to overhaul the governmental apparatus and legalize the communist party. In another desperate gesture of reconciliation, Saigon Radio today referred to the North Vietnamese and the Viet Cong as "our brothers of the other side."

In his acceptance speech two days ago, President Minh asked for a cease-fire in order to arrange a "political solution within the framework of the Paris Agreement" and called upon the South Vietnamese military to "defend the remaining territory." It now seems clear, however, that Hanoi has rejected the gradual transfer of power and negotiations on a co-equal governmental basis implied by Minh and is determined to accept nothing short of surrender.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

CAMBODIA

Deputy Prime Minister Khieu Samphan announced in a communiqué he read over Phnom Penh radio yesterday that a "special national congress" had "decided" that Prince Sihanouk would remain nominal head of state and that Penn Nouth would be "allowed" to remain as prime minister.

Although the announcement leaves little doubt that Sihanouk and Penn Nouth will be severely circumscribed, Samphan's reference to "thorough review and debate" suggests that the decision to allow the two any role was a bitter pill for some communist leaders to swallow. In this regard, Samphan hinted that other non-communist figures--such as Foreign Minister Sarin Chak--may be on their way out by saying that they would be "rewarded according to their respective contributions and abilities."

In the communiqué, Samphan backtracked on the communists' previously stated willingness to accept "all unconditional aid." He made allusions, instead, to "foreign interferences...under the form of humanitarianism." At the same time, however, he spoke of "striving to develop unity with...people throughout the world," including "peace and justice loving Americans," and again stressed a "nonaligned and neutral" foreign policy.

In addition to the communiqué, Phnom Penh radio over the weekend broadcast its first postwar "editorial." A relatively new art form for Khmer communist propagandists, the editorial was noteworthy for its references to "the great Cambodian revolutionary organization" that achieved victory through its "clear-sighted and correct line." However oblique, this is the first public acknowledgment of the dominant role played by the covert Khmer Communist Party.

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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Meanwhile, a recent message from the Khmer Communist Party Central Committee has confirmed communist plans to expel large numbers of non-Cambodians from Phnom Penh. A communist commander in northwestern Cambodia was ordered to send 22 vehicles to the provincial capital of Pursat on April 30 to pick up a large number of "foreigners" and transport them to the town of Poipet on the Thai border. The Central Committee stated that "all foreigners" should be expelled "quickly" because they created "many complex political problems."

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that press reports of a Cambodian communist buildup along the Thai border are exaggerated. Thai officials have expressed anxiety over the proximity of Khmer communist forces to Thailand, but there is no evidence that the communists are massing troops along the border. Khmer communist forces are still attempting to consolidate their control, and alleged border violations probably have involved pursuit of fleeing Cambodians.

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FRANCE-MBFR

The possibility that the US may withdraw nuclear warheads and delivery systems as part of a force reduction agreement has increased France's apprehension about the MBFR negotiations.

The French, who opted not to participate in the Vienna talks, have long expressed concern that the talks could result in an agreement that would inhibit future European defense cooperation ventures and weaken NATO's defensive capabilities.

[redacted] the force reduction talks are now moving into a critical phase and is making a concerted effort to put its skeptical views on record.

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[redacted] the Soviet Union's real purpose in MBFR is to obtain a means to frustrate future European defense cooperation and to influence West European affairs in general. [redacted]
[redacted] France is concerned about the long-term rather than the short-term effects on the security of Western Europe if the US offered to withdraw military elements.

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In particular, the French fear that:

--Reducing "Allied" air forces would erode NATO's conventional tactical air capabilities and might affect NATO's capability to deploy and use tactical nuclear weapons.

--Accepting a ceiling on US tactical nuclear warheads might prohibit future technological changes that could bolster NATO's strategy of deterrence.

--A cutback in US nuclear delivery systems would have deleterious consequences for the Allies' military flexibility.

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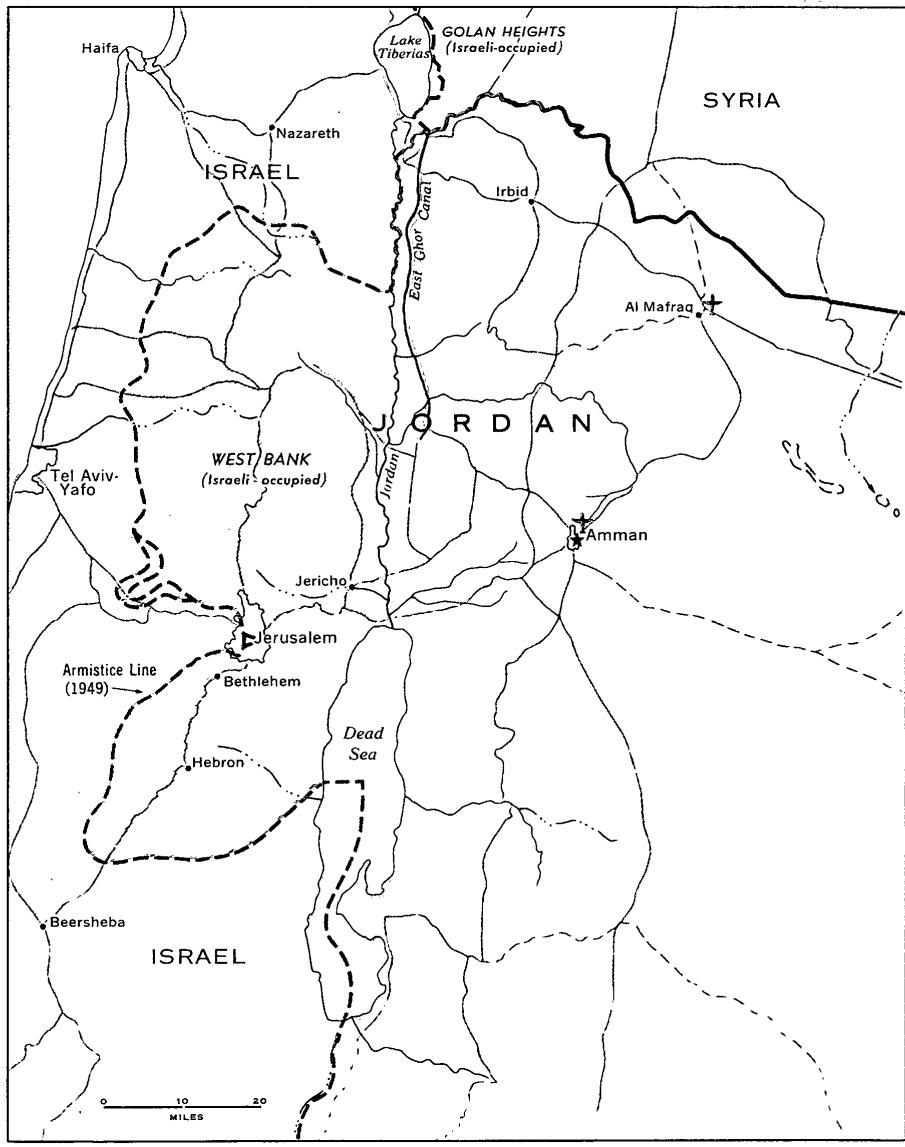
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--A trade-off of US nuclear elements for a Soviet tank army would decrease Western security because the Soviets could easily reintroduce the tanks.

--Verifying any force reduction agreement would be extremely difficult.

The French probably will continue their efforts in other forums to dissuade the US and NATO from proposing the bargain concerning nuclear elements and a tank army. They may have some difficulty, however. Most of the NATO participants in the Vienna talks agree in principle that the so-called nuclear sweetener is the West's only trump card and that it should be played relatively soon in an effort to break the deadlock.



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The initial reaction by NATO members to our demarche requesting early consideration of Spain's relationship with the Alliance has been negative.

Most NATO members, in fact, are decidedly cool to any initiatives at this time to bring Spain closer to membership. Many favor eventual ties with Spain, but believe closer relations with the Franco regime could have serious political consequences in their own countries and weaken public support for the Alliance. Some also argue that premature links with Madrid might cause a popular reaction in Spain against NATO when Franco passes from the scene. French and West German officials show the most positive interest in the problem, while the Belgian government is the most negative.

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The President's Daily Brief

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SOUTH VIETNAM

The flag of the Viet Cong's Provisional Revolutionary Government was hoisted over the presidential palace at 12:15 today Saigon time, marking the end of over 30 years of war in Vietnam.

North Vietnamese troops and tanks entered the heart of Saigon less than two hours after President Duong Van Minh announced the unconditional surrender of his government. Minh asked that Viet Cong representatives meet him to arrange an orderly transfer of power, stating that "I am waiting to hand over full administrative power to you." At last report, Minh was seen leaving the palace accompanied by communist troops.

President Minh's brief address to the nation over Saigon radio was followed by an order from the South Vietnamese joint general staff telling all members of the armed forces to observe the President's order and "be ready to make contacts with PRG forces to carry out a bloodless cease-fire." South Vietnamese troops were pulled out of defensive positions in and around the city and marched to central points to turn in their weapons.

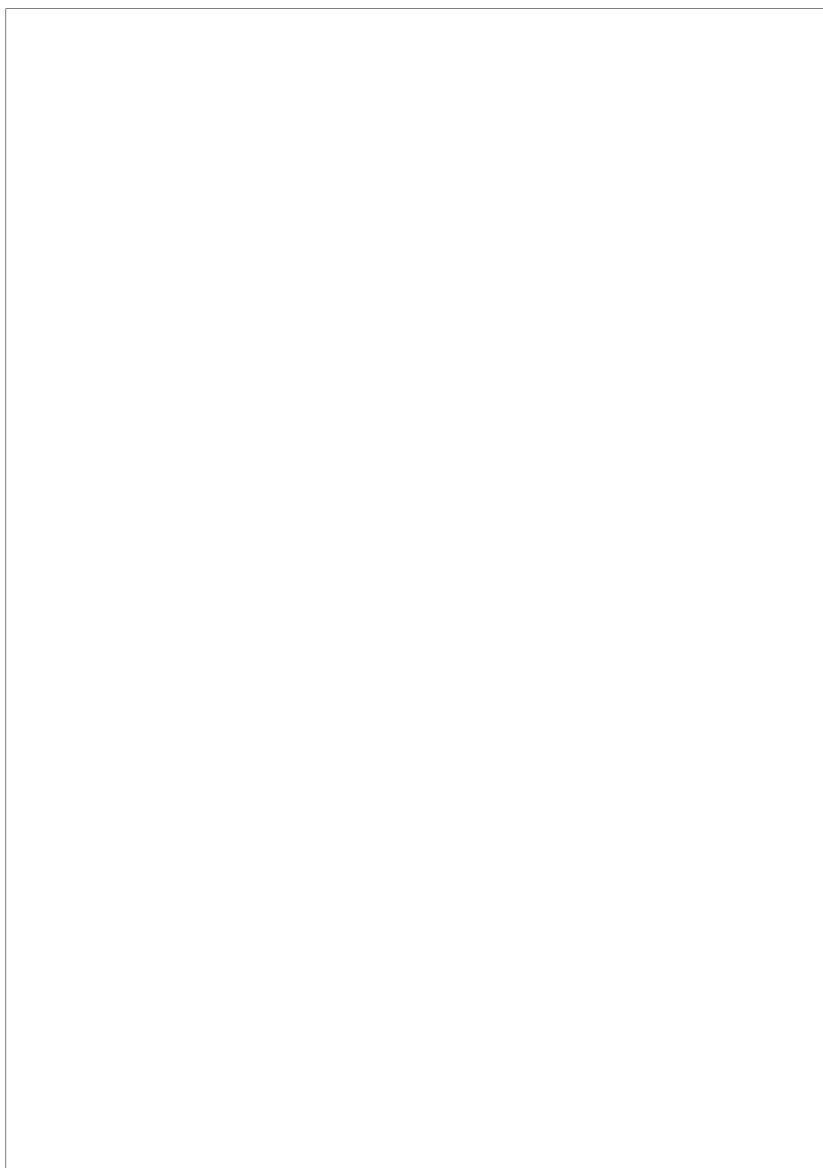
Immediately after the US evacuation was completed in the morning, the US embassy and consular office were looted by South Vietnamese mobs. Following the occupation of the city by North Vietnamese troops, order has largely been restored. Sporadic shooting was reported in parts of Saigon during the day, but there are no indications of any significant resistance from government forces.

There is no news from the southern delta. As of this morning, South Vietnamese units in that area were still intact.

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EGYPT-ISRAEL



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PORtUGAL

Socialist Party leader Mario Soares appears to have taken a first step in a post-election challenge to the Communist Party and the ruling Armed Forces Movement. In an interview with a Lisbon newspaper on Monday, Soares described the results of last week's election as an "immense defeat" for the Communists.

Soares derided the Communists for obtaining such a small vote after a well-financed and concerted election effort and implied that the Communists had exploited key positions in the government and the media to advance their campaign. The Socialist leader indirectly criticized the Armed Forces Movement by warning against efforts to develop a brand of socialism that would isolate the country internationally and offer no immediate prospects of improved living standards.

Soares called for municipal elections to replace local leftist officials who assumed their posts after the coup a year ago. The Movement has ignored appeals from the moderate parties that these officials be selected through free elections.

Soares' criticisms are a departure from the conciliatory stand he adopted immediately after the election. At that time he publicly stated that the Socialists would not seek government changes and would continue to support a platform that would guarantee military control of the government. His shift in tactics may be a reaction to efforts by both the Movement and the Communists to portray the moderates' election victory as a success for the parties of the left and an endorsement of the Movement's policies.

Soares may also have been influenced by the runner-up Popular Democratic Party, which has criticized statements by the Communists and the media aimed at playing down or distorting election results. The Popular Democrats maintain that Portuguese voters made a clear choice for a democratic form of socialism.

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The Socialists face a difficult task in trying to capitalize on their election victory. They want to press their advantage sufficiently to obtain some concrete results from their strong showing. In an effort to reduce communist and radical influence in the government, they are likely to make common cause with moderate officers in the Armed Forces Movement. At the same time, the Socialists want to avoid the appearance of pushing too hard, fearing that they would thereby alienate the still dominant radical officers.

* * *

Soviet reporting and commentary on the Portuguese election so far have been candid about the poor showing of the Communists, raising the possibility that Moscow is not altogether displeased with the outcome of the election. The Soviets may calculate that the relative lack of electoral support for the Portuguese Communist Party will make it more amenable to Soviet influence. The Soviets also may see the election results as evidence of the local party's wisdom in associating itself closely with the Armed Forces Movement, which remains the locus of power in Portugal.

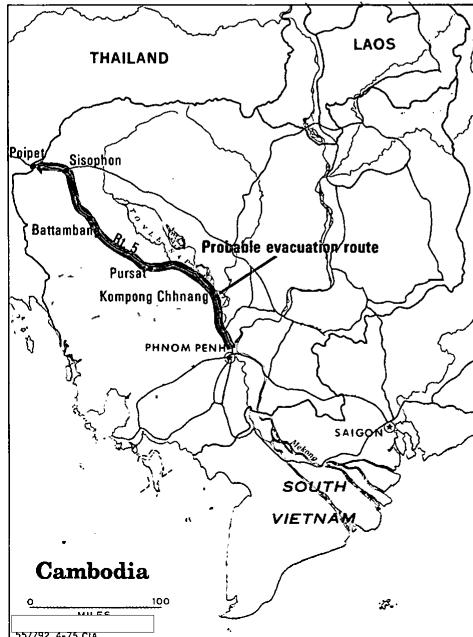
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NOTES

The new authorities in Cambodia plan to deport those foreigners now confined in the French embassy compound in Phnom Penh--over 600 at last count--by way of the town of Poipet on the Thai border.

[redacted] the foreigners will be sent out by road in increments beginning on April 30; the total evacuation could take 15 to 20 days. The French have arranged with the Thai government and the Red Cross for medical treatment and onward transportation for the evacuees once they cross the border. Upon the completion of the evacuation, the French plan to close their mission in Phnom Penh. Paris has already expressed its willingness, however, to establish ties with the new regime in Phnom Penh and will presumably try to reopen its embassy as soon as possible.



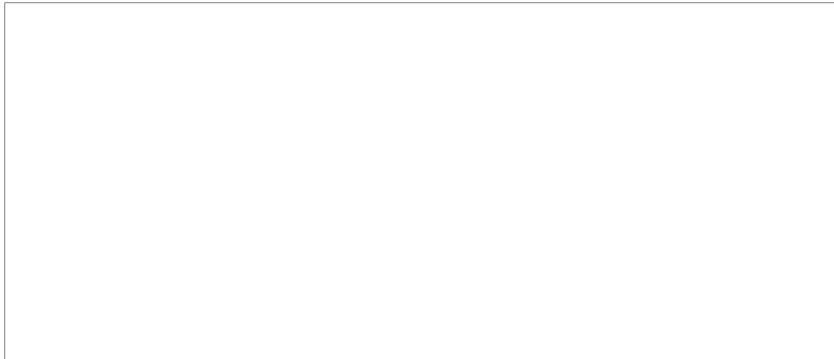
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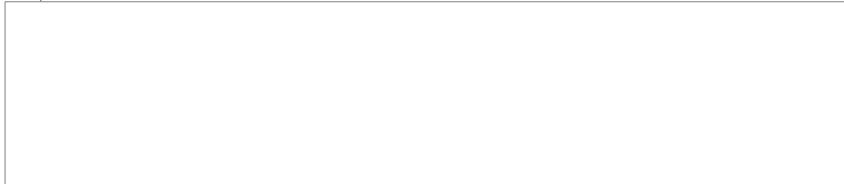


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Polish Communist Party leader Gierek is moving rapidly to launch a sweeping reorganization of party and government bureaucracies.

Gierek is evidently convinced that the success of his plans for economic development--on which his tenure rests--depends on a major structural reform that will tighten central control at the expense of the powerful regional administrations. [redacted]

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