

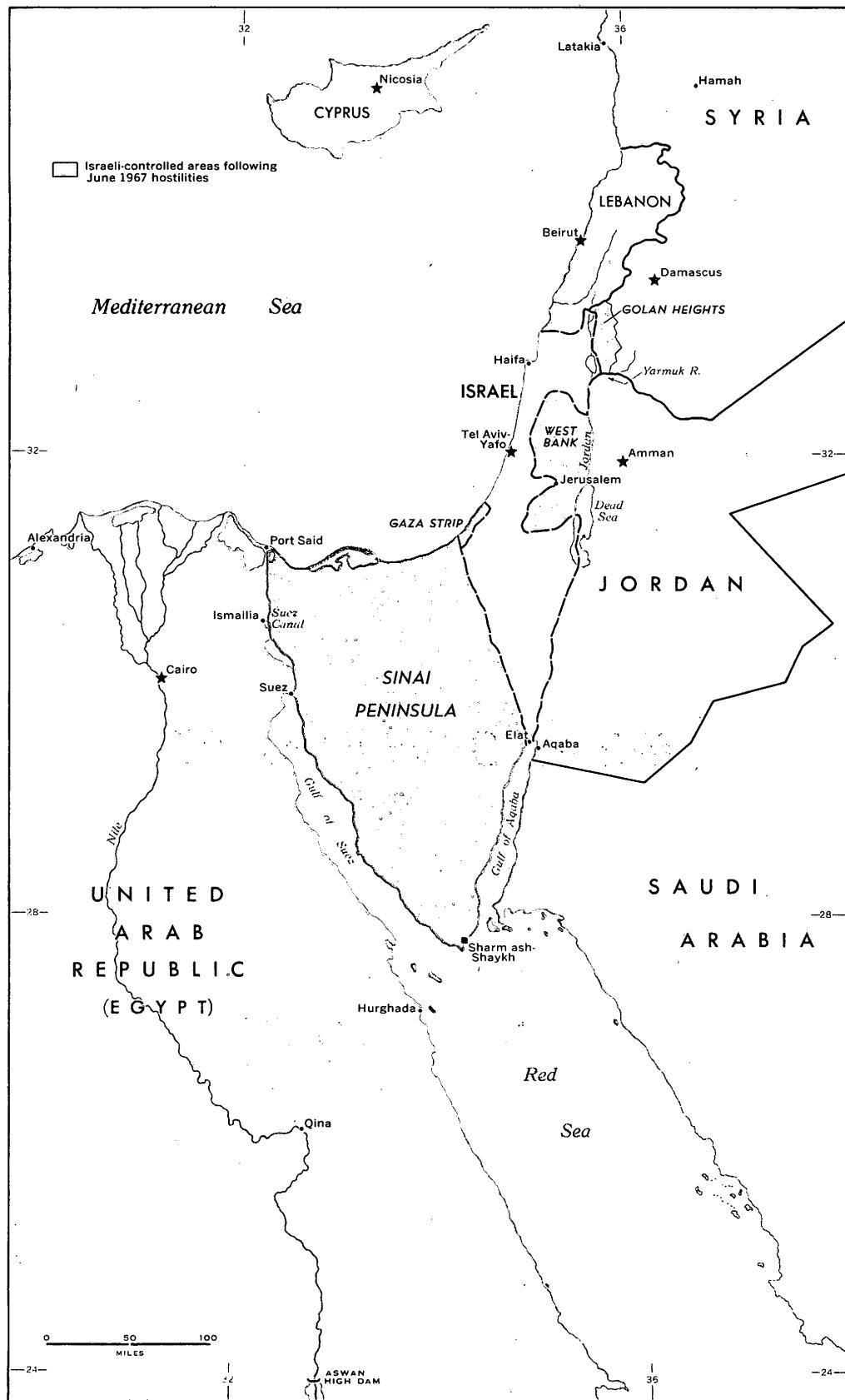
The President's Daily Brief

1 April 1969

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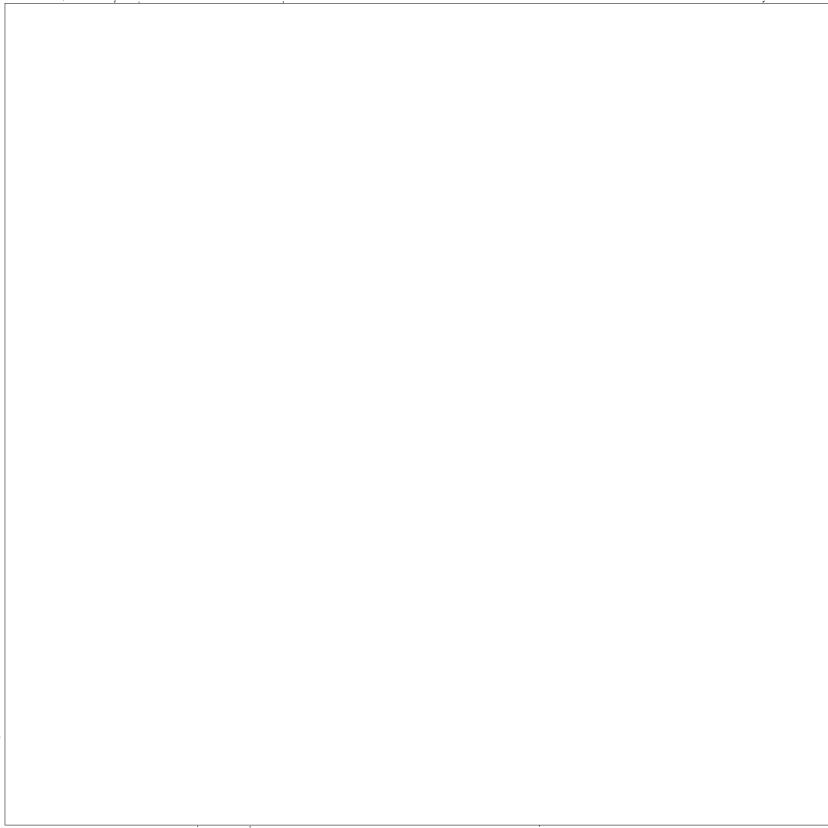


TOP SECRET

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LATE NOTES FOR THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF OF
1 APRIL 1969

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TOP SECRET

2 April 1969

LATE NOTES FOR THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF OF
1 APRIL 1969

I. MAJOR PROBLEMS

VIETNAM

There was no significant enemy activity in Vietnam during
the daylight hours today.

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SOVIET AFFAIRS

The Czechoslovak party leadership issued a statement
following yesterday's meeting of the Central Committee pre-
sidium. The statement was highly critical of those Czech citi-
zens, especially party members, who took part in last weekend's
anti-Soviet demonstrations. Progressive presidium member Josef
Smrkovsky was singled out by name "for certain utterances at
variance" with the party resolution of last November. The
communications media were also criticized, including the party
daily Rude Pravo. Politika, a weekly magazine, was "suspended
temporarily because of grave political errors." (FBIS 16, 2 Apr)

* * *

There is nothing significant to report on the Middle
East or Europe.

II. OTHER IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS

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DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

I. MAJOR PROBLEMS

MIDDLE EAST

Although the Israelis have carefully avoided an outright rejection in advance of the four-power talks, their displeasure with the talks is becoming ever clearer.

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Tel Aviv's latest rhetorical salvo was fired Monday by Foreign Minister Eban, who told Ambassador Barbour that Israel was growing nervous at an Iraqi buildup in Jordan. When pinned down by the ambassador, he said it was an increase in Iraqi artillery which really exercised the Israelis, and he intimated Jordanian civilians might be shelled if a duel with the new artillery broke out.

We have seen no signs of an Iraqi buildup. In fact, about 3,000 troops were sent home recently to fight the Kurds. This brought Iraqi troop totals in Jordan down to something under 20,000. There are several thousand more Iraqis just across the border in Syria.

* * *

Recent statements by Minister of Defense Moshe Dayan that he is not "comfortable" in the ruling Labor Party could signal the beginning of domestic political turmoil in Israel. Dayan said--for the first time publicly--that he has not yet made up his mind whether to leave the party but will make that decision well before the fall elections.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

Dayan wants to be prime minister but has no independent political machinery outside the party. His departure from the party would probably result in the breakup of the national coalition, perhaps even causing damaging break-offs from the Labor Party itself.

EUROPE

Embassy Paris believes the French will continue, and even intensify, their efforts to lure London and Bonn into discussing alternatives to a supranational European Community. Even if they fail, they will place themselves on record as being willing to seek solutions to the current impasse and will be in a better position to resist further pressures for UK entry into the Common Market. The embassy believes that De Gaulle at 78 realizes his successors are unlikely to continue his ultranationalist policies. Therefore, he figures he must contrive major and lasting changes before time runs out. While he does not want to leave or scuttle the Community, an irrational move by an old man in a hurry is always possible.

SOVIET AFFAIRS

The new wave of anti-Soviet demonstrations brought Soviet Defense Minister Grechko and First Deputy Foreign Minister Semyenov to Prague yesterday. Tensions in the city are at their highest pitch since the immolation of a student in January.

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

The violence against Soviet installations, equipment, and personnel during the night of 28-29 March was more widespread than originally reported. Burning of Soviet buildings and cars or attacks on Soviet troops occurred in nine cities, and lesser incidents apparently took place elsewhere.

The Czechoslovak authorities are clearly concerned. The leaderships of the federal, Czech, and Slovak governments met yesterday in an unusual joint session to decide on what to do next. One thing they will have to do is mute the anti-Soviet tone of Czech media reporting the rioting.

VIETNAM

There is nothing significant to report.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

II. OTHER IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS

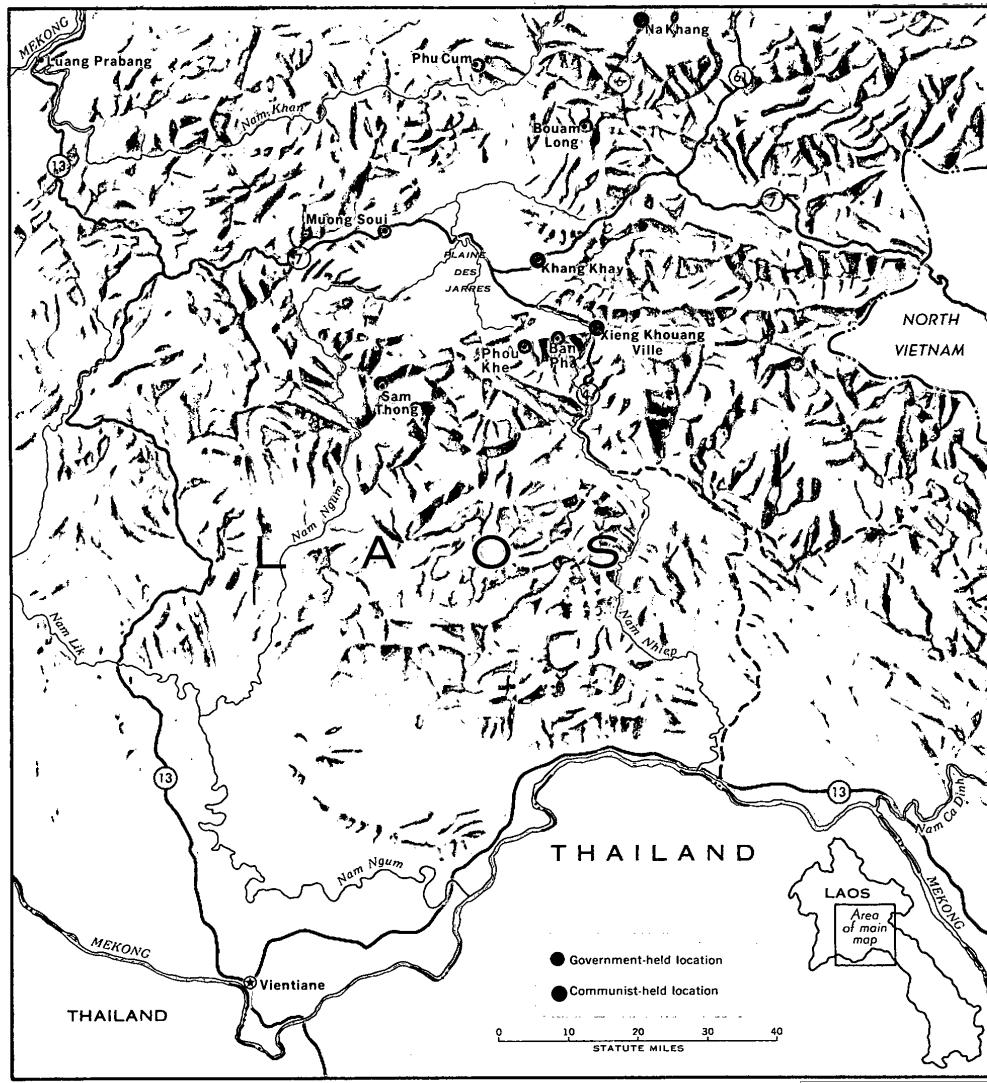
COMMUNIST CHINA

The long-postponed party congress--the first in 13 years--opened today in Peking. The agenda includes discussion of a "political report" by Mao's heir, Lin Piao, adoption of a new party constitution, and election of a new central committee. The congress will attempt to project an appearance of normality following the excesses of the Cultural Revolution. We expect, however, that the policy and personnel issues dividing the top leadership will persist.

SOVIET UNION - PAKISTAN

Pravda today carried the first Soviet analysis in any detail of the recent developments in Pakistan. Ayub's behavior is put in a generally favorable light. Criticism of the opposition is especially strong for unnamed extremist "pro-Peking" and "pro-American" elements. In general, the article leaves the impression that Moscow is relatively satisfied with the interim regime, and the fact that the extremists are unnamed probably means that the Soviets want to avoid alienating any political figures prematurely.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY



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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

LAOS

The situation remains serious. In the face of recent Communist gains, government troops have launched a limited counteroffensive in the northeast.

The operation, designed to forestall a major Communist push south of the Plaine des Jarres that Lao military leaders still believe is imminent, has so far resulted in the capture of two strategic positions near Route 4, an important Communist supply route east of the Plaine. One of the positions is Ban Pha, a government base that had fallen to the enemy in February, and the other is located on Phou Khe mountain, from which the guerrillas will be able to place artillery fire on Route 4. The enemy offered little resistance to the assaults.

Other government ground actions have not fared as well, although harassing attacks along Route 7 have probably caused the enemy to divert troops to protect the road. The ground offensive is being conducted in conjunction with an aerial campaign of unprecedented scope against Communist positions near the Plaine des Jarres. Although it is still too early to assess the results of these actions, the recent movement of a North Vietnamese battalion out of the Plaine area suggests the attacks may be achieving their tactical purpose.

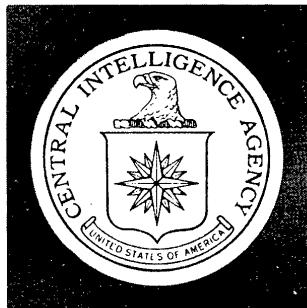
If the offensive continues to go well, it may also do much to repair the shattered morale of government troops.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

The danger is that the Communists might feel that the government and the US, rather than themselves, have taken action to upset the political-military balance in the northeast, and may react sharply to the threat to their rear areas. The loss of additional important positions could set in motion a chain of circumstances that would result in the collapse of the government presence in Sam Neua and Xieng Khouang Provinces. The Meo guerrillas, who have borne the brunt of the fighting over the past seven years, have virtually reached the end of their rope.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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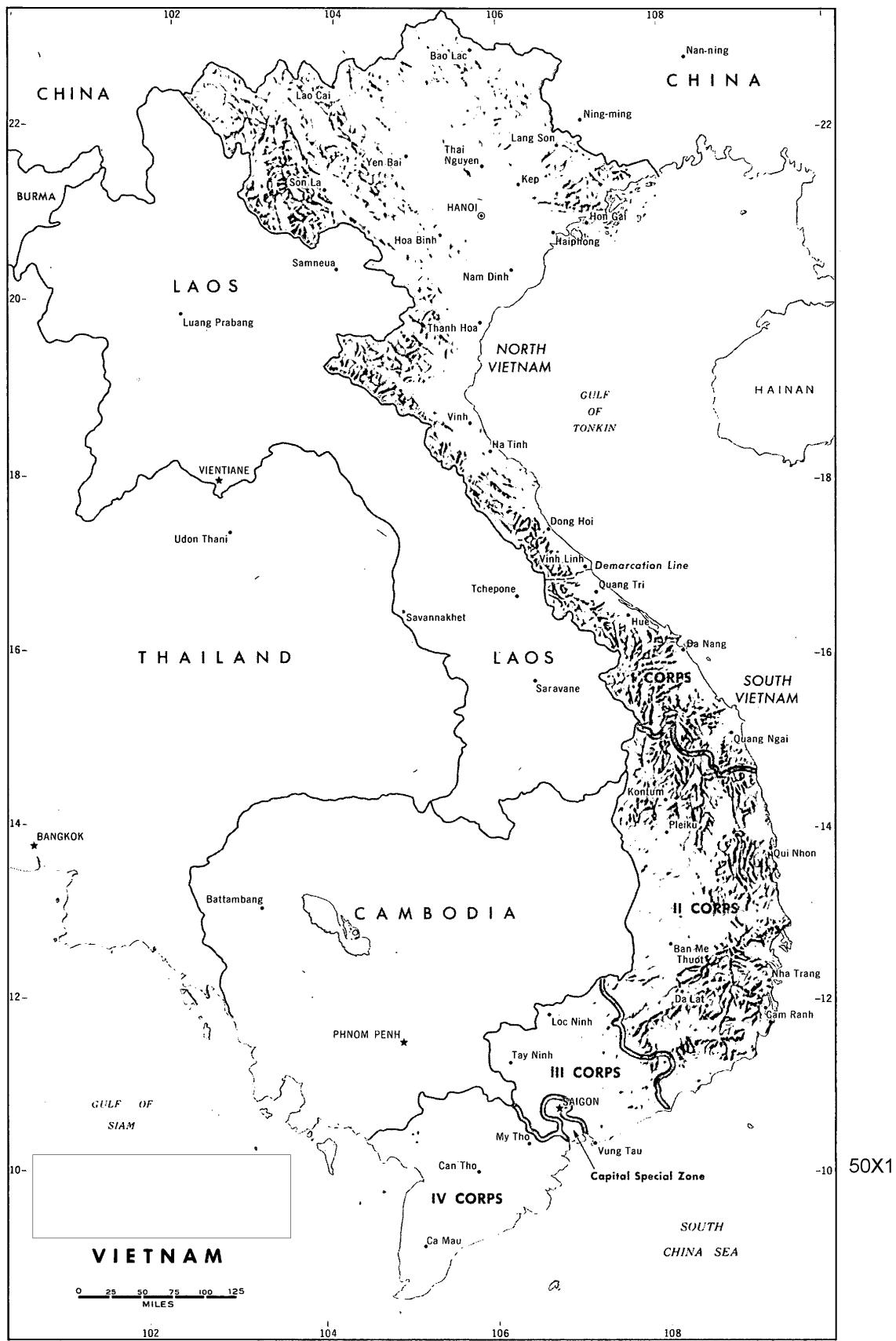
The President's Daily Brief

2 April 1969

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

I. MAJOR PROBLEMS

VIETNAM

The Communists may be pausing in their offensive to refit some front-line units and to assess the results of their post-Tet campaign. Enemy activity throughout South Vietnam over the past several days has dropped to the lowest level noted since the offensive began nearly six weeks ago.

In I and II Corps, regroupment of a number of enemy main force units into mountain redoubts is under way. In addition, the senior Communist military headquarters in this sector has ordered a "general conference" of all unit commanders and political officers from Front 4, which is responsible for operations in the Da Nang area. A number of enemy local force units and some main force units, however, remain near allied posts and urban centers. The Communists thus remain capable of launching sporadic mortar and rocket attacks and staging limited ground attacks.

This pullback of forces has not yet spread to III Corps where Communist units remain in forward staging areas. In the delta, Communist forces also remain within a few days' march of the major allied complex of My Tho and Dong Tam. Massive allied spoiling operations and B-52 strikes evidently have been responsible for the reduced tempo of enemy attacks in III Corps and the northern delta.

The picture in the Demilitarized Zone is also mixed. The North Vietnamese have not chosen to make the DMZ into

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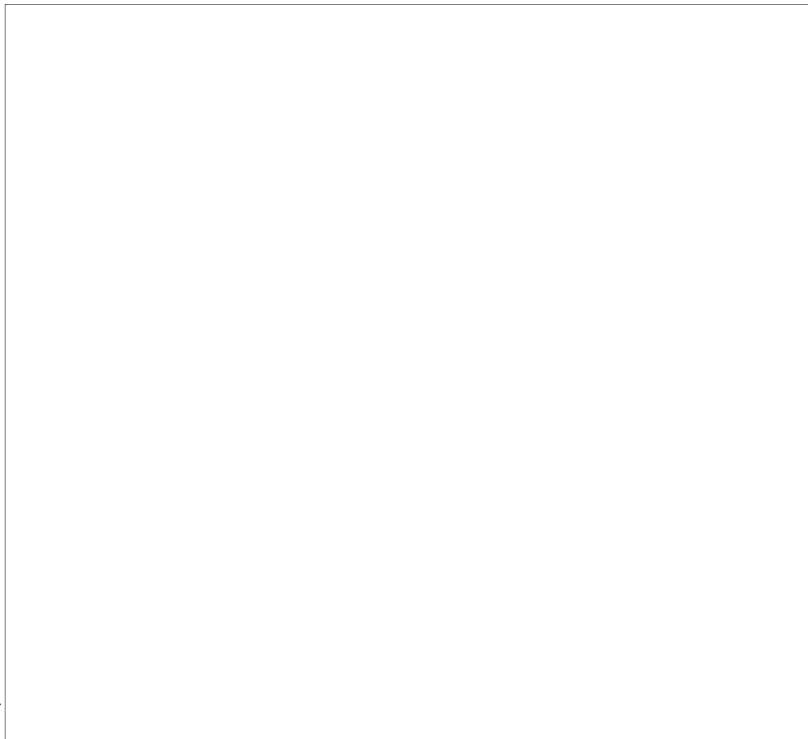
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LATE NOTES FOR THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF OF

2 APRIL 1969

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TOP SECRET

3 April 1969

LATE NOTES FOR THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF OF
2 APRIL 1969

I. MAJOR PROBLEMS

MIDDLE EAST

The US Embassy in Amman views Eban's concern over Iraqi troops in Jordan as a warning of a possible Israeli attack. Eban claimed on 31 March, in conversation with Ambassador Barbour in Tel Aviv, that Iraqi troop strength in Jordan had increased markedly. He intimated that Irbid, Jordan's second largest city, could be the target of Israeli reprisals if Iraqi artillery attacked Israel.

We still have no evidence of any Iraqi buildup. Iraqi troops, however, assist the Arab fedayeen, and Eban's statements, taken in the context of Israel's "active defense" policy, may mean that Israel has plans to hit the Iraqis hard again. The religious holidays that began yesterday are likely to restrain Tel Aviv from early military action.

[redacted] Central Intelligence Bulletin, 3 Apr) 50X1

SOVIET AFFAIRS

There have been no reports overnight of further developments in the Czechoslovak situation.

VIETNAM

Enemy-initiated activity remains at a low level throughout South Vietnam. [redacted]

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* * *

There is nothing significant to report on other areas.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

a major battlefield during the current campaign, despite the deployment of several regiments into and through the area. Activity has been sporadic for several weeks, and enemy-initiated attacks there have also declined over the past few days.

Recent North Vietnamese intercepts, however, again raise the possibility that at least one additional North Vietnamese division, the 304th, may be moving southward from its holding position near Dong Hoi. These messages suggest that the 304th may be headed for an area somewhat south of the DMZ.

It is not clear whether the present lull will be only limited and temporary, or whether it presages a general pullback as occurred in June of last year and again in September and October. We are still receiving captured documents and reports from prisoners on Communist plans to sustain the offensive through April and possibly beyond.

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[redacted] Thieu's public statement of 25 March that his government was ready for private talks with the NLF [redacted]

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[redacted] Although Thieu's announcement has apparently helped bring his countrymen along toward acceptance of a

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

Communist role under a future settlement, there is a widespread feeling in South Vietnam that he made the statement under pressure from the US. Militant anti-Communists, moreover, have accused the government of proceeding "from concession to concession."

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President Thieu and his colleagues remain extremely sensitive to public statements by US leaders about a possible coalition government.

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press reports of Secretary

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Laird's statement may tend to shake the fragile consensus Thieu is trying to form on the question of reaching an accommodation with the Communists.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

The Communists have not reacted publicly as yet to Secretary Laird's interview or to his announcement yesterday that the US plans to cut back on B-52 sorties in South Vietnam after midyear. There will probably be some derogatory Communist commentary on these subjects in the next day or so, but it will not necessarily reflect real Communist assessments. The Secretary's remarks will be interpreted in Hanoi as additional evidence that the US is under strong and growing pressure to end the war, and that the US administration wants to accomplish this through a settlement negotiated in Paris.

Nothing said by Secretary Laird is likely to prompt any initiatives from the Communist side at this point. The Soviets, or even the French, however, may do some probing on Hanoi's behalf in order to get a better reading on the Secretary's remarks.

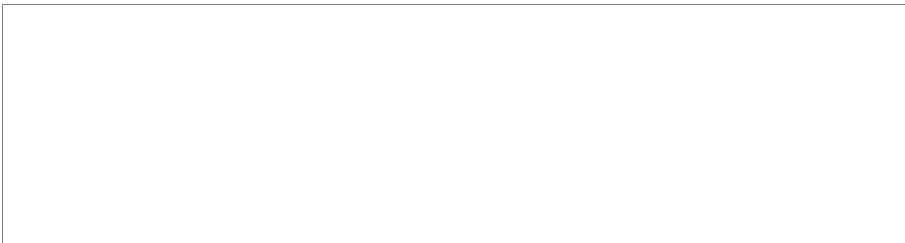
SOVIET AFFAIRS

The Czech leadership has become embroiled in its most serious crisis since the Soviet invasion, as a result of Dubcek's failure to head off anti-Soviet demonstrations last weekend.

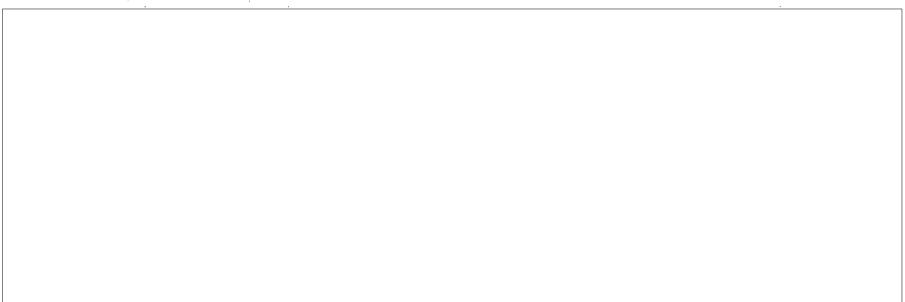
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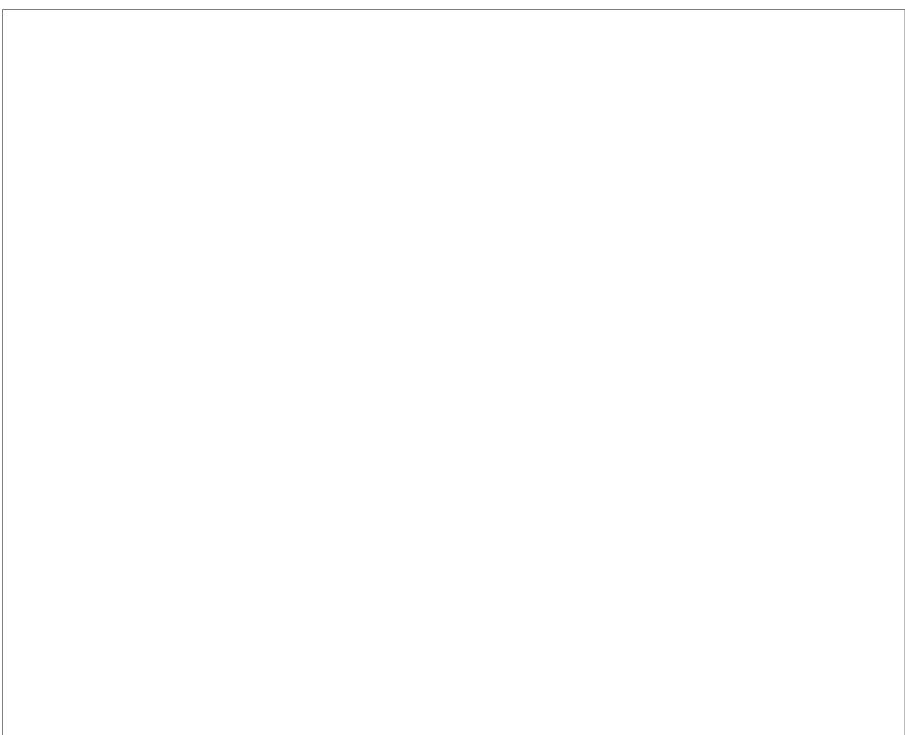


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MIDDLE EAST

The new leadership of the Syrian Baath Party, announced Monday after protracted haggling, is about equally divided between the party's two major party factions. Defense Minister Asad is probably still the dominant figure, but infighting will inevitably continue despite this week's compromise. This factionalism is largely personal rather than ideological, but we do have indications that Asad and his followers are more interested than their opponents in reducing Syria's dependence on the Soviets and in improving relations with other Arab states.

EUROPE

There is nothing significant to report.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

II. OTHER IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS

NIGERIA

Arms deliveries to Biafra seem likely to increase.

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In the war itself, federal forces have gone on the attack in several sectors of the Biafran perimeter, but we see no sign that decisive federal gains are in prospect.

Prime Minister Wilson is back in England after his flying trip to Africa. His statement in Parliament today tends to confirm our earlier impression that the trip did not bring the civil war appreciably closer to settlement.

COMMUNIST CHINA

Imports by Communist China of electronic equipment and precision instruments from the Free World have risen

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

sharply during the past several years, from \$3.1 million in 1961 to \$47.3 million in 1966. Although such imports dropped during 1967, possibly because of the Cultural Revolution, preliminary information shows that they rose again in 1968, perhaps to the level of 1966. Japan has been the prime source; France, the UK, and West Germany have also been important suppliers. Many of these shipments have not been in violation of controls on strategic items. Some of the equipment has non-strategic applications; in other cases, details were insufficient to indicate a clear-cut breach of the embargo.

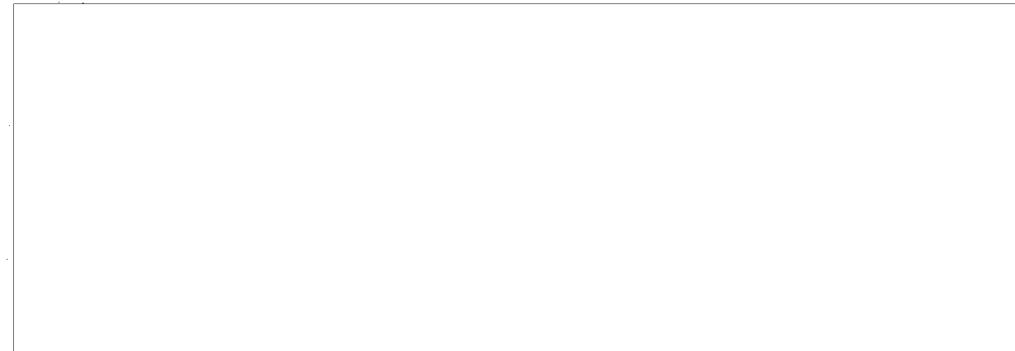
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JAPAN

The government's overriding interest in Okinawan reversion is shown in the recent reshuffling of the Foreign Office to strengthen Japan's negotiating team. The main features of the reorganization include the appointment of Hiroto Tanaka

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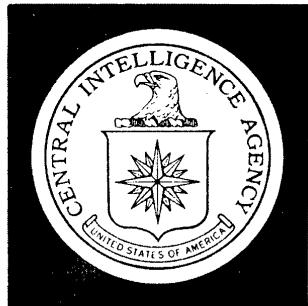
as an aggressive roving ambassador to assist Japanese Ambassador Shimoda in Washington and the designation of deputy vice minister Haruki Mori as the coordinator of all Okinawan matters.



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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

I. MAJOR PROBLEMS

SOVIET AFFAIRS

An uneasy calm prevails in Czechoslovakia. Many people gathered in the downtown area of Prague last night, but there was no evidence of public protest over the regime crackdown on "antisocialist" criticism. Rumors were plentiful as hard information was difficult to come by; there has been no confirmation of press reports that Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister Semyenov handed the Czechs a note threatening that Soviet forces would restore order if the Czechs did not.

Party boss Dubcek made a radio-television address today. First reporting indicates it to be a "more in sorrow than in anger" speech warning the people that further outbursts will take the country back to last August. Additional information on the speech will be provided in the Late Notes tomorrow morning.

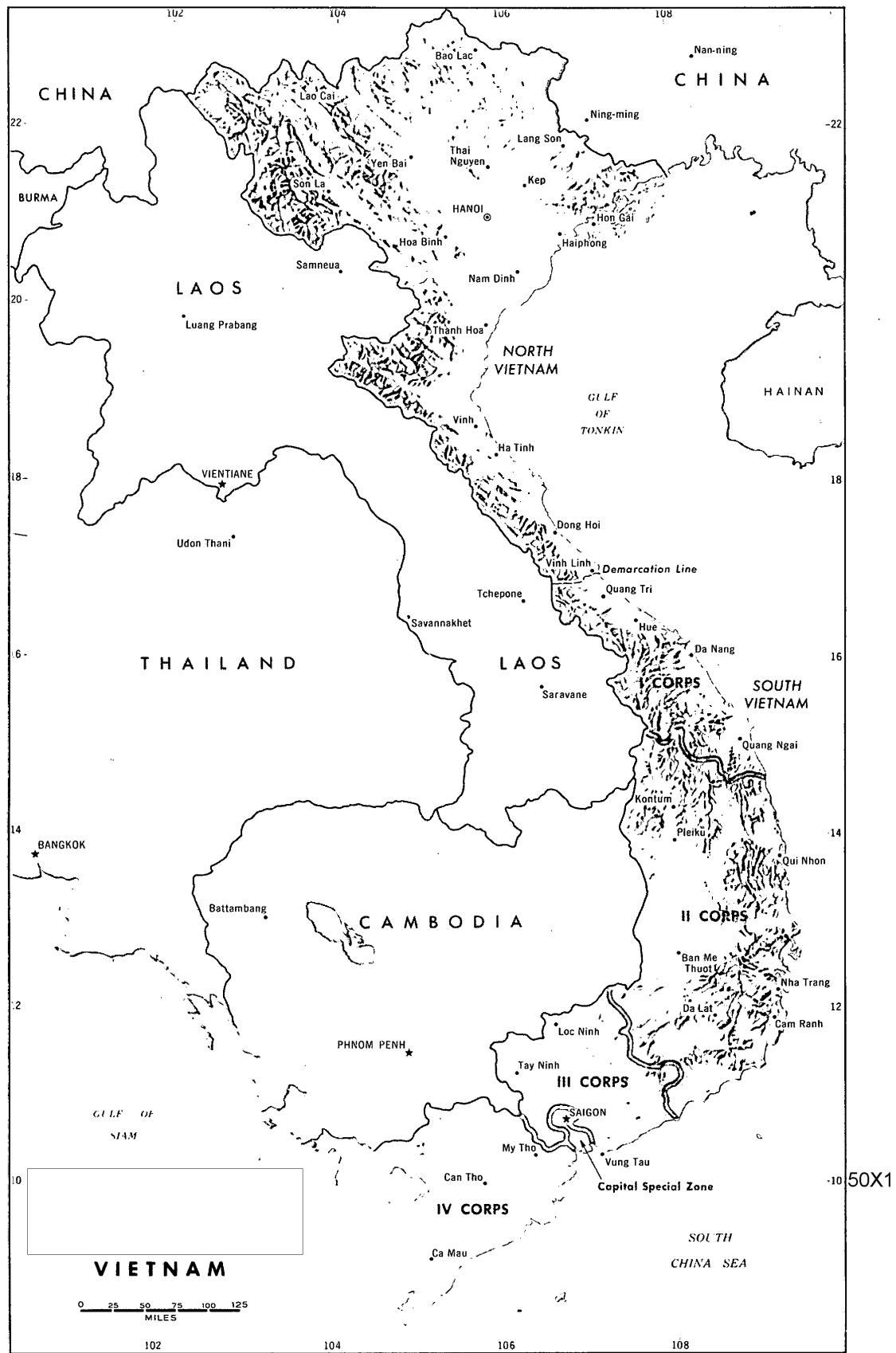
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Continuing search of satellite photography for Soviet ICBM deployment shows that construction has been started on three more SS-11 groups of ten silos each during the last six months. All known SS-11 groups now under construction should be completed by mid-1970. At that time there will be 780 operational SS-11 launchers. [redacted]

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TOP SECRET

4 April 1969

LATE NOTES FOR THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF OF
3 APRIL 1969

I. MAJOR PROBLEMS

SOVIET AFFAIRS

Dubcek made it clear in his speech yesterday that Soviet pressures had become so strong that he has no choice but to introduce certain restrictive domestic policies and to tighten controls over the population. He hinted that the Russians had lost their patience, and might now be ready to take other steps to speed the process of "normalization." In effect, Dubcek was telling his listeners that another anti-Soviet outburst would spell the end of his leadership, the end of the reform program, and the return of Soviet tanks and troops to the cities.

Dubcek remains in an extremely difficult position. He can no longer drag his feet in responding to Moscow's demands--"we must combine persuasion with decisive measures"--and has tried in his speech to convince the people to accept new domestic restrictions without reservations. At the same time he must try to mollify progressive groups which are becoming increasingly alienated from the party leadership.

[redacted] the trade unions are already planning a general strike to protest general price hikes expected to be announced next week. The regime considers this measure an essential step in its economic reform program. Such a strike, which probably would also be joined by the students, could generate more public manifestations of anti-Russian sentiment, and lead to the fall of the Dubcek regime.
(Various FBIS, Central Intelligence Bulletin, 4 Apr)

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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There is nothing significant to report on other areas.

II. OTHER IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS

PERU

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

EUROPE

While Prime Minister Wilson is having his troubles, we believe that press reports of a serious challenge to his leadership of the Labor Party are exaggerated. The results of his trip to Nigeria are less than impressive, but he had forewarned the public not to expect anything spectacular, insisting that he was going as a fact-finder, not a mediator. Wilson was unsuccessful, however, in persuading the Federal Nigerian Government to curtail the bombing of Biafra--a task which, if successful, might have quieted domestic critics of London's support of Lagos.

It is true that the latest public opinion polls show only two persons in ten satisfied with the Wilson administration, and Labor candidates have suffered sharp defeats in recent by-elections.

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VIETNAM

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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General Quang, who is President Thieu's intelligence coordinator, has informed an American observer in Saigon that several division commanders will be replaced shortly. Although Quang claimed the planned changes were routine rotations in career assignments, he singled out the commander of the 18th Division--probably the worst unit in the South Vietnamese Army--as the leading candidate for replacement. General Quang was reporting on problems considered by the President's Advisory Council on 31 March, and it appears that he wished to make clear to US officials that the Saigon leadership is concerned about the quality of some of its division commanders and plans to take action.

MIDDLE EAST

There is nothing significant to report.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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II. OTHER IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS

PERU

Embassy Lima believes that hard-line nationalists and leftists are consolidating their position in the Peruvian Government. We concur in this assessment

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We see almost no chance of any significant change in the government or its policies before the Hickenlooper and Sugar Act deadlines, and we suspect Velasco will prove to have a good deal of staying power even afterwards.

The government has given no sign that it is losing its nerve in the dispute with the US; an editor who is close to Velasco reiterated only yesterday that the "palace group" is sure that the US will not impose sanctions. He alleged that contingency plans are ready if sanctions do come, however.

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COMMUNIST CHINA

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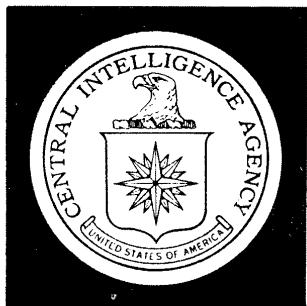
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SOUTH KOREA



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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY



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4 April 1969

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5 April 1969

LATE NOTES FOR THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF OF
4 APRIL 1969

I. MAJOR PROBLEMS

SOVIET AFFAIRS

Prague was calm yesterday afternoon

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Some of the groups which have been at the center of anti-Soviet activity seem to be knuckling under. The trade unions have announced for the first time since the August intervention that they will join Dubcek's "normalization" efforts, and union leaders are working hard to avoid a general strike over proposed price increases. Czechoslovak journalists, on the other hand, are still giving ground reluctantly. They were sharply criticized today by the Czech Communist Party's executive committee. (Central Intelligence Bulletin;

UPI 034, 5 Apr; [redacted]

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There is nothing significant to report in the Middle East, Vietnam, or Europe.

II. OTHER IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS

LAOS

Government forces yesterday abandoned the southern Laos base of Thateng. The move was not precipitated by an enemy attack; rather, it was ordered by the regional commander in the face of low troop morale and difficulties of resupply and reinforcement.

The loss of Thateng--the first significant government position in southern Laos to fall into enemy hands this year--does not by itself alter the military equation in the Bolovens

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

Plateau area. It is, however, another result of an enemy campaign dating back to 1967 to isolate the Bolovens and confine government troops to areas along the Mekong River. Recent Pathet Lao harassments along Route 13 appear to be part of this effort. In addition, fresh pressure against small government positions at Keng Nhao and Paksong may be designed to remove the last vestiges of government presence in the northern part of the plateau.

The military situation in northern Laos meanwhile remains quiet.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

I. MAJOR PROBLEMS

VIETNAM

Several public statements by the Vietnamese Communists over the past few days suggest that they will continue to react negatively for a while to any approaches for secret talks between the GVN and the Front. Tran Buu Kiem on 3 April characterized recent US statements on secret talks as "cunning treachery" aimed at diverting public pressure "which demands an early end to the war." A Liberation Radio commentary, also on 3 April, made the same charges.

Nevertheless, the Communists are seeking to keep the door slightly ajar on possible future private talks. Kiem quoted the Liberation Front response to Thieu's call for private talks, in which the Front stated that "the decisive question is not to talk this way or that;" this clearly leaves open the possibility of a Communist agreement to private talks in the future.

The same Front statement presented a new formulation describing the "decisive question" as "whether or not the Nixon administration wants to put an end to its aggression against Vietnam; whether or not it wants to withdraw unconditionally all US and satellite troops from South Vietnam." A commentary in the party daily on 3 April used the same language. Previously the usual Communist formulation was that the US "must end its aggression" and "must withdraw its troops...." (Underlining added.)

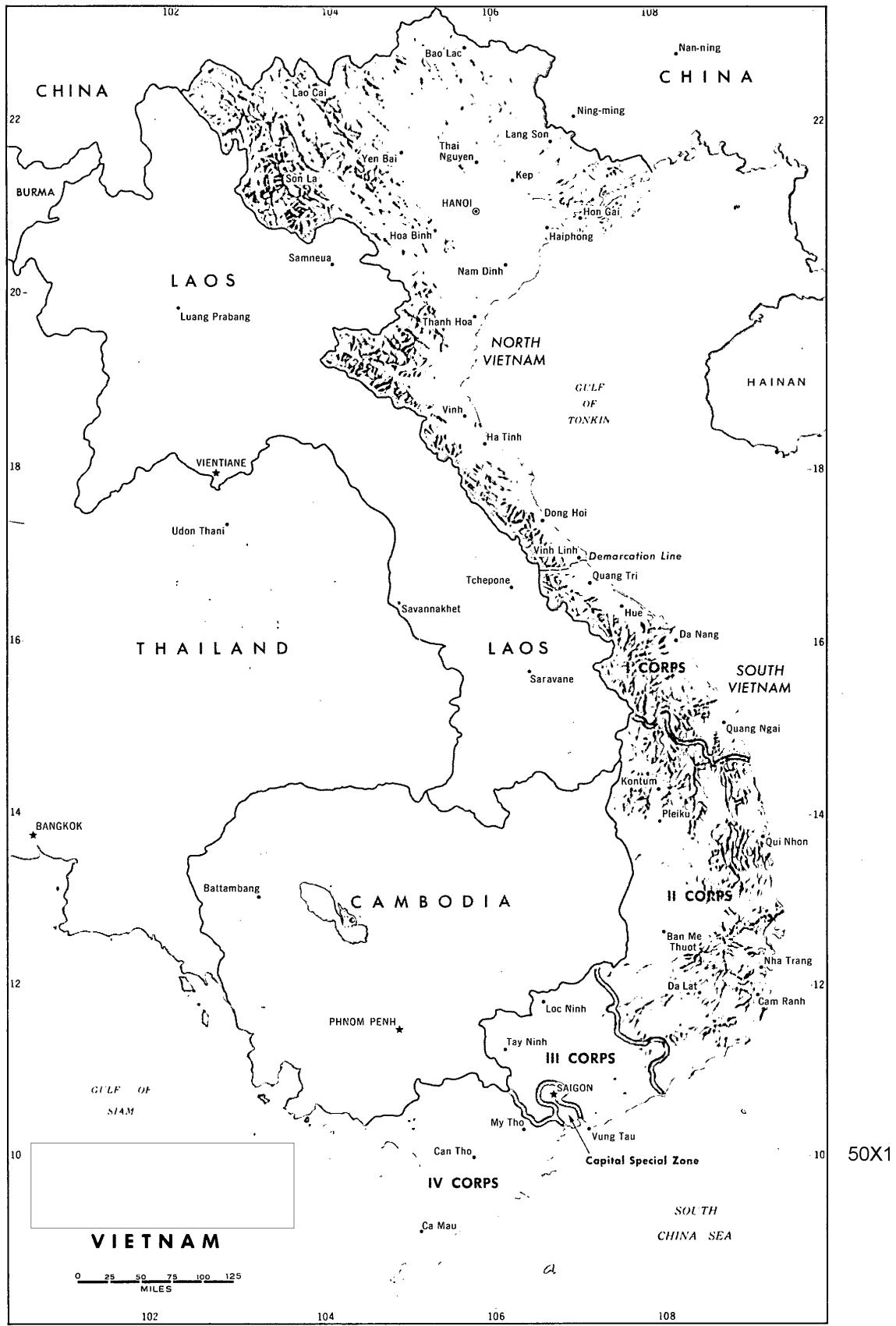
FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

This kind of semantic variation of basic themes is a favorite Vietnamese Communist technique for introducing a hint of flexibility into hard-line, maximum public positions. In regard to the bombing halt, for instance, the North Vietnamese implied that an agreement in principle by the US to stop the bombing unconditionally would be sufficient to move them toward full negotiations. In fact, however, Hanoi demanded that the US set a specific date for ending the bombing and that the bombing actually end before Hanoi would move ahead into substantive talks with the GVN present.

In this regard, it should be noted that in his presentation on 3 April, Tran Buu Kiem also restated the hard-version of the Communist demand--"the key to the settlement of the present South Vietnam problem is that the United States must withdraw all its own and satellite troops from South Vietnam, without asking any condition whatsoever, and let the South Vietnam people settle themselves their internal affairs, in accordance with the political program of the Liberation Front without foreign interference." (Underlining added.)

Thus we regard the Communists' attitude as being inclined against opening private talks between the Front and the GVN, at least for the present. The Communists apparently still believe their best tactic is to stand firm for a while until they see whether domestic pressures within the US will force the administration's hand. At the same time, the Communists will continue to send



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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

out vague signals suggesting they are ready for bargaining on the key issues without in fact compromising their basic positions.

The Communists may be attempting to orchestrate the flexible phrasing of their public position with a slowdown in the pace of their military offensive in South Vietnam. Activity initiated by the enemy has remained at a sharply reduced level for more than a week. The pull-back of main force units continues in I and II Corps,

[redacted] 50X1

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SOVIET AFFAIRS

Recent satellite photography provides the first firm evidence that the "Shaddock" cruise missile launcher has been deployed near the Sino-Soviet border north of Manchuria. The Shaddock can deliver a nuclear warhead to a range of about 300 miles. This missile augments two other mobile missile systems that have been moved to the border as part of the general Soviet buildup of forces which has been going on there for several years.

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According to members of the Czechoslovak military mission in West Berlin, Warsaw Pact leaders have "confirmed" that there would be a reorganization of the

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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Pact to provide for increased command responsibilities for personnel from member states. They said that East German Defense Minister Heinz Hoffman, who is the logical choice for a high position because of his age and experience, has been in Moscow preparing for his new duties.

The Soviets presumably also consider Hoffman to be a logical candidate for any new job because he is likely to be more amenable to their direction than any of the other defense ministers. The continuing absence from public view of Bulgarian Defense Minister Dzhurov has led to speculation that he too may be in line for a new job, possibly as Hoffman's deputy.

In recent years, the Eastern European members of the Pact--particularly the Rumanians--have been pressing the Soviets for a share in the Pact's command structure. All the members will probably welcome any institutional change, but many of them probably will have doubts that any practical effects will flow from the appointment of such hard-line dogmatists as Hoffmann and Dzhurov.

EUROPE

On 27 March a daily news letter published by Georges Broussine, a Gaullist with an "in" to the Elysee Palace, contended that US relations with Europe "turned a page" following President Nixon's visit. The letter stated that the US now considers it has relations with the individual states of Europe, not with the continent as a whole. This letter

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

could be considered an indication that the French are playing a psychological warfare game, particularly with the Italians, Dutch, and British, attempting to frighten them by implying that Washington is preparing to abandon them in favor of improved bilateral relations with France. It conflicts, however, with another line taken by Paris, that the President's visit created a good atmosphere but that neither side changed its basic views on Europe.

MIDDLE EAST

The embassy in Tel Aviv has indications that Jewish emigration from the USSR to Israel has increased even more sharply than we had thought. An embassy source reports that 600 Jews emigrated in February alone. This is a higher rate than obtained before the June 1967 war.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

II. OTHER IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS

SOUTH AFRICA

South Africa, faced with a growing deficit in its balance of payments, sold over 75 tons of gold on the free market in Switzerland during the first quarter of this year. The selling price averaged about \$42 an ounce. Two-thirds of the sales took place last month when a flurry of demand for gold caused the price to rise sharply on the free market. Despite Pretoria's reluctance to sell gold in quantities which might drive the price down, we expect substantial new sales in the near future. South Africa's receipts from gold sales in the first quarter--about \$100 million--amounted to less than half its payments deficit.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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7 April 1969

(Morning)

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

I. MAJOR PROBLEMS

VIETNAM

President Thieu's special assistant, Nguyen Cao Thang, has been in Paris seeking to open secret talks with the North Vietnamese and Liberation Front delegations. Thang has told Mr. Habib of the US delegation that he has not yet made direct contact with the Communists but that an "intermediary" has carried his message to Ha Van Lau, an old friend of Thang's from the Viet Minh days. Thang claimed that the intermediary, whom he would not name to Habib, had told him that the North Vietnamese were checking with Hanoi about possible direct contact with Thang and that word would be forthcoming around 14 April.

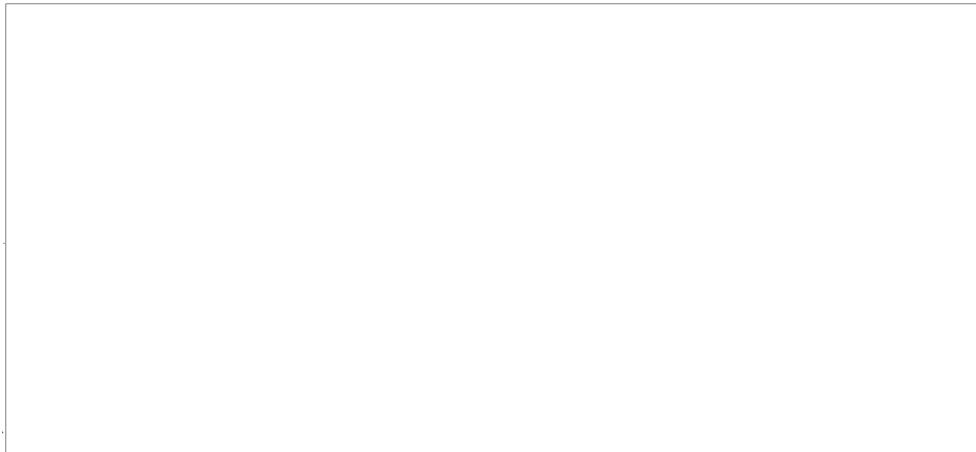
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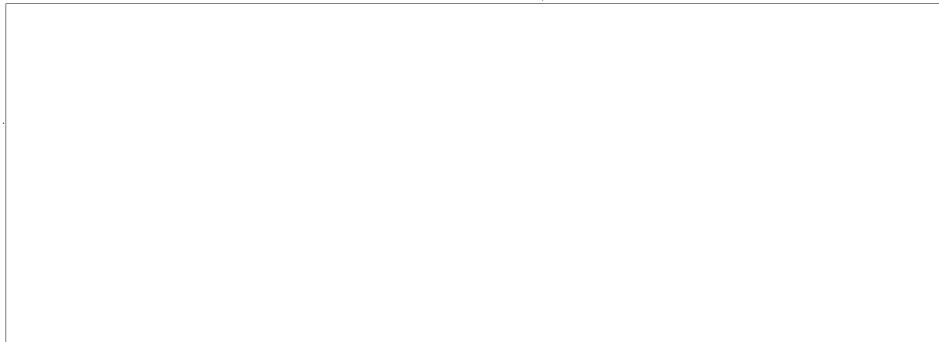
[redacted] the new director for Asian Affairs in the French Foreign Ministry told a US Embassy official that the Communists had informed the French that there was no point in holding private talks as long as the US insisted on dealing with military and political issues separately.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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Saigon has voiced no objections to the prospect of a US declaration recognizing Cambodia's borders, although South Vietnamese leaders hardly seem enthusiastic. Thieu offered no comment when Ambassador Berger notified him of the pending US action. Foreign Minister Thanh asked whether the US would issue a follow-up statement assuring that it was not supporting Cambodia in bilateral border disputes with its neighbors. Thanh also raised the Cambodian sanctuary problem. He agreed, however, that an improvement in US-Cambodian relations was one way of getting at the problem.

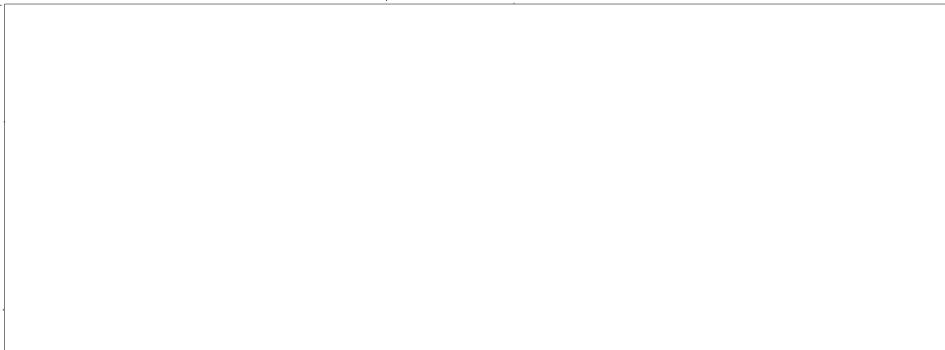
FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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In Laos, Prime Minister Souvanna Phouma has reacted to the US decision with equanimity. Thai leaders, who have been away from Bangkok, have not yet been informed.

MIDDLE EAST

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There is nothing of significance to report in Europe or the Soviet area.

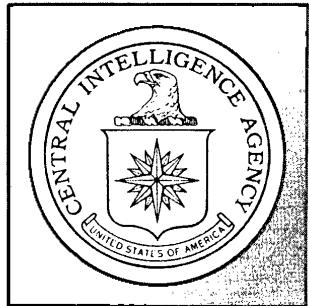
II. OTHER IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS

COMMUNIST CHINA

The Chinese have imposed a virtually complete news black-out on the ninth party congress. This is a sharp departure from the fanfare usually accorded such gatherings in China and other Communist countries. We assume that the congress has become the scene of heated debates which the leadership wants to conceal from the public.

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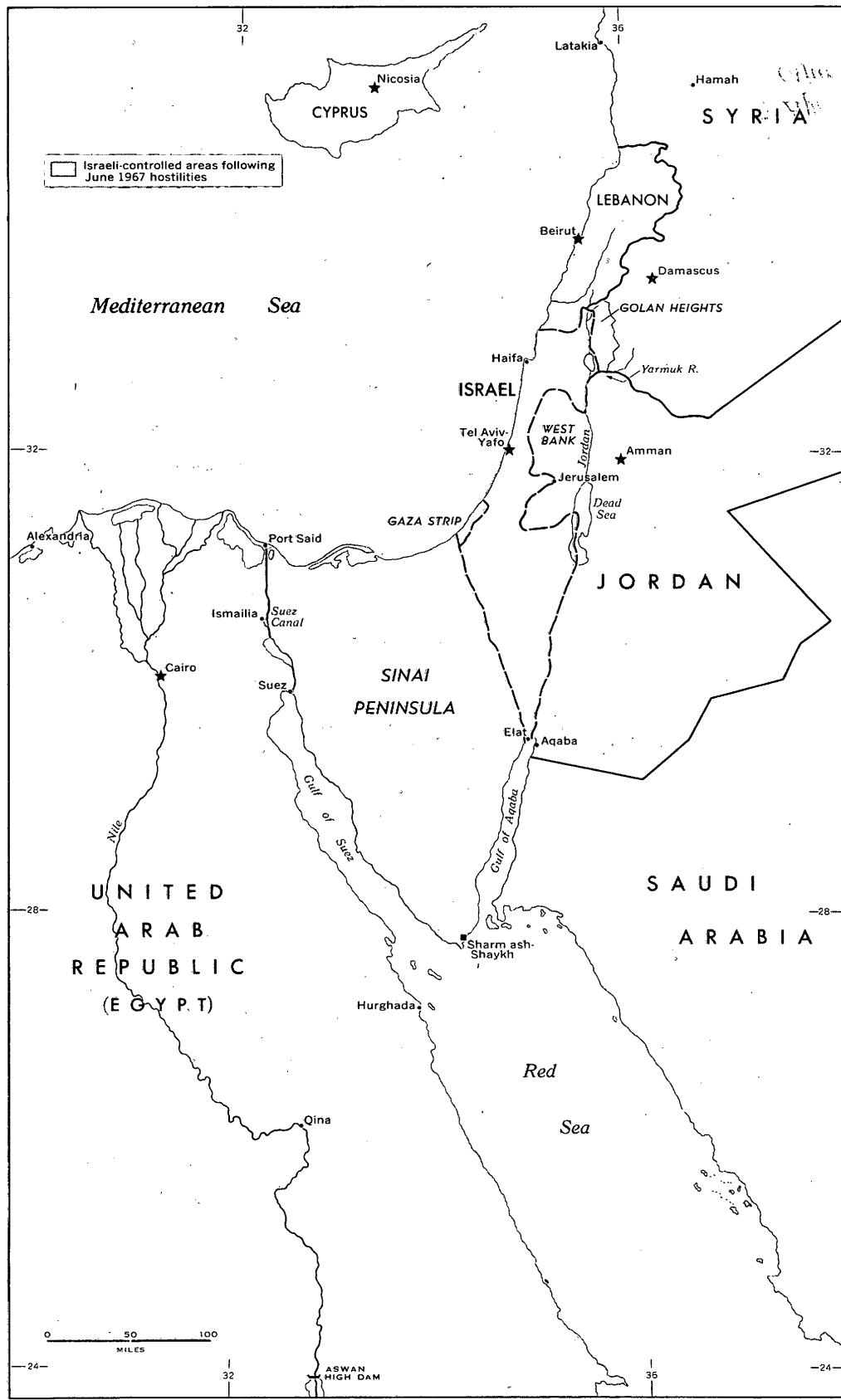
The President's Daily Brief

7 April 1969
(Afternoon)

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8 April 1969

LATE NOTES FOR THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF OF
7 APRIL 1969

I. MAJOR PROBLEMS

MIDDLE EAST

Fighting erupted today between Jordan and Israel as King Husayn arrives in Washington for an official visit. Jordanian rockets crashed into Eilat, an Israeli port on the Gulf of Aqaba, in predawn hours, plunging it into darkness and sending people rushing to air raid shelters. As a reprisal, Israeli jets struck the port of Aqaba at dawn and silenced the rocket positions, according to Israeli military spokesmen. It was the first Arab attack on Eilat this year and the heaviest ever on the town.

Another series of fire fights also began across the Suez Canal early this morning and the fighting was apparently still in progress at mid-day local time. (Press, FBIS,

[redacted] 8 Apr)

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VIETNAM

Enemy-initiated incidents as of noon local time today remained generally low throughout all areas. [redacted]

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[redacted]
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* * *

There is nothing significant to report on any other area.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

I. MAJOR PROBLEMS

MIDDLE EAST

Both Israel and Egypt seem to be getting ready for more fire fights across the Suez Canal.

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VIETNAM

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Although Thieu's "Six Points" statement of 7 April in the main offered a restatement of Saigon's existing policy of "national reconciliation" in exchange for Communist military withdrawal, it also subscribed to the more distant goal of reunification based on free elections under a system of international inspection and guarantees. This "peace platform" is a useful follow-on to his announcement of 25 March that his government is ready for private talks with the NLF, and it helps strengthen Saigon's public position that it is ready for serious negotiations.

Thieu's [redacted] initiatives suggest that he is genuinely more confident that he can deal successfully

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with the Communists in Paris and subsequently in post-settlement political competition. This is also apparent in his "exultation, bordering on euphoria" in a conversation with Ambassador Green on 4 April.

EUROPE

The appeal issued by the Warsaw Pact countries at their recent meeting in Budapest for a European security conference has revitalized West European interest in detente, with the Belgians and the Italians taking the lead. Some NATO members believe Soviet problems with China may influence Moscow to make genuine compromises in Europe; others think it would be poor politics to appear unresponsive even though some of them are skeptical that the Russians are in earnest. Most of the NATO foreign ministers apparently want an exchange of views on the subject at this week's ministerial meetings.

On the Soviet side, Ambassador Dobrynin mentioned Moscow's interest in the European security conference idea to Under Secretary Richardson last week. While we think that the Soviets are interested in turning Western European attention away from Czechoslovakia and toward detente, we doubt that they plan to make specific proposals for a meeting any time soon.

SOVIET AFFAIRS

Further modifications are under way in the Moscow ABM system. Recent satellite photography shows a new wing being added to one of the two large radar buildings at each

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of the four active complexes.

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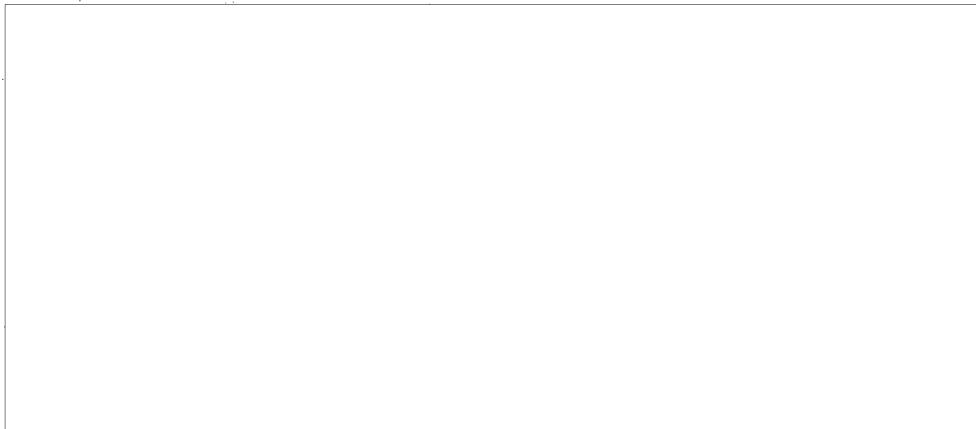
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In addition to the new construction, the photography shows a large number of missile cannisters at the ABM support facility near Moscow,

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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The situation in Prague and vicinity remained calm over the weekend and today, which is a holiday. The city was inundated with the usual Easter visitors from Western Europe, especially West Germany. Contrary to Western radio reports, our embassy did not observe any increase in Czech military patrols; the military continue to be mixed with police in small patrols. Two student peace marches on Sunday were apparently cancelled; political leaders had been trying to talk the students out of their plans on Saturday.

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II. OTHER IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS

RUMANIA - COMMUNIST CHINA

The Rumanians are keeping firmly to their long-standing policy of neutrality in the Sino-Soviet dispute. The press has not mentioned the Sino-Soviet border problem since 4 March; last week it published a relatively warm message from the Rumanian party central committee addressed to the Chinese party congress and its chairman "Comrade Mao Tsetung."

FINLAND

The Finnish Communist Party has been taken over by its liberal wing. At the Party congress which closed on Sunday the liberals, who had a majority of the delegates, were able to enact their version of the party program calling for a "peaceful transition to socialism" and a multiparty system.

A dispute over the selection of a new central committee precipitated a walkout by the conservatives; in their absence the liberals swept the more objectionable ones out of the leadership. The new 12-member politburo is weighted 9-3 in favor of the liberals. Party secretary Ville Pessi resigned after 25 years in office and was replaced by the relatively unknown Arvo Aalto.

Such a split could change the political balance in Finland, since the Communists usually control about 20 per cent of the vote and since 1966 have participated in the center-left coalition government.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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The Soviets, who were represented at the Congress by a high-level delegation, were chiefly concerned with preventing a split. Soviet party leaders Brezhnev and Suslov made this evident in talks with Finnish Party leaders in Moscow in late March. These talks probably led the Soviets to accept the inevitability of liberal gains. They are likely therefore to take a dim view of the conservative walk-out and will exert their influence to repair the split and bring the conservatives back.

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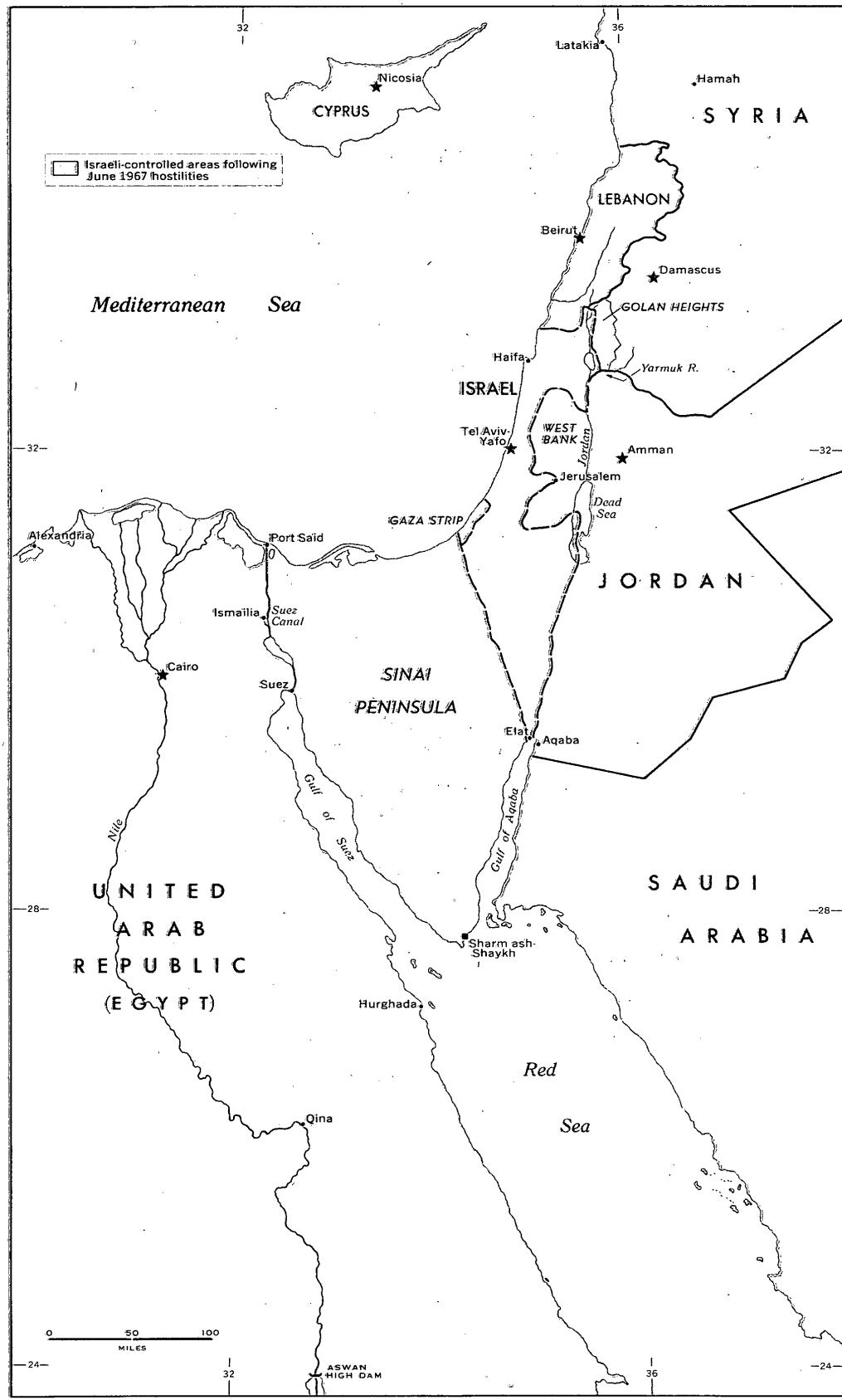


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8 April 1969

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9 April 1969

LATE NOTES FOR THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF OF
8 APRIL 1969

I. MAJOR PROBLEMS

MIDDLE EAST

President Hili has informed Ambassador Porter through an intermediary that the fedayeen presence in southern Lebanon has grown markedly over the past week. The influx was represented in large part by Syrian-supported units which were able to infiltrate more easily as melting snow made the terrain more accessible. Hili was increasingly concerned that new fedayeen raids may be mounted from Lebanese territory primarily into Israeli-occupied Syria. He urged the US to continue efforts to restrain Israel from reprisals that would only worsen the situation.

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* * *

Cairo says there was a second artillery duel across the Suez Canal late yesterday, lasting some ninety minutes. This followed the considerably longer fire fight that began Tuesday morning. A UN source in Jerusalem says the firing along the canal yesterday was "extremely heavy" and, contrary to the usual practice, the Israelis fired first. (AP, 9 Apr;

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There is nothing significant to report on Europe, Soviet Affairs, and Vietnam.

II. OTHER IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS

PERU

Velasco is extremely concerned over the lack of credits from foreign financial institutions resulting from uncertainties over US economic sanctions. In a meeting with US

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

officials he characterized the situation as "asphyxiation" for lack of credit and said that in effect the amendments were already being applied. He believes the government cannot take measures to deal with its problems so long as the talks with the US are going on and uncertainty about application of the amendments continues.

Leaders of various political parties have publicly castigated the US. Officials of minor parties of the far left, who visited Velasco on 7 April to express their support, called the deferral as prejudicial to Peru as actual application of sanctions would have been. The pro-US APRA has also published a call for "unified action in defense of national sovereignty...."

Several other Latin American leaders have expressed relief that the US has not applied the Hickenlooper Amendment.

A Peruvian Communist youth group is to join other "anti-imperialist" organizations in a protest march today, according to a Lima newspaper. Other such demonstrations had been planned in other Peruvian cities prior to the announcement that sanctions had been deferred, and there is no information that these have been canceled. (Central Intelligence Bulletin, 9 Apr)

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

I. MAJOR PROBLEMS

MIDDLE EAST

Egyptian presidential adviser Fawzi, feeling perhaps that he had seemed unforthcoming in his previous exchanges with US officials, told Ambassador Yost Monday that he was willing to make a public as well as a private affirmation of Egypt's desire for peace. This breaks new ground for the Egyptians, but they will have to think long and hard before actually making a public declaration on the subject. Moreover, what they finally say will probably fall short of an outright declaration of peaceful intent toward Israel. We suspect the Egyptians will want to be assured of some major Israeli quid pro quo before taking such a step.

* * *

At Annex today we discuss the problems facing Nasir in the search for a Middle East settlement.

* * *

This morning's exchange around Aqaba and Eilat resulted from a temporary breakdown of the unwritten agreement between the Israelis and the Jordanians to keep the lid on in this touchy area. Perhaps because Husayn is out of the country, the Jordanians failed to pass the word to Tel Aviv that they were taking action against the terrorists responsible for the rocketing of Eilat. The Israelis retaliated more quickly than in the past,

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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launching a short, sharp air attack which was clearly designed to remind the Jordanians of their obligations under the agreement and to keep Tel Aviv's "active defense" policy fresh in Jordanian minds. The almost instantaneous retaliation implicit in "active defense," in fact, is going to make such understandings as that for Aqaba and Eilat increasingly fragile.

EUROPE

Foreign Minister Debré's Directeur du Cabinet Haberer, in a recent "clarification" of De Gaulle's thinking on Europe, stressed that the General's statements to Ambassador Soames, Chancellor Kiesinger, and President Nixon represented his "long-range thinking," and not a "plan which would be unveiled 'as a whole' in the near future." According to Haberer:

--France is basically satisfied with the present situation in the Common Market but is ready to enter into the "long negotiations" necessary to set up a "satisfactory substitute" if the Five wish.

--De Gaulle is increasingly suspicious of Britain in the wake of the Soames affair and remains opposed to British entry.

--In the longer run, however, if London mends its ways and stops "undermining France," it might be brought into closer political and defense arrangements with France.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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--De Gaulle believes French security is most threatened by the possibility that Bonn will acquire nuclear weapons and become more assertive about unification-- a possibility which necessitates the continued presence of US forces in Europe.

--The era of Franco-Soviet cooperation is at an end because of Czechoslovakia.

Much of the above reflects De Gaulle's views fairly accurately, but Haberer's comments on the Common Market are misleading. De Gaulle has long desired a substitute for the present structure which would be larger, less binding, and uncommitted to supranational goals. In effect, he is giving the Five a choice: accept the Common Market at its present level of integration or continue to press for British entry with the danger that France will then try to erect the kind of European grouping which it wants and the others oppose.

Moreover, it is an exaggeration to say that Franco-Soviet cooperation is at an end, although [redacted] 50X1
[redacted] scientific and technical cooperation 50X1
has been severely limited. Despite Czechoslovakia, De Gaulle probably still sees benefits in a special relationship with Moscow. He has always been aware of the inherent limits in cooperation but has had solid political motives for pursuing such a course. His present "rapprochement" with the US might be intended in part to warn the Soviets that he has other options available.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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Haberer, in implying that he was explaining "new elements" in De Gaulle's policy, overstated the case. His interpretation makes no allowance for the kind of tactical shift for which De Gaulle is famous. Also, experience has taught us to be wary when French officials purport to explain what De Gaulle thinks or intends.

SOVIET AFFAIRS

Gromyko told Ambassador Beam yesterday that the USSR would face an "intolerable" situation if it ratified the nonproliferation treaty and West Germany did not. In response to the suggestion that Moscow and Washington synchronize the formal exchange of their instruments of ratification, as in the case of the limited test ban and outer space treaties, Gromyko said that Moscow was undecided on when to act. Beam thought Gromyko saw some merit in the argument that joint US-Soviet action would serve as a prod to the West Germans, but Gromyko gave the impression that the Kremlin had taken a preliminary stand against ratifying before Bonn signs.

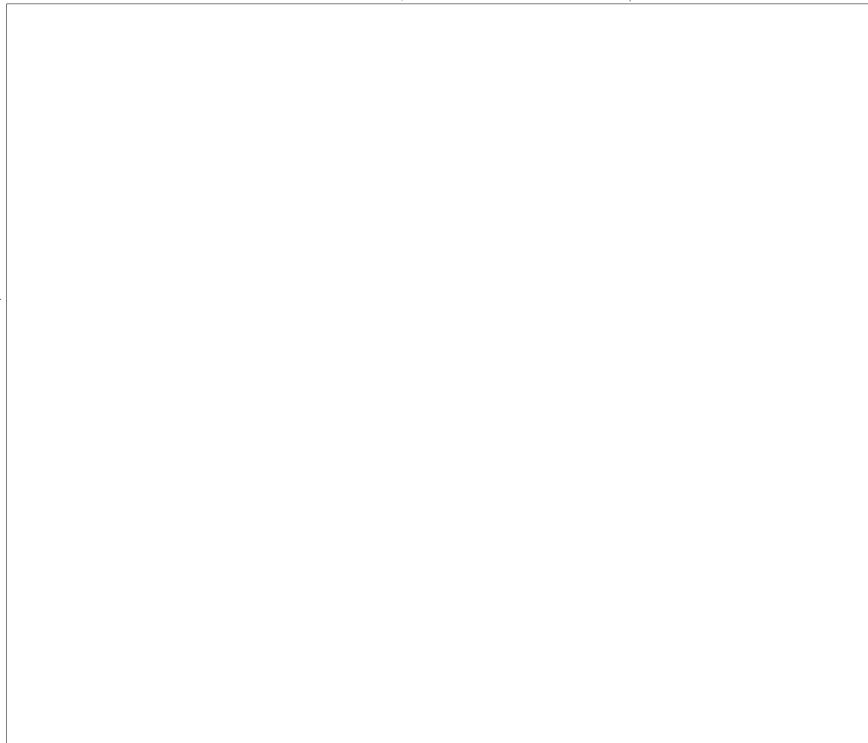
Gromyko complained that Bonn's position was "far from clear," and that its foot-dragging was responsible for Moscow's indecision. Uncertainty about Bonn's intentions is indeed a chief sticking point for Moscow; Gromyko clearly wants us to apply pressure.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

VIETNAM

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II. OTHER IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS

There is nothing significant to report.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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NASIR'S PROBLEMS IN APPROACHING A SETTLEMENT

Nasir seems to be genuinely interested in a political solution to the impasse in the Middle East if, as he puts it, he can do so "with honor." He doubts, however, that one can be achieved. To him, a political settlement means primarily Israel's withdrawal from the Egyptian territory it occupies. Nasir realizes that he is now unable to eject the Israelis forcibly from the occupied territories and he thinks it will be some time before he is strong enough to do so. He knows that another large-scale military defeat probably would spell the end of his regime and so proceeds cautiously. He also knows that the large powers will not allow the Arabs to "drive Israel into the sea," even if the Arabs had the capability. On the other hand, he clearly does not want to go down in history as the Arab leader who "sold out to Israel." Cairo's goals therefore are limited, confined for the moment to obtaining Israeli withdrawal from Arab territory. His ultimate intentions toward Israel remain obscure.

Nasir's need for some movement in the situation, however, is clear. Domestic pressures on him are mounting as many Egyptians become more and more impatient with the no war, no peace situation. The vocal student elements who launched demonstrations in November 1968 among other things decried their governments's use of force against them and not Israel; they are likely to become more impatient as the impasse continues. Elements in the armed forces too are unhappy with inaction. As they forget the harshness of their defeat and regain confidence through extensive rearmament and training, some will probably

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

press harder for an opportunity to utilize their new skills against the Israeli forces in the Sinai. Nasir will find it increasingly difficult to ignore their demands for action.

There are those in Egypt, however, who are tired of the smoldering conflict with Israel which has flared periodically over the past 20 years. They would like the attention and resources that have been dissipated on foreign adventures turned to Egypt's domestic problems. Their voices are not loud, and Nasir must still take care to avoid an overly conciliatory position toward the problem of Israel, or he will risk mass outcries that might threaten his political position at home.

In addition to domestic pressures, attitudes within the Arab world also affect Nasir's position on a Middle East settlement. These too compel him to move with caution as he searches for a political settlement. On the one hand, Nasir must not provoke attacks from the vocally militant Arab states like Algeria and Syria lest he lose his hold on popular emotions. On the other, he must take into account the sensitivities of the conservative Arab nations of Libya, Kuwait, and Saudi Arabia, lest he lose some \$250 million in annual subsidies which these nations provide Egypt to compensate for the closure of the Suez Canal. Although the Egyptians might be tempted to work out a settlement that ignored Jordan's interests in the settlement process, they are not willing to face the inevitable charges that Nasir was selling out his Arab brother Husayn, and abandoning Muslim interests in Jerusalem.

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

The Arab terrorist movement represents a new and most serious challenge to Nasir's position in the Arab world, and one he may not be able to overcome. The terrorists have caught the imagination of an Arab public hungry for retribution following the humiliating defeats Israel has handed the Arabs. They have become a movement to be reckoned with by the Arab governments, and a leading symbol of Arab nationalism as Nasir's prestige has waned. He would like to undercut the terrorists' recent rise in popularity but cannot; instead he has talked of a fedayeen organization of his own in the Sinai, and has attempted to gain some influence over the larger well-established groups. One of the few options open to him is to try to arrange a political settlement and hope that it would undermine the fedayeen's raison d'etre and bring a sharp decline in the extensive support they are receiving. But here too there are doubts and problems.

Arab and Israeli positions will probably shift somewhat if the settlement process intensifies. But the great distance between the positions of the opposing parties on the terms, and their mutual distrust suggest that an agreed settlement remains a remote possibility. Israel ultimately requires direct negotiations and contractually binding peace treaties with the Arabs, two concepts which are anathema to the Arabs. The Egyptians will probably continue to regard as virtually impossible Israel's insistence on the stationing of its own troops at the Strait of Tiran to ensure continued free passage of Israeli ships into the Gulf of Aqaba. Egypt would accept the repositioning of UN troops there but Israel has no confidence in or respect for the safeguards

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

such a UN contingent might provide. Egypt will also find it extremely difficult to agree to Israel's demand for the complete demilitarization of the Sinai peninsula after a withdrawal.

Besides sharp substantive differences, Egypt and Israel are at odds on the form of the final settlement and will probably remain so. Israel insists that any settlement must be freely and independently arrived at by the parties concerned. Egypt, even though it has publicly decried an imposed solution, actually seems to feel that a settlement must give the appearance of having been forced on it in order to placate those critical of any Arab dealings with Israel. Cairo also believes that only external pressure can bring the Israelis to offer terms acceptable to the Arabs. The problem of the Arab terrorists poses yet another obstacle in the way of a workable settlement. Israel will require a guarantee that any settlement include an end to terrorism. Given the growing strength and popularity of the movement, it is extremely doubtful that any Arab state or combination of Arab states would be able to satisfy Israeli demands on this issue if the terrorists wished to carry on.

Egypt will almost certainly be forced to alter its stated position on the terms it could accept for a settlement, especially if new dimensions to the crisis develop (for instance, if the Egyptians become convinced that Israel had developed a nuclear weapon). Cairo's decision makers themselves have almost certainly not thought through what the final Egyptian position might be. Nasir has an abiding fear that any action,

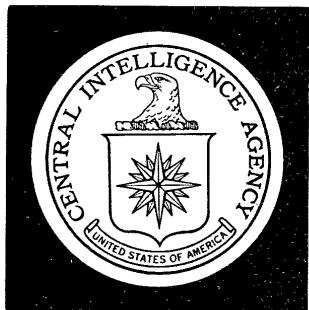
FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

any concession on his part will be used against him by his domestic and foreign enemies. This in turn induces him to postpone difficult decisions and then to make them hastily in light of what he sees as the immediate tactical situation.

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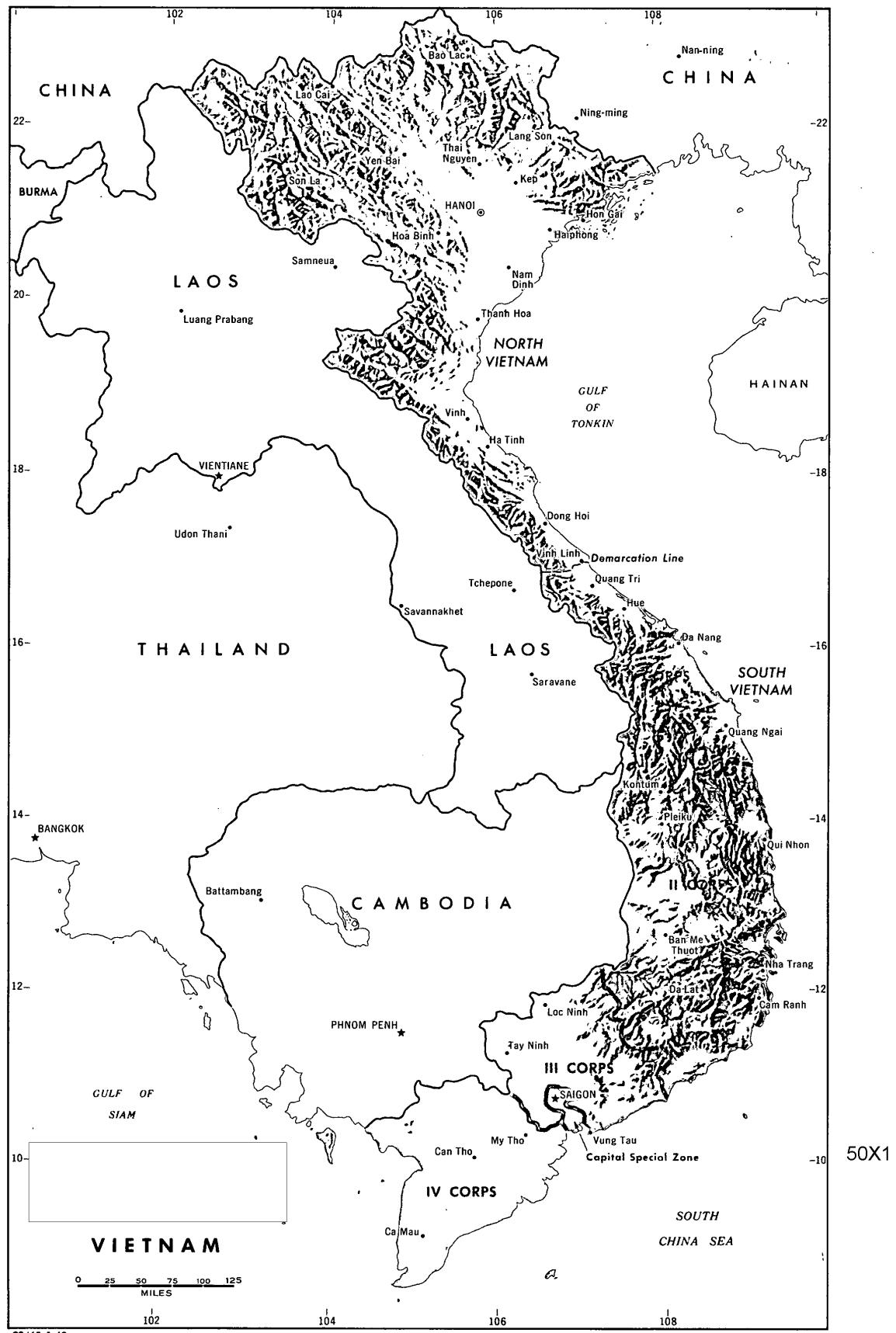


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10 April 1969

LATE NOTES FOR THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF OF
9 APRIL 1969

I. MAJOR PROBLEMS

SOVIET AFFAIRS

Students in Prague intend to strike soon over the recent restrictions on the press, and they are trying to drum up support in the trade unions. The Dubcek leadership is trying to calm the situation, but its influence with the students has declined in the wake of its recent efforts to meet Soviet requirements for "normalization."

The leadership is also worried about discipline and morale in the Czechoslovak armed forces, in part because the Soviets have expressed concern on the subject. President Svoboda has visited four military posts in the last week.

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* * *

There is nothing significant to report in the Middle East, Europe, or Vietnam.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

II. OTHER IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS

CANADA - COMMUNIST CHINA

Peking has agreed to "full-scale negotiations" with Canada about recognition, according to press reporting from Ottawa.

[redacted] 50X1

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NIGERIA

Another 500 tons of arms for Biafra [redacted]

[redacted] 50X1

[redacted] are to arrive in Gabon by ship next

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week, [redacted]

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

I. MAJOR PROBLEMS

VIETNAM

The Communists appear to be off balance as a result of recent South Vietnamese initiatives on the peace issue, particularly President Thieu's statement to the National Assembly on 7 April. Communist responses continue to be highly defensive and notable for their failure to provide straight answers to direct questions about whether they are rejecting Saigon's proposals or refusing categorically to negotiate with GVN authorities under any circumstances.

This ambiguity was particularly evident in the Liberation Front's "special" news conference held in Paris yesterday. It was a highly inept affair and left newsmen puzzling over why it was called at all. The Front spokesman claimed he "had something to say," but his responses to questions about recent South Vietnamese statements consisted solely of tired clichés and epithets.

In view of the care the Vietnamese Communists normally take in expressing their positions, their failure specifically to reject Thieu's offer is significant. That the Communists are not closing the door on further contacts, and eventually even negotiations, with GVN representatives appears obvious. Indeed their ambiguous and clumsy responses may be intended to give this impression. In our view, however, their reactions so far seem to reflect mainly the difficulties they are

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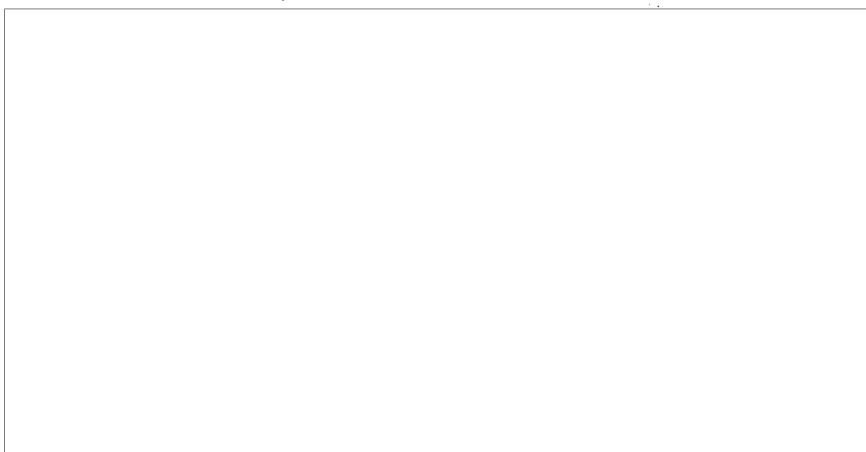
FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

having in coming to grips with Saigon's more confident and forthcoming stance concerning a future political settlement.

We still think the Communists will not soon respond positively to South Vietnamese feelers for private contacts. They probably calculate that given enough time, the US desire for progress in Paris will prompt Washington to take new initiatives to set up private talks in the kind of four-way format they seem to want.

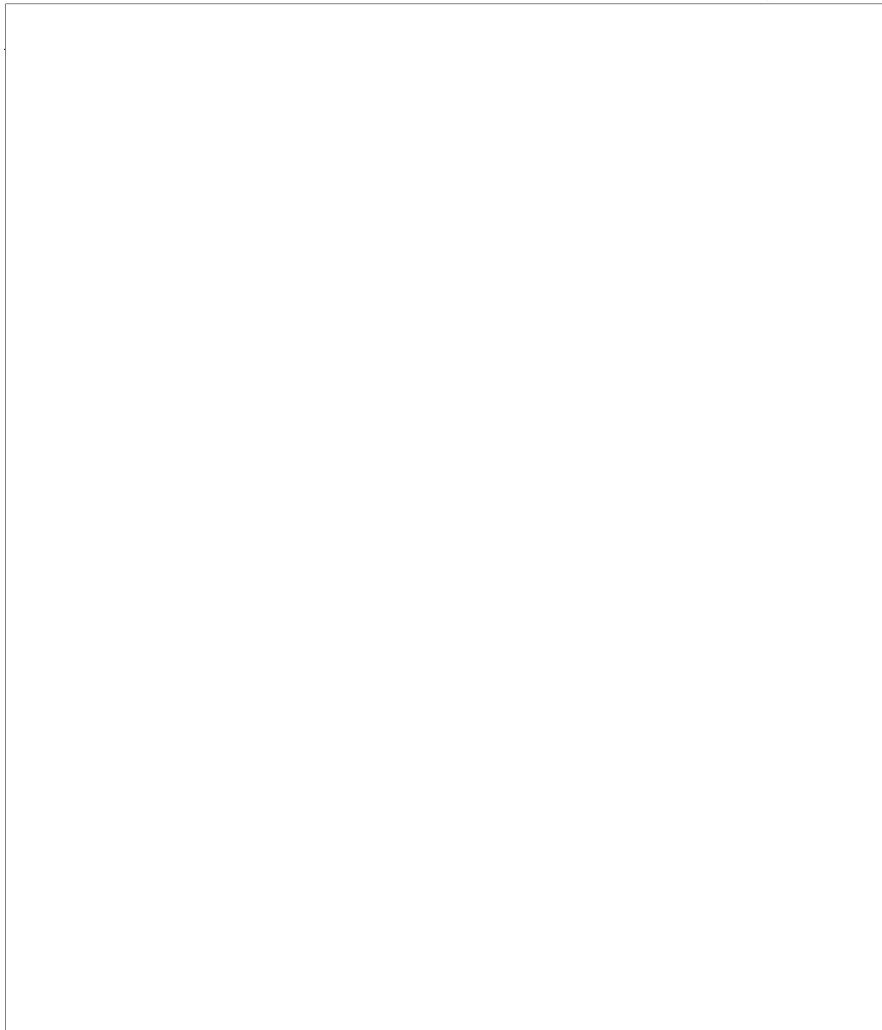
Although we do not expect the Communists to agree to private meetings with the GVN at this point, we would not rule out some overtures from the French or Soviets on behalf of the Vietnamese Communists aimed at breaking the ice in Paris. Hanoi may well consider the post-offensive period a suitable time for such an indirect initiative. It might, for example, take the form of another Soviet "we-have-reason-to-believe" statement suggesting the direction in which we should move next if we want to see negotiations move ahead.

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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EUROPE

[redacted]
[redacted] international agreement on plac-
ing voluntary limits on certain textile exports [redacted]
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Bonn has confirmed to a US Embassy off-

ficial Germany's dislike for such an agreement, although

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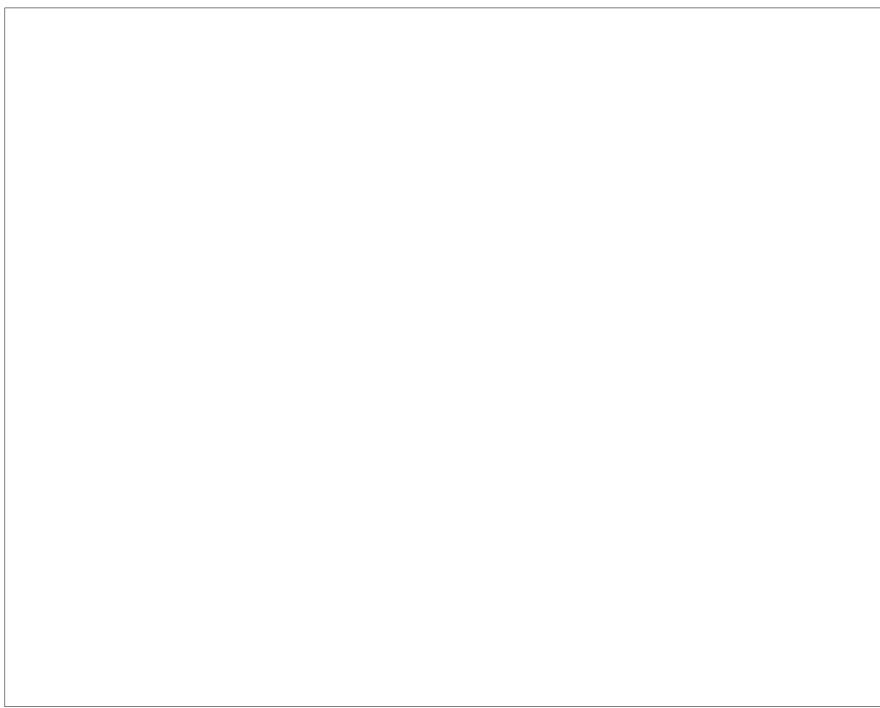
FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

he said the Germans would listen to the US case. The officials of the Community are setting up their positions because they expect Secretary Stans to bring up the question on his forthcoming European trip.

Apart from the textiles issue, the Europeans welcome the Stans visit as an opportunity to discuss protectionist trends on both sides of the Atlantic, and the Community countries may be interested in setting up some kind of new machinery to resolve trade issues between the US and the Common Market.

SOVIET AFFAIRS

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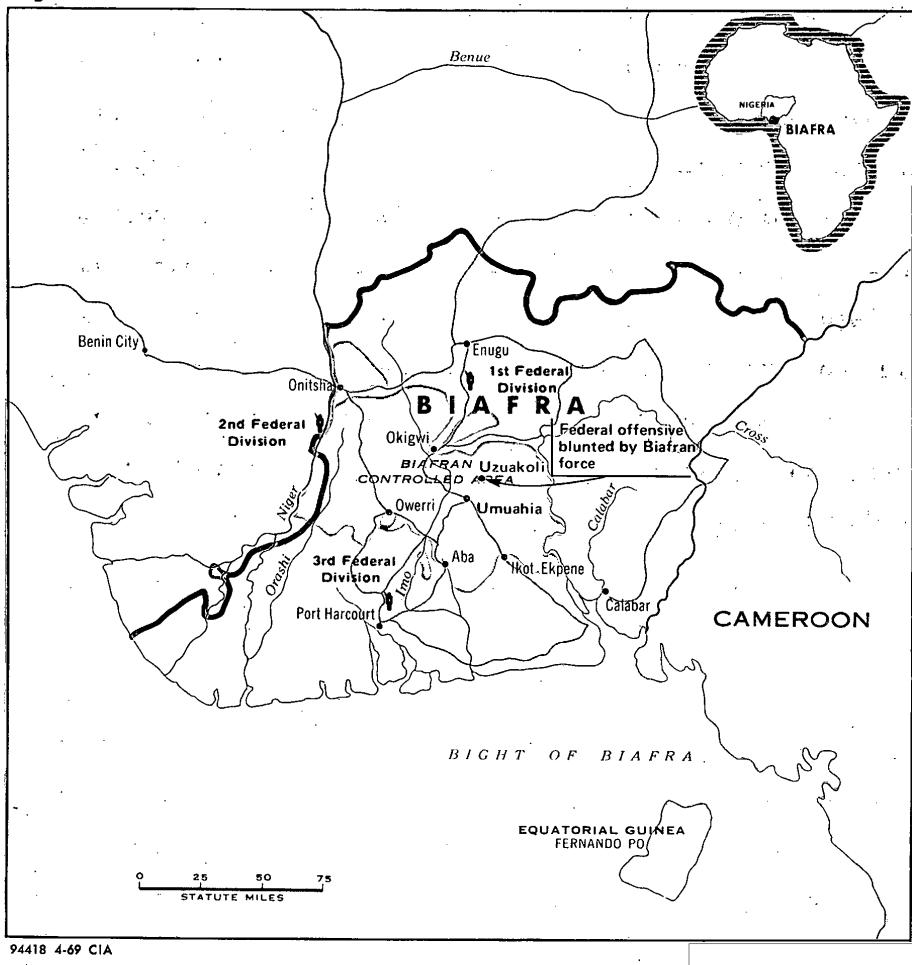


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There is nothing significant to report.

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NIGERIA

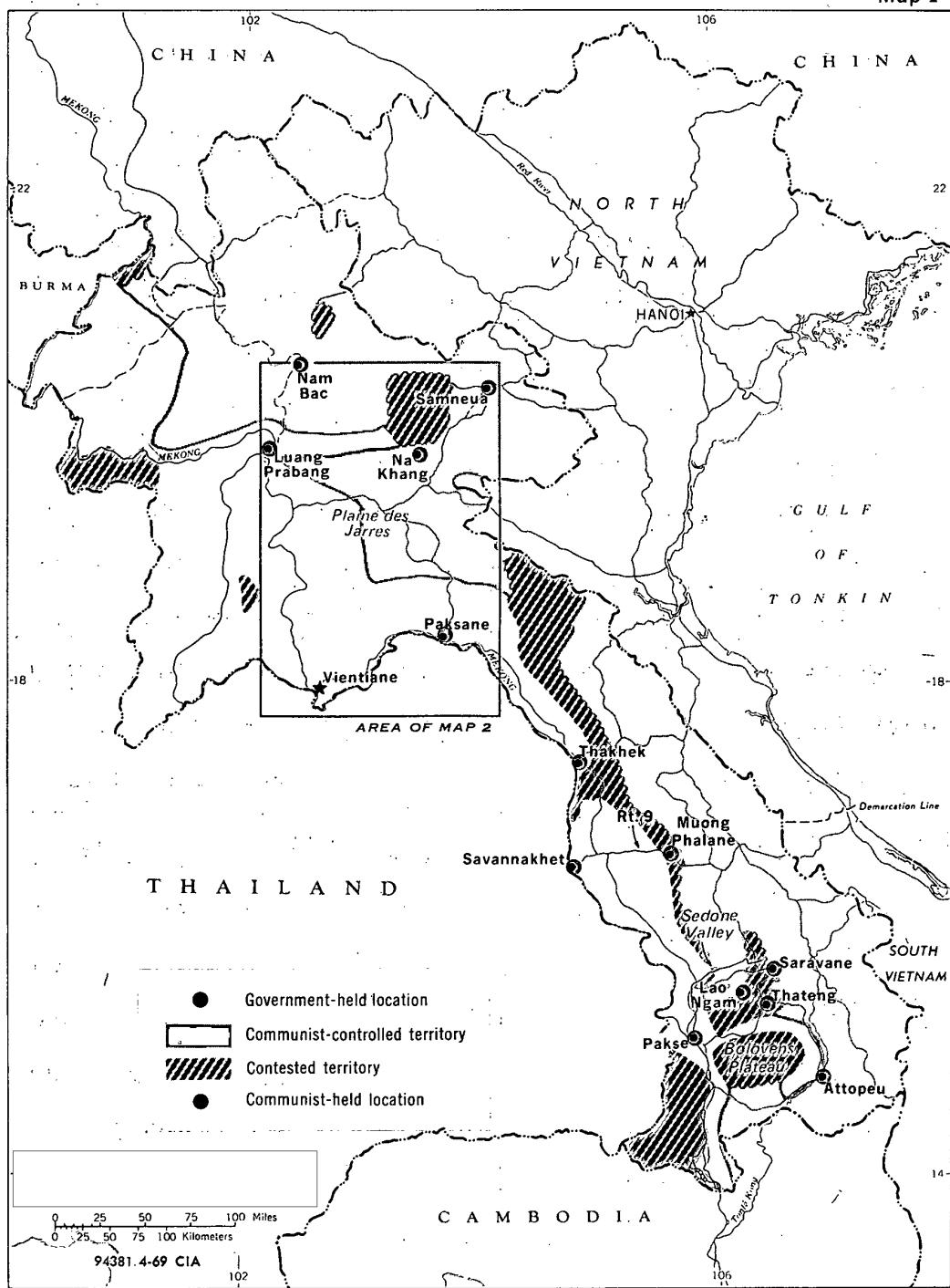
Federal spokesmen have been claiming their forces are getting close to Ojukwu's capital at Umuahia, but Biafran military intercepts indicate that the federal drive has in fact been blunted. Biafran forces apparently still occupy the key junction of Uzuakoli and are counterattacking a few miles north of the town. Nor is the federal offensive producing any gains elsewhere on the Biafran perimeter.

Lagos apparently genuinely believes the Biafrans have lost Uzuakoli--it has invited a group of foreign correspondents to visit the town--and the disappointment when the truth comes out will add to the undercurrent of unhappiness with Gowon's government. (MAP)

LAOS

At Annex we discuss the Communist military threat and the role of Laos in Hanoi's over-all negotiating strategy.

Map 1



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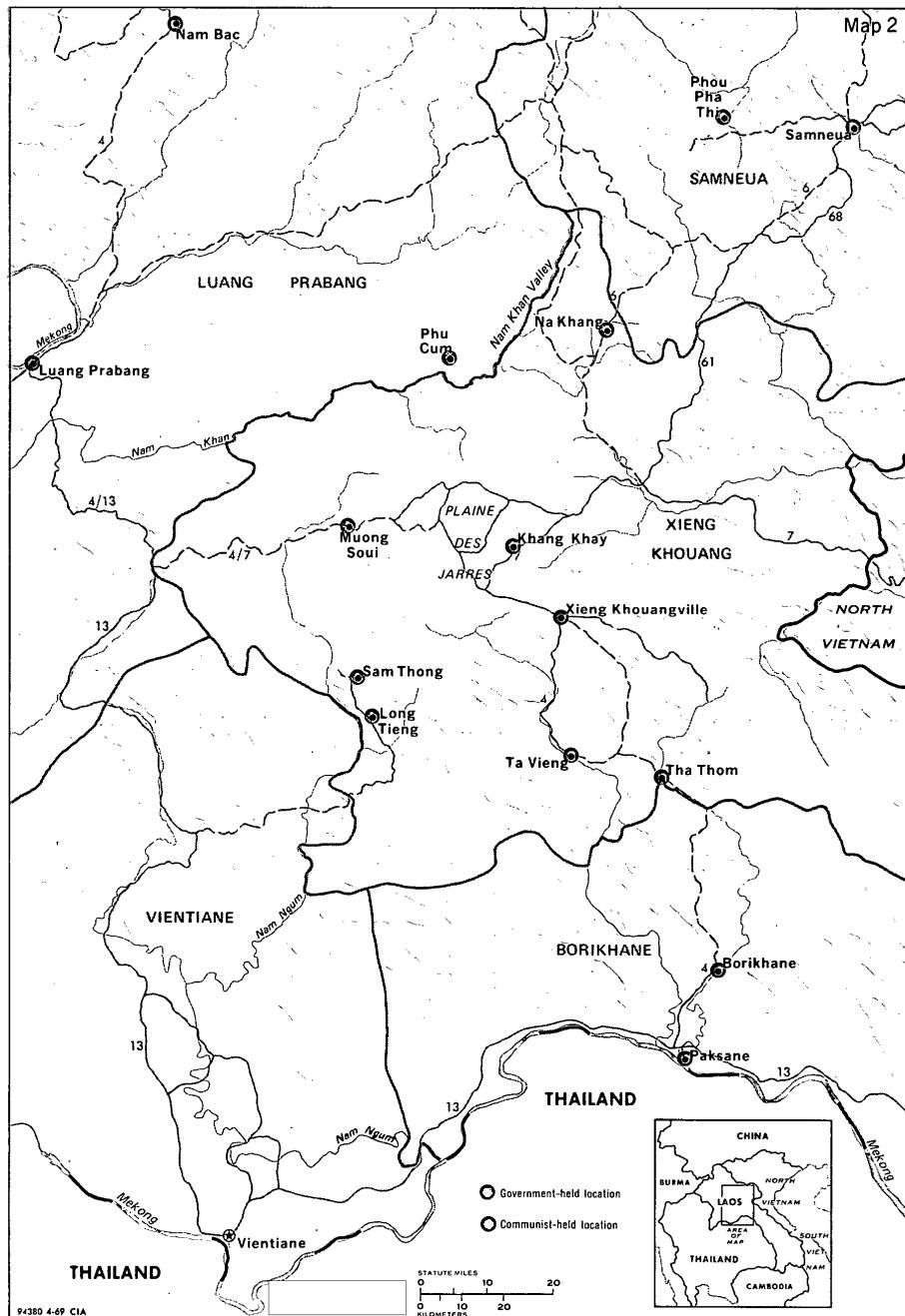
THE CURRENT COMMUNIST THREAT IN LAOS

Recent fighting in Laos has once again surfaced the specter of a Communist military victory there and has raised questions about North Vietnamese aims in that country. The North Vietnamese position is that the problem of Laos will have to be settled apart from the talks on Vietnam. We might expect the Communists to take as much additional territory as possible prior to reopening talks on Laos. On close inspection, however, it seems reasonably clear that the current offensive has only limited objectives and probably does not presage an impending Communist call for renewed negotiations.

By most objective criteria, the dry season offensive mounted by North Vietnamese and Pathet Lao forces this year has been notably restrained. Except for some not unexpected--although still dangerous--inroads in the north, the Communists have gained no substantial new territory, brought no great numbers of new people under their control, captured no important political or population centers, nor otherwise significantly improved their tactical or strategic position in the countryside. This year's dry season operations, at least through the first week of April, have been carefully modulated, unadventuresome, and essentially defensive in nature.

A comparison with last year's dry season offensive might help put the current situation in sharper relief. Last year at Nam Bac, the enemy dealt government forces the worst defeat of the war, putting out of action close

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY



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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

to 3,000 troops, capturing vast stocks of arms and ammunition, burying government pretensions in north-central and northwest Laos, and, finally, precipitating a crisis of confidence in Vientiane that has not yet run its course.

In the northeast, where much of the enemy's activities have been centered this year, the Communists captured the guerrilla base at Phou Pha Thi, demonstrating the vulnerability of any government position no matter how "impregnable," [redacted]

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By early March, government guerrillas in Samneua and Xieng Khouang provinces were in full retreat, an attack against Na Khang [redacted] was thought to be imminent [redacted]

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[redacted] and nothing--or so it seemed at the time--stood in the way of a clean Communist sweep.

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Farther south, the Communists pushed government forces out of Ta Vieng and Tha Thom and moved downward along Route 4, harassing the provincial capital of Borikhane and raising a new threat to the Mekong River town of Paksane. To the east, the enemy moved against a number of guerrilla bases defending the approaches to Meo leader Vang Pao's headquarters at Sam Thong. In the pan-handle, North Vietnamese troops moved out of the infiltration corridor and captured, for the first time, the town of Muong Phalane situated on Route 9. More importantly, fresh North Vietnamese battalions surrounded the provincial capitals of Saravane and Attopeu, pushed the government out of the rice-rich Sedone Valley, attacked

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and eventually occupied Lao Ngam, and all but sealed off the strategic Bolovens Plateau. To do their work, the Communists are estimated to have brought in as many as 12 additional battalions from North Vietnam.

In contrast to last year's formidable roll call, the Communists this year have captured only one major government base--Na Khang--and have brought heavy pressure to bear on only one strategic government position--Thateng! They also have increased harassing attacks against irregular forces in northwest Laos, and have taken a number of preliminary steps to move back into Vientiane Province, from which they were driven several years ago. But on the whole the Communists' drive has fallen considerably short of last year's threshold. There is, in short, not only sufficient reason to query why the Communists have not pursued last year's gains with more vigor, but also reason to question whether there has actually been a full "offensive" this year.

What, then, is the basis of the alarmist statements that have been made by government leaders in Vientiane, the sense of foreboding that engulfs the capital? In part, the situation reflects disappointment that the Paris talks have not made more progress and that the end of the fighting in Laos, after all of these years of conflict, is still not in sight. Deep down the answer lies in the Laotian psychology--the expectation that each Communist blow may be the beginning of the end.

The fact remains, nevertheless, that the North Vietnamese could, with assets already on hand and with little

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

or no warning, move to the Mekong, overrun major political and population centers and, in short order, bring Souvanna Phouma's government to heel. That North Vietnam has refrained from moving in this direction over the past seven years is a reflection of the fact that as long as portions of Laotian territory contiguous to Vietnam are in Communist hands, and as long as the struggle for South Vietnam continues, what happens in Laos is of secondary importance.

Hanoi has been reluctant to press for a military solution in Laos, in part because it cannot predict what the US response might be, and in part because a military move that seriously jeopardized Souvanna's government would of necessity also be of such a character as to appear to the world to be a clear case of aggression against a "neutral" country. A move of that nature in Laos would tend to undermine Hanoi's political posture in the South Vietnam struggle and would probably alienate some of the international sympathy and support that the Communists clearly covet.

Despite these limitations on its freedom of action, North Vietnam plays from an extremely strong hand in Laos, and is in a position to up the ante anytime it chooses. If the Communists want to precipitate a full-blown crisis in Laos--either with the intention of pushing Souvanna into an unfavorable settlement or of exercising some leverage on the US in Paris--there are a number of pressure points where they can do so at

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relatively little military cost. It would probably take a dramatic turn of events in South Vietnam to force the Communists' hand, but Hanoi retains the option of playing its trump cards in Laos whenever it sees fit.

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

Top Secret



The President's Daily Brief

10 April 1969

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11 April 1969

LATE NOTES FOR THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF OF
10 APRIL 1969

I. MAJOR PROBLEMS

VIETNAM

Hardest hit in last night's round of intensified Communist shellings were Tay Ninh City and the delta town of Vinh Long. In Vinh Long, 25 rounds of 82-mm. mortar fire fell, killing 15 and wounding 98. Just northeast of Tay Ninh, allied military compounds received eight rounds of 82-mm. mortar fire and two 107-mm. rockets. Secondary explosions from ammunition dumps hit during the brief attack contributed to an impression that considerably more rounds of enemy fire landed than was actually the case. [redacted]

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EUROPE

Widespread indifference as reflected in recent polls to the referendum scheduled for 27 April was probably behind De Gaulle's threat to resign in his recent taped interview. Despite an intensified government publicity campaign, the most recent poll showed 52 percent either had no opinion or have not yet decided how they will vote. Only 25 percent said they intended to vote yes, while 23 percent plan to vote no. The poll also

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

indicated that most of those who had decided how to vote were more interested in registering their opinion on De Gaulle's leadership than on the merits of regional and senatorial reforms.

The General probably thought it was a safe bet to try to turn the referendum into another confidence vote in his leadership since the same polls showed 54 percent satisfied with his performance as President as opposed to 34 percent who were dissatisfied. (Central Intelligence Bulletin, 11 Apr)

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There is nothing significant to report in other areas.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

I. MAJOR PROBLEMS

VIETNAM

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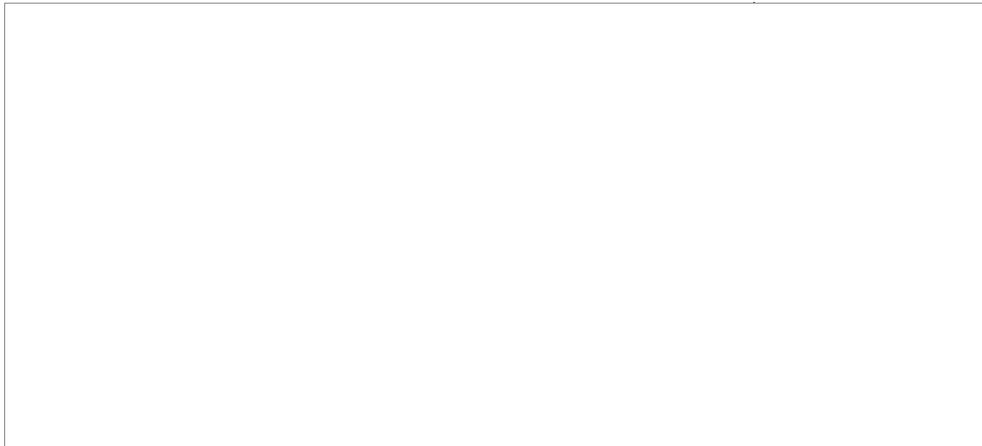


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EUROPE

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MIDDLE EAST

We see little significant movement in Israeli UN delegate Tekoah's assertion yesterday that the substance rather than the label was what mattered in any contractual arrangement between the Israelis and the Arabs. Tekoah was implying that perhaps the term "peace treaty" could be avoided, but we think the Arabs would regard Tekoah's formulation as a distinction without a difference.

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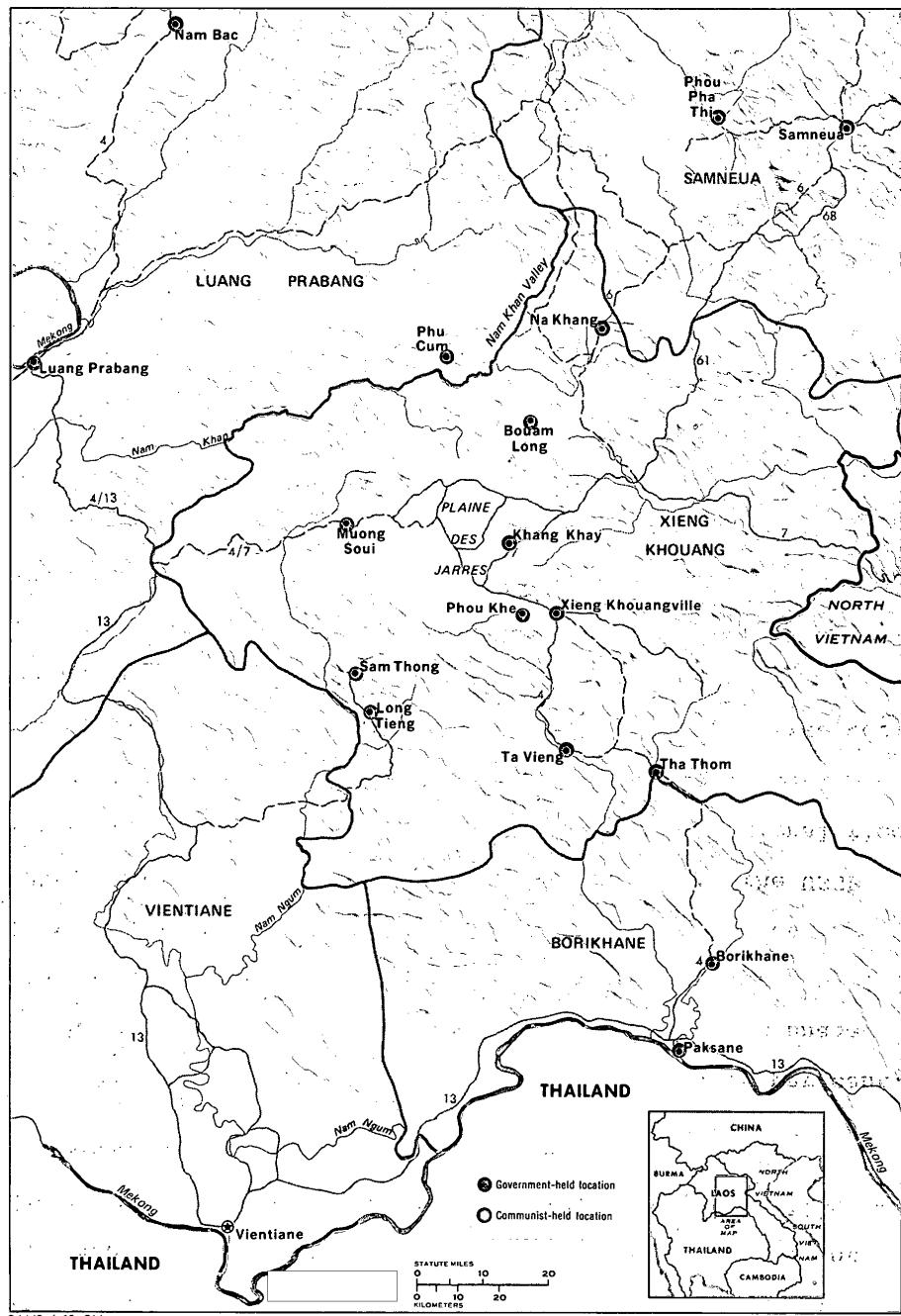
SOVIET AFFAIRS

Soviet Merchant Marine Minister Bakayev recently said that Moscow's merchant fleet would grow by more than fifty per cent during the years 1970-75. At present the Soviet fleet includes some 1,200 ships, totaling 10-1/2 million deadweight tons.

While the Soviet fleet may increase by fifty per cent, we think it unlikely that Moscow will achieve its tonnage goal of 13 million deadweight tons by the end of the current Five-Year Plan in 1970, and 17 million deadweight tons by 1975. Even if the 1975 Plan goal were achieved, the USSR would move no higher than fifth in the rank of national fleets (it is now seventh). At any rate, the continued expansion of the Soviet fleet does not pose a serious threat to free world shipping.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

LAOS: Current Situation



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II. OTHER IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS

LAOS

Government troops in the northeast have recently moved into positions just south of Route 4 and are now interdicting Communist troop and supply convoys moving south of Xieng Khouangville. Reinforcements have also been brought into Phou Khe, captured by the government two weeks ago, and an effort is under way to drive the enemy from positions to the south. The ease with which the operation has progressed has greatly improved the morale of General Vang Pao's forces.

The absence of a sharp enemy response to these moves--probably in part a result of the intensive air campaign mounted against the Plaine des Jarres--may be short-lived. Intercepts indicate that a North Vietnamese battalion is preparing to move against Phou Khe. Moreover, government troops preparing to attack southwestern portions of the Plaine are likely to encounter stiff resistance because of the large concentration of Communist forces in that area.

Government harassing operations south of the Plaine have not appreciably eased enemy pressure to the north. Communist forces have probed the government's newly reoccupied base at Phu Cum and have continued to shell government troops at Bouam Long. No major enemy push has developed so far.

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In southern Laos, the government has moved fresh troops
and supplies onto a high point overlooking the recently
abandoned Thateng base.

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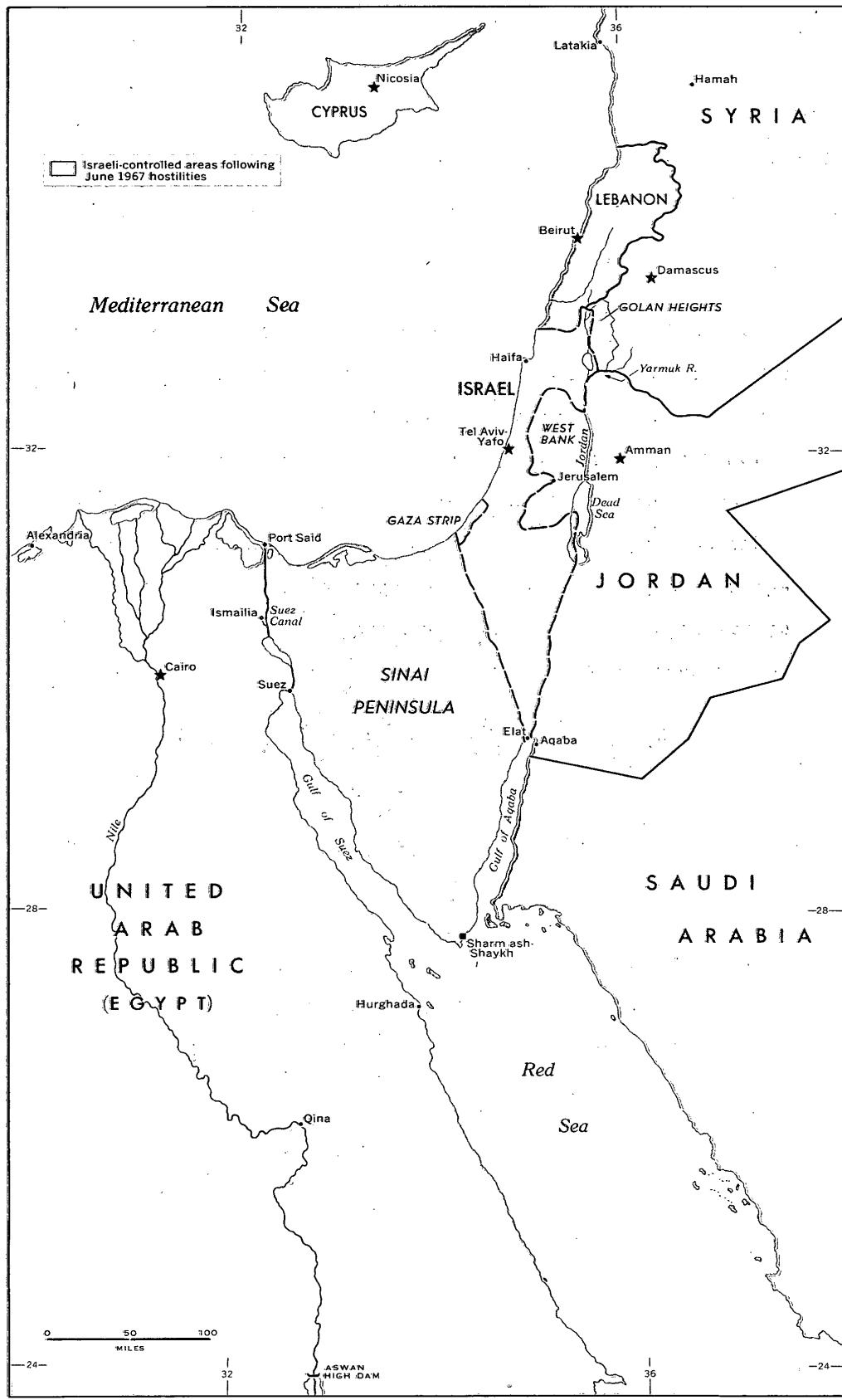
The President's Daily Brief

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12 April 1969

LATE NOTES FOR THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF OF
11 APRIL 1969

I. MAJOR PROBLEMS

VIETNAM

There was continued shelling today with a second attack at Vinh Long city in the IV Corps area and hits on 25-30 other towns. Recent intercepts show that a number of enemy main force regiments in the III Corps provinces near Saigon are in the process of withdrawing to base areas and border sanctuaries. (Central Intelligence Bulletin; [redacted])

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MIDDLE EAST

Israeli and Jordanian troops battled for three hours today eight miles south of the Sea of Galilee, according to a Jordanian military spokesman. The Cairo newspaper, Al Ahram, claims that several senior Israeli military officers who were conferring at an advance post near the Suez Canal Thursday were injured by artillery fire. (Press)

* * *

There is nothing significant to report on Europe or Soviet Affairs.

II. OTHER IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS

CAMBODIA

Phnom Penh radio today carried a statement by Sihanouk that he has received a letter from President Nixon saying that the US will recognize Cambodian frontiers next Wednesday and that he is preparing his diplomats for a renewal of relations with the US. (FBIS 09, 12 Apr)

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

I. MAJOR PROBLEMS

MIDDLE EAST

The embassy in Amman reports that the fedayeen may be getting ready for a major show of strength. Signs pointing in this direction had started to appear even before Tuesday's rocket attack on Elat, and they have multiplied since then. The Jordanian Government apparently is working itself up to an attempt to curb the terrorists, but the embassy doubts that it will do anything until Husayn returns. The government lost a good bit of prestige--and hence saw its leverage with the terrorists reduced--by its inept handling of the rocket incident.

* * *

Fedayeen confidence and inflexibility were apparent in what an official of the Palestine Liberation Organization in Beirut told a US Embassy officer. In the last 18 months, he claimed, the fedayeen have grown strong enough to keep any Arab government from reaching a separate settlement with Israel. He also made it clear that Husayn was not empowered to speak for the fedayeen during his current visit to Washington, and that the PLO rejected both the Security Council resolution of 22 November 1967 and the current four-power talks.

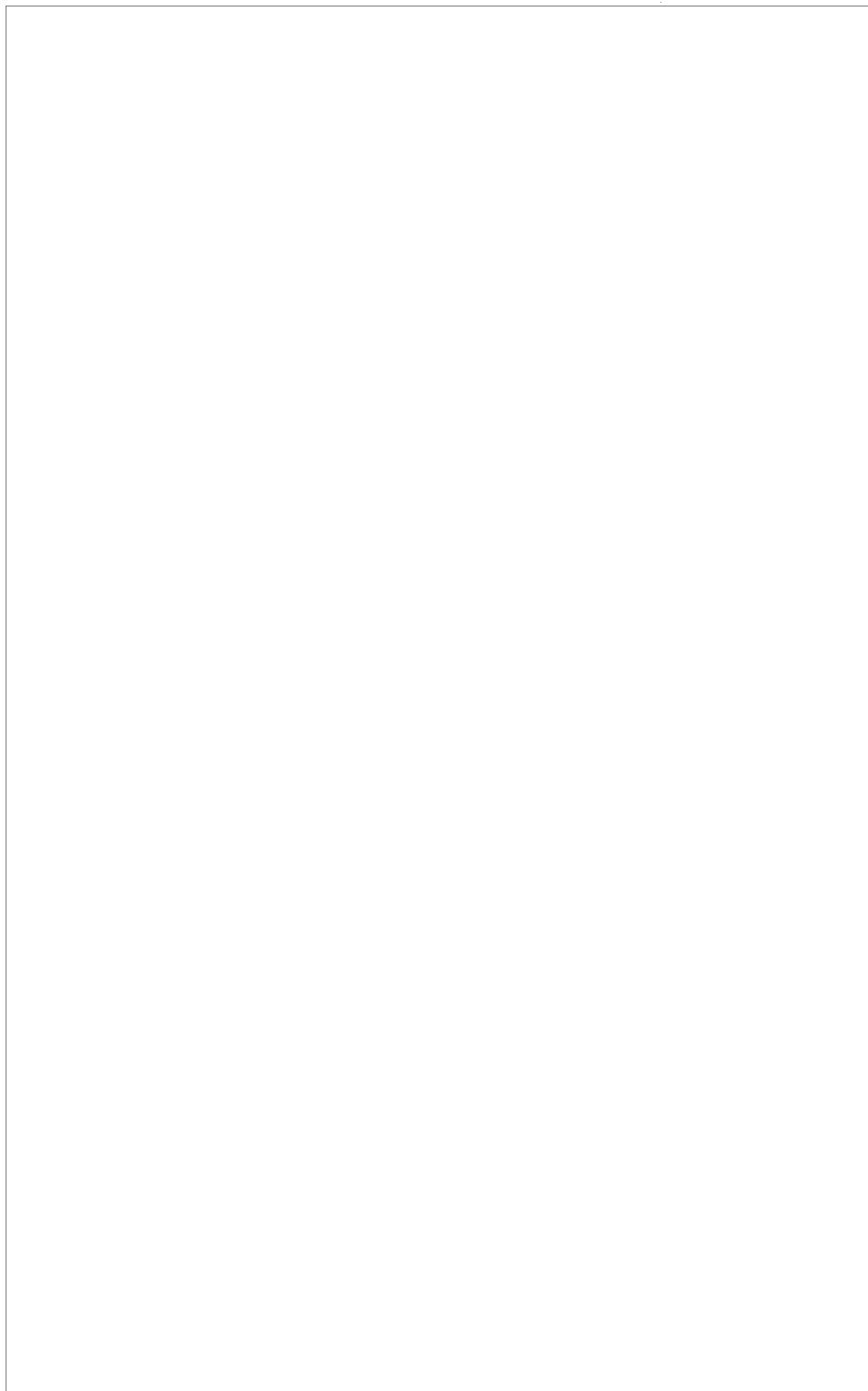
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VIETNAM

The current refusal of the Vietnamese Communists to meet privately with representatives of the government of South Vietnam may well represent a firm decision by the Politburo in Hanoi to procrastinate until the US agrees to four-way private talks on the political future of South Vietnam. There are signs, however, that the lack of action or reaction on the part of the Communists in Paris reflects continuing debate within the Politburo over what course to take.

We suspect, [redacted] that the Vietnamese Politburo has been in extended session over how to proceed both in Paris and on the battlefield in South Vietnam. We note in particular that Le Duc Tho has been back in Hanoi for almost two months now. This, his longest absence from Paris, may be a result of the Politburo's inability to reach agreement over what to do next.

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We believe that the North Vietnamese leadership has long been split over how to fight the war, and that strong differences are continually surfacing now over how to proceed in the negotiations. There probably are some who advocate a policy of ending the fighting soon and attempting to carry on the struggle in the South largely through political methods. These people, who perhaps include Truong Chinh and Pham Van Dong, might be willing to make a deal with the current government

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in Saigon and accept a temporary settlement which accorded the Liberation Front a legal political role in South Vietnam. Those who advocate this path, of course, also favor use of illegal and paramilitary action whenever and wherever it can be used effectively to aid their cause. Others in the Politburo, such as Le Duan, remain unalterably opposed to reliance on a so-called "parliamentary road" to power and to the fundamental political compromises this would require on the part of the Communists.

The Chinese Communists undoubtedly would back the views of Hanoi's hard liners. Peking obviously has been worried for a long time that Hanoi was going to compromise significantly in the course of the negotiations. Since last autumn there have been many items in Chinese media which could be read as strong hints of concern that the Vietnamese Communists are going to choose a "parliamentary road."

Truong Chinh's magnum opus of last summer, which laid out the path the Politburo wanted to take in South Vietnam, was very defensive on the question of whether the party advocated the "road of peaceful transition." Truong Chinh flatly ruled out any such illusion as a means of "seizing power," but he was very vague on the courses which might become necessary if the party was unable to seize power by force. He noted, in fact, that in Vietnam either the "political or the armed struggle will play the principal role in accordance with the actual situation." He went on to state that "when not able to seize

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power, we should cleverly coordinate illegal activities with legal or semilegal ones," thus leaving open the possibility of some sort of participation in the legal government or political life of South Vietnam.

We believe, in fact, that some time last summer the North Vietnamese made some basic strategy decisions. One of these probably was to try to force a negotiated settlement of the war which would ensure eventual withdrawal of all US forces. The Politburo probably also recognized that achieving such a settlement would require fundamental Communist political concessions in South Vietnam.

It is likely that these were the decisions reflected in Truong Chinh's report and more specifically in Hanoi's agreement in October to accept the present South Vietnamese Government as one of the principal parties in the negotiations. This, in itself, was certainly a grim compromise for the hard liners. They probably have been trying whenever possible to forestall further steps along this road. In our view, however, the decisions made last summer have not been reversed and whatever debate may now be going on in Hanoi involves the tactics for carrying out the new strategic course.

* * *

Recent deployments by Communist main force units and the level of enemy activity over the past few weeks have combined to create a mixed picture of Hanoi's intentions in the military sphere. The disengagement of a number

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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of enemy main force units from combat areas, coupled with a sharp downturn in the number of infiltration groups entering the pipeline, suggests that the enemy intends to close down his latest offensive and lie low for a while.

On the other hand, the spate of shelling incidents today, several intercepts referring to other upcoming attacks, and the current move [redacted]

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[redacted] into the Laos corridor west of Khe Sanh all point 50X1 toward an intent to continue the offensive.

These seemingly contradictory moves could reflect indecision among the party leadership on how to proceed at present. A more likely explanation, however, is that the Communist high command has decided to alter somewhat the character of its military effort while retaining its basic purpose. The primary aim of the offensive which began on 22 February probably was to demonstrate that Communist forces remain in the field and that there is no likelihood of an early end to the fighting apart from a negotiated settlement of the war. The Communists may now believe that they can continue to make that point by staging only occasional large-scale shelling incidents, such as the one today. By pulling some of their main force units back into base areas they may hope to reduce their casualties and thus also the number of replacements needed from North Vietnam.

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They may also believe that by keeping other units near certain key allied installations and urban centers [redacted]

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[redacted] they can maintain a sufficient threat to tie down significant numbers of allied units in largely defensive positions. At the same time they can give some main force units a respite from the fighting.

The enemy high command must also be considering ways of countering any US plan for unilateral withdrawal of US forces from South Vietnam. Hanoi wants US troops out, but it wants to extract political concessions from the US as the price for lowering the level of the military threat sufficiently to allow such a withdrawal. The North Vietnamese believe their only hope of getting adequate political and military concessions from the US lies in domestic pressure on the US administration. They further believe that any unilateral US troop withdrawal may lower the level of domestic pressure and thus lessen the likelihood of such concessions.

Thus, Hanoi's planners probably will design their military operations in such a way as to make significant US troop withdrawal appear a serious threat to the ability of the GVN to contain the Communists. If this is the case, over the next few months we may find the enemy launching more of his attacks against ARVN units and areas primarily defended by government forces. During the latest offensive, the Communists appear to have been trying primarily to drive up the level of US casualties, presumably on the assumption that the higher the level of US casualties, the more domestic pressure on the US Government to make concessions in Paris.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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SOVIET AFFAIRS

The Soviets are continuing to press the leadership in Prague prior to the opening of a Czechoslovak party plenum next week. Soviet Defense Minister Grechko returned to Prague today from East Germany, where he met with Ulbricht and Polish party chief Gomulka. In Moscow, the Czech ambassador was called in yesterday for a "friendly" talk with Brezhnev.

The return of Grechko, as well as the continued presence of Deputy Foreign Minister Semenov, emphasizes that the Soviets are unwilling to tolerate Dubcek's delays in carrying out their demands. They probably are prodding Dubcek and his colleagues to make sure the central committee endorses to the letter Moscow's revised prospectus for "normalization." The plenum will probably go along after prolonged and painful debate.

Moscow seems also to be playing a rôle behind the scenes in Prague's precautionary measures to avert threatened strikes over several issues. Semenov met with trade union chief Polacek today, probably to sound out the hitherto liberal unions on their attitude toward new "normalization" measures. If the workers stage a general strike over expected price hikes, the students and other sectors of the population might join them. Consequently, one of Grechko's objectives may be to coordinate security measures with the Czechs and among his commanders in case the situation should necessitate action by Soviet occupation forces.

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Meanwhile, the Dubcek leadership apparently has worked out a compromise to head off a strike threatened by students over press censorship. The students announced that they will hold only a relatively harmless one-day "teach-in"--a solution that may be acceptable to the Russians.

There is widespread speculation that some top party leaders, including Dubcek and the popular presidium member Josef Smrkovsky, will be ousted at the forthcoming plenum. The Russians allegedly are pressing for Smrkovsky's removal, even though they are aware that this action, as well as other retrogressive measures, could bring the Czechs into the streets.

EUROPE

[redacted] the West German Foreign 50X1

Office thinks that De Gaulle is playing old-fashioned intra-European power politics in order to establish French primacy. [redacted] said De Gaulle recognizes that he cannot hold out forever against UK entry into the European Communities. His current tactic is therefore to propose a kind of French-UK-West German-Italian consortium for directing Europe, with France playing the leading role.

[redacted] noted the wide gulf between De Gaulle's ideas on Europe and those of other Western European governments who support integration. 50X1

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

[redacted] seemed to betray some anxiety that De Gaulle might be able to obtain US and UK acquiescence in his efforts. He alluded to the concern felt in Bonn prior to the President's European tour that the President would endorse De Gaulle's ideas on Europe in the interest of improving US-French relations.

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Finally, [redacted] made clear that Bonn does not favor a British-French dialogue as originally proposed by De Gaulle, thus contradicting Lord Chalfont's assertion that the Germans have been encouraging London to undertake talks.

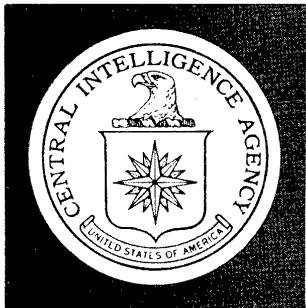
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II. OTHER IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS

There is nothing significant to report.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

Top Secret



The President's Daily Brief

*14 April 1969
(Morning)*

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

I. MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS

VIETNAM



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Ambassador Zorin put forward [redacted] on 11 April 50X1
in a conversation with Ambassador Lodge. According to Zorin,
the NLF call for new people in the Saigon government who
stand for a peaceful settlement was not an ultimatum which
called for a US rejection. Zorin went on to acknowledge that
Thieu's statement on the political role of the Front marked a
difference from his old position. He asserted, however, that
Thieu's demand for the dissolution of the Front reinforced
Communist suspicions of his intentions.

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The comments of Zorin could be taken as a sign that the Communists have softened their demand for a "peace cabinet" and are now hinting that all they want is a sign of Thieu's genuine desire to reach a political settlement with them.

[redacted] 50X1

[redacted] 50X1

Zorin hinted strongly that

Communist ire is now focused solely on Ky. This, of course, may be only a ploy by Hanoi to split Thieu and Ky, but it could also represent a face-saving fall-back position by the Communists who know that Ky could most easily be sacrificed by Thieu if need be.

Zorin further stated that both Xuan Thuy and Tran Buu Kiem had told him they are ready for secret talks if the US "had new proposals to offer." Zorin said Thuy and Kiem had examined the points offered for discussion by the US to date and had found them unacceptable. From Zorin's remarks it would appear that the Communists do not now intend to respond directly to the US initiative of 22 March but rather will await another approach by the US.

Zorin, however, made the most explicit suggestion to date that the North Vietnamese might be interested in tacit mutual withdrawals as a starter. Zorin said that if the US should withdraw troops, the North Vietnamese "could reply." If the US started, said Zorin, "they might do something." This is vague language and may represent only Zorin's own opinion, but it is remarkably like the line taken by the North Vietnamese last summer in regard to the bombing halt, when DRV spokesmen frequently told us that if we stopped the bombing they "would know what to do."

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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[redacted] the Soviets conveyed the impression 50X1
of a softening of the Communist position that the US would
have to deal with the Front before any substantive move could
be made. [redacted]

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[redacted] Zorin
stated that one way the US could move the talks ahead would
be by "entering into some kind of relationship with the NLF."

[redacted] the NLF and Hanoi have decided "de-
finitively" never to separate the military and political as-
pects of the problem. Furthermore, they reject categorically
US proposals that military problems be discussed separately
by the US and DRV and political aspects by the GVN and NLF.

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Zorin once again raised with Ambassador Lodge the danger
of Chinese Communist influence on Hanoi. He urged the US to
hurry "before those who do not want peace gain more influence
than those who do."

SOVIET AFFAIRS

Prague's retraction on Saturday of its announcement that
more Soviet troops would enter Czechoslovakia suggests addi-
tional concessions to Moscow are forthcoming. It is likely
that the Soviets gave Dubcek a choice between strict and im-
mediate compliance with their demands or a more intensified
occupation, and that the Czechs made a last-minute decision
to fulfill the requirements. Soviet Defense Minister Grechko
may have carried Czech assurances with him when he returned
to Moscow yesterday.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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The Russians are said to have insisted that the Czechs reduce the size of the party's ruling body, the presidium, which is presently dominated by progressives and moderates who support Dubcek. This demand, and Slovak party boss Husak's scathing attack, by implication, on Dubcek and his colleagues, suggest that personnel changes in the party's higher echelons are on the agenda of a central committee plenum beginning on Thursday.

Husak, a "realist" who aligned himself with the leadership during the recent crisis over anti-Soviet demonstrations, also hinted the party would no longer temporize, but would reassert its authority and control the situation; TASS reported his remarks in detail.

Meanwhile, workers, students, and other groups are attempting to pressure the authorities not to cave in to the Russians. The trade unions have reaffirmed their support for progressive policies and called for greater freedom of the press. Some youth groups are said again to be threatening to strike if any popular leaders are removed from the party hierarchy.

The Czech Defense Ministry announced that Warsaw Pact antiaircraft exercises would be held today through Wednesday in Czechoslovakia, Poland, Hungary, and the USSR, but such exercises would hardly serve as a pretext to move additional Soviet troops into Czechoslovakia especially since they were planned a year ago.

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

Soviet Ambassador Roshchin at the ENDC meeting in Geneva has asked for a meeting with Ambassador Smith today to deal with the question of new members. Roshchin said he saw considerable advantage in settling the issue during the session now in progress so that the new members could attend when the session is resumed after a recess in May.

West Germany's recently expressed willingness to defer its candidacy will remove a major obstacle to the US package proposal to admit Japan, while preserving an East, West, and non-aligned balance acceptable to the Soviets. Moscow will have no difficulty accepting the Netherlands, the NATO nation most likely to be proposed in place of Bonn.

The US and USSR, co-chairmen of the ENDC, already have agreed to admit Hungary, Mongolia, Argentina, and Tunisia, in addition to Japan. Once the NATO candidate is accepted, the remaining obstacle will be Soviet agreement on membership for Pakistan and Yugoslavia.

* * *

Economic nationalism, long a stumbling block to cooperation among Warsaw Pact nations in their Council for Economic Mutual Assistance (CEMA), again became apparent at a Polish-East German conference in East Berlin last week. A high-level Polish delegation, led by party boss Gomulka, spent two days in the East German capital. While other matters of common concern were discussed and a meeting was held with Soviet Defense Minister Grechko, who flew in from Prague, economic cooperation was apparently the prime topic of discussion.

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Erich Honecker, number two man in the East German party, had mentioned "a big economic conference on CEMA matters in Moscow on 23-24 April" in connection with the Polish visit. This presumably refers to the oft-postponed CEMA summit meeting to grapple with the organization's future course. If a top-level meeting is held this month, these recent Polish - East German talks would suggest that answers to the vexing problems of CEMA will not be forthcoming.

EUROPE

There is nothing of significance to report.

MIDDLE EAST

There is nothing of significance to report.

II. OTHER IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS

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PAKISTAN

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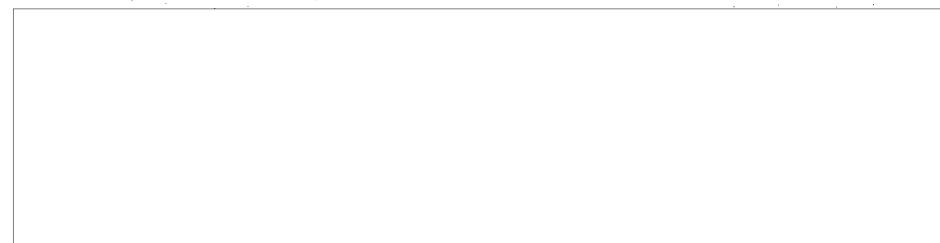
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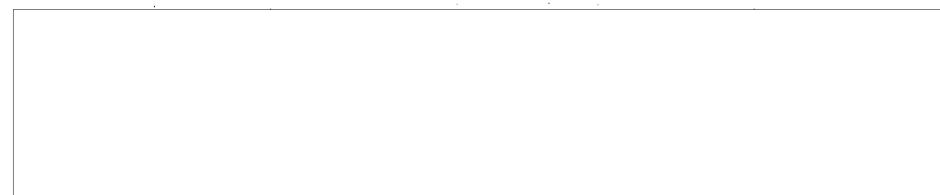
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ITALY - [REDACTED] COMMUNIST CHINA

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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PERU.

President Velasco, straining to portray the deferral of US sanctions as a victory for his government, is basing his claim on unrealistic hopes for fairly large-scale resumption of badly needed foreign credits.

Potential foreign lenders are reluctant to move ahead. Their confidence in Peruvian financial management has been shaken by recent wholesale dismissals of competent personnel from the Peruvian Central Bank. Also, last week Velasco's

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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finance minister announced inflationary budgetary plans which are not likely to be in accord with standby commitments with the International Monetary Fund.

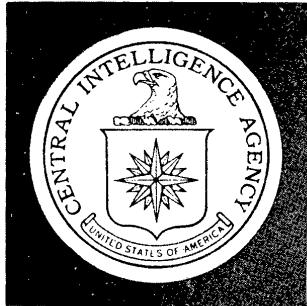
The influential, ultranationalistic Lima newspaper El Comercio, meanwhile, has called for a delay in dispatch to the US of the promised Peruvian delegation that is to discuss outstanding US-Peruvian issues. The delegation should not be sent, said the paper, until "it is clearly demonstrated" that lines of US public and private credit and loans by "international institutions under the influence of the US" have been "re-established."

COMMUNIST CHINA

There is still no word from Peking on deliberations of the ninth party congress. A few tentative signs suggest that the congress was due to conclude its work over the past weekend, but the session is still going on. This strengthens our earlier view that the congress has not gone smoothly.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

Top Secret



The President's Daily Brief

14 April 1969
(Afternoon)

19

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15 April 1969

LATE NOTES FOR THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF OF
14 APRIL 1969

I. MAJOR PROBLEMS

There is nothing significant to report on the Middle East, Europe, Vietnam, or Soviet Affairs.

II. OTHER MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS

KOREA

North Korean fighters shot down a US reconnaissance aircraft over the Sea of Japan last night. The American aircraft, a Navy Super Constellation, was nearly 100 miles off the Korean coast when it was attacked. Pyongyang promptly broadcast a report of the shootdown, claiming the aircraft had intruded into North Korean airspace. The North Koreans have proposed a meeting of the Military Armistice Commission for Thursday.

Rescue operations have been launched, but, as yet, there is no word on the fate of the 31 crewmen aboard the aircraft.



FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

I. MAJOR PROBLEMS

MIDDLE EAST

Zaid Rifai, Husayn's private secretary, was gilding the lily a bit in the account he gave US officials last Wednesday of the Jordanian Government's relationship with the fedayeen. We have seen nothing to substantiate Rifai's assertion that the terrorists' popular support inside Jordan is declining, for instance. Nor do we credit Rifai's explanation of the recent increase in fedayeen activity: that the rules laid down last fall by Husayn's government had effectively limited the fedayeen until they became more "anarchical" in recent weeks. We believe, on the contrary, that the terrorists have if anything grown less anarchical recently and that this fact itself, coupled with the growth in the popular support they receive, accounts for their increased activity.

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Rifai did speak with surprising frankness about the need for his government to take stronger measures against the terrorists than it has in the past. It remains to be seen whether his words were tailored for US ears or whether the Jordanian Government is in fact headed for a confrontation with the fedayeen as he predicted.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

SOVIET AFFAIRS

The Soviets are increasing pressure on the Italian Communist Party to fall into line as 5 June, the date for the Conference of World Communist Parties, approaches. The Italians have been serving as unofficial leaders of the dissidents in the international Communist movement.

A number of smaller parties, including the Australians and British, backed the Italians and Rumanians in their opposition to Moscow's dominance at last month's preparatory meeting for the June conference. The Rumanians, however, disagreed with Italian tactics,

3.3(b)(1)

The French, who had earlier backed the Italians, this time caved in to the Soviets.

Moscow has already threatened to cut its annual subsidy to the Italian party, reputed to be in the neighborhood of 6.5 million dollars. To counter this, the Rumanians have agreed to trade deals which would net the party in Rome \$800,000 over a one to two year period. Yugoslavia is said to be considering a similar arrangement.

Soviet irritation with the Italian position came through clearly in a Pravda article yesterday which criticized the Italians' stand on Czechoslovakia and the Sino-Soviet border dispute and reminded them not to forget "the principles of proletarian internationalism."

pressure from Moscow may bring latent conflicts 3.3(b)(1)

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

within the leadership to the surface,

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* * *

According to unconfirmed press reports, Dubcek will fly to Moscow before Thursday's central committee plenum to discuss its agenda with the Soviets. There is no indication that he has yet left Prague, but he has consulted with Moscow before previous plenums.

At the plenum, party conservatives are expected to use the increasing tension to start a bandwagon drive for retrenchment and a return to "realism." Some liberals have become disheartened; one told a US Embassy source that he doubted Dubcek was tactically astute enough to withstand a concerted conservative challenge because he has become "too romantic and at times childish."

Hungarian party chief Kadar apparently no longer supports or sympathizes with Dubcek. In a speech Friday, Kadar criticized vacillation in the Czech leadership. Yesterday's issue of Pravda quoted the criticism approvingly.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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EUROPE

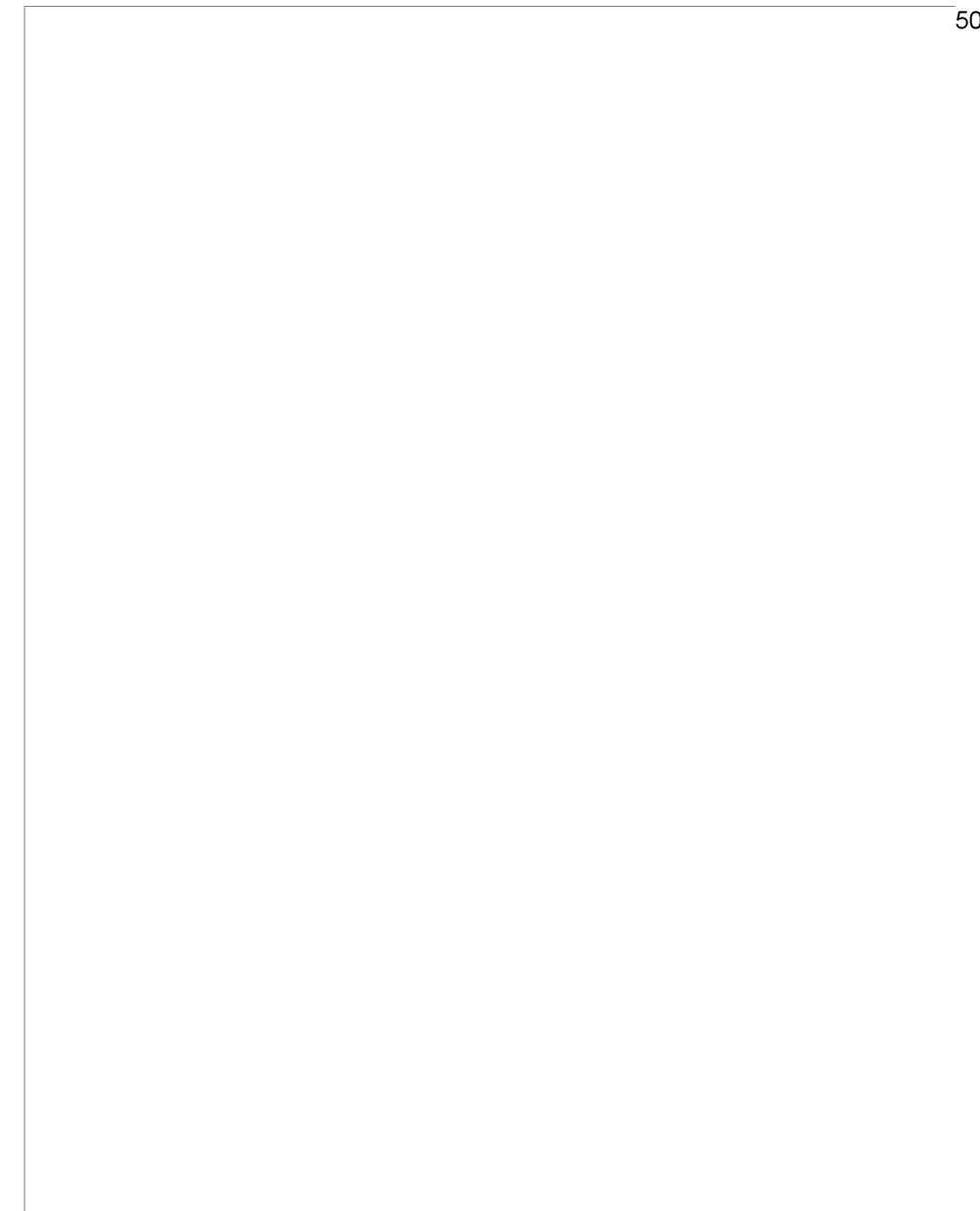
There is nothing significant to report.

VIETNAM

There is nothing significant to report.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

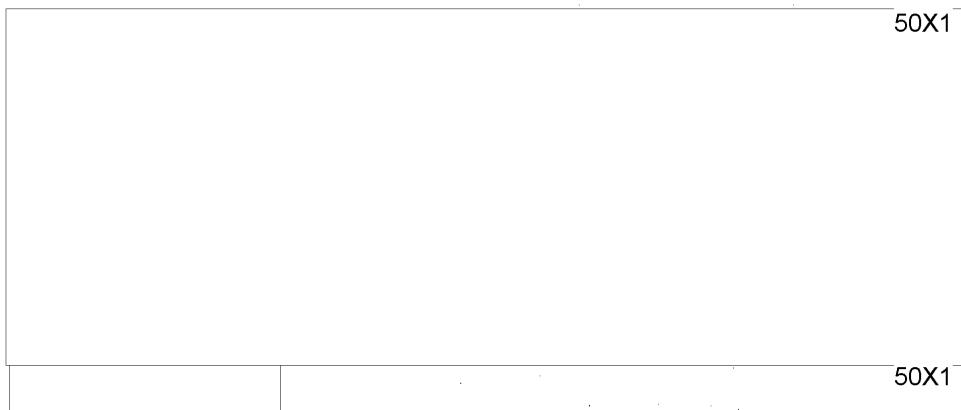
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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

II. OTHER IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS

NIGERIA



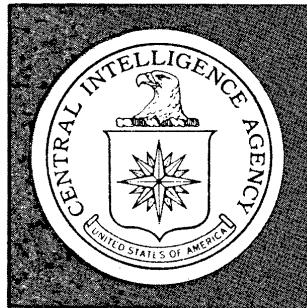
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JAPAN

Ultraradical students are planning two weeks of potentially violent demonstrations beginning this Thursday. The immediate theme will be the demand for the return of Okinawa, but the demonstrations are part of the continuing leftist effort to block renewal of the US-Japanese security treaty next year. The extremists have tentatively scheduled "raids" on the US Embassy, the Diet, and the prime minister's residence. The police are mobilizing their largest force this year.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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The President's Daily Brief

15 April 1969

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16 April 1969

LATE NOTES FOR THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF OF
15 APRIL 1969

I. MAJOR PROBLEMS

SOVIET AFFAIRS

Dubcek's trip to Moscow apparently has been cancelled. Press sources in Prague suggest that the cancellation was due to continuing disagreement between Czechoslovak liberals and conservatives. (Reuters [redacted] 16 Apr) 3.5(c)

MIDDLE EAST

Lebanese troops clashed yesterday with a group of about 100 terrorists who had crossed into Lebanon from Syria. The Lebanese are now trying to persuade the group to go back to Syria, but they doubt that they will be able to do so. Four firefights in the last week between terrorists and Israeli forces on the frontier have made the Lebanese even more nervous than usual about Israeli retaliation. [redacted]

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[redacted] 50X1

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There is nothing significant to report on Vietnam or Europe.

II. OTHER IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS

KOREA

Two US destroyers are now in the area in which the US plane was lost. It is still not clear if there are any survivors. [redacted]

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Under the headline "American Plane Shot Down over North Korea," Moscow newspapers this morning carried a brief account of the North Korean news agency's version of the incident. Tass, however, also reported the US Defense Department statement

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

that the plane was lost over the Sea of Japan. [redacted]

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[redacted]
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The South Korean press is demanding that the US re-taliate against the North Koreans. Government spokesmen have been more cautious. There has been no official government statement so far. [redacted]

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The embassy in Seoul reports that there have been no reports of infiltration activity from North Korea since the plane was lost. Nor have there been any firefights along the Demilitarized Zone. [redacted]

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

I. MAJOR PROBLEMS

VIETNAM

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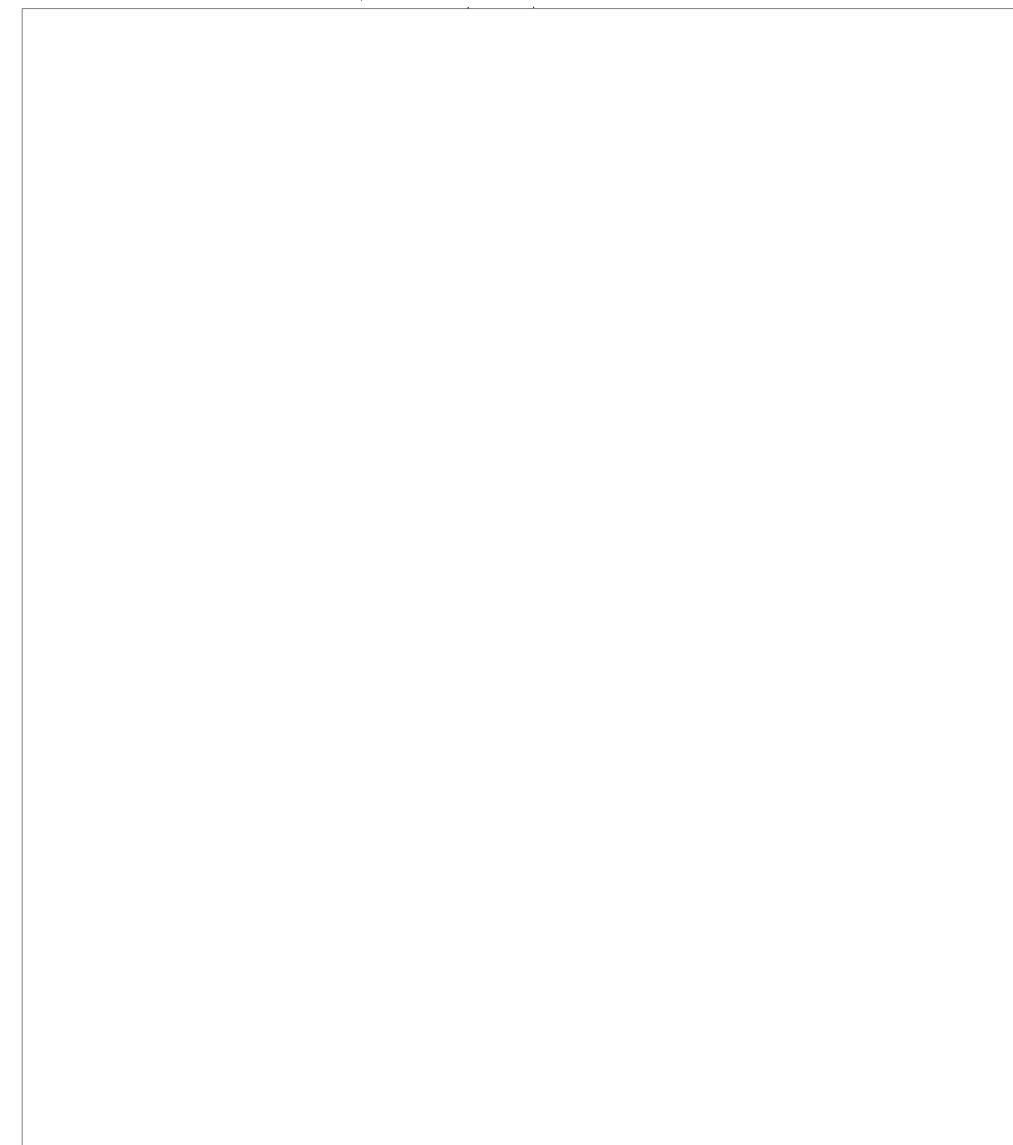
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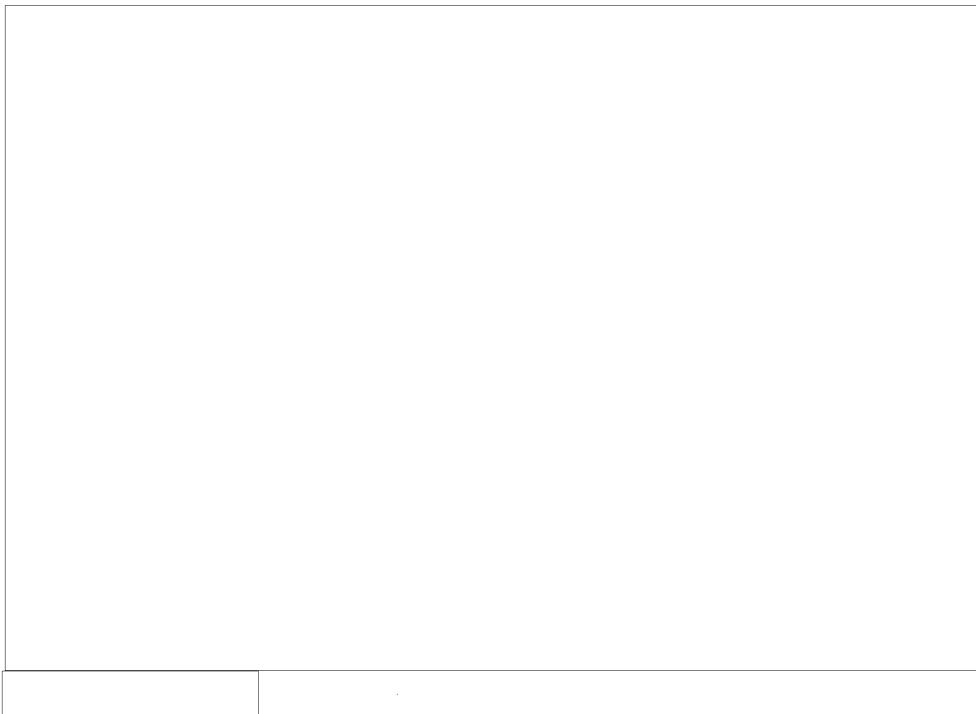
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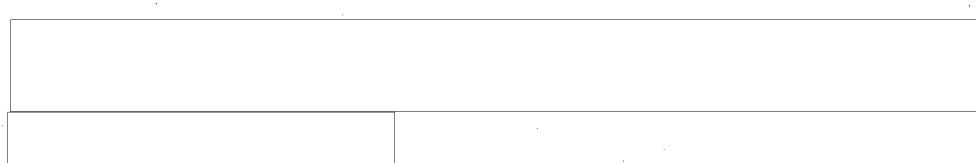
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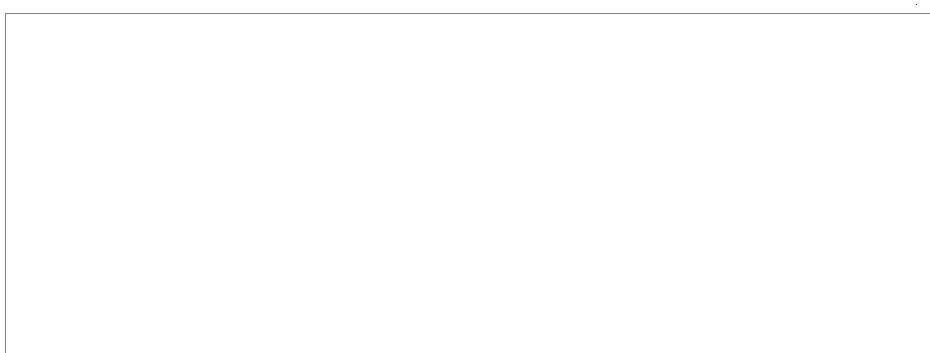
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MIDDLE EAST



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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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Exchanges of fire across the Suez Canal have increased in frequency and intensity in recent weeks. Shooting of some kind--most of it initiated by the Egyptians--is now a daily occurrence. Artillery duels have become commonplace, and there was another air battle on Monday. Neither side seems interested in scaling down the exchanges; Cairo wants to focus world attention on the problem and refute charges of Egyptian inactivity, and the Israelis are more willing to shoot back now that their hardened shelters are finished.

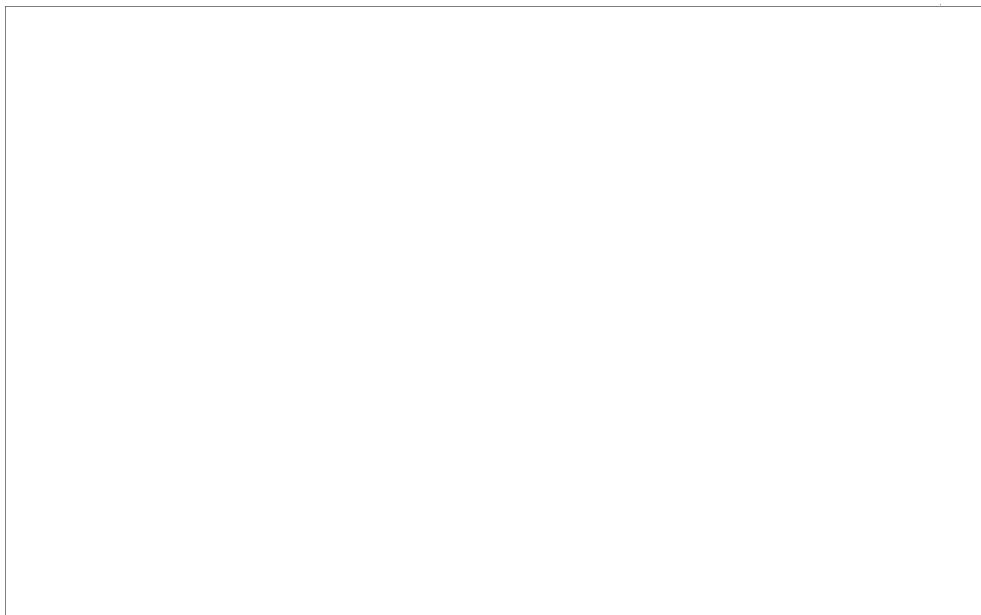
SOVIET AFFAIRS

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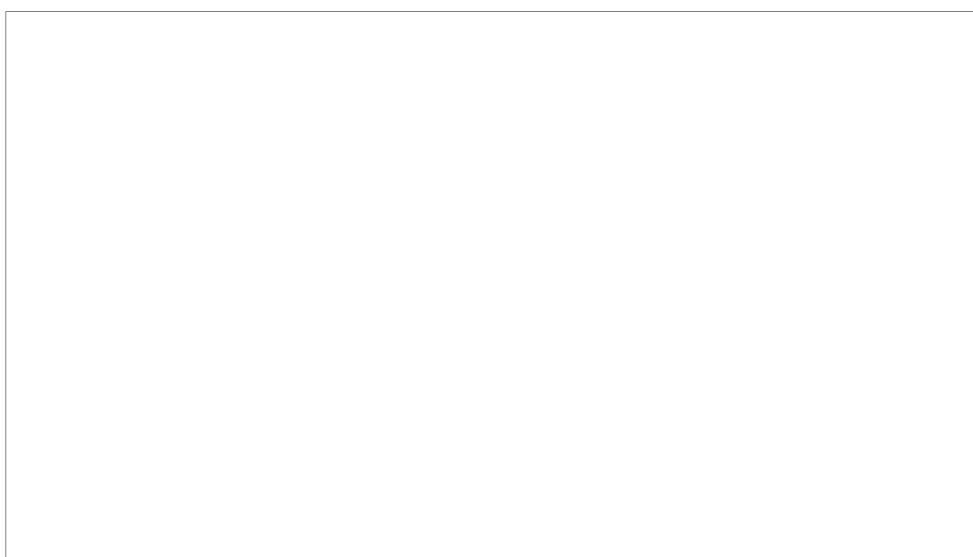


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At annex today we discuss Soviet propaganda charges of
"Sino-US collusion."

EUROPE

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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II. OTHER IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS

CAMBODIA

Cambodian border forces have fought several engagements with Viet Cong and North Vietnamese troops in recent months. Such incidents are not without precedent and are still fewer in number than those involving Cambodian and allied troops, but they are a clear sign of the growing tension between the Communists and the Cambodians in the border area.

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The change in the Cambodian attitude has resulted largely from the heavier fighting along the border over the past several years and the greater use the Communists have made of their bases in the southern half of Cambodia. The heavy influx of North Vietnamese troops may also have disrupted long-standing local arrangements worked out by the Viet Cong with Cambodian border officials.

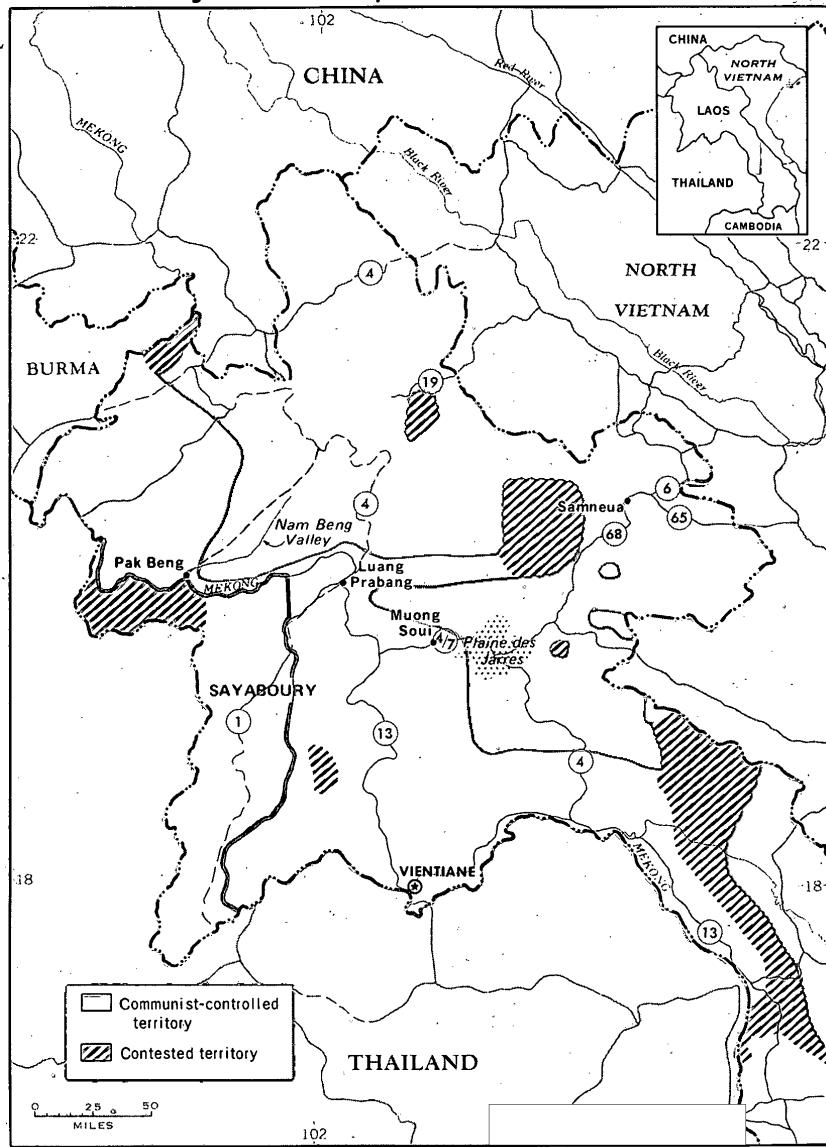
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Phnom Penh is also showing its increasing preoccupation with Communist bases in other ways. Cambodian news media have described in greater detail than heretofore Viet Cong violations of the border, and Liberation Front representatives

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

LAOS: Pak Beng Falls to Enemy



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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

have been maneuvered into public admission that such depredations occur. By applying such pressures on the Communists, while at the same time moving toward a resumption of relations with the US, Sihanouk is again trying to achieve by political means what he cannot by military.

For their part, the Communists are trying to maintain as cordial relations as possible with the Cambodians. The recent Cambodian actions do not seriously threaten Communist bases in Cambodia, and the Communists are probably not overly concerned about what the Cambodians can do in this regard.

LAOS

The Communists have captured Pak Beng, a government outpost on the Mekong River in the northwest. On 14 April a series of enemy ground assaults led to the fall of the garrison and several outlying defense positions.

This action caps a seven-month enemy effort to clear government forces from the Nam Beng Valley. The Communists probably wanted to draw off government guerrillas that had been operating against Lao and Thai Communist elements along the Thai-Lao border.

Communist forces have long controlled the area surrounding Pak Beng, but their new access to the valley will make it easier for them to move troops and supplies into western Sayaboury Province. The erosion of the government's presence in this area may also have considerable impact in the Thai border area, where a Communist tribal insurgency has made significant inroads.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

Around the Plaine des Jarres the government's counter-offensive continues to make limited headway. The Communists, probably thrown off balance by heavy air strikes, have so far limited their response to a series of probing attacks against the neutralist headquarters at Muong Soui.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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SOVIET CHARGES OF SINO-US COLLUSION: HOW MUCH DOES MOSCOW BELIEVE?

For the better part of the past three years the Soviets have been publicly charging Sino-US collusion on a wide range of international issues, grossly exaggerating the extent of dialogue between Washington and Peking. Moscow knows how sterile the Warsaw talks have been over the years. Moscow's allegations of collusion, therefore, are primarily propaganda aimed at discrediting Peking. Moscow is in effect attempting to turn back on the Chinese the charges of collusion with the US which Peking has regularly leveled at the Russians. The Russians also are seeking by innuendo and half-truth to implant the idea that collusion accounts for the discrepancy between Peking's bold words and cautious deeds.

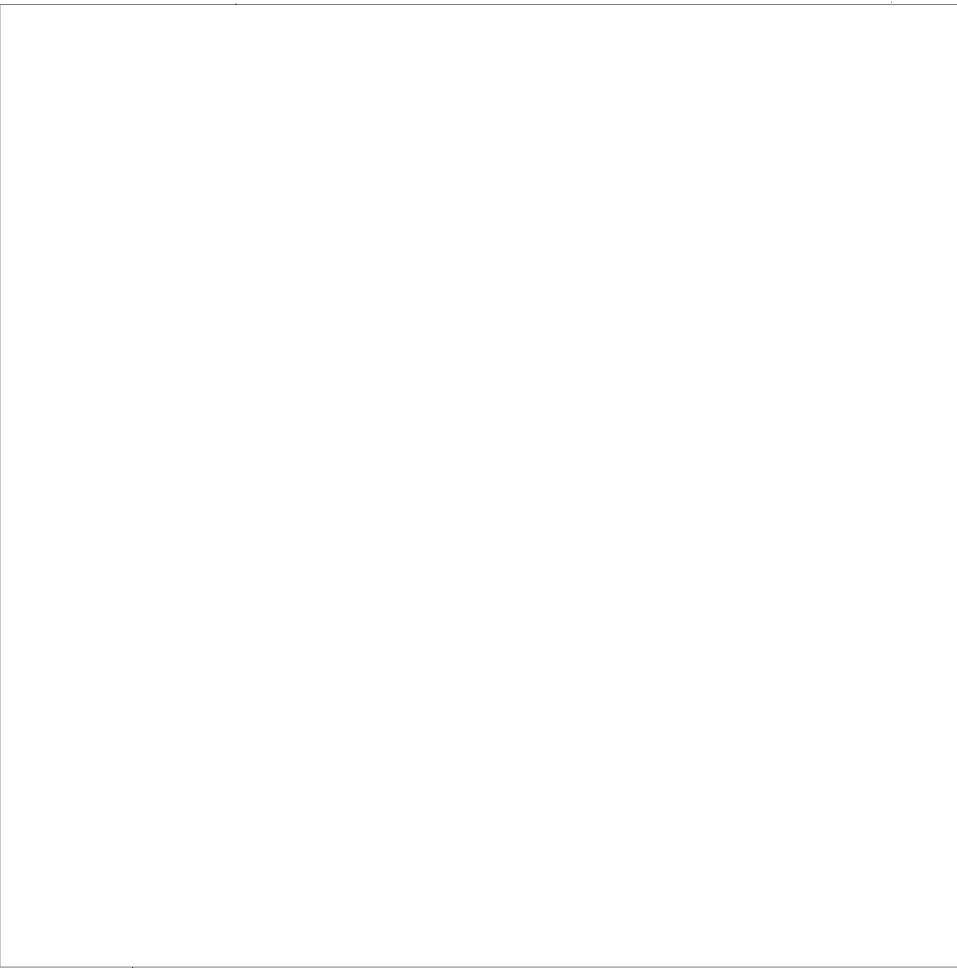
As with other major Soviet propaganda campaigns, however, there is an element of real concern beneath the public charges. In this case, the concern is over an eventual US-Chinese accommodation at Soviet expense. Such an accommodation is probably not considered likely in the short term, but there is almost certainly far less confidence about even the medium term. As a result, Soviet officials frequently seek information on the extent of contacts between the US and the Chinese, and on possible US policy changes toward Peking.

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The Soviet concern that Peking may some day decide to seek an arrangement with the US is perhaps not yet clearly articulated in Moscow, but probably stems from Moscow's fear that the post-Mao era in Peking will produce a more flexible Chinese foreign policy. The Soviets probably realize that Peking could indeed ease its isolation and gain diplomatic maneuvering room by muting its simultaneous and absolute hostility to both Moscow and Washington. The Soviets also probably judge that Peking would be more likely to edge toward

A2

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

Washington than toward Moscow, given the depth of Chinese hostility to the Soviets. An attack on the Chinese leaders in the current issue of the Party theoretical journal Kommunist makes the statement that Maoist "foreign political steps have at their base... tendencies of relying on any forces in the political struggle against the USSR and other fraternal countries." This is probably an accurate assessment of the Kremlin's real feelings. On the other side of the coin, our embassy in Moscow has reported considerable consternation among various Russian officials over statements by several prominent Americans at the recent US National Committee Meeting on Sino-US Relations which advocated a significant US effort to reach an accommodation with China.

Meanwhile, no incident is too small to be used by Moscow in its effort to embarrass Peking. Thus, following the Sino-Soviet border clashes last month, Moscow renewed charges that the Chinese were obstructing Soviet aid destined for Vietnam. The Chinese apparently did harass or refuse to cooperate with Soviet officials at border transshipment points for several days following the clash on 2 March, but the Soviets inflated this to a claim that China had "closed its border" to Soviet aid for embattled Vietnam.

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In another instance late last year, a Soviet journal did an exposé on a commercial telephone link--the only one existing--between San Francisco and Shanghai, citing it as an example of US-Chinese cooperation. Probably embarrassed by this publicity, Peking shortly thereafter broke the connection.

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

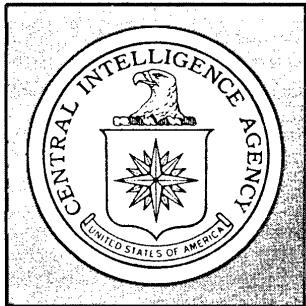
FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

The "Sino-US collusion" charge will continue to be a polemical issue as long as Moscow feels that it can be used to blacken Peking, and to help reduce the impact of similar charges against itself--charges to which it is indeed more vulnerable than is Peking. In all probability, Moscow does not believe the vast majority of its charges. Given its traditional suspicions and its heightened nervousness since the Ussuri River incident, however, Moscow probably does believe there is a greater prospect of improved US-Chinese relations than is apparent in Washington.

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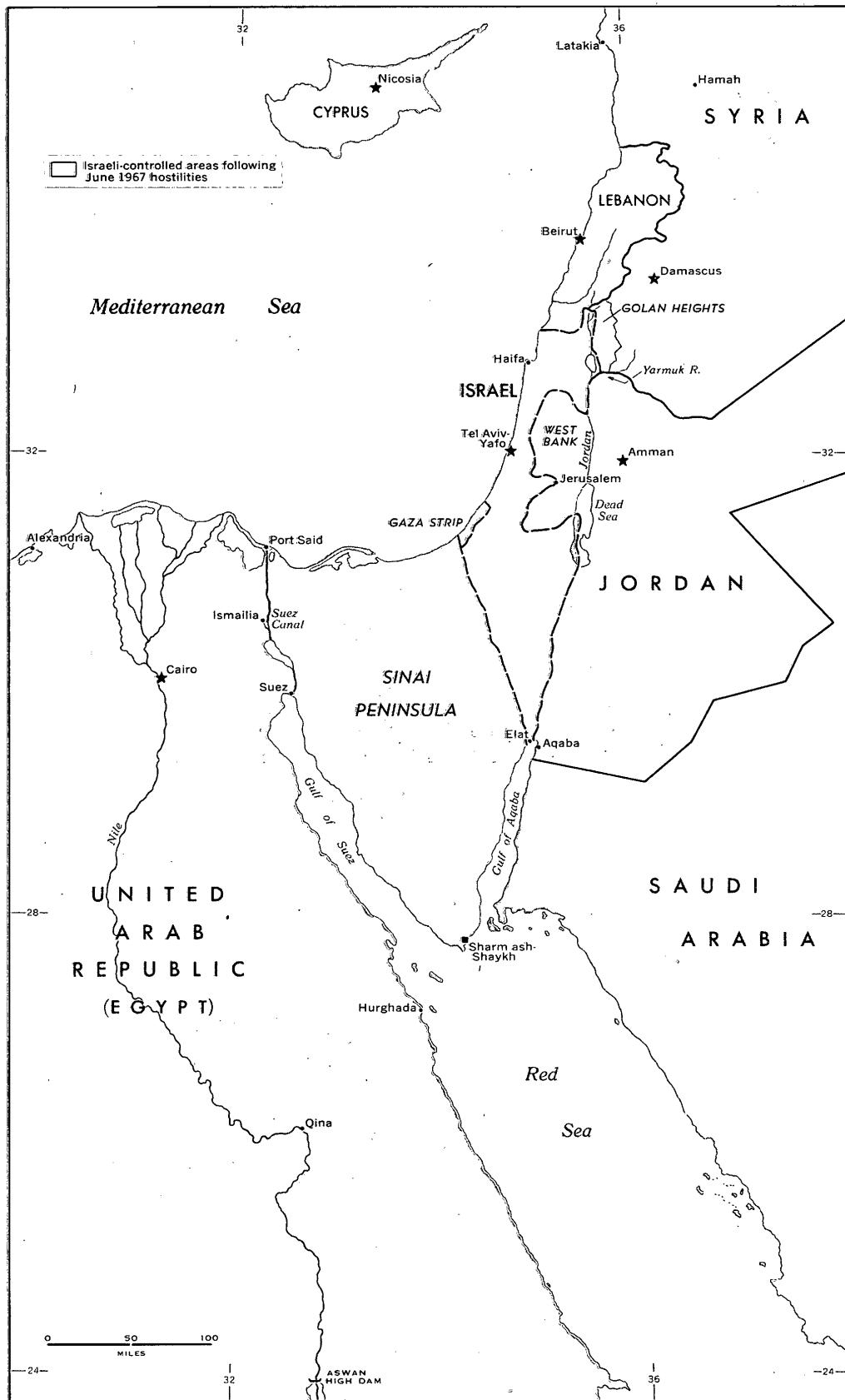


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16 April 1969

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17 April 1969

LATE NOTES FOR THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF OF
16 APRIL 1969

I. MAJOR PROBLEMS

MIDDLE EAST

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President Hilu of Lebanon says his government has made a major decision to confront fedayeen groups by force if they attempt to cross the Lebanese-Israeli border. This has not yet caused difficulties between Muslim and Christian officers in the Lebanese Army despite the general Muslim sympathy for the fedayeen movement. Hilu is convinced that all fedayeen groups are basically revolutionary in their thinking and modus operandi and will eventually become a captive of Moscow or Peking despite their current backing by conservative Arab states. He also understood from his Jordanian contacts that a major confrontation between Amman and the fedayeen would have to take place in the near future.

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VIETNAM

The limited activity in the I Corps area on 16-17 April adds substance to other indications that the Communists intend to step up their military activity in the northern provinces in the weeks ahead. In addition to the indicated movement of elements of two divisions and other independent units toward I Corps, there are intercepts revealing increased supply

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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and heavy weapons movements into the Laotian panhandle.
(Central Intelligence Bulletin)

* * *

There is nothing of significance to report on Europe or Soviet Affairs.

II. OTHER IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS

KOREA

The destroyer USS Tucker confirms it has picked up two bodies in debris 17 miles from the crash site of the EC-121 plane. [redacted]

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The North Korean Defense Minister General Choi Hyun, apparently talking to the officers and men of the North Korean army unit responsible for the shootdown, thanked them for their action and was quoted as saying that the flight was part of planned preparations for "inciting a new war in Korea. ... the situation remains tense and it shows that a war may break out again at any moment." The speech appears to be part of the North Korean effort [redacted] to keep its units alert to any military reaction from either the US or South Korea. [redacted]

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A Chinese Communist newspaper in Hong Kong bitterly attacked the "despicable Russian revisionists for shamelessly and brazenly selling out North Korea by sending two warships to help the Americans find the bits and pieces of the marauding plane. ...the Russian action would be acceptable if this were a civilian plane and not a military intruder." (AP 283, 17 Apr)

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

I. MAJOR PROBLEMS

MIDDLE EAST

Five major fedayeen organizations on Tuesday flatly rejected Husayn's recent proposals for a Middle East settlement. They have of course consistently denounced all proposals involving a negotiated settlement, and in the bargain have made it clear that neither Nasir nor Husayn speaks for them in international forums. What is significant about this latest blast, however, is that Husayn has been singled out for special treatment. This is yet another sign that the tenuous six-month truce between the fedayeen and the Jordanian Government is coming to an end.

The government has fumbled badly in its dealings with the terrorists during Husayn's current trip abroad. When he returns home tomorrow, Husayn will have his work cut out for him if he decides to try to rein them in again.

* * *

The Lebanese Army, no doubt much to its own surprise, managed to persuade the some 100 terrorists it clashed with yesterday to withdraw. After considerable dickering, the terrorists got into Lebanese trucks and were taken to the Syrian border.

SOVIET AFFAIRS

The Czechoslovak central committee meeting tomorrow will open in a charged atmosphere as it seeks to grapple

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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with the aftermath of the recent anti-Soviet riots. The Soviets are maintaining pressure on the Dubcek regime to purge the liberals from the leadership, to give a greater role to party conservatives, and to reimpose party control over all elements of Czech society.

At a minimum, central committee conservatives, who are in a minority, probably will press for an end to open expression of anti-Soviet sentiment, genuine control of the press, and tighter discipline over party members. Moderates and liberals will probably go along, but they may be expected to try to place limits on the censor's authority over the media and will undoubtedly oppose any other conservative proposals to restrict personal rights and liberties. The leadership will probably try to steer a middle course. Moscow has approved a party action program adopted last November and seems to be pressing for its implementation rather than revision.

Dubcek is reported ready to propose a reduction in size of the 21-man party presidium. This will probably mean the ouster or demotion of several liberals, including Smrkovsky, as well as others who came into prominence during the invasion in August 1968. The moderates, however, seem to have at least an even chance of retaining their posts.

It is unclear how the population will react to personnel and policy shifts which it considers to be too retrogressive. Students particularly are unreconciled

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

to the reimposition of strict domestic policies and their public declarations have been uncompromisingly anti-Soviet. Trade union leaders have pledged their cooperation in trying to calm the situation, but they cannot guarantee the performance of the workers, who might join the students if the latter go into the streets.

* * *

An unusually harsh winter has gotten the Soviet economy off to a poor start for 1969. Bad weather not only affected the agricultural sector (large areas of winter wheat will have to be resown), but also caused disruption in production and transportation schedules and shortages of fuel and raw materials. Moscow blames these factors "to a significant degree" for the slow growth rate in industrial production in January and February (only 2 1/2 percent above the corresponding period of 1968; normally the Soviets shoot for a growth rate of about 6-8 percent).

VIETNAM

There is nothing significant to report.

EUROPE

There is nothing significant to report.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

II. OTHER IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS

KOREA

North Korean military activity since the shootdown has been cautious.

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No movement of North Korean forces has been detected, nor has there been any aircraft activity in reaction to the search.

The South Koreans are showing some concern over US resolve in dealing with North Korean attacks and the latest incident is being cited as evidence that South Korea needs more US military assistance. Calls for retaliation also continue to be heard in Seoul.

In Tokyo, opponents of the US-Japan security treaty are trying to use the incident to exploit Japanese fears of becoming involved in a Korean conflict. Both the Socialists and the Communists are stressing that the aircraft was from a US base in Japan. Foreign Minister Aichi was hit by a barrage of opposition questions in the Diet today.

For its part, Moscow remains noncommittal in its press coverage, although it obviously does not mind any inferences Pyongyang may care to read into the participation of Soviet naval units in the search.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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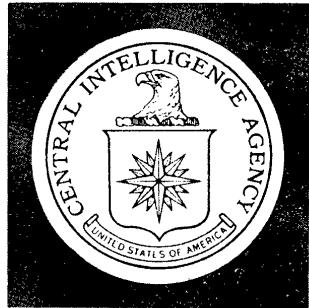
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

A recent outbreak of terrorism--much of it Communist-inspired--is likely to draw some drastic reprisals from the military which has been the main target of the ambushes.

Violence begets violence in the Dominican Republic, and the situation could deteriorate if there is an escalation of retaliatory killings. All this has put President Balaguer in a difficult position. He does not want to be left open to charges of permitting the military to run amuck, yet because his commanders are his main source of support, he does not want to put them on too tight a leash.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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17 April 1969

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

18 April 1969

LATE NOTES FOR THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF OF
17 APRIL 1969

I. MAJOR PROBLEMS

SOVIET AFFAIRS

Yesterday's events in Czechoslovakia mark the end of the Dubcek experiment to fuse socialism with democracy. The "realism" of new party first secretary Gustav Husak replaces the idealism of Alexander Dubcek. To most Czechoslovaks, the change means succumbing to Soviet pressures with a new leadership responsive to Moscow's demands.

The central committee reduced the size of the party presidium from 23 to 11 members, in the process removing from power 11 of Dubcek's moderate and liberal supporters.

The new leadership is dominated by "realists," most of whom, like Husak, believe that the only feasible course is cooperation with Moscow. Dubcek was named to the new presidium, but the outspoken Josef Smrkovsky was dropped. The shifts probably presage similar changes in the government leadership.

Husak advocates closely controlled reform. In his maiden speech, Husak said his administration would not abandon the reforms begun last year, but their continuation was absolutely dependent on an end to anti-Soviet dissidence. He said he intends to review reform programs, and warned that under his leadership liberty would not be "without limits."

Husak faces an uphill task. He must try to convince the people that the changes are for the best. In order to be effective, he must overcome the distrust of the Czechs, many of whom despise his Slovak nationalism and his attacks on the liberal mass media.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

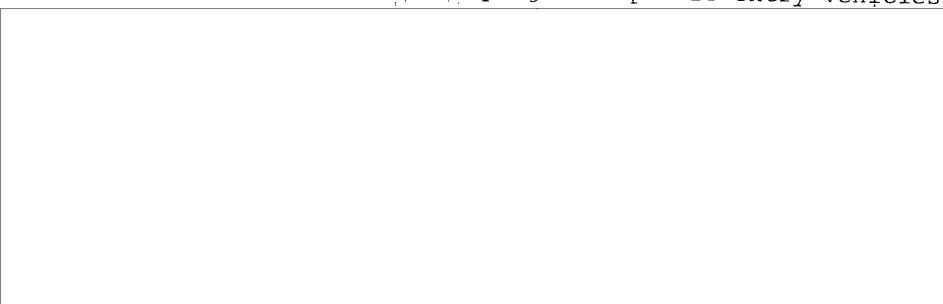
FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

Prague was quiet last night. The general public may well turn away from politics with an air of resignation. Young workers and students are likely to be less tractable.
(Central Intelligence Bulletin, 18 Apr)

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The Soviets yesterday conducted their first extended-range test of an SS-9 ICBM carrying multiple re-entry vehicles.

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[redacted] Yesterday's flight was the first in what may be a series of extended-range tests. (Central Intelligence Bulletin, 18 Apr)

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There is nothing significant to report on the Middle East, Europe, or Vietnam.

II. OTHER IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS

KOREA

At today's Military Armistice Commission meeting, the statement of the senior North Korean representative dealt only with charges of DMZ violations and made no mention of the aircraft shootdown. When the UN Command member, General Knapp, made his protest, the North Korean asked to what unit the plane had been attached. After this question was reiterated, General Knapp walked out.

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The Soviet destroyer Vdokhnovenyy, rendezvousing with the USS Tucker, this morning turned over a number of items of clothing and equipment recovered from the downed aircraft.



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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

I. MAJOR PROBLEMS

SOVIET AFFAIRS

Alexander Dubcek is out as first secretary of the Czechoslovakian Communist Party, but is still on the Presidium.

Dubcek has been replaced in the top party job by Gustav Husak, whose more conservative bent is less grating to Moscow.

Husak, a fierce Slovak nationalist whose elevation will be resented by the Czechs, has adopted a more pragmatic approach to relations with the Soviet Union.

The Czechoslovakian party central committee has been meeting all afternoon and some announcement of its proceedings is expected early this evening. Meanwhile, the atmosphere in Prague is tense with security forces prepared for demonstrations. With Dubcek out, there could be trouble in the capital city tonight.

We will be reporting developments during the evening and will summarize the situation in the Late Notes tomorrow morning.

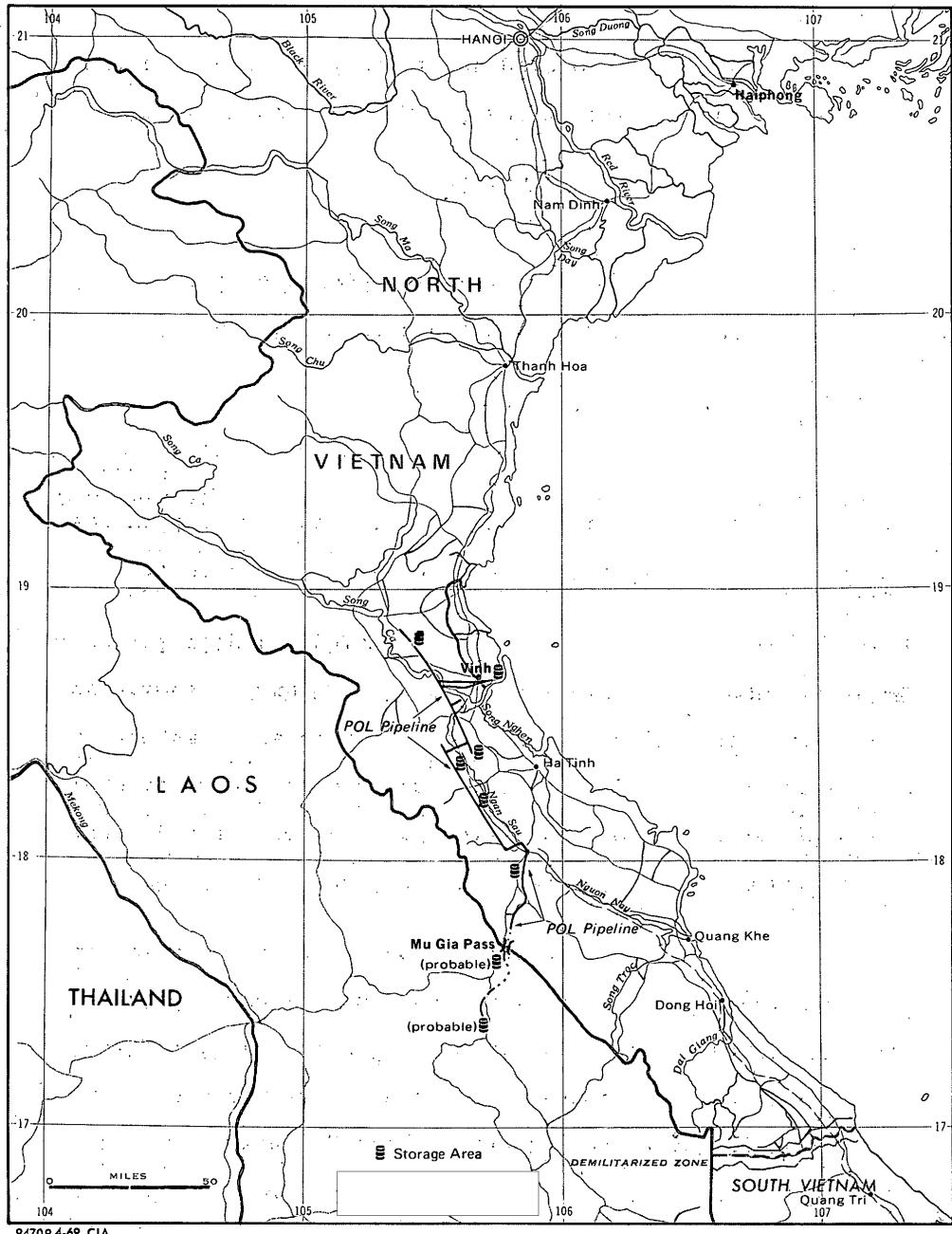
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VIETNAM

North Vietnam is far along in laying an oil pipeline system to provide logistic support of the war effort in

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY



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South Vietnam and Laos. Since last spring, some 100 miles of a pipeline have been laid through the southern provinces of North Vietnam and extended this year into the Laos pan-handle by way of Mu Gia Pass. The system now appears to be operational from Vinh west to the main north-south line and south to a point about 15 miles north of Mu Gia Pass.

Petroleum currently is being shipped from Haiphong to Vinh by barge. A branch pipeline forwards it from Vinh to the main line. A duplicate segment from Vinh is under construction, probably to provide an alternative to the first line. The additional capacity is not needed. The pipeline system is believed capable of transporting some 1,000 tons of petroleum a day, sufficient to meet the requirements of all consumers in South Vietnam and Laos.

The area immediately north of the DMZ is not yet served by pipeline, but this may be provided for in plans for further expansion.

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MIDDLE EAST

There is nothing significant to report.

EUROPE

There is nothing significant to report.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

II. OTHER IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS

KOREA

The South Korean Government seems anxious not to get too far ahead of the US position on the shootdown. In a relatively moderate statement the government today condemned the "outrageous, illegal, barbaric" North Korean action and called on the "US and free world...to take prompt and effective countermeasures to prevent once and for all the Northern puppets from playing with fire and provoking war." The statement avoided any demand for immediate military retaliation and only asserted that North Korea's leaders "should receive due punishment for the crime they committed." In contrast to official caution, the press is continuing to call for immediate retaliation.

Japanese Prime Minister Sato publicly censured Pyongyang in the Diet today. He said that the North Korean action should be "internationally condemned." Sato, however, expressed a hope that the US would take a cautious attitude and that the incident would not develop into any further conflict. This clear preference for US restraint, which underlies popular attitudes toward the incident, has also been reflected in commentary by Foreign Minister Aichi, Japanese defense officials, and in the news media. Sato also implied a concern that US retaliation might affect the progress of negotiations on the return of Okinawa to Japanese administration.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

NIGERIA

The Biafrans still hold Umuahia, but the civilian administration has apparently left and the Red Cross has moved its headquarters to a town about 14 miles from Biafra's one operating airstrip. Colonel Ojukwu was still in Umuahia on 16 April, but unless federal forces are driven back soon, Ojukwu himself will probably move.

The large-scale civilian exodus from Umuahia, where many Ibo tribesmen had sought refuge during previous federal advances, will further complicate Biafra's already serious refugee problem.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

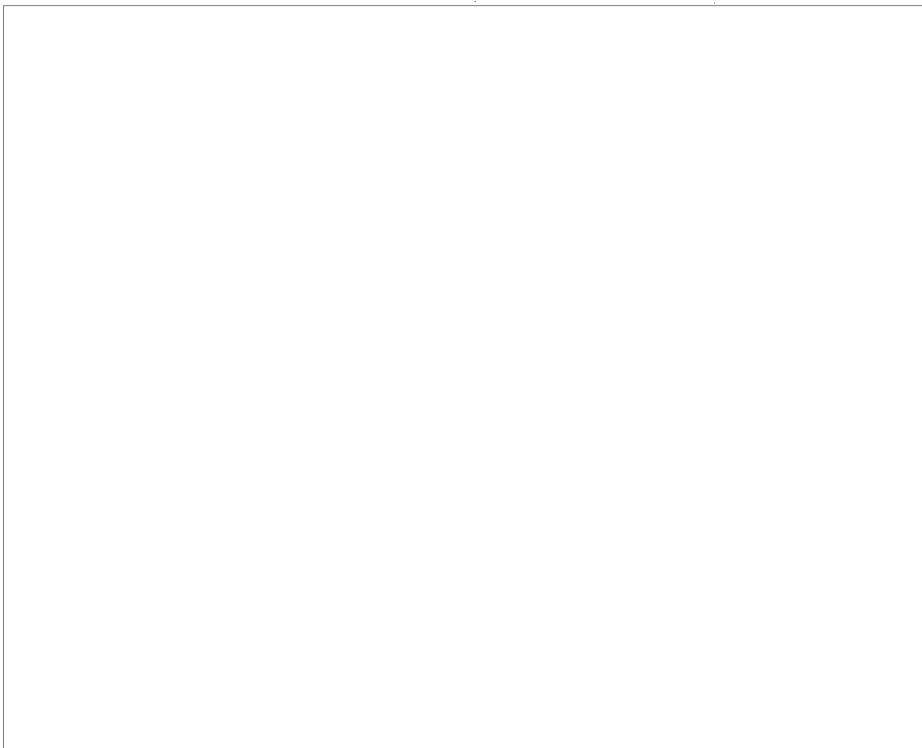


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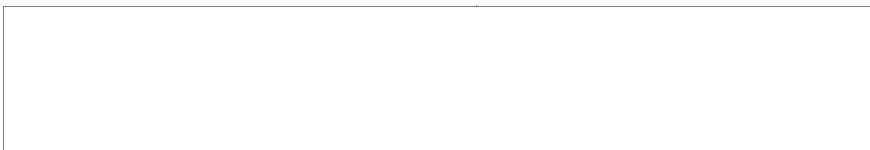


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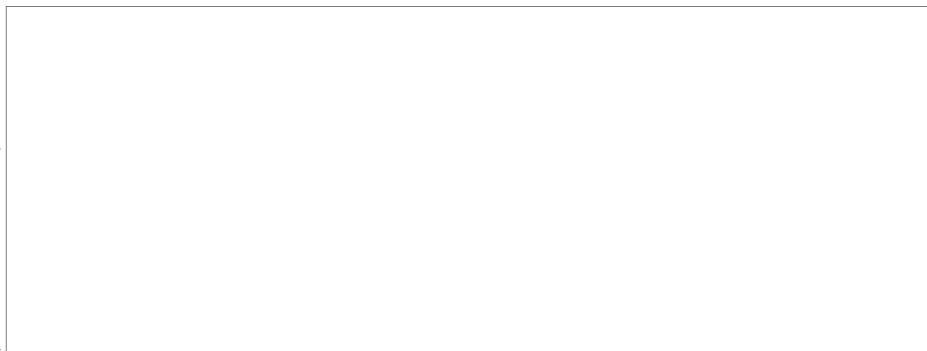
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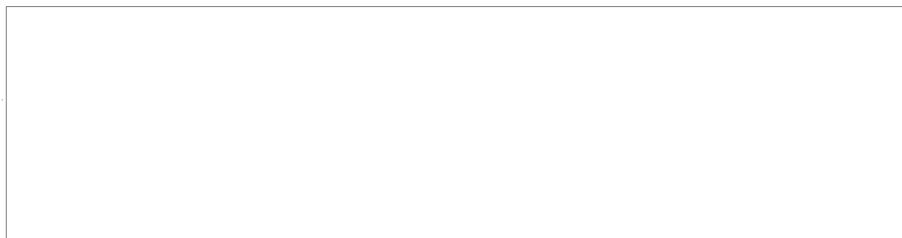
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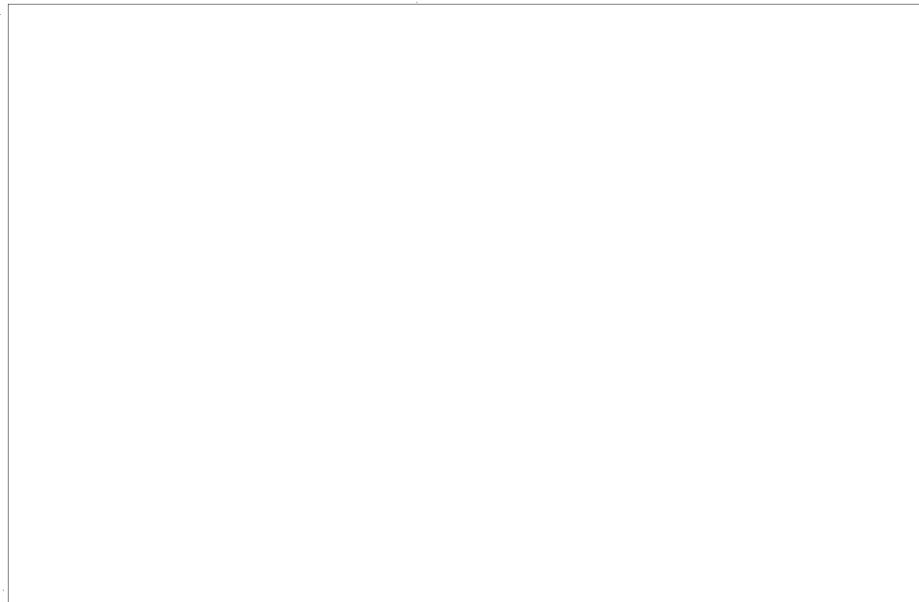
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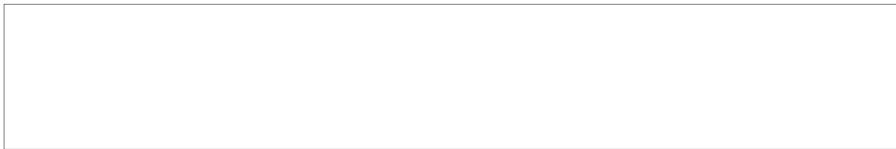


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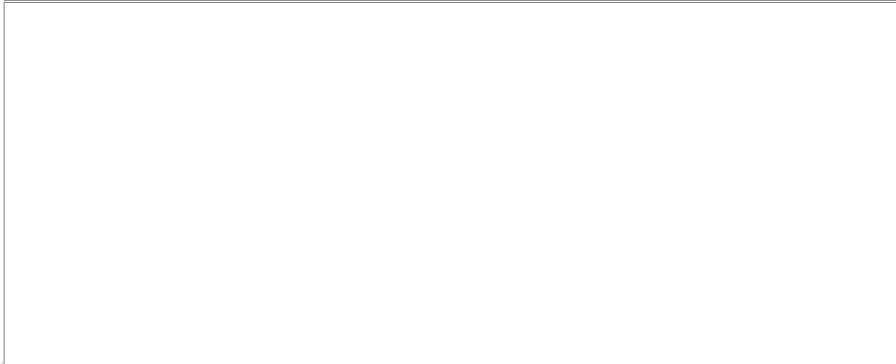
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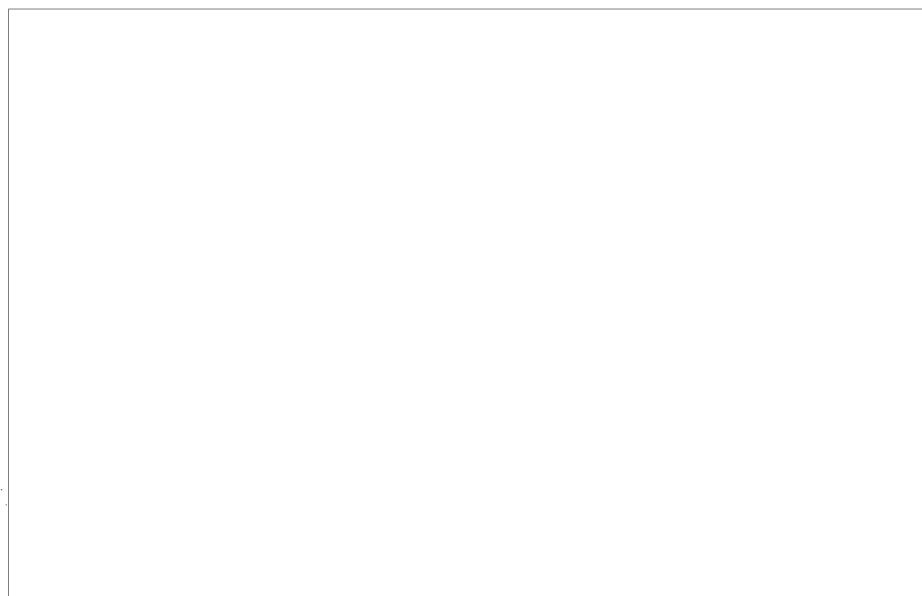
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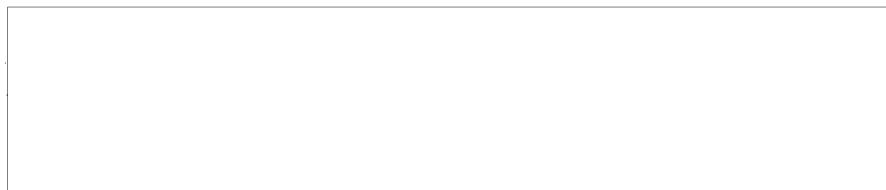
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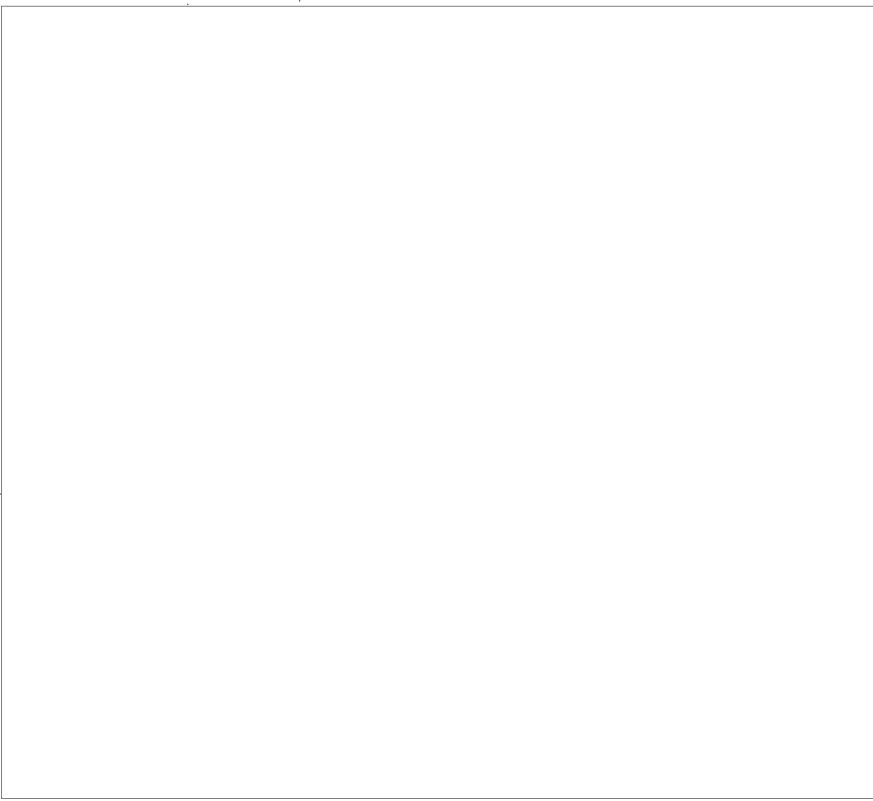
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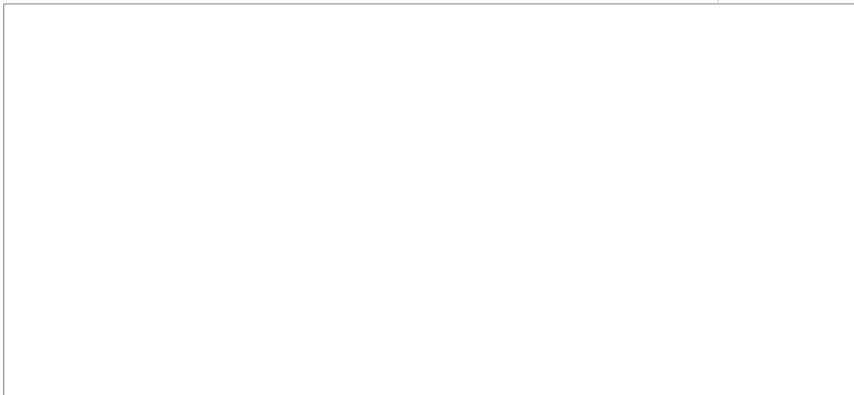


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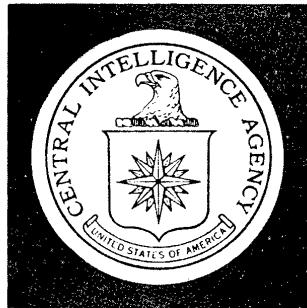


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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

Top Secret



The President's Daily Brief

18 April 1969

19



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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

19 April 1969

LATE NOTES FOR THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF OF
18 APRIL 1969

I. MAJOR PROBLEMS

SOVIET AFFAIRS

Czechoslovakia remained quiet through the night.

* * *

There is nothing significant to report on Europe, Vietnam,
or the Middle East.

II. OTHER IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS

KOREA

The North Koreans have not yet commented directly on
President Nixon's announcement that reconnaissance flights
will be resumed with adequate protection. A Pyongyang domes-
tic broadcast last night, however, pledged that the Korean
people "will in the future, too, mete out severe punishment
to aggressors who infringe upon the sovereignty of our coun-
try."

We have observed no indications that North Korean forces
are preparing for offensive action. [redacted]

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[redacted]
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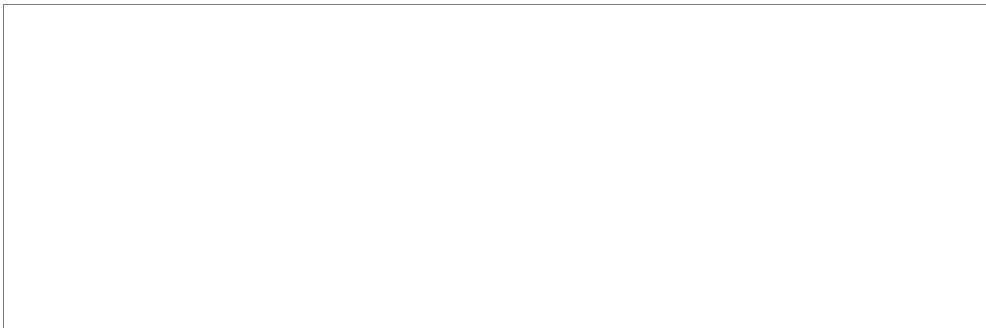
(Central Intelligence Bulletin, 19 Apr)

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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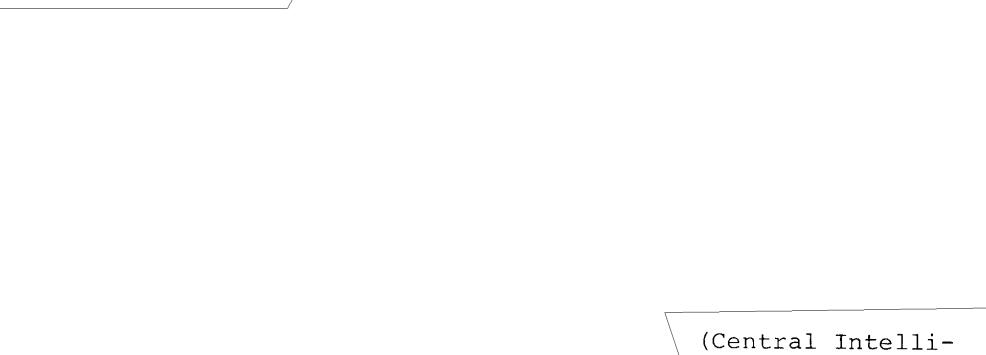


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* * *

South Korea has not yet commented officially on the President's press conference, but the first unofficial reactions are mixed.

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(Central Intelli-

gence Bulletin, 19 Apr)

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

I. MAJOR PROBLEMS

MIDDLE EAST

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

EUROPE

Franz-Josef Strauss tried a variation or two on some old themes in his talk yesterday with the US chargé. The subject was the nonproliferation treaty, and Strauss warned that Chancellor Kiesinger would be provoking a crisis in the Grand Coalition if he tried to force a decision on the signing of the NPT. He left the chargé with the impression that he might resign or otherwise provoke a crisis to prevent the treaty's signature. Moreover, Strauss added, he did not think the Nixon administration attached as much urgency to West German signature of the treaty as its predecessor had.

The cabinet will meet Wednesday in Bonn, and we assume the NPT will be one of the topics. Given Kiesinger's tendency to temporize on any issue when he lacks a consensus, Strauss probably could indeed force a further extension of the decision-making process ~~or~~ ^{by} remaining intransigent. And a decision will be progressively harder to reach as next fall's elections come closer. One high-ranking German official, in fact, told the chargé today that he thought West Germany probably would not sign the treaty before the elections. The thoughts Strauss expressed to the chargé strongly suggest he thinks he has a good hand on this issue and will play it to the hilt.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

Strauss' comments on the US administration's attitude are something of a comedown from his previous pronouncements. Initially he tried to draw parallels between his opposition to the treaty and the Nixon administration's allegedly reserved attitude. Since the US Senate's ratification, he has been reduced to an assertion that the administration is lukewarm about West German adherence.

SOVIET AFFAIRS

Prague has been calm today. Strong security forces, including some military units, continue to patrol the city.

Dubcek will become president of the National Assembly. While this announcement obviously was intended to take some of the sting out of his demotion, it looks like another step down the road to political oblivion.

Gustav Husak, the new party first secretary, moved quickly toward silencing what dissident notes linger in the press by naming a pro-Soviet conservative as editor-in-chief of the main party newspaper.

Brezhnev has sent his congratulations to Husak and Soviet President Podgorny told Ambassador Beam that the Czechoslovak plenum had "initiated steps" which would be satisfactory "to the whole world."

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

VIETNAM

There are tenuous indications in communications intercepts that the flow of new infiltration groups from North Vietnam may resume in the near future. Some message traffic suggests that a period of refurbishment within the infiltration pipeline may be drawing to a close, and an incomplete [redacted] report notes the detection of a possible new group on the move within the North Vietnamese panhandle.

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Fragmentary reports intercepted during the past month have indicated that some of the stations along the infiltration route in North Vietnam and Laos were being relocated or were improving their facilities. These relocations were relatively minor and were usually described as being "within 45 minutes or less"--presumably of walking time--from the original site. It is possible that movements of this sort are undertaken periodically by infiltration stations for reasons of security, concealment, or sanitation.

Coincident with this possible improvement effort within the infiltration pipeline has been the absence of reports indicating that new units were being dispatched from North Vietnam. No reliable evidence of fresh troop deployments has been received since 22 March. We think it unlikely that the Communists have instituted some new communications system which is masking the formation of infiltrator groups in North Vietnam.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

The most probable explanation for the failure to detect any new units in the past four weeks is that the Communists have temporarily satisfied their troop requirements in the South and have instituted a standdown in new infiltration in order to refurbish the heavily used facilities along the trails from North Vietnam. If the enemy intends to renew large-scale offensive activity in South Vietnam early this summer, as is suggested by a growing body of evidence, it is likely that the deployment of new manpower from North Vietnam will soon be resumed.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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II. OTHER IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS

COMMUNIST CHINA

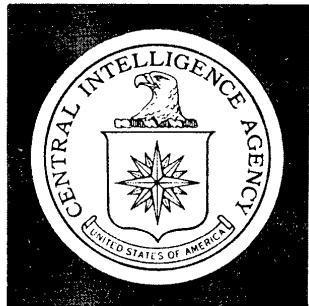
The ninth party congress has now been meeting for nearly three weeks, but Peking has still divulged precious little about what is going on. The "interim" communique issued on 14 April said the first two items on the agenda-- adoption of a new party constitution and endorsement of a "political report" by Mao's heir, Lin Piao--had been approved unanimously. However, no speeches delivered at the congress were made public.

The communique also announced that discussion of the third and final item on the agenda, the election of a new central committee, was to begin on 15 April. This is perhaps the most important and controversial matter before the congress. It may well be that the session has bogged down on the issue. Earlier, there had been numerous signs that the congress was to have finished its work before the middle of the month.

We expect to get a better line on developments at the congress after it adjourns, when at least some material, including the new constitution, a version of Lin's speech, and the new central committee list will almost certainly be published.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

Top Secret



The President's Daily Brief

21 April 1969
(Morning)

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

I. MAJOR PROBLEMS

VIETNAM

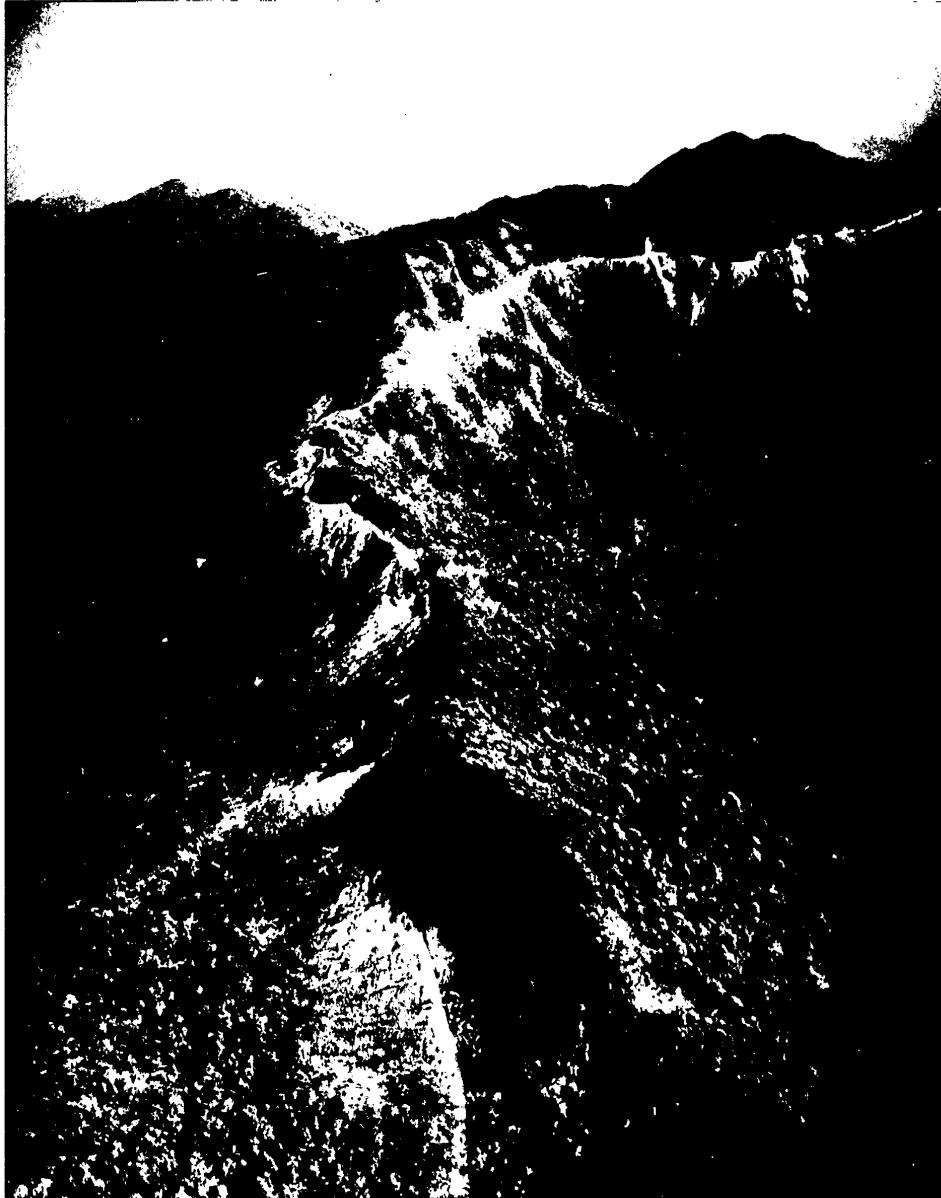
Ambassador Lam, South Vietnam's chief delegate to the Paris talks, says he has reason to believe that he could get the Liberation Front to respond positively to a bid for private contacts. In a talk with Mr. Habib in Paris late last week, Lam did not specify what "signs" he had from the other side. He claimed, however, that he had received "direct assurance" that contacts could be set up. Lam plans to seek detailed instructions about how to proceed when he sees President Thieu during a trip back to Saigon toward the end of the month.

Lam may be reacting to advice from enthusiastic intermediaries (like the French or a Vietnamese exile) instead of to a real feeler from the Communists. But even if there is substance to what he says, Lam obviously is in no hurry to follow up, despite Habib's urgings that he do so. Lam's desire for detailed instructions from Thieu may reflect only his usual caution, but it could be based on instructions to check with Saigon before setting up any kind of contact.

Lam's source may have also told him that the Communists would insist on seeing more of the GVN's political package. Soviet Ambassador Zorin made this point very strongly on 11 April, when he told Ambassador Lodge that the allies would have to come up with new proposals if we wanted the DRV and the Front to engage in private talks.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

Route 1036 in North Vietnam at the Laotian Border (Facing South)



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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

* * *

The North Vietnamese are working hard to expand their logistical network along the western edge of the Demilitarized Zone. They are extending two roads into the Laos panhandle which will connect with already completed roads coming up from the south. The Communists are also improving trails and waterways just west of the Demilitarized Zone. When completed, this expanded network will give the enemy a much more direct and less vulnerable means of moving supplies into key base areas supporting his forces in South Vietnam. (For some idea of the terrain the North Vietnamese must work in, see the photo on the reverse page.)

SOVIET AFFAIRS

Czechoslovak students apparently are planning nonviolent demonstrations against First Secretary Husak's central committee speech last week. This flies in the teeth of Husak's warning that no demonstrations will be permitted and that police action would be justified to end "illegal" public dissidence. The workers, who sympathize with the students, have said they will call a general strike if the regime takes harsh measures against nonviolent demonstrations.

We have nothing to confirm press reports that Husak will be going to Moscow in the next day or two.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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EUROPE

Although most Gaullists are still predicting victory in next Sunday's referendum, signs of uncertainty are beginning to crop up in the Gaullist camp. André Malraux told Counselor Blake on Friday that a poll taken the day before had showed that 44 percent of the populace was still undecided or planning to abstain.

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A high abstention rate would be worrisome, both because it might cut disastrously into De Gaulle's traditional rural majority and because it would undermine the credibility of the referendum even if the Gaullists won. We have later reports, however, that the indicated abstention rate is down to a little over 30 percent. This is a higher figure than De Gaulle would like, but we think it is one he could live with. He will probably try to reduce abstentions still further with his usual television appeal on the eve of the referendum.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

We also assume that some of the gloom being dispensed by French leaders is aimed at stimulating the Gaullist rank-and-file, whose prosecution of the referendum campaign has not been as vigorous as De Gaulle might wish.

MIDDLE EAST

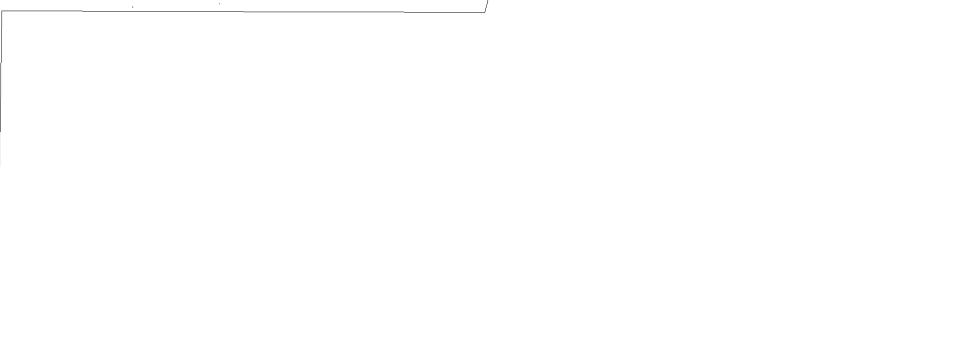
There is nothing significant to report.

II. OTHER IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS

KOREA

North Korea has made some defensive moves against the possibility of US retaliation.

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There still has been no authoritative comment from either Peking or Moscow on the incident. The North Koreans, in fact, have received full support from only three countries: East Germany, North Vietnam, and Cuba. Perhaps because they realize they are not getting much backing for their claims, they have not made much propaganda use of the incident so far.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

ARGENTINA-FRANCE

The Argentines contracted last November to buy 14 Mirage aircraft from France [redacted]

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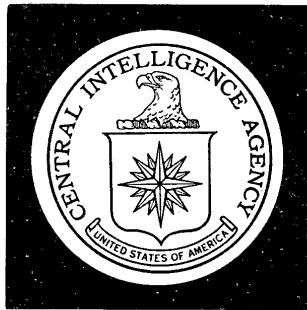
[redacted] President On-

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Argentina has not yet signed the contract, but air force officers are pressing him to do so. This purchase, coming after Peru's acquisition of Mirages last year, will make other South American countries--notably Brazil--even more eager to obtain supersonic aircraft.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

Top Secret



The President's Daily Brief

*21 April 1969
(Afternoon)*

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Top Secret

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

22 April 1969

LATE NOTES FOR THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF OF
21 APRIL 1969

I. MAJOR PROBLEMS

MIDDLE EAST

Israeli jets made a strike at dawn today against two radar stations in southern Jordan, according to a military spokesman in Tel Aviv. The radar sites were said to be under Egyptian command. Israeli planes also attacked Arab guerrilla bases in Jordan. (Reuters, 22 Apr)

SOVIET AFFAIRS

A Czechoslovak delegation, led by Gustav Husak, arrived in Moscow this morning to attend a CEMA meeting. (FBIS 10, 12, 22 Apr)

* * *

There is nothing significant to report on Vietnam or Europe.

II. OTHER IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS

KOREA

Kuznetsov's statement of concern yesterday to Ambassador Beam over US forces in the Sea of Japan, followed by Dobrynin's parallel approach here, was low-keyed. Although the Soviets apparently believe some comment is necessary, the nature of the representation reflects Moscow's effort not to sharpen existing tensions. (Central Intelligence Bulletin, 22 Apr)

PERU

Velasco is scheduled to address the nation this evening on an unannounced subject. The US Embassy in Lima comments that, in light of Velasco's two previous addresses which featured IPC matters, it is reasonable to suppose he may be planning another momentous announcement. [redacted]

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[redacted]
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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

some additional arguments to back up the Communist rejection of the concept of "two-track" negotiations. He said that Hanoi could not agree to the idea of US-DRV talks on military matters proceeding apart from Saigon-Front negotiations about a political settlement. He claimed that the US favored this approach as a means of "isolating" the DRV from the Front. According to Bo, North Vietnam would never let the Front face the Saigon government "alone."

Bo's remarks sound like another way of making the point Xuan Thuy made at the plenary session in Paris last week. Thuy argued that if the Communists accepted both US proposals for restoring the DMZ and for mutual troop withdrawal as well as Thieu's suggestions for a political settlement, Communist forces in South Vietnam would be left at the mercy of the allies.

This is one reason the Communists have rejected allied proposals to date, of course, but it probably is not their principal motivation in rejecting the US concept of parallel sets of negotiations. For the Communists, there is substance in the form of the talks. To them, the idea of four "equal and independent" delegations means that they have a claim, in the name of the Liberation Front, on a share of political power in South

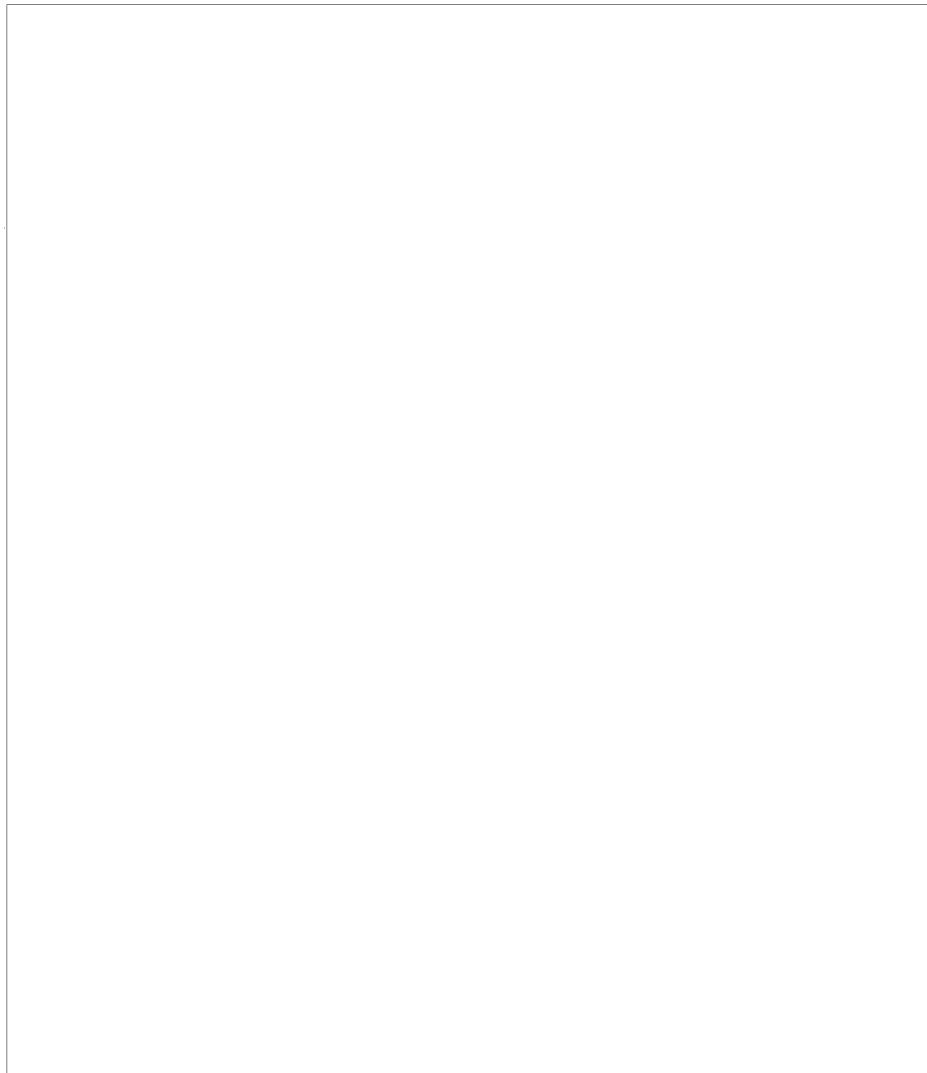
FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

Vietnam. That Hanoi wants four-way private talks was conveyed to Governor Harriman in January when Le Duc Tho stated that the US must accept the "reality" that there are four "belligerents" in the war. Tho went on to say that if a settlement is to be found, "we must sit together and in discussion both sides must take into account reality."

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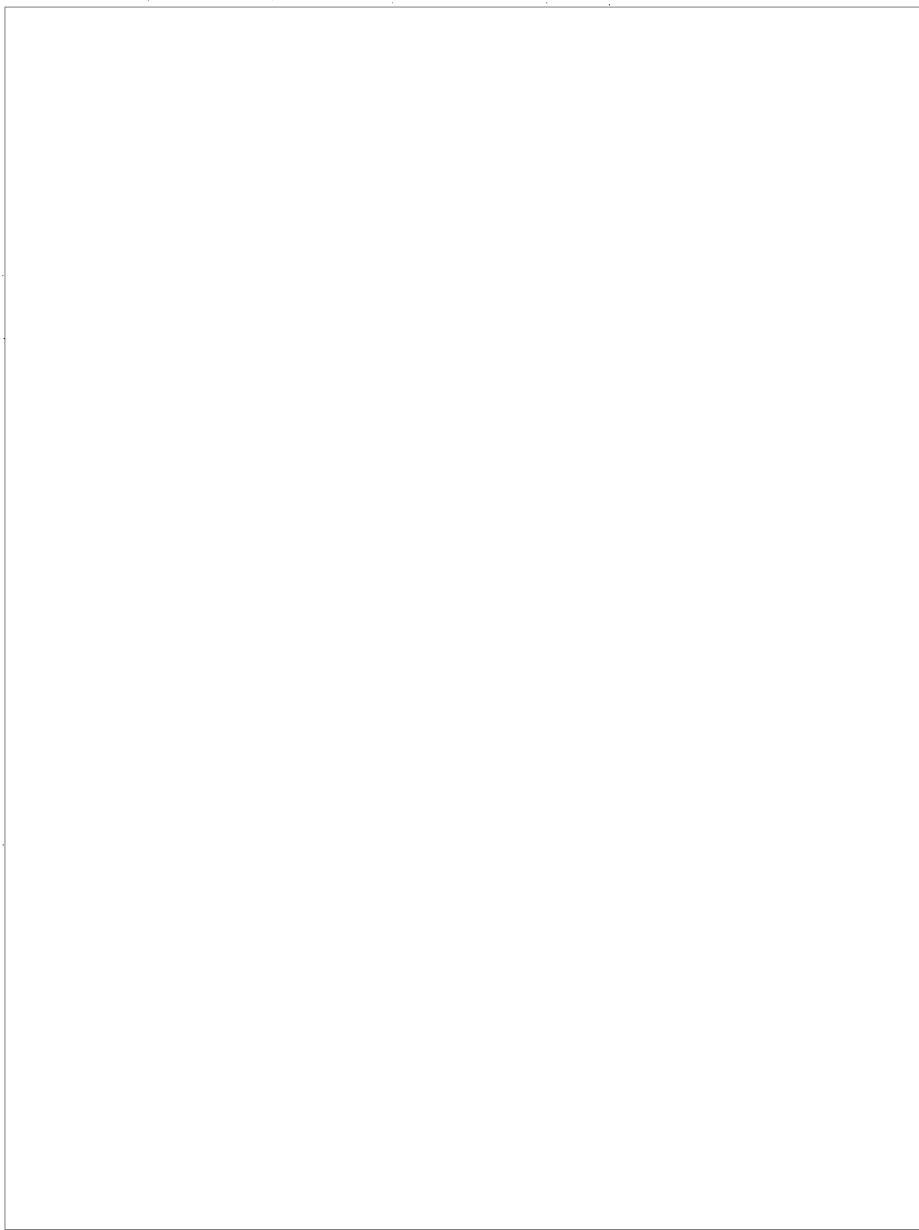
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SOVIET AFFAIRS

Students in Prague and elsewhere in western Czechoslovakia staged some nonviolent demonstrations today. The student parliament--representing the higher schools

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

of the capital--met today to discuss further actions, but no results have yet been reported. Some student leaders are suggesting a wait-and-see attitude toward Husak, and Husak in turn may attempt to play on this in hopes of gaining wider acceptance among student groups.

Husak in Czech means "goose" or "goose-boy." Some Prague students are carrying signs reading, "Husak is not the people, and the people are not geese."

MIDDLE EAST

There is nothing significant to report.

EUROPE

There is nothing significant to report.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

II. OTHER IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS

KOREA

Pyongyang is maintaining its silence on the US response to the shootdown.

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In Seoul, the government seems to be making a deliberate effort to quiet public concern over the incident.

The prime minister has assured Ambassador Porter that President Pak would not yield to domestic pressures for unilateral retaliation.

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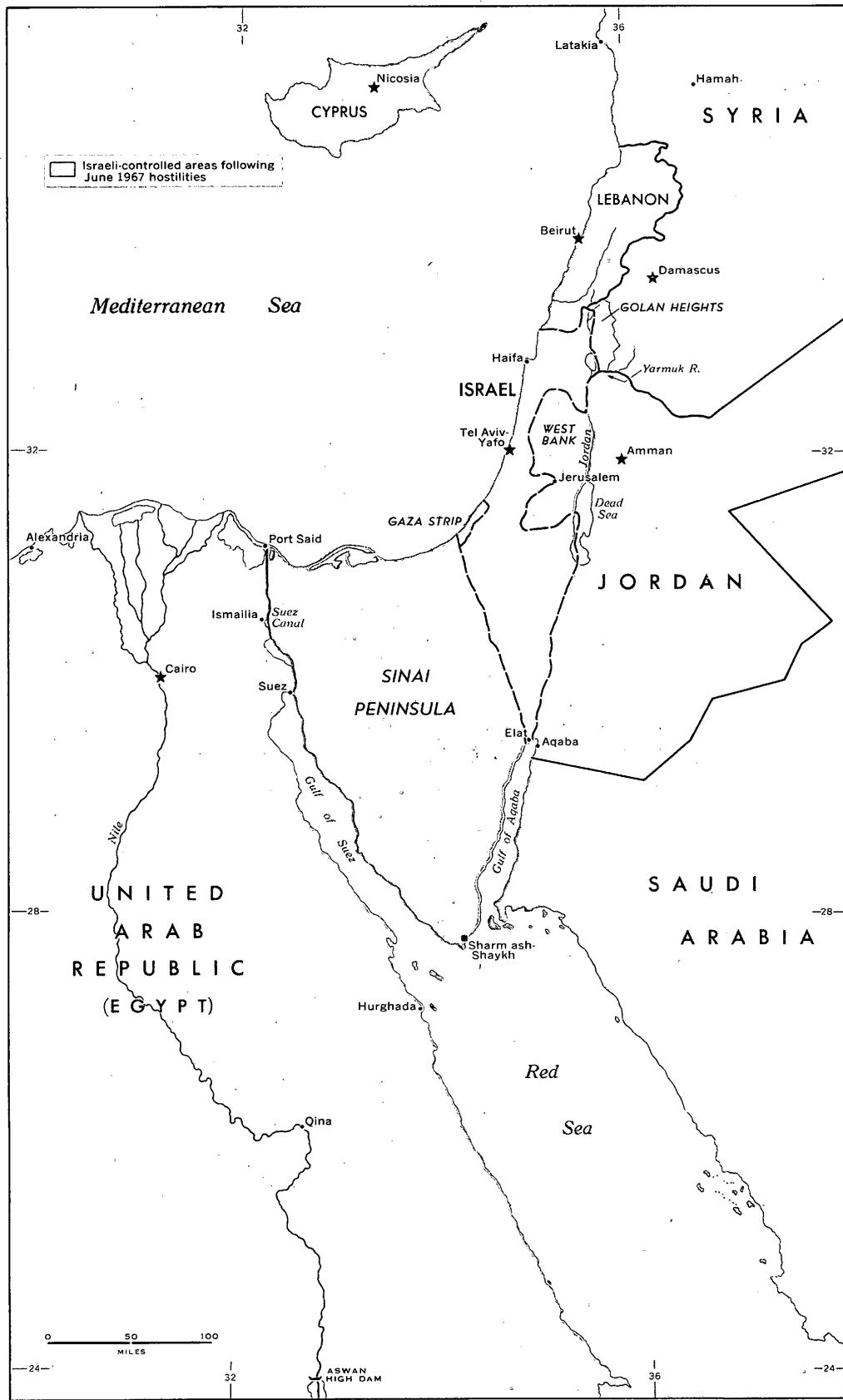
The President's Daily Brief

22 April 1969

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

23 April 1969

LATE NOTES FOR THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF OF
22 APRIL 1969

I. MAJOR PROBLEMS

EUROPE

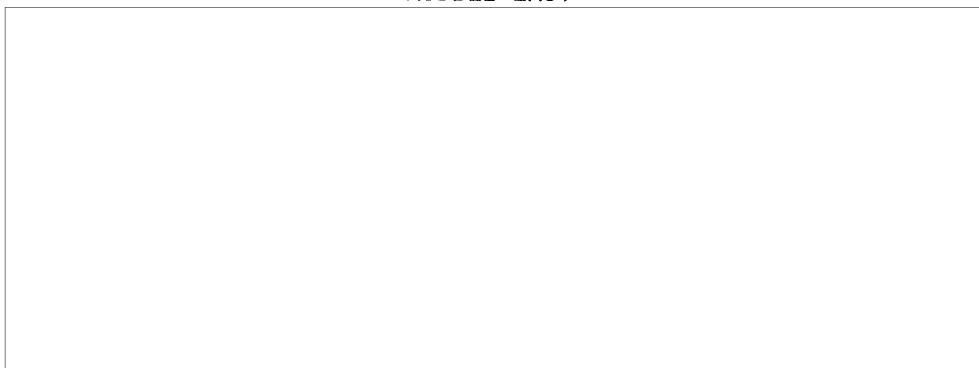
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MIDDLE EAST

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SOVIET AFFAIRS

Support for the chain of student sit-in strikes in Czechoslovakia appears to be dwindling and Rude Pravo today charged that the strikes were interference in the internal affairs of the Communist Party. (Reuters, 23 Apr)

* * *

There is nothing significant to report on Vietnam

II. OTHER IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS

PERU

President Velasco's address to the nation last night turned out to be something less than "momentous." It was defensive in nature, consisted largely of a general appeal for support, and introduced no new departures. He expressed the view that the IPC case was closed although his government was willing to remain open to a continuing dialogue. He did not refer to the fact that a Peruvian delegation is scheduled to leave for Washington this week to continue the talks. [redacted]

50X1

KOREA

The North Korean government today issued a statement on the EC-121 incident. The complete text is not yet in, but the summary would indicate an accusation that the US infiltration into North Korean air space by a "large-size reconnaissance plane" was raising a "new war clamor." The statement adds,

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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"Our counterattack and self-defense measures...are a legitimate exercise of sovereignty...which fully conforms to international law." (FBIS 17, 19, 20, 21, etc.)

Preliminary reports indicate that a North Korean guard post this morning fired an estimated 30 rounds of recoilless rifle fire and 300 rounds of machine gun fire across the DMZ at a position manned by troops of the South Korean 7th Division who returned the fire. The fight lasted 35 minutes and no casualties were reported. [redacted]

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

I. MAJOR PROBLEMS

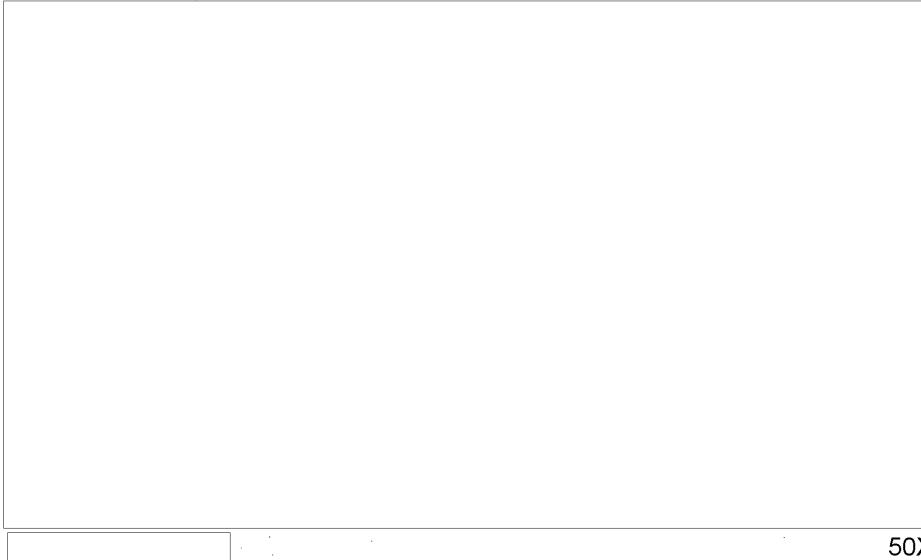
MIDDLE EAST

The Arabs and Israelis are both making it known that more serious military clashes may be imminent. The Israelis told the embassy in Tel Aviv yesterday that another terrorist attack on Elat was being readied. Perhaps to build a case for an "active defense" attack on Iraqi forces in Jordan, they have also claimed that Iraqi artillery shelled Israeli targets in Monday's exchange over the Jordanian border. Jordanian Prime Minister Rifai warned yesterday that if the Israelis continue to hit civilian targets, Jordan will have to retaliate in kind.

Warnings such as these are not to be taken as predictions of what are essentially unpredictable events. They are, however, accurate indices of the continuing rise in Arab-Israeli tensions.

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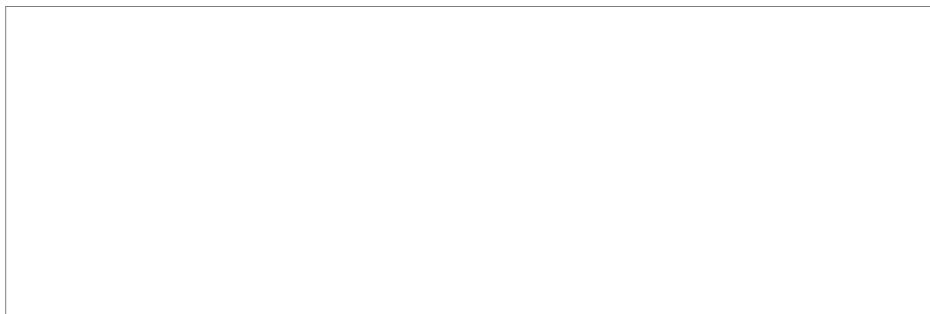


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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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SOVIET AFFAIRS

The CEMA (Council of Economic Mutual Assistance) summit meeting to be held tomorrow and Thursday in Moscow will present a show of unity, but is not likely to accomplish anything of major importance.

Most of the East European countries, all of whom will be represented by their party and government leaders, feel that CEMA, as presently organized, is unable to meet their technological, trade, and monetary requirements, and advocate major changes. Given the acrimonious history of recent CEMA meetings, no substantive economic agreement is likely and the best that can be hoped for is a public display of political solidarity. Thus, serious economic disagreements will be papered over for the sake of public appearance, and the Soviets may use the occasion to discuss with their allies the current Czechoslovak situation in the aftermath of last week's party changes in Prague.

At annex we give some background on CEMA's problems.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

EUROPE

Canada's NATO colleagues are deeply concerned over Ottawa's contemplated force reductions in Europe but hope to limit their effect. West German Foreign Minister Brandt believes that Canadian Foreign Minister Sharp and Defense Minister Cadieux both oppose Trudeau's decision and will be looking for arguments at the May Defense Planning Committee (DPC) meeting for a stretchout or reversal of the prime minister's action.

The Germans fear the gap left by a Canadian withdrawal could not be closed and that the decision might lead the US to reduce its troop commitments in Europe. The Dutch are also unhappy with the impending Canadian withdrawal and see little likelihood that West Europeans will be able to take up the slack.

Both NATO Secretary General Brosio and the Germans are seeking multilateral efforts, prior to the DPC meeting, to influence the scope, timing, and character of any force reductions by Canada. Such concerted action might have this effect, but it will almost certainly not deter Ottawa from reducing, perhaps substantially, its military forces in Europe.

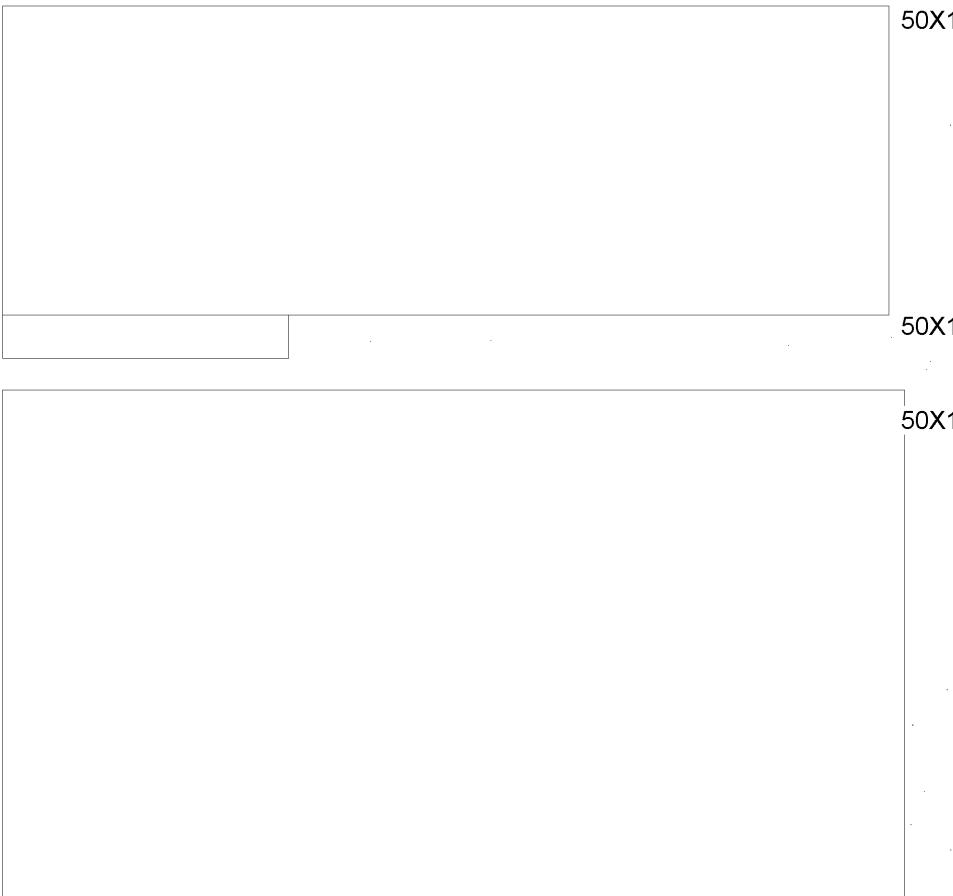
VIETNAM

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY



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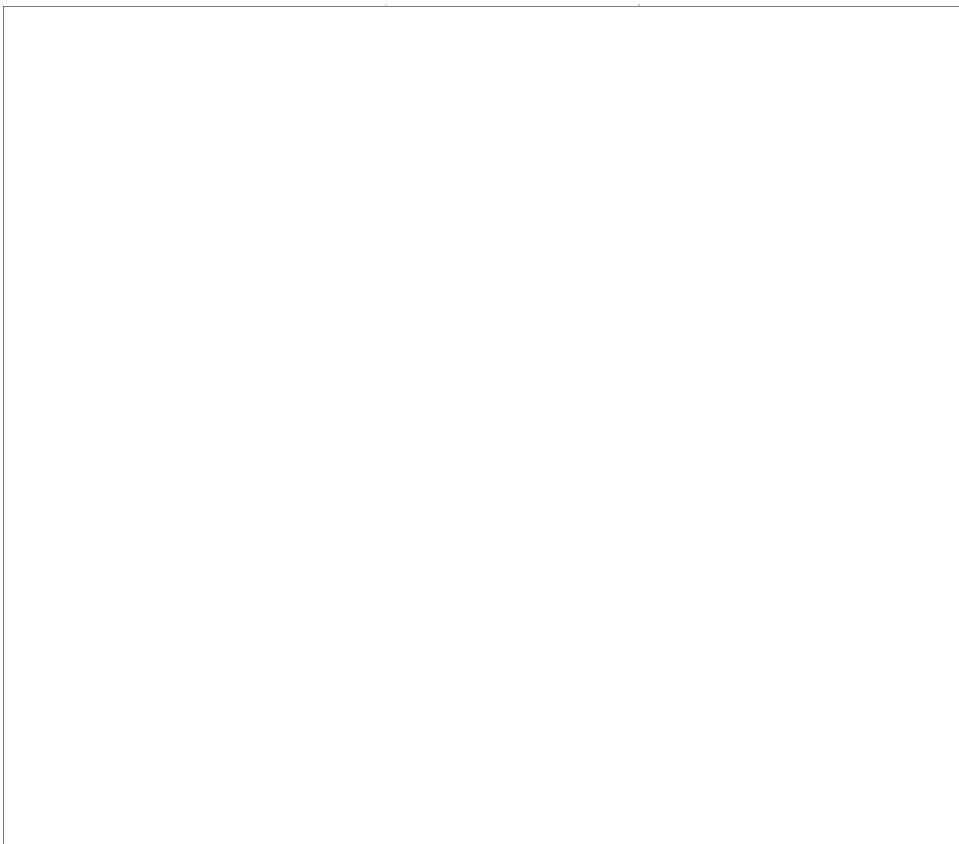
II. OTHER IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS

PERU

The Cerro de Pasco Mining Company fired twelve labor leaders yesterday after unions at the company's installations rejected a government order to resume work. Although the company's action was perfectly legal, it is likely to provoke an angry response that could spread to other US-owned companies. Given the current atmosphere in Peru, the government cannot be expected to go to the aid of US firms with much vigor.

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SOVIET UNION - INDIA



FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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Meanwhile, the Soviets have requested a long-range agreement for use of Indian port facilities for supply, maintenance, and repair of Soviet ships. Extensive military assistance to India gives the Soviets leverage in pressing for a port agreement. New Delhi showed no signs, however, of agreeing to any permanent ties which would compromise its policy of nonalignment, although ad hoc permission for individual ships to visit Indian ports will continue to be granted.

KOREA

Peking yesterday broke its week-old silence over the shootdown in an official news release attacking Moscow's "collusion" with the US after the incident. While denouncing the Soviets' assistance and cooperation during the past week as "active service provided to US imperialism," the article cited a "news report" source stating that the US plane "intruded" into North Korean airspace. The dispatch made no mention of who shot down the plane and managed to avoid any direct expression of support for North Korea's action.

Peking's statement contrasts with its announcement last year concerning the seizure of the Pueblo which promised China's "firm support" for Pyongyang's "just stand."

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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THE COUNCIL FOR MUTUAL ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE (CEMA)

CEMA was formed in 1949, during the period when Moscow--in the Stalinist pattern--was forcing heavy industrialization on all the East European countries. Parallel development of this sort, without any adaptation to market forces, fostered inefficient, competitive economies, rather than a complex of complementary trading partners.

The proper role of CEMA has long been a subject of dispute--at times acrimonious--among the member countries. For political reasons, the Soviet Union and Poland believe that the organization should promote greater economic cohesiveness. Czechoslovakia, East Germany, and Hungary are interested in increased cooperation, but are apprehensive lest Soviet domination increase. Rumania, at the other end of the scale, is extremely sensitive to any move that impinges on its sovereignty. Thus, it is not surprising that CEMA has been most effective in technical areas of cooperation among its members--such as the railway freight car pool and the integrated electric power network--where conflicts of national interest are minimal.

All the countries rely and will continue to rely on bilateral barter trade with one another--a major factor in the inefficiency of their economies. In their bilateral trade negotiations, the countries run head on into gross price distortions that result from artificially set prices which do not reflect costs or scarcity. There is no multilateral medium of exchange to settle trade imbalances. The

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CEMA International Bank for Economic Cooperation provides only a limited clearing service for trade imbalances which must still be settled by bilateral negotiations.

The Soviets have recently engaged in a series of bilateral talks with the East European countries on development of the five-year trade plans for 1971-75. These plans will also be considered at length in CEMA committees.

In its day-to-day work, CEMA has evolved into a service-type organization, currently housed in a new headquarters building in Moscow and employing personnel from all member states. It is a clearing house for administrative, technical, and financial guidance to its members in their bilateral trading arrangements with each other. The members have also not been averse to having CEMA's technical staff wrestle with such problems as pricing of items, joint investment projects, and problems of currency convertibility.

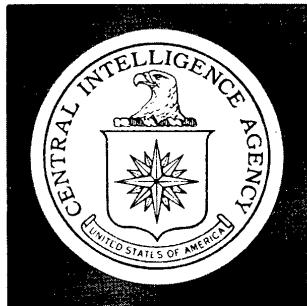
CEMA also explores means of achieving the benefits of large-scale production through cooperation, economies that are not possible within a single country. It is obvious, however, that no CEMA member, including the USSR, will surrender control over the development of its economy to an international authority. Areas where a start toward integration can be made are indeed limited. They might include more cooperation in research and development, selected industrial specialization, and increased enterprise-to-enterprise contacts. Multilateral planning probably will continue to be limited largely to coordination of trade requirements

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

specified in the national plans of the individual member countries.

CEMA members will find it difficult to break out of the vicious circle of their economic dependence on the USSR. They must buy the agricultural and industrial materials they need from the USSR because they cannot sell goods in the West. Their manufactures will not be able to compete significantly in Western markets until major changes are made in the Communist systems of economic management and unless specialization greatly increases among the CEMA members. Trade with the West will probably grow even more slowly during the 1970s than it has in the last 10 to 15 years.

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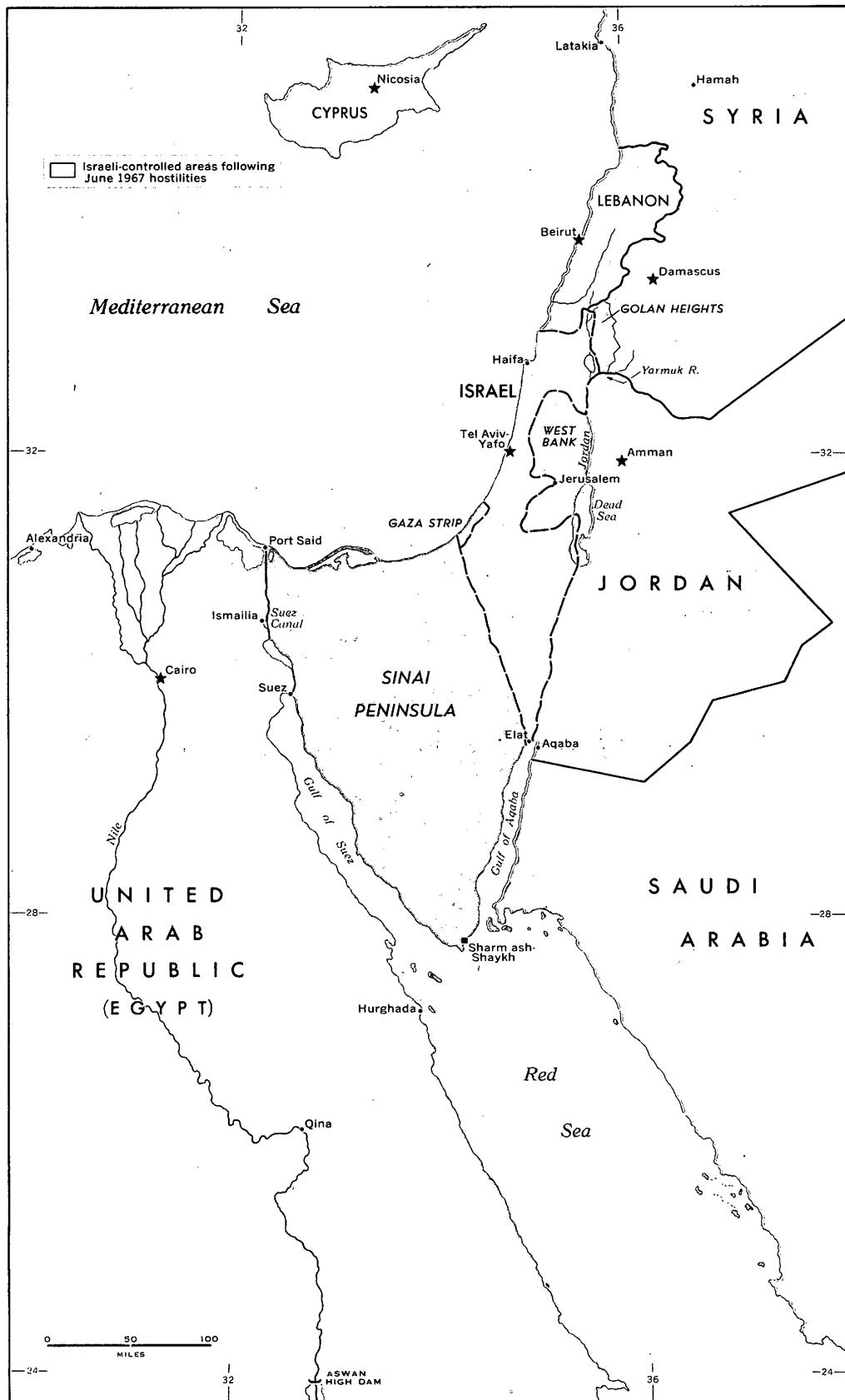
The President's Daily Brief

23 April 1969

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

24 April 1969

LATE NOTES FOR THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF OF
23 APRIL 1969

I. MAJOR PROBLEMS

MIDDLE EAST

In Beirut troops are still patrolling city streets and guarding key buildings including American University. The state of national emergency declared yesterday is to last until 27 April. In a clash between armed Palestinian refugees and security forces near Sidon yesterday, three refugees were killed and some 30 wounded. In a subsequent clash in Beirut, three more demonstrators were killed and 25 people wounded. There was another incident at Barr Illyas, to the east of Beirut near the Syrian border.

The disturbances have been triggered by the government's attempts to bring the fedayeen under better control. (Central Intelligence Bulletin, 24 Apr.)

* * *

In a lengthy conversation yesterday with Bergus, the senior US diplomatic representative in Cairo, Egyptian Foreign Minister Riad claimed the military were deeply concerned over the possibility of an imminent Israeli attack on Port Said. The Egyptian military also insist, according to Riad, that Israel is making extensive use of "rockets." The foreign minister described these as weapons having a range of between 5 and 15 kilometers--not "pinpoint weapons" but "area weapons" to supplement artillery. [redacted]

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EUROPE

Manac'h, the new French ambassador to Peking, says he found De Gaulle in a somber mood during his farewell call on the General Tuesday. When Manac'h asked De Gaulle about the

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referendum, De Gaulle replied that this might be their last meeting in Elysee. He said if the referendum results were not what he wanted, he would resign "immediately."

On the same day, veteran politician Guy Mollet told Manac'h that he was "absolutely sure" that the "no" vote would win Sunday.

De Gaulle will take small comfort from the latest results of Le Figaro's poll, which today for the first time has 53% of those who have made up their minds voting against the government's reform proposals. About one-third of those polled are still undecided, however. [redacted]

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There is nothing significant to report in any other areas.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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I. MAJOR PROBLEMS

MIDDLE EAST

The Israelis have once again accumulated a sizable backlog of scores to settle with the Egyptians. They always carefully calibrate their moves to balance the account, but it is difficult to predict the lengths to which their retaliation will go this time. The current state of affairs along the Suez Canal, however, is reminiscent of the situation last fall when the Israelis finally made a helicopter raid deep into Egypt.

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VIETNAM

There is further evidence that Hanoi is prepared to wait out some new US effort to break the current impasse in Paris. Ha Van Lau told the French on 18 April that he knew of no plans for Le Duc Tho to return soon and discounted the idea that the North Vietnamese Politburo member would

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come back with new instructions designed to get the ball rolling. Lau's line was that Tho would return only after our side had opened a way to progress in the talks.

Soviet Ambassador Zorin gave even clearer evidence of Hanoi's current waiting game in a talk with Ambassador Lodge on 21 April. He said that Moscow was not going to act as a go-between unless the US came up with "something new." He claimed again that the Vietnamese Communists were ready to move into "serious" talks, but only if the process started with new steps from the US side. Zorin bluntly asserted that if we did not take the first steps ourselves, "there is no way out."

Zorin refused to say what Hanoi might do if the US withdrew some troops. He continued to insist that we must do "something" if we wanted progress, but he did not specify what. In the past he has suggested everything from unilateral troop withdrawal to pressuring Saigon to "reform" itself.

SOVIET AFFAIRS

Press reports that the Soviets may have canceled all or part of the military phases of the Moscow May Day parade could be correct. Western attachés report that the military equipment assembled at Moscow's Central Airport for the parade has not been seen since the night of 8-9 April. The equipment--including missiles, tanks, and artillery--had arrived on 3 April. Night rehearsals for the parade should

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have begun in Red Square this week, but so far only dismounted marching elements have been seen.

One possible explanation for what may be a sharp break with tradition could be Moscow's wish to play down the military segment of the parade as a way of promoting a peaceful image. The seeming change of signals between 3 and 9 April suggests that the reason for the switch in plans--if indeed there has been one--may lie in some fairly fast breaking development.

EUROPE

There is nothing significant to report.

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II. OTHER IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS

NIGERIA

The federal government is claiming the capture of Ojukwu's capital at Umuahia. We have no confirmation yet. If the claim proves accurate, this would be less than a decisive point in the civil war. Ojukwu had already moved his capital elsewhere. Biafran forces are intact, and the arms supply airfields are still functioning. Arms are pouring into Biafra at a very high rate, in fact.

Nevertheless, it is clear that the federal side is gaining in its war of attrition. Even Ojukwu's backers in Paris seem to think the Biafrans will be overrun in the next few months, although they (and we) believe Ojukwu's Ibo tribesmen will then revert to guerrilla warfare.

KOREA

Examination of the full text of Pyongyang's first official statement on the EC-121 incident shows a generally cautious and defensive stance. The North Koreans clearly have been playing for time in which to assess US intentions. The defensive tone of the statement suggests that North Korean leaders are well aware of their weak international position and are fully conscious of the hazards in any further military provocations on their part.

The North Koreans make an attempt to link the EC-121 with the Pueblo affair, but the weakness of their case is evident in their failure to cite a precise location for the

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alleged intrusion of the US plane. The omission of details contrasts with the elaborate attempt to "document" the Pueblo's violation of North Korean waters.

In an obvious attempt to play on foreign uneasiness regarding US intentions, the statement claims there is no "guarantee" that US flights "will not intrude again." The statement further seeks to cast doubt on US intentions by warning that the US will exploit any North Korean defensive reaction as a pretext to "commit full-scale attack" which may lead to another "total war" in Korea.

The general posture and deployment of North Korean forces and air defense units is consistent with a decision to lie low for the time being.

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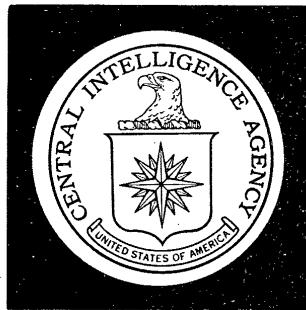
Seoul appears to be trying to keep in step with the US.



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25 April 1969

LATE NOTES FOR THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF OF
24 APRIL 1969

I. MAJOR PROBLEMS

MIDDLE EAST

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The Israelis say they killed six members of an Egyptian commando party this morning as it was trying to land on the east bank of the Suez Canal.

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Lebanese Premier Karame announced his resignation yesterday during a parliamentary debate in which he was criticized for his part in the suppression of pro-fedayeen demonstrators. If his resignation is accepted, there are unlikely to be any volunteers for his job and the crisis could be a long one.

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SOVIET AFFAIRS

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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I. MAJOR PROBLEMS

VIETNAM

Despite Saigon's desire to improve its relations with Paris, the South Vietnamese have their guard up against French attempts to inject their views into the Paris talks. The South Vietnamese regard the French as more sympathetic toward Hanoi than toward Saigon; a surprisingly heavy-handed demarche by the French consul general in Saigon has sharpened their suspicions.

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[redacted]

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fed grossly misleading reports on US casualties. These false reports may well contribute to Hanoi's view that time is on its side in the negotiations.

According to a captured enemy post-action report, Communist forces killed 47 US troops in a recent engagement. In fact, there were no US deaths in that action. [redacted]

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The Communist leaders are most reluctant to admit that the allied situation may be significantly better than their reporting pictures it. [redacted]

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MIDDLE EAST

[redacted]

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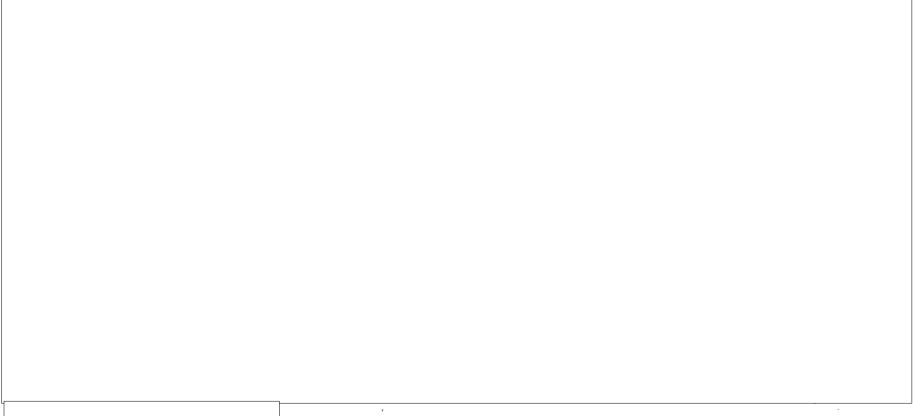
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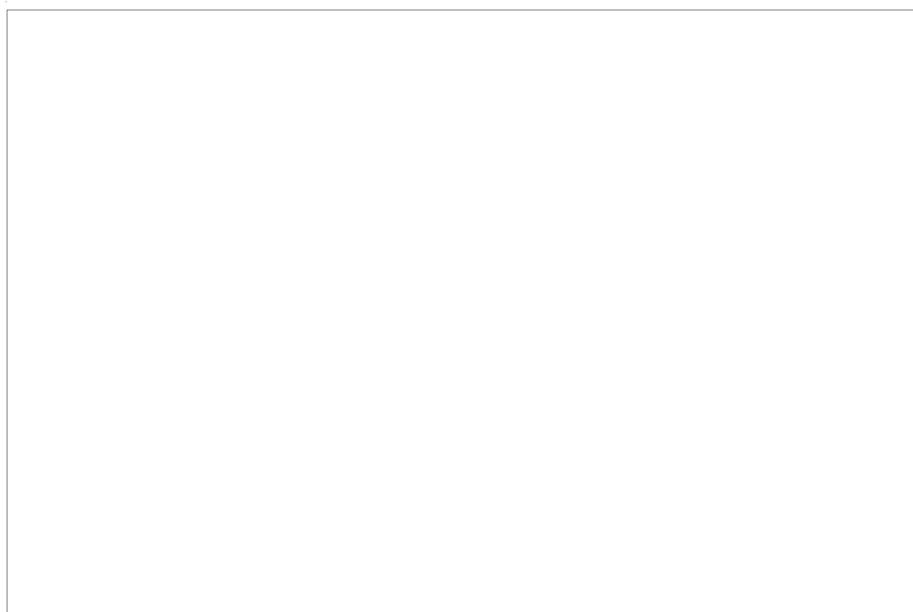
Fighting between Lebanese security forces and pro-fedayeen demonstrators broke out again today. The number of people killed now stands at 12 and the number injured at almost 80.

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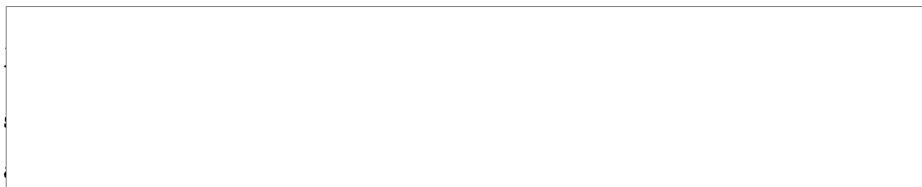
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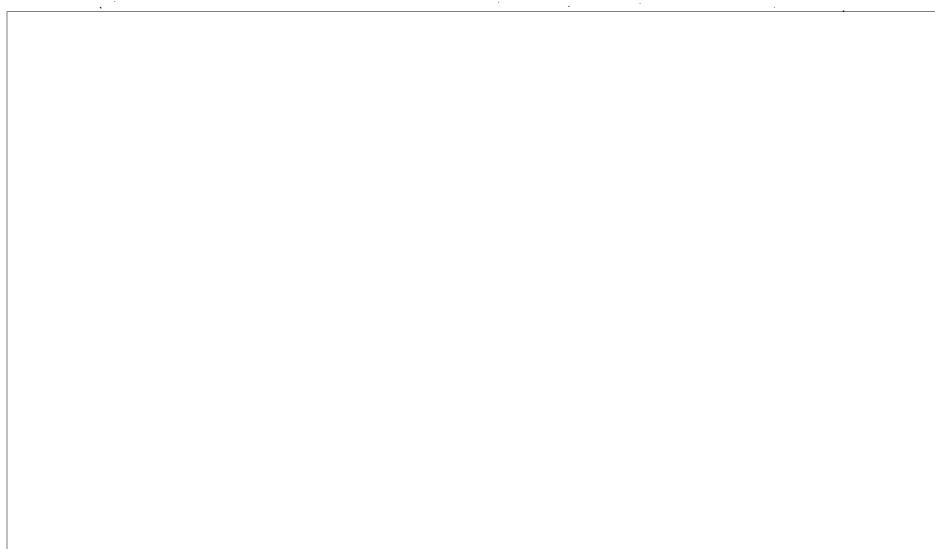
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EUROPE

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SOVIET AFFAIRS

There is nothing significant to report.

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II. OTHER IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS

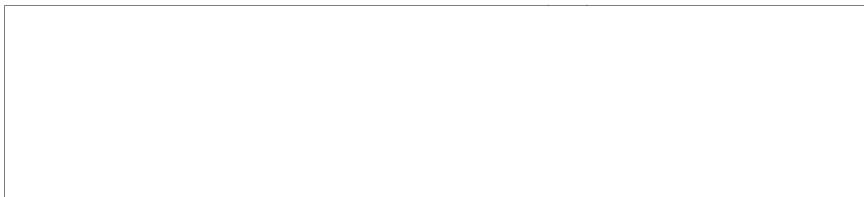
THAILAND-CAMBODIA

Thailand's foreign minister has welcomed a Cambodian initiative to hold formal discussions on re-establishing diplomatic relations. Although over the years there have been a number of false starts, this time substantive hurdles seem minimal, and Sihanouk--in line with his current effort to widen his diplomatic options--appears more forthcoming. There are still some personal animosities that will have to be smoothed over before a rapprochement can take place.

COMMUNIST CHINA

Initial accounts of the 9th Party Congress, which adjourned today, are bland and uninformative. The new central committee has 279 full and alternate members, compared with 170 in the last one formed in 1956. The 24 people named as appearing at the final session have been heading leadership turnouts in Peking for months. Chairman Mao, his designated successor Lin Piao, and Premier Chou En-lai were present in their usual order.

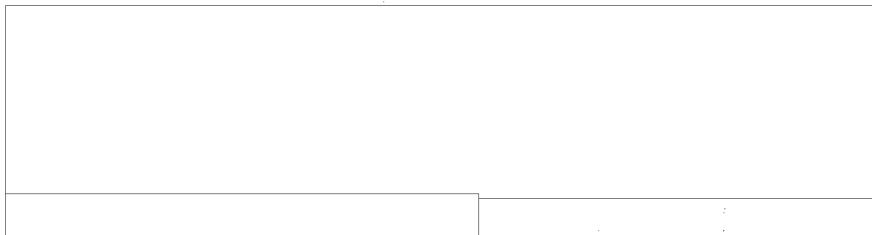
GREECE



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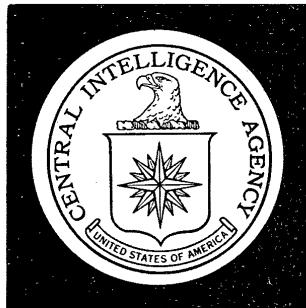


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The President's Daily Brief

25 April 1969

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

26 April 1969

LATE NOTES FOR THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF OF
25 APRIL 1969

I. MAJOR PROBLEMS

MIDDLE EAST

President Hilu is reported to have accepted the resignation of Prime Minister Karami, who still maintains he cannot retain the support of his fellow Muslims if he accepts Hilu's decision to confront the fedayeen. Hilu, however, is convinced that, if he does not come to a showdown with the fedayeen, Lebanon's sovereignty and freedom of action will be destroyed. He believes any concessions to the fedayeen would only preserve their presence for a later confrontation at a less favorable time. If he cannot find another Muslim leader willing to take on what Karami has rejected, Hilu, as a last resort, is prepared to turn the government over to the army.

(Central Intelligence Bulletin, 26 Apr)

VIETNAM

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There is nothing significant to report on other areas.

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I. MAJOR PROBLEMS

EUROPE

In a short, emotion-charged TV appeal to the nation today, De Gaulle defended the substance of the reforms he has proposed and made clear that he would resign immediately if the referendum on them failed. He warned that a negative vote would lead to "disastrous upheaval" and told Frenchmen that they held the "destiny of France" in their hands. De Gaulle neither lectured nor threatened but spoke in a fatherly tone.

His performance was impressive, but he is fighting an uphill battle. Polls released on the eve of his speech by the French Institute of Public Opinion, which has a very good record, show that 51 percent of those who have made up their minds will vote "no" in the referendum. The percentage of those who either are undecided or plan to abstain has dropped sharply from 44 percent last week to 21 percent in the current poll. Since the abstention rate in past referenda has run over that, it would appear that most of the 21 percent do not plan to vote and there remain very few undecided voters.

If De Gaulle loses the referendum, Alain Poher, the 60-year-old president of the Senate, will take over as interim president until new elections are held, not sooner than 20 and not later than 35 days after the office is vacant. Poher, an anti-Gaullist centrist who was a political unknown until his recent election to the Senate presidency [redacted]

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[redacted] He supports Britain's bid

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for entry into the Common Market and has called for an accelerated pace of economic and political integration in Europe.

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Speculation that De Gaulle may resign pushed the dollar value of the franc last week to its lowest level since November, despite stringent exchange controls. These pressures were reinforced on 16 April by the rise in the West German discount rate, which triggered a round of increases in German interest rates.

The Bank of France has lost over \$400 million in foreign exchange during the past two weeks in its efforts to support the franc. As during the financial crisis last November, the British pound also suffered, but coordinated action by the major central banks substantially reduced pressure on the mark and sterling.

VIETNAM

Prime Minister Huong has strong doubts that South Vietnam's politicians will be able to join together with Thieu to form a stable and cohesive nationalist political organization. He told Ambassador Bunker Thursday that since Thieu made his appeal for national unity, the politicians have been showing the same old interest in the spoils of office. On the other hand, he does not believe these politicians and their coteries are likely to play a critical role in the coming political competition with the Communists. Rather, he believes, the contest will be decided by

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the actual performance of the government on behalf of the people.

Despite Thieu's current attempts to lure some political leaders into a new progovernment confederation, he probably is depending primarily on the government's own apparatus of cadre at the village and district level to get the job done in the coming months.

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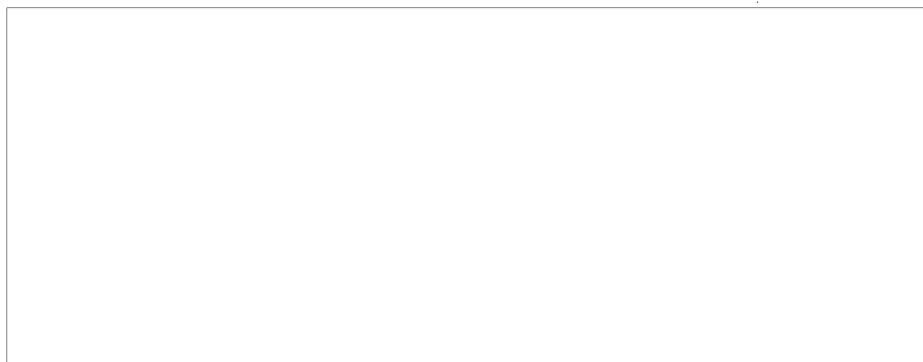
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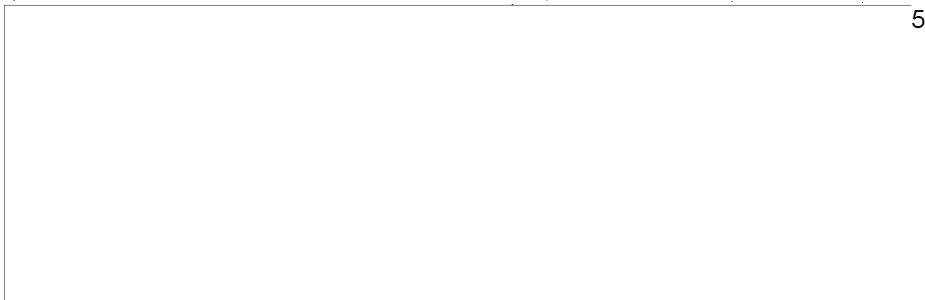
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SOVIET AFFAIRS



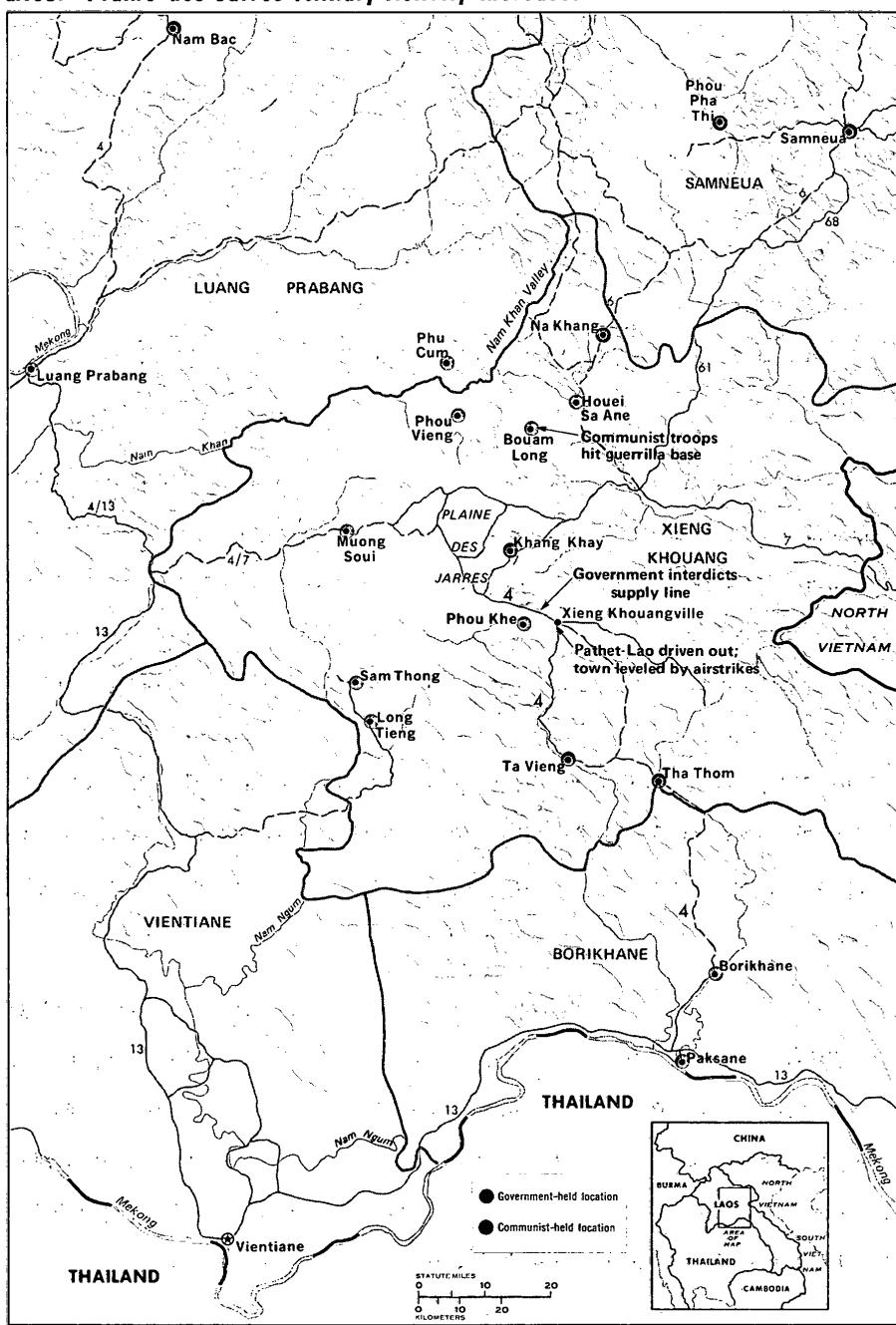
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MIDDLE EAST

There is nothing significant to report. Tensions in Lebanon, along the Israeli-Jordanian border, and along the Suez Canal are all unusually high.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

LAOS: Plaine des Jarres Military Activity Increases



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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

II. OTHER IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS

LAOS

The government's counteroffensive south of the Plaine des Jarres continues to make progress. Government forces have interdicted traffic along Route 4, a critical Communist supply line in southern Xieng Khouang Province, and have driven Pathet Lao military and civilian elements from Xieng Khouangville. The town itself has been leveled by US and Lao air strikes.

The enemy, still reacting cautiously, has so far made only a desultory effort to force the guerrillas from positions near Route 4.

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Although the counteroffensive has caught the enemy off guard and has helped bolster the morale of government forces, it has not achieved its principal purpose, forcing the enemy to divert troops from operations in northern Xieng Khouang. The Communists there are applying fresh pressure.

North Vietnamese and Pathet Lao troops hit the government guerrilla base at Bouam Long on three consecutive nights but were unable to dislodge the defenders.

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COMMUNIST CHINA

A preliminary assessment of the new central committee list suggests that it is a compromise product, with divergent interest groups well represented. There are no important casualties among strong supporters of the Cultural Revolution; on the other hand a few victims of Red Guard attacks have been resurrected. Provincial military and political leaders are on the list in force, but officials from the central government ministries also are fairly well represented.

The increased size of the new committee suggests not only that it is the result of compromise but that it will be too unwieldy to play a major political role. The presence of a number of political nonentities will tend to reduce further the political significance of the committee.

The new central committee should meet shortly to name a reconstituted politburo. At that time a new secretariat and other important administrative appointments may be announced.

JAPAN

With the approach of "Okinawa Day" on Monday, the police have made elaborate preparations to contain countrywide disorders planned by extremists. It is by no

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means certain they will be able to keep the lid on completely, particularly in Tokyo. Several student groups are said to be planning to use more violent tactics than usual in attacks against government offices and the US Embassy over the next few days.

PAKISTAN

The Yahya regime is doggedly pursuing the line it laid out for itself after the coup: no provocative security measures, a campaign against the rampant corruption of the Ayub days, and conciliatory gestures toward some opposition groups, notably labor. It is now allowing a certain amount of political activity; politicians and students, especially in East Pakistan, are beginning to find their voices again. But the regime clearly intends to monitor their efforts closely, and the muzzle it has imposed on the press makes their pronouncements all but inaudible to most of the region's inhabitants.

There is some indication that Yahya is serious when he says he does not want to remain president for more than a year or so. It is still questionable, however, whether his low-key efforts to set Pakistan on its feet again could accomplish their aim in any time frame, much less in one or two years. Yahya has made no discernible progress with the problem which overshadows all others, the alienation of East Pakistan.

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The President's Daily Brief

28 April 1969
(Afternoon)

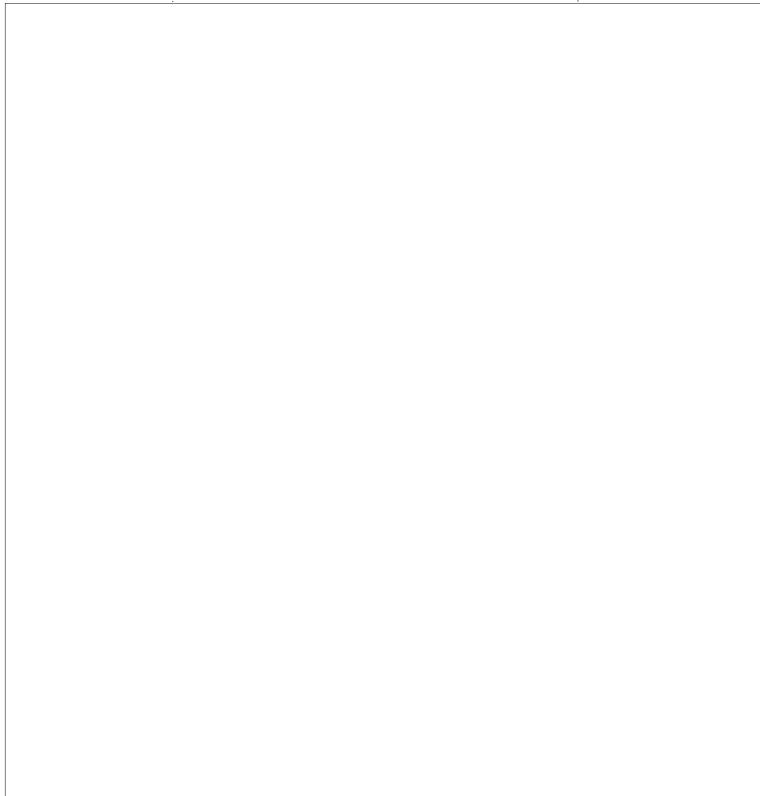
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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

29 April 1969

LATE NOTES FOR THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF OF
28 APRIL 1969

I. MAJOR PROBLEMS

EUROPE

Pompidou announced his candidacy this morning. (FBIS
12, 29 Apr)

MIDDLE EAST

Israeli aircraft this morning attacked Jordanian and
terrorist positions south of Lake Tiberias, according to an
Israeli announcement. [redacted]

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The crisis in Lebanon continues unabated. The embassy
in Beirut reports that:

--Former Premier Karami is willing to try again, but only
if he can achieve some kind of national consensus on the
terrorists. If Karami cannot put together another government,
President Hilu's only alternative is to call in the army.

--The army seems to be backing away from its determina-
tion to rein in the fedayeen.

--The Fatah terrorist organization seems willing to ex-
plore the possibility of a modus vivendi with the Lebanese,
but a rival, Syrian-supported organization remains intransigent.
The Lebanese suspect that even Fatah's apparent reasonableness
is only tactical and temporary.

--The fedayeen in Lebanon now number 1,200-1,500.

Israeli officials yesterday told an embassy officer that
the crisis had been triggered by the efforts of "leftists,"
with Syrian backing, to destroy the Lebanese political system.
They expressed concern that the crisis could spread to Jordan

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

if Lebanon does not hold the line.

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There is nothing significant to report on Vietnam or
Soviet Affairs.

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II. OTHER IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS

BOLIVIA

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

I. MAJOR PROBLEMS

EUROPE

So far, only Francois Mitterand has thrown his hat into the French presidential ring. Pompidou is still silent, and Giscard d'Estaing stopped short of declaring at his press conference. Giscard did say, however, that he would not support anyone who had been involved in the political battles of the past year, which we take to mean that he will not back Pompidou. Despite many rumors to the contrary in Paris, we tend to doubt that De Gaulle intends to run again.

Interim President Poher in his initial address called for unity but neither announced his own candidacy nor set a date for the election. We will report any further developments in tomorrow morning's late notes.

* * *

The West German cabinet last week once again postponed a decision on the nonproliferation treaty, and the treaty's opponents are saying openly that there is now no chance of a German signature before next fall's elections. Foreign Minister Brandt apparently has realized that both his party's vote totals and the treaty's prospects could be damaged if the treaty (which is none too popular in West Germany) becomes a major campaign issue. He therefore has recently been pushing less strenuously for early signature.

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VIETNAM

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MIDDLE EAST

The Israeli press is exultant over De Gaulle's resignation. [redacted] Israeli officials [redacted]
[redacted] satisfaction is obvious. They do not expect a sharp change in French policy, but they clearly anticipate that Israel will get a fuller hearing in Paris now.

Their optimism seems justified. The French Government probably will not make any major policy changes until after

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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the elections, but none of De Gaulle's potential successors
is likely to be as rigid toward the Israelis as the General
was.

[redacted] 50X1

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[redacted] 50X1

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The Arabs and Israelis meanwhile continued to exchange
fire on all fronts.

SOVIET AFFAIRS

There is nothing significant to report.

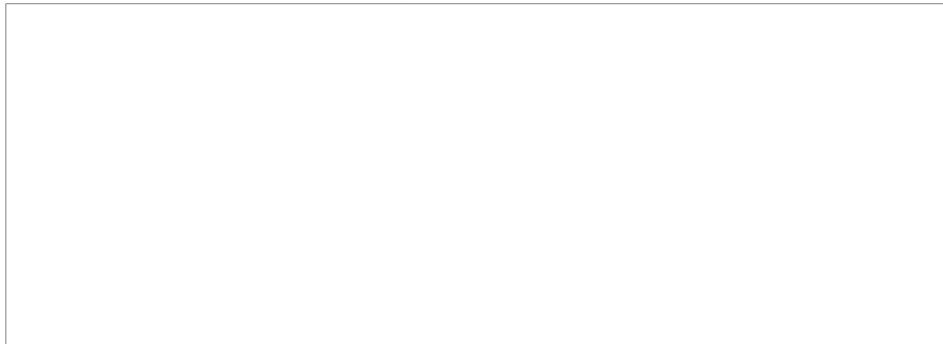
FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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II. OTHER IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS

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PAKISTAN



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COMMUNIST CHINA

The composition of the 25-member politburo announced today fails to reveal a decisive victory for any of the competing interest groups in Peking. The listing of the members in the Chinese version of alphabetical order successfully conceals their relative ranking, but the body appears to be essentially a compromise product balancing divergent political interests. Most of Mao's more radical supporters who played major roles in the Cultural Revolution are members. Their presence, however, is offset by an infusion of military men, some of whom were severely criticized early in the Cultural Revolution. This attests both to an attempt to legitimize the army's rôle in the party and to its importance in running the state. A major surprise in the new ruling body is the absence of virtually all of the central government ministers who served in the previous politburo; this may suggest some diminution of Premier Chou En-lai's political strength.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

Lin Piao's "political report" also suggests that the congress failed to achieve a consensus on several difficult problems which have plagued the leadership in recent months. Lin adopted a vague and rhetorical approach to the problems China faces in the post-congress period and avoided delineating specific programs. The prime policy issues discussed in detail were the vexed question of how to deal with officials criticized during the Cultural Revolution and the need for careful economic planning and renewed attention to increasing production. He prescribed the "rehabilitation" of large numbers of cadres, suggesting that a considerable number of middle and lower level government and party officials will be restored to duty.

The report touched relatively little on foreign policy. Most of Lin's remarks were given over to generalized denunciations of the United States and the Soviet Union. In this context, Lin continued to maintain Peking's general silence on the war in Vietnam, which was barely mentioned in passing.

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The President's Daily Brief

28 April 1969
(Morning)

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

I. MAJOR PROBLEMS

EUROPE

The French public has reacted calmly to the defeat of the referendum (only the second of 18 referenda and plebescites held in France since 1793 to fail) and to De Gaulle's subsequent resignation. Although a few isolated outbreaks of violence have occurred, neither government supporters nor opposition forces have tried to provoke major civil disorders. In any event, there are elaborate security plans to control any outburst.

The resignation of De Gaulle after almost 11 years in office will open a period of intense political maneuvering and bargaining. Although no formal candidacies have been announced, a Gaullist and a centrist are likely to be the prime contenders in the presidential election which must be held between 20 and 35 days from today. Senate President Alain Poher, who will serve as interim president until the election is held, is almost certain to be a candidate and will be backed by centrists and some leftists. The other probable candidates are former prime minister Georges Pompidou, who is certain to be the choice of most Gaullists, Independent Republican leader Valery Giscard d'Estaing and leftist leader Francois Mitterrand. The Communists have no candidate at the moment and the leaders of the party have declared that they seek an alliance of all parties of the left.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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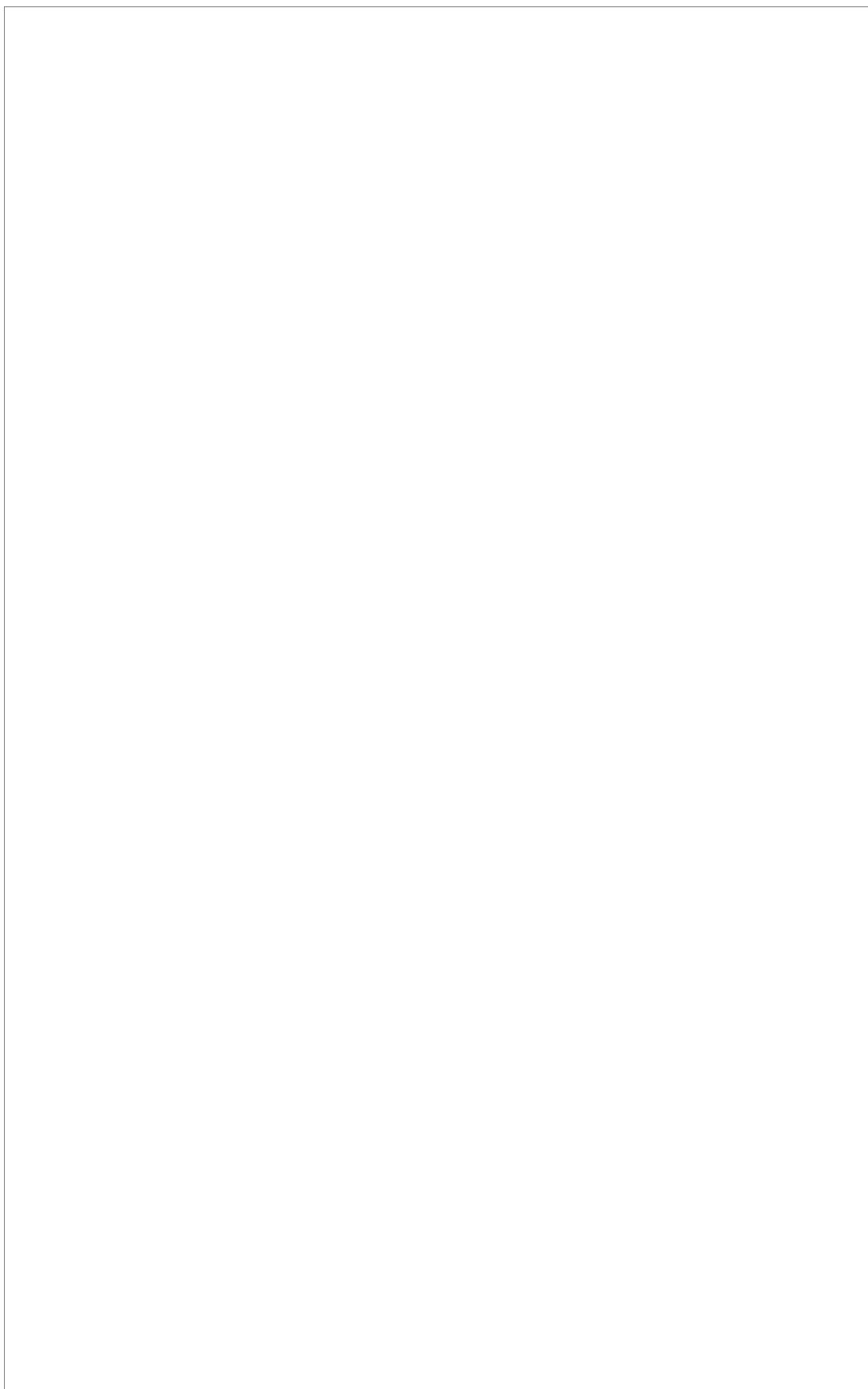
During the interim period until the election, no basic domestic or foreign policy changes are likely. Although Poher is an anti-Gaullist centrist, neither Prime Minister Couve de Murville nor any of his cabinet has resigned and Poher does not have the constitutional power to remove them without their consent. Furthermore, Poher is more likely to focus his attention on the election campaign rather than policy decisions.

In the referendum itself, slightly over 80 percent of the electorate voted and almost 53 percent of these voted "no." Interior Minister Marcellin announced that the votes from the overseas territories cannot affect the outcome.

VIETNAM

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MIDDLE EAST

The fedayeen have been increasing their pressure on the Jordanian Government and this raises the risk of a major clash between them.

Various fedayeen organizations have been preparing for an all-out confrontation with King Husayn since a joint communiqué of 15 April repudiated his six-point peace plan, and Fatah remains on an alert status. Furthermore, Prime Minister Rifai tentatively agreed last week to permit Egyptian-based personnel of the military branch of the Palestine Liberation Organization to enter Jordan. Rifai stipulated, however, that the transfer would require Husayn's agreement after he returned from London yesterday.

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It is doubtful that the King will agree to allow this influx of troops, inasmuch as the fedayeen already constitute virtually a state within a state in Jordan, and more units would further jeopardize his position. Husayn is expected to try to enforce stronger controls over the fedayeen short of an all-out clash. Even minor efforts to limit their operations, however, will almost certainly meet with resistance from the terrorists.

SOVIET AFFAIRS

As predicted, the communiqué issued Saturday at the conclusion of the CEMA summit session was very bland, indicating that few decisions were taken and major disagreement on economic unity continues. Displaying unusual sensitivity, Pravda yesterday took pains to denounce Western press reports that "irreconcilable contradictions and incompatible interests" exist among the CEMA members. The writer did not completely deny the reports, however, saying only that the session took place in an atmosphere of cordiality and that decisions of "major importance" were adopted unanimously. The communiqué did not even mention economic integration or creation of a convertible currency for multilateral trade relations--two of the major issues.

The session lasted four days, rather than the anticipated two, indicating the probability that the nations stuck to their previous positions on economic matters and that a variety of political issues were also discussed.

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II. OTHER IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS

BOLIVIA

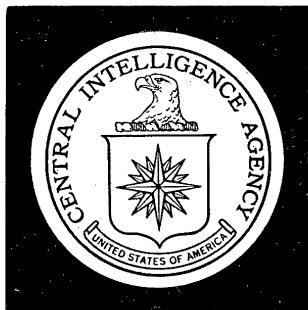
In the aftermath of President Rene Barrientos' fiery death in a helicopter crash yesterday, Vice President Luis Adolfo Siles Salinas has been sworn in as president and the armed forces have "guaranteed" the constitutional succession.

The armed forces remain the key to political power in Bolivia. They probably will back Siles for the moment but could oust him should he attempt to assert any independence. Armed Forces Commander in Chief Alfredo Ovando is on his way to Bolivia from the United States. Ovando had been considered the probable winner in the presidential election scheduled for July 1970. He may now decide to move before the election.

There is no evidence that the Barrientos crash was anything but an accident. Siles has ordered a suspension of all public and private activities for three days and a period of national mourning for thirty days. La Paz and Cochabamba (where the accident occurred) are calm with no evidence of hostile political activity.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

Top Secret



The President's Daily Brief

29 April 1969

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

30 April 1969

LATE NOTES FOR THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF OF
29 APRIL 1969

I. MAJOR PROBLEMS

MIDDLE EAST

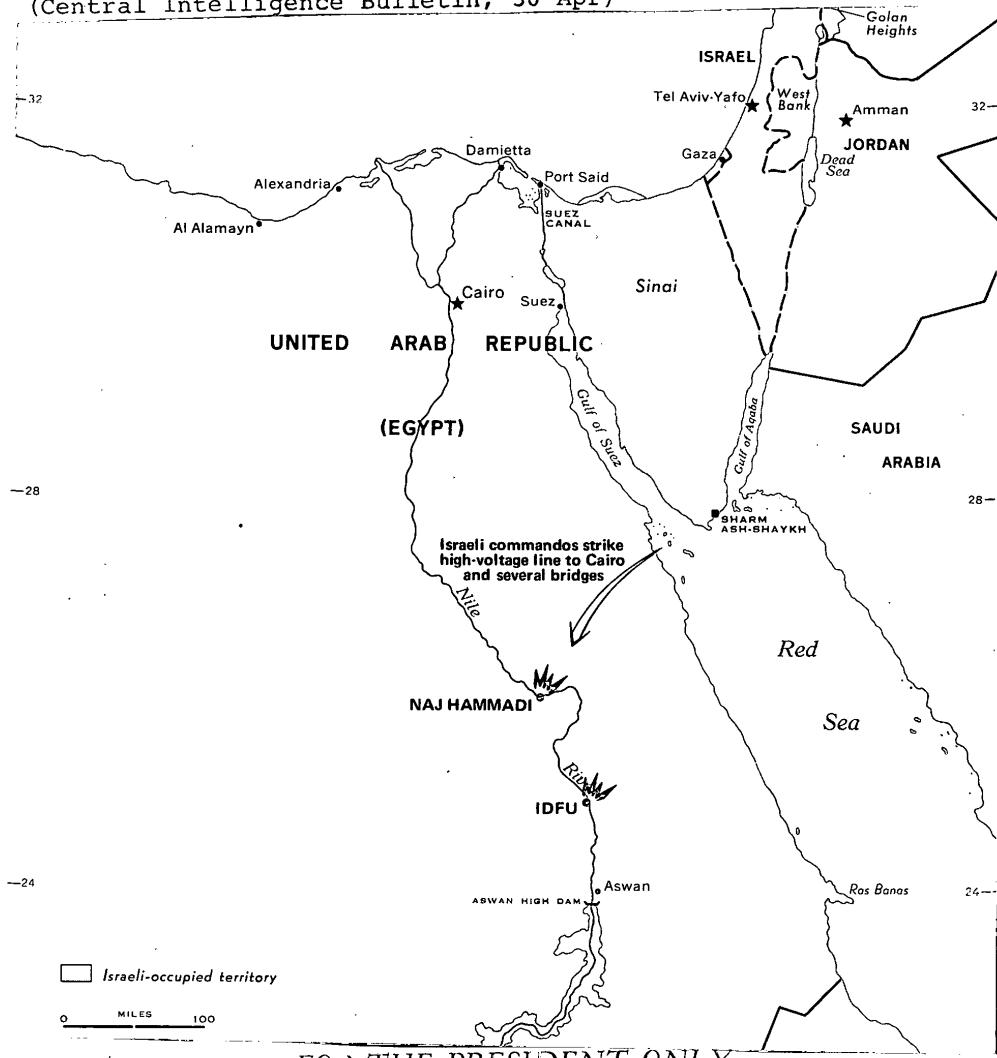
Israeli commandos struck deep into upper Egypt this morning. According to the Israeli communiqué, the commandos hit a high-voltage line feeding power to Cairo, and several Nile River bridges. The strike sites, according to Cairo Radio, included Naj Hammadi, which the Israelis hit last October, and Idfu, which is some 60 miles north of the Aswan Dam.

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Cairo has initially sought

to play down this raid, but Nasir will likely be under considerable pressure to take some face-saving retaliatory action.

(Central Intelligence Bulletin, 30 Apr)



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The Quai has instructed French ambassadors in Arab countries to take the line that De Gaulle's departure will not produce any change in French Middle East policy during the interim period and probably not even after the election of a new president. The ambassadors are also instructed, however, to get the message over that Paris' current policy will continue only so long as the Arab states act responsibly.

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VIETNAM

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There is nothing significant to report on any other area.

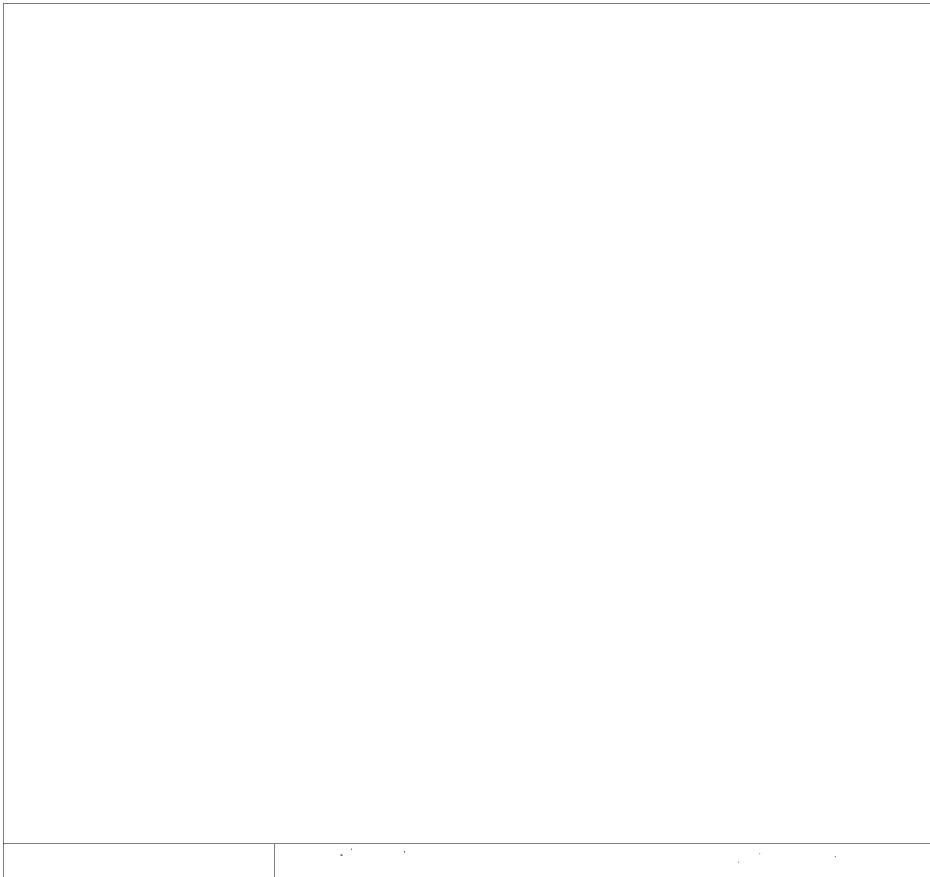
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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

I. MAJOR PROBLEMS

MIDDLE EAST

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VIETNAM

Interparty rivalries are preventing Thieu's mobilization of South Vietnam's political parties and groups from getting off to a fast start, but the effort nevertheless seems to be moving ahead at a steady pace.

The important Greater Solidarity Force, a Catholic group, stayed away from the preliminary organizational

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meetings held last Friday and Sunday, apparently in an attempt to secure promises of spoils of office in return for its support. Thieu's aide, Nguyen Van Huong, who chaired these meetings, made it clear to all prospective members, however, that cabinet posts will not be handed out in exchange for support.

Another group, the Vietnam Nationalist Party (VNQDD) failed to attend because its three factions still have not been able to patch up their differences and decide on a joint policy toward the confederation.

The ten groups that did participate, however, agreed to cooperate in the confederation. They also agreed that the presidium of the new body would actually be advisory in nature and that Thieu would have full power to make decisions for the confederation after consulting the presidium.

EUROPE

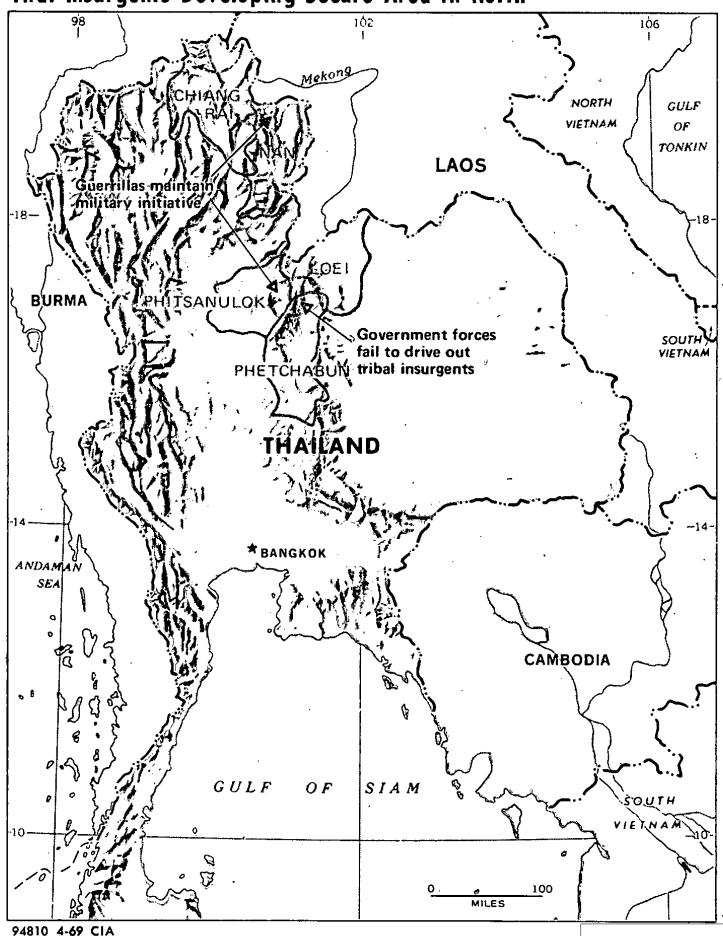
There is nothing of significance to report.

SOVIET AFFAIRS

There is nothing of significance to report.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

Thai Insurgents Developing Secure Area in North



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II. OTHER IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS

THAILAND

The Communists are making further headway in developing secure base areas in the north. The insurgents apparently are strengthening their hold in the villages as government forces pull back from advanced positions into garrisons in the valleys.

The Communist effort is receiving substantial assistance from North Vietnamese and Pathet Lao elements in Laos. Recent evidence has provided new details on a long standing infiltration and support organization, apparently run by a Thai Communist Party headquarters group in Laos, that includes training camps, forward support bases, and supply trails leading into each of the main operating areas in the north. [redacted]

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such assistance has increased in recent months.

The government has made little progress either in training friendly tribal self-defense forces and resettling refugees, or in coping with unfriendly tribal insurgents. Thai troops in the north central area are now bogged down in defensive positions. The government apparently is gambling that it can afford to write off the insurgent areas, while it builds security in the lowlands.

NIGERIA

For the past few weeks, arms supplies have been flowing into Biafra at an unprecedented rate. Many of

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these have come from France at the urging of Ivory Coast President Houphouet-Boigny. Continued support on the present scale by De Gaulle's successors is by no means certain, but the Biafrans should be able to manage nicely with what they have for a while.

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The President's Daily Brief

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

1 May 1969

LATE NOTES FOR THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF OF
30 APRIL 1969

I. MAJOR PROBLEMS

MIDDLE EAST

Fighting between Lebanese troops and fedayeen is reported to have occurred yesterday in southern Lebanon near the Israeli border. The clashes are likely to have been with the Syrian-inspired fedayeen that have been flowing into Lebanon recently.

(Press, 30 Apr)

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A military spokesman in Tel Aviv says five Israelis were killed by Egyptian gunfire yesterday at the southern end of the Suez Canal. (Reuters, 1 May)

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There is nothing significant to report on Vietnam, Europe, or Soviet Affairs.

II. OTHER IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS

IRAQ - EAST GERMANY

Iraq yesterday became the first non-Communist state to accord full recognition to East Germany. Pankow, which has long centered its efforts to obtain diplomatic recognition in the Arab world and among other third world countries, probably will launch a major propaganda campaign and such pressure as it can exert on other states to get them to follow Baghdad's example. There presumably will be no great rush among other states to recognize East Germany, however, in part because West Germany would regard such action as an unfriendly act. Baghdad probably was not concerned about Bonn's reaction because Iraq does not have diplomatic or trade relations with West Germany.

(Central Intelligence Bulletin, 1 May)

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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BOLIVIA

President Siles' position seems increasingly precarious. The powerful Bolivian National Peasants Confederation, which is headed by armed forces commander Ovando, has demanded that Siles resign by 3:00 PM today. The stronghold of anti-Siles sentiment is Cochabamba, where Barrientos' body is being taken for burial tomorrow. As many as 30,000 anti-Siles peasants may be in Cochabamba by tomorrow.

The peasant federation's demand may be only an attempt to put additional pressure on Siles to bow to Ovando's wishes. It could, however, be the first step in a move to oust Siles and install a completely military government. (Central Intelligence Bulletin, 1 May)

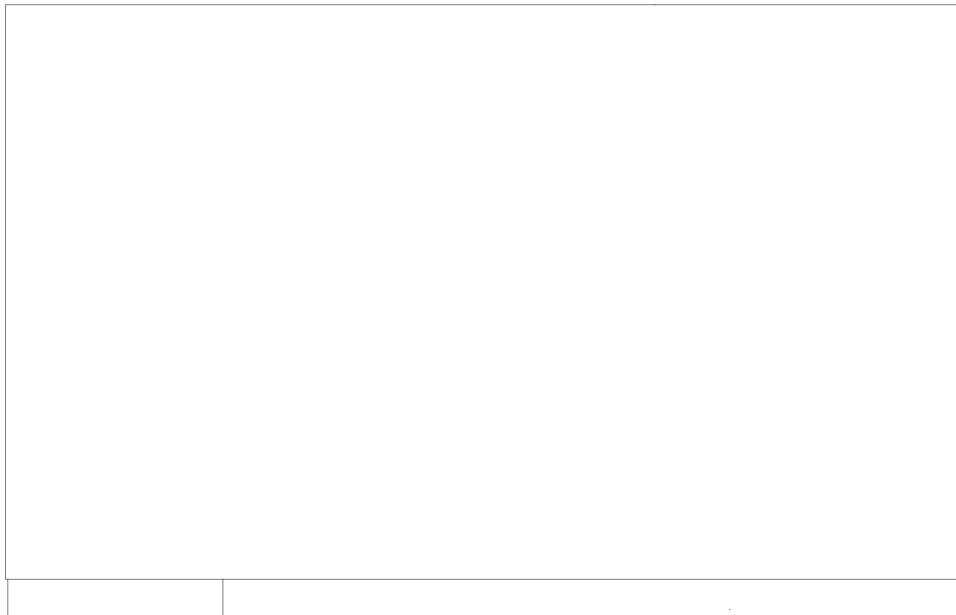
CAMBODIA

Sihanouk also used his press conference yesterday to denounce the North Vietnamese. He said that Cambodian troops are moving against Vietnamese Communists in the remote north-east. Sihanouk also called for an expansion of the Paris talks to include Cambodia, Laos, and other Southeast Asian nations threatened by American "imperialism" and Communist "expansionism." (FBIS, 30 Apr)

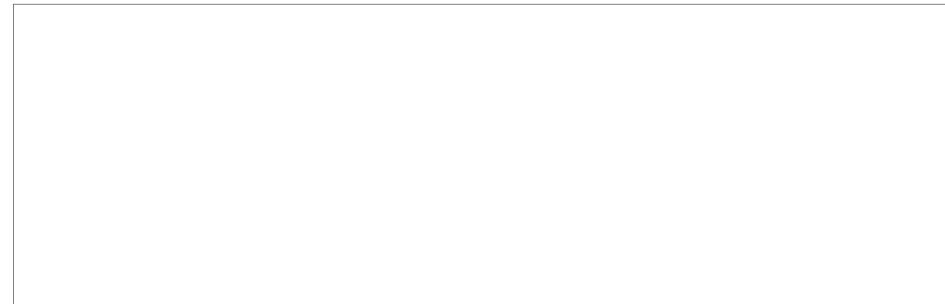
FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

I. MAJOR PROBLEMS

MIDDLE EAST



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An army officer, a terrorist, and three civilians died in a chance encounter between fedayeen and Jordanian military police in Amman yesterday. The situation is ripe for even more serious incidents.

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The Israelis are most unlikely to regard yesterday's clash in Amman as convincing evidence of Jordan's will or capacity to cool off the situation. With tensions rising, in fact, it becomes increasingly difficult for the Jordanians to do anything effective at all. If this state of affairs continues, some kind of Israeli military action is almost inevitable.

Mrs. Meir called in Ambassador Barbour this morning to warn him that the situation along the Jordan border was becoming "impossible." Husayn must do something "drastic," she said, to control both the terrorists and the Jordanian Army.

VIETNAM

Liberation Front spokesman Tran Buu Kiem at today's talks intimated that the Communists are now ready to engage in private substantive discussions with the US and GVN provided the allies agree to take the Communists' four and five points as the starting point of those discussions. Calling the four and five points "a realistic basis for a correct political settlement" of the Vietnam problem, Kiem affirmed that the Front is "ready to engage in discussions with the other parties so as to make the conference move forward."

Kiem was careful to describe the four and five points in moderate terms, hinting that the allies would be free to bring up whatever subjects they wish. He did, however, use the now hardened version of the Front's third point, which calls for the "unconditional" withdrawal of US forces. The original version made no mention of "unconditional."

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By leaving vague just which "parties" might be included in the discussions, Kiem allowed himself plenty of room for maneuver. The wording suggests, however, that for the present at least, the Communists will continue to insist that private substantive talks on the political future of South Vietnam will have to include the US as well as the GVN.

It is not clear why the Communists chose this moment to drop the public hint that they are ready for substantive talks with the GVN.

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the Communists have been concentrating their fire on the need for a "peace cabinet" to replace the present GVN leadership. It is possible that Hanoi now believes there is more to gain from engaging the US and the GVN in substantive discussions than there is from further delay. This would be in line with the Communists' conviction that the US and GVN will differ sharply over major issues as the talks progress. Thus their objective in this latest move may be to fish for just such differences where they can.

EUROPE

The dominant reaction among West Europeans over De Gaulle's departure is one of relief and renewed hope for unity. Most members of the European Commission recognize that the situation has dramatically and fundamentally changed, but that new obstacles are likely to appear rapidly to replace the one that has fallen away. Any changes will take place slowly: first because the new French government, once

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chosen, will take time to settle in, and secondly because Bonn, whose initiative would be essential to exploit the new situation, is already feeling "the paralyzing effect" of the elections to be held in September.

The Community will watch British policy during this interim period critically.

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Prime Minister Wilson and Italian President Saragat issued a joint declaration in London earlier this week calling for a united Europe

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SOVIET AFFAIRS

There is nothing significant to report.

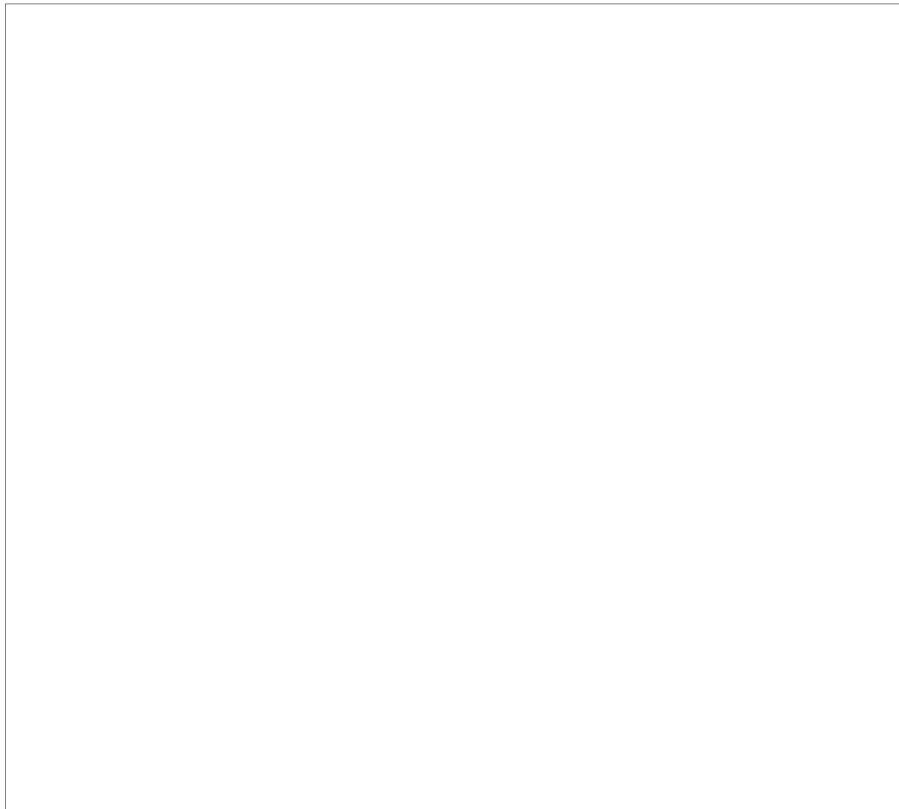
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II. OTHER IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS

BOLIVIA

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CAMBODIA

Sihanouk apparently is having second thoughts about how fast he should move toward a rapprochement with the US. He told a press conference in Phnom Penh today that Cambodia rejects the recent US border declaration. He said that American newspaper stories describing the general nature of the border declaration indicated Washington had "reservations" which undermined the declaration's utility to Cambodia.

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The account of the press conference is fragmentary, and it is still too early to tell how serious Sihanouk is about the "rejection." Throwing up last-minute hurdles to a course he has already set is characteristic of Sihanouk's political and negotiating style. In doing so, he may hope to extract some clarification of the US position which he can use to advantage with his neighbors and his domestic critics. At a minimum, a show of obduracy presumably would enable Sihanouk to demonstrate to Cambodian leftists, as well as the Vietnamese Communists, that he is still his own man.

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