

The President's Daily Brief

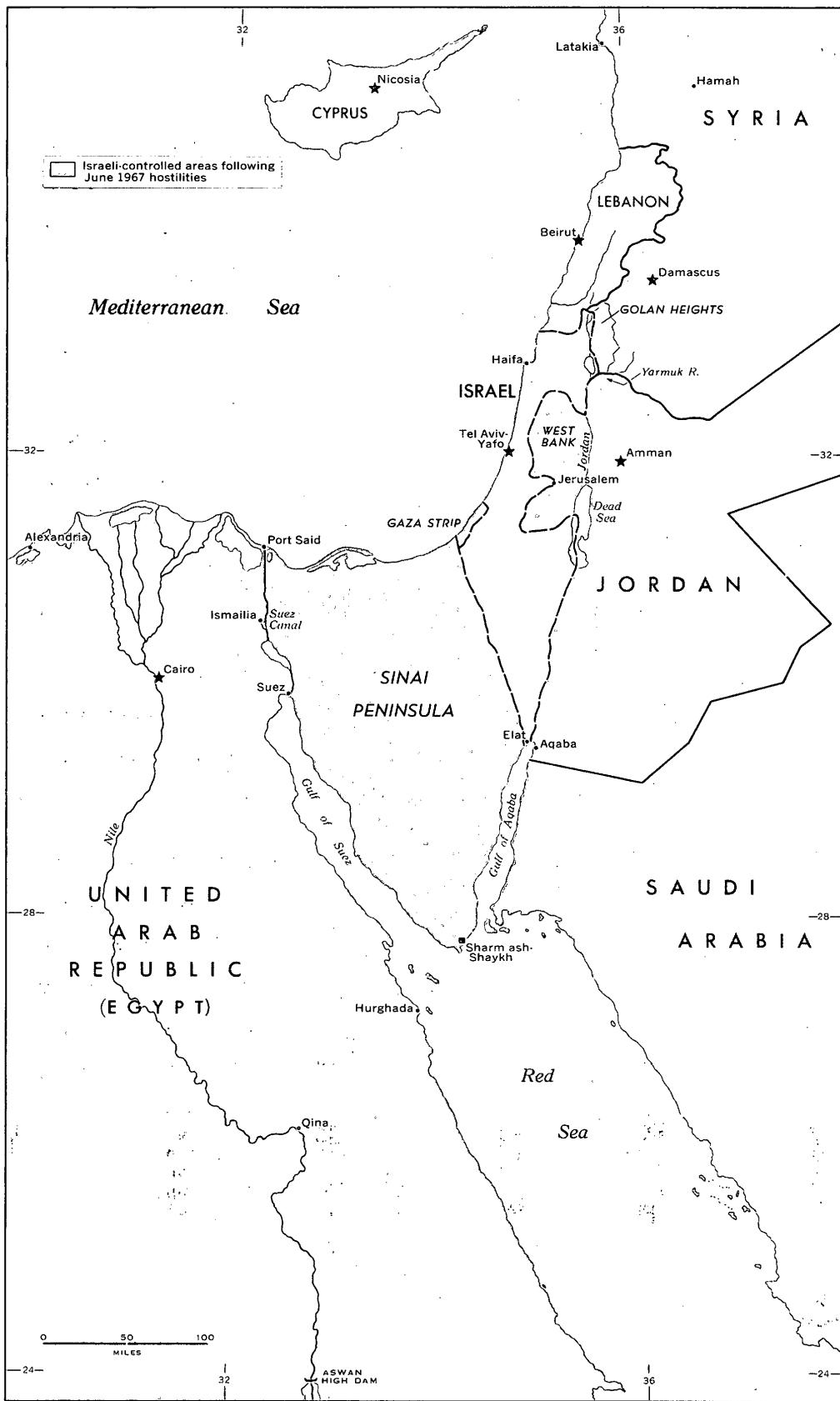
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1 March 1969

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

I. MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS

MIDDLE EAST

The Dayan forces are wasting no time pressing their man's case. A Tel Aviv broadcast the day before Eshkol's funeral cites their claims that a petition campaign for "Moshe Dayan as premier within or outside the Labor Party" has already come up with 47,000 signatures. Mrs. Meir and Pinhas Sapir, the Labor Party secretary general, have both attacked the petition drive. Mrs. Meir said it was "undemocratic"--"the party and not the street will decide who will be the candidate for prime minister."

We are not sure Dayan himself is behind this activity. Ambassador Barbour in Tel Aviv in fact reported yesterday that there was a good deal of talk about Dayan's not being "in fighting spirit" at this stage.

EUROPE

As the press has reported, things in Rome are sizzling down. The Italian police arrested 194 people in connection with Thursday night's demonstrations; eight of these were ultimately placed under arrest. Fourteen civilians were injured, five of them seriously enough to be hospitalized. The only word on the student who died is that he fell from the roof of the Rome Teaching Faculty building. This part of the building is still occupied by the students, however, and the police have not been able to verify the report.

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SOVIET AFFAIRS

The Soviet note delivered to the East German Government yesterday can be construed as giving Ulbricht a virtual free hand in hampering West German traffic to and from Berlin. The note raised the familiar claim that Bonn was illegally recruiting soldiers and manufacturing military and strategic goods in West Berlin and secretly transferring them to West Germany.

The East Germans almost immediately ordered their check-point officials to begin applying an already-existing decree which bans the transport of goods used "for military purposes" across their territory. This decree is deliberately worded so that the East Germans can ban the transport of most of the goods manufactured in West Berlin as well as materials sent to the city for use in their manufacture. The reference to the alleged recruitment of West Berliners for service in the West German armed forces, moreover, provides Pankow still another rationale for at least slowing down all passenger traffic.

Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister Semenov and Marshal Yakubovsky, commander of the Warsaw Pact, arrived in East Berlin from Moscow yesterday and met with Ulbricht and other East German political and military officials. Moscow had announced on 20 February that Yakubovsky would direct a joint Soviet - East German exercise early in March.

Meanwhile, units from at least two, and perhaps as many as four, of the five Soviet armies in East Germany appear to

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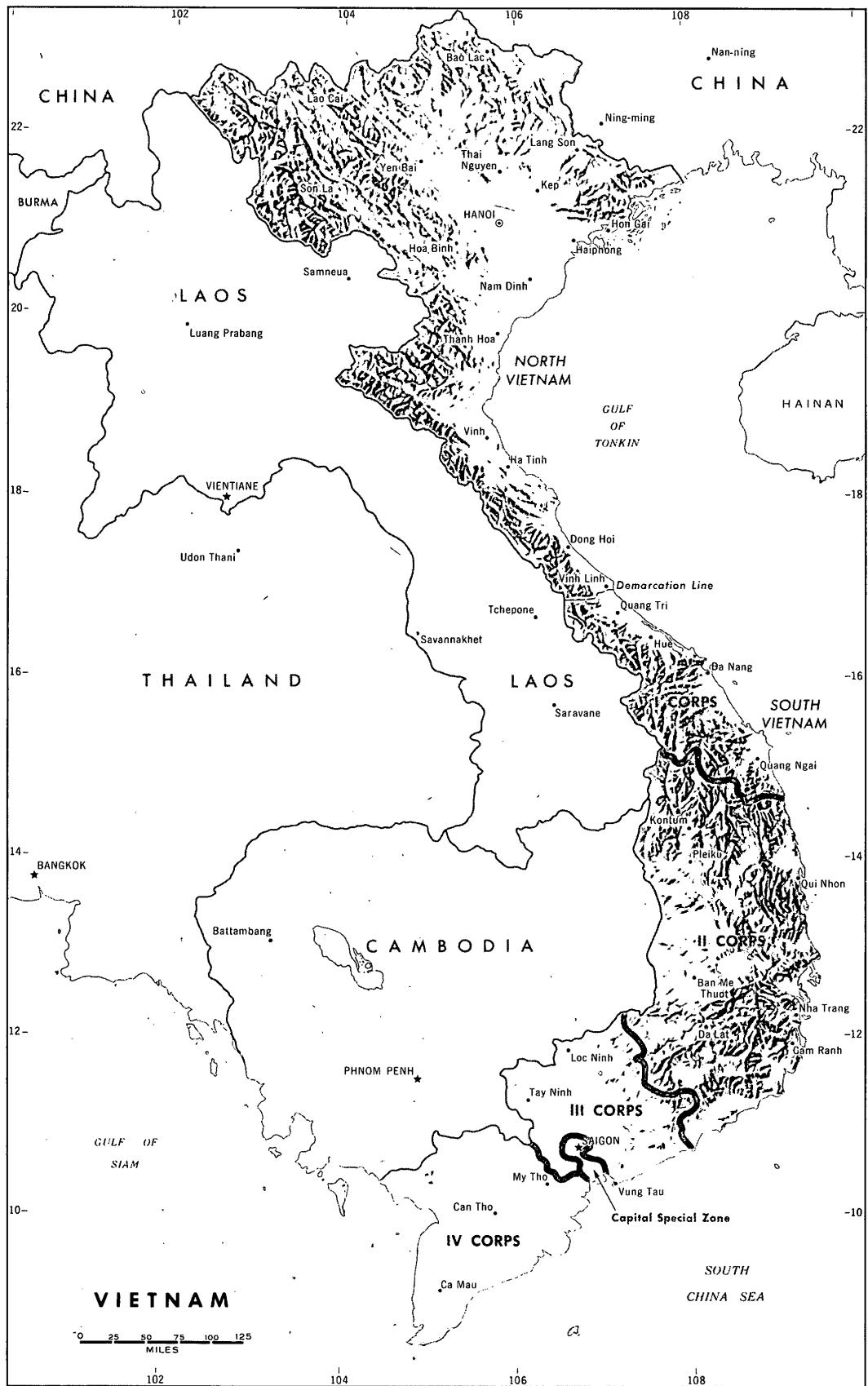
be preparing for the exercise. They are located in a training area between Berlin and the West German border, along with units from an East German division. Soviet tactical aircraft have not yet moved to alternate bases near Berlin and its air corridors to the West.

Chancellor Kiesinger, Foreign Minister Brandt, and Mayor Schuetz had earlier publicly aired their views that the presidential election will take place in Berlin next Wednesday, as scheduled. Implicit in their statements, however, was the thought that a last-minute deal could not be entirely ruled out. According to Kiesinger's press secretary, Sunday is the last day on which a change of venue can be arranged. Thereafter, he implied, technical arrangements would have to go forward.

VIETNAM

The scope and intensity of enemy activity throughout South Vietnam slackened considerably on 28 February, for the second consecutive day, suggesting the opening phase of the Communist's offensive may be drawing to a close as they regroup, refit and assess the results of their initial round of attacks. It is not clear how long this lull will last. There is strong evidence, however, that the offensive will be resumed, probably on a countrywide basis, and quite possibly featuring operations by at least some of the large numbers of main force units which have not yet been committed.

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Except for sporadic fire fights in Saigon's out-lying districts and one isolated terrorist incident downtown, Saigon remained free of enemy activity yesterday. Hue, so far unscathed during the offensive, also was quiet. There has been no significant enemy activity at Da Nang since the heavy explosions in the dock area of 27-28 February that caused numerous US casualties and destroyed nearly 350 tons of ammunition.

In I Corps, little significant ground fighting developed in any of the northern provinces or in the area of the Demilitarized Zone. Allied forces on sweep operations in the northern A Shau Valley uncovered more than 100 tons of enemy arms and munitions. No enemy actions of significance occurred in the II Corps area. Although no major actions were reported in III Corps, large numbers of enemy troops continued to be noted along the approach routes to the allied military complex at Bien Hoa - Long Binh and in the vicinity of the provincial capitals of Song Be and An Loc in the northern sector. Viet Cong activity in the Mekong Delta was generally light and scattered.

* * *

Thieu and Ky are edging closer to opening direct contact with the Liberation Front in Paris. Ky told Ambassador Lodge on 26 February that he is "available" to talk to the Viet Cong in Paris and that Thieu has

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authorized him to offer a deal. In exchange for the withdrawal of all North Vietnamese north of the 17th Parallel, the GVN would allow all Viet Cong to be eligible to vote and to run as candidates in elections for the senate, the assembly, local offices, and even the presidency in 1971.

This approach is a major step forward on the part of Thieu and Ky and indicates that they are now more confident of their strength in South Vietnam. It is clear from Ky's remarks to Ambassador Lodge, however, that he and Thieu want the US not only to tell them whether they ought to continue down this path but also to hold their hands while they travel it. The degree to which Ky and Thieu are counting on continuing US help was revealed in Ky's comment to Ambassador Lodge that the US could dissuade various nationalist candidates from running for the presidency, thereby avoiding a split in the anti-Communist vote.

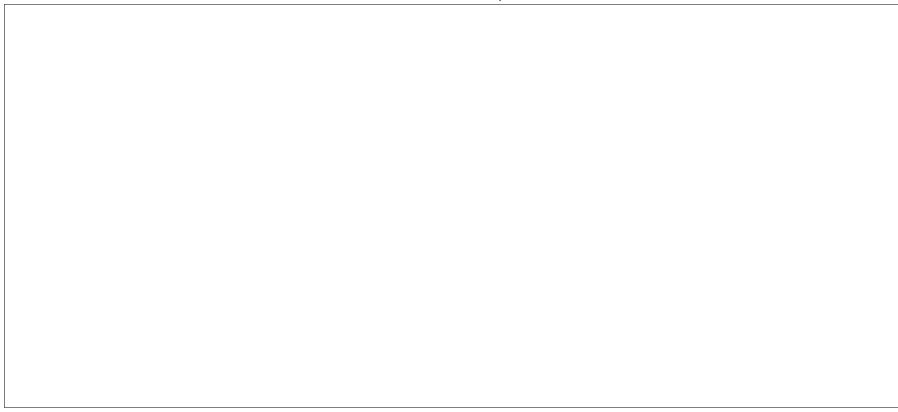
The Communists would be intrigued and enticed by any discreet approach from Ky to open talks, despite their frequent assertions that they will not deal with the present GVN leadership. If the Communists were convinced that Ky genuinely wants discussions involving the political future of South Vietnam, they would probably agree to meet with him. They might, however, seek to establish through an intermediary beforehand precisely what Ky has to offer. Thieu has previously suggested that the Soviets or the US might have to play

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the role of intermediary in establishing contact between the Front and the GVN.

At present, however, the Communists are trying to encourage the US to open direct talks with the Liberation Front and they might regard an approach by Ky as nothing more than a US counter to their own strategy.

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On the issue of mutual de-escalation, it is possible that the Communists may soon become more active. In response to allied protests about the current Communist offensive, both Hanoi and the Front have repeatedly taken the line that US "intensification" of the war has made this necessary and that the first requirement for progress in Paris is cessation of US "aggression." Justifying Communist military activity on grounds of "self-defense" is nothing new, but perhaps something more is involved in this current emphasis, and it is conceivable that the Communists may try to bring about some mutual reduction in hostilities before long.

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The main argument against the Communists pushing for a cease-fire, or even for significant de-escalation, is that one of their main forms of pressure on the Allies would be reduced. The Communists generally have been negative about the idea of an early cease-fire or de-escalation, calling them inappropriate until the shape of a settlement is clear, or arguing that the US only wants to use a cease-fire as a device to tie the hands of Communist forces while the Allies continue to build a "position of strength."

We doubt very much that the Communists want or will press for a formal cease-fire until they have a settlement pretty well nailed down. It is conceivable, however, that the current offensive might be capped by an attempt by the Communists to bring about some kind of tacit reduction in the level of fighting in South Vietnam. In a post-offensive period when their forces presumably would be resting and regrouping anyway, the Communists might see some advantage in trying to curb US military activities.

The Communists clearly have an elaborate political scenario devised to accompany the current military offensive. There are many indications that the Communist political offensive this time is to center on agitation of the peace issue in support of their call for a "peace cabinet" in Saigon.

If after widespread, intensive fighting there appeared to be no end of the fighting in sight, a peace campaign might have considerable appeal both in South Vietnam and elsewhere, particularly if it were coupled with suggestions that a reduction in the fighting could be prolonged if the Allies were willing to curb their military operations.

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A successful Communist effort to take advantage of widespread sentiment for peace is one of the few ways they might be able to muster any real popular response in South Vietnam and to bring about activities such as demonstrations and strikes which would serve their ends. There is a good chance such an effort is going to be mounted before long.

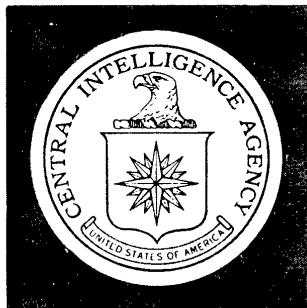
II. OTHER MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS

SPAIN

Madrid has just given a sign of flexibility over the 26 March deadline for concluding the negotiations on the base renewal agreement. A high Foreign Ministry official told the US Embassy that if no agreement is reached by then, negotiations could still continue. He said that in this event the one-year phase-out period for dismantling the bases--which technically starts on the deadline date--could perhaps be deferred in return for an interim military assistance package.

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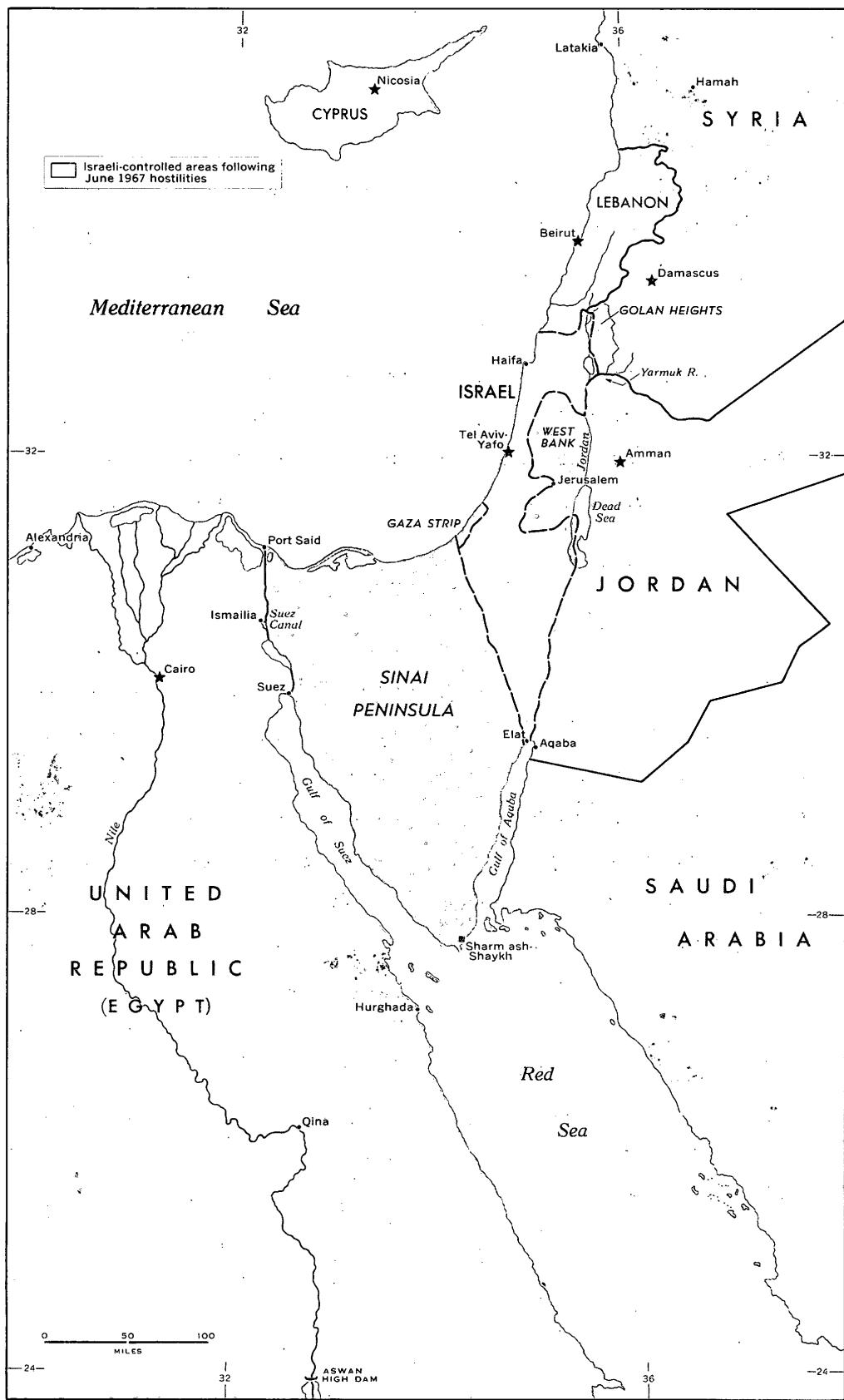
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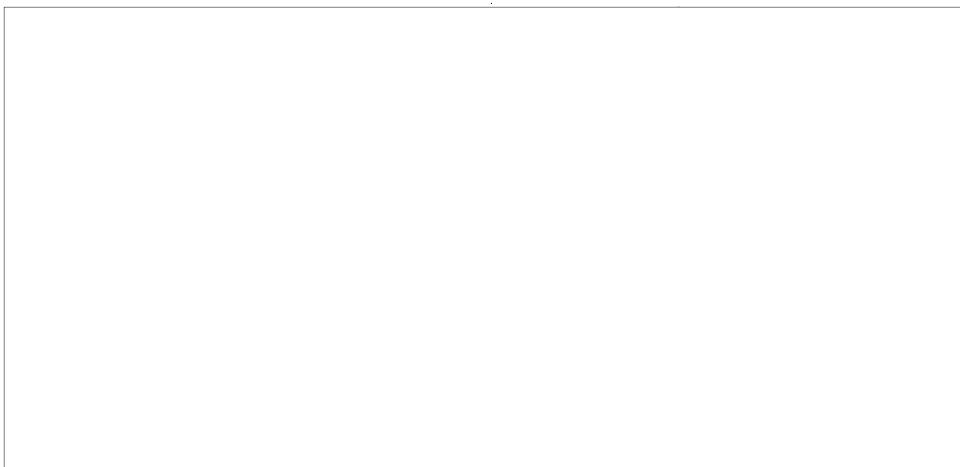
I. MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS

MIDDLE EAST

The picture of what has been going on inside Syria during the past two days is blurred. It is reasonably certain, however, that the Defense Minister, Hafiz A'sad, moved on 28 February to take full control of the government. Reports from neighboring countries indicate that he has not yet encountered serious resistance, but it is by no means clear that the coup is a complete success. Although a member of the so-called radical Baathist Party, which has ruled Syria since 1966, he is counted less doctrinaire than most of the men he is trying to oust. He is reported to favor bringing Syria into closer alignment with the other Arab countries in the interest of developing a common anti-Israeli policy. He seems also to favor keeping the Communist Party of Syria at arms length and reducing his country's dependence on Soviet military aid.

EUROPE

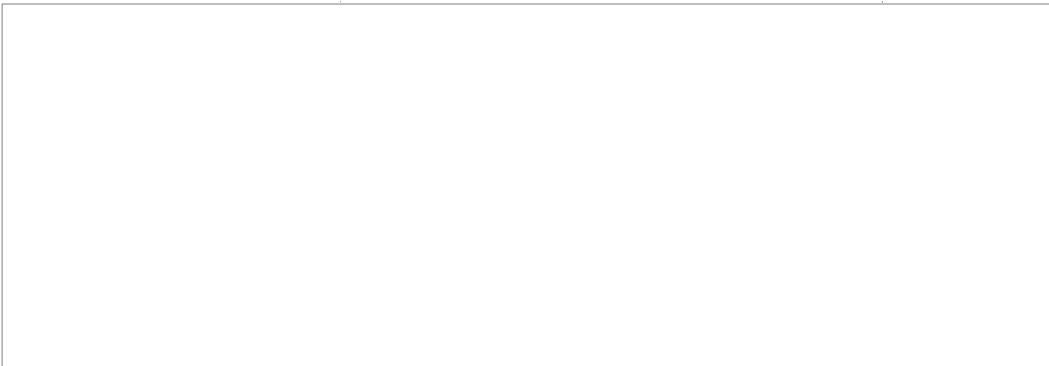
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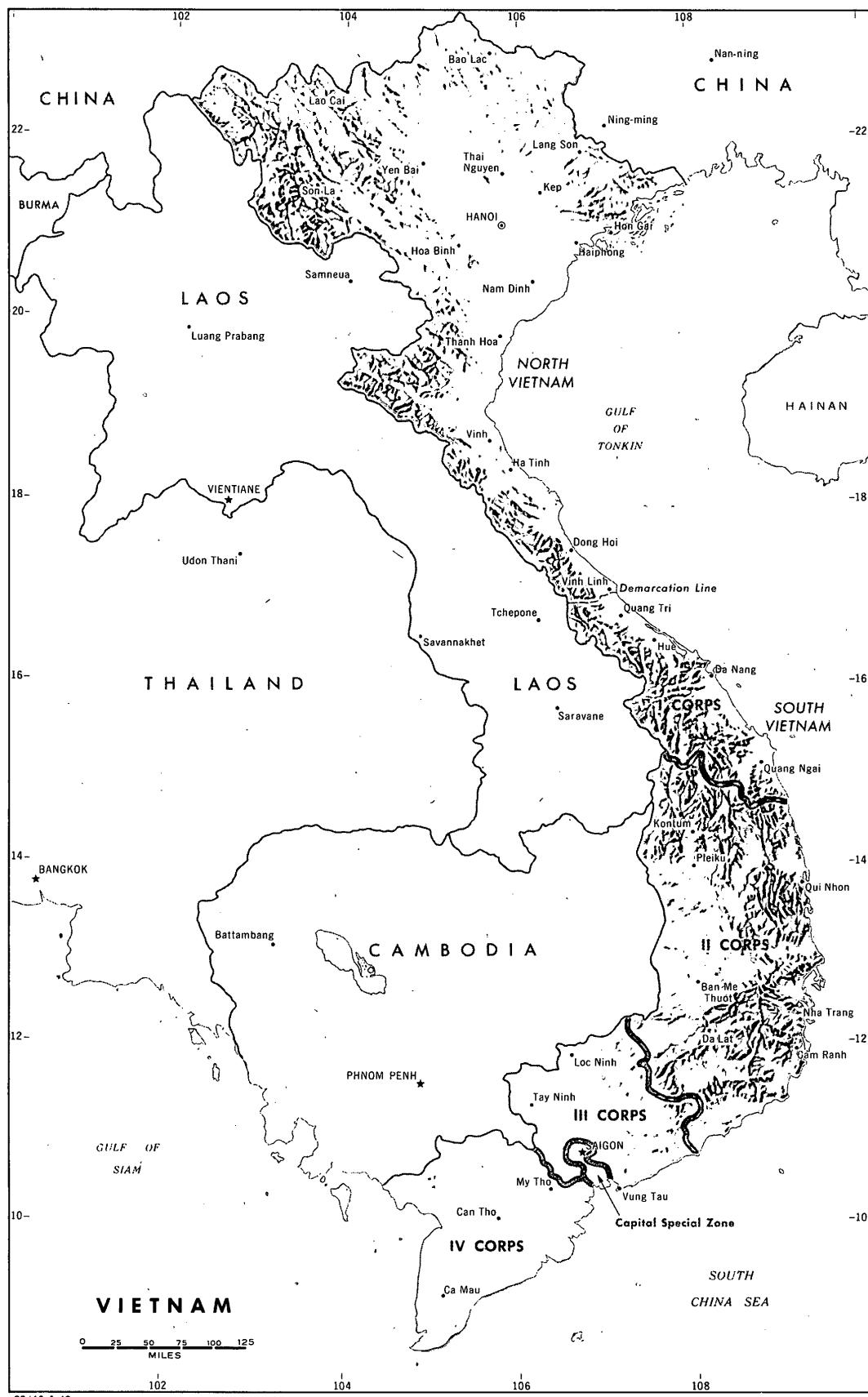


SOVIET AFFAIRS

There were intermittent delays of traffic moving to and from West Berlin during the past 24 hours, including one total closure of the major access route to the city between 1 AM and 3 AM yesterday. Backups at the checkpoints appear to have been due both to heavy weekend traffic and a slow-down in processing by the East Germans.

A meeting yesterday between Chancellor Kiesinger and Soviet Ambassador Tsarapkin brought no results. In a television report on the meeting, Kiesinger said "there was no possibility of reaching an understanding" on the question of the site of the Federal Assembly, and that the assembly therefore will convene in West Berlin on 5 March. He said he had also rejected Soviet charges that military goods were being manufactured in West Berlin. Kiesinger stated the West Germans will be better able because of President Nixon's recent reaffirmation of America's commitments to stand up to the "war of nerves" which can be expected in coming days.

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Soviet military units continue to deploy to exercise areas between Berlin and the West German border, and, apparently, to positions astride the Berlin-Helmstedt autobahn. Large numbers of Soviet tanks, trucks, and other vehicles were seen in the woods along the highway on 28 February and 1 March. The situation in the Berlin (air) Control Zone and air corridors has thus far remained quiet.

VIETNAM

Enemy activity declined further during the past 24 hours. Most of this activity occurred in III Corps. There were two terrorist incidents in Saigon, and a small enemy force attacked the outskirts of An Loc, the capital of Binh Long Province. There was little enemy action in I Corps, and Hue and Da Nang were quiet. In II Corps, fewer incidents of enemy shelling were reported than on any day since the offensive began. Sporadic mortar fire was directed against scattered allied military bases in IV Corps.

Prisoners in I Corps have reported that the second round of the offensive will open on 2 March.

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Attacks could, in any event, come at any time because of the proximity of the enemy's main force units to major objectives.

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II. OTHER IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS

LAOS

The important government guerrilla base of Na Khang in north-eastern Laos has fallen. North Vietnamese troops, believed to number about 1,000, attacked and seized outlying defensive positions early on 1 March. The US Air Force Tactical Air Navigation (TACAN) installation nearby was also captured. Enemy assaults on the main base continued into the night, finally forcing the defenders--who numbered 600 at the outset--to withdraw.

Loss of this base is a serious setback to the pro-government guerrilla operations in northern Laos. There will also be some impairment of air navigation through the loss of the TACAN facility, but no severe disruption of US air operations.

The military situation elsewhere in northern Laos remains quiet.

CHILE

The Annex discusses the important congressional election in Chile today.

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CONGRESSIONAL ELECTIONS IN CHILE

The results of the congressional elections to be held in Chile today will have an important influence on the development of the campaign for the presidential election in 1970, particularly in the formation of a coalition of the far left. Chile's large Communist Party and its rival, the even more extremist Socialist Party, together have the highest vote-getting strength of any Marxist parties in Latin America and will play important roles in both elections. In fact, Chile is the only Latin American country where a Communist-dominated coalition has a reasonable chance of winning a free presidential election.

* * *

The Elections

Many of the electoral contests--for 30 of the 50 Senate seats and all 150 seats in the Chamber of Deputies--will be decided more on the basis of local issues and personalities than on national politics. Because of Chile's complicated proportional representation system, the percentage of the popular vote received will not be directly reflected in the make-up of Congress. For example, in the last congressional elections in 1965 the Christian Democratic Party (PDC) received 42.3 percent of the popular vote, but obtained an absolute majority in the Chamber of Deputies.

Some races have assumed national importance because the candidates are mentioned as presidential nominees. In particular, the Tenth Senatorial District could have an important

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impact on the presidential race as three presidential hopefuls--Socialist Salvador Allende, Popular Socialist Raul Ampuero, and Christian Democrat Juan Hamilton--are among the contenders for the five Senate seats.

Political Situation

The choices to be made in the election will demonstrate the strengths not only of the five major parties but also of the competing factions within them.

Of particular interest is President Frei's Christian Democratic Party, in which a vocal leftist faction advocates cooperation with the Communists in the presidential election. Factionalism plus the problems of any incumbent party in off-year elections make it unlikely that the PDC can approach its 1965 percentage. To maintain its position as the country's dominant party, however, it hopes to obtain about a third of the vote. Frei hopes for a strong showing by PDC moderates that will weaken the leftists' position at the party congress to be held a few months after the elections. Since that meeting will set the tone for the presidential campaign, and may also choose the nominee, the congressional election results could be crucial for the future direction of the party.

Other political groups have equally important interests at stake. The Socialist Party is engaged in a bitter battle with its breakaway faction, the Popular Socialist Union. This strife is almost certain to decrease the total Socialist vote, which in the last congressional election was ten percent. If

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pro-Castro Socialist Senator Allende wins a large victory, he would have a good chance for the nomination, for the third time, of the Communist-Socialist Popular Action Front. It would be Allende's fourth try for the presidency.

The conservative National Party, which was formed in 1966 from two traditional parties after their serious defeat in the congressional elections of 1965, may profit from a general feeling of uncertainty in the electorate. The pace of reform in recent years, too slow for many leftists, has at the same time upset some members of the middle class. Although some National Party candidates suffer from political inexperience, and the party lacks organization and a popular base, it could emerge as the second-largest vote-getter. It may derive some support from followers of former president Jorge Alessandri, whom the Nationals openly favor for the presidency. As an independent the 72-year-old Alessandri has been careful to dissociate himself from partisan activities.

The Radical Party, a traditional middle-class group, has lately been led by people who see the party's future tied to that of the Communists. Although the Communist Party has not spurned Radical advances, it might be reluctant to support a "bourgeois" Radical presidential candidate if its more militant Socialist allies did not follow its lead. Indeed, the Radicals' national organization has been so fragmented by factionalism that if the party did make a strong showing it might not have the unity of leadership necessary to consolidate its gains.

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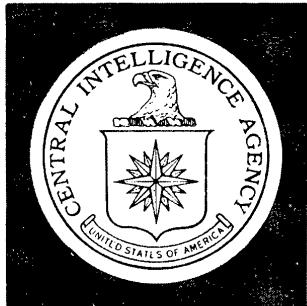
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The Communists themselves have the strongest organization of any of the parties and should improve on the 12 percent of the vote they received in 1965. Because the Communist Party can deliver its vote virtually intact to the presidential candidate it supports, the Socialists, Radicals, and part of the PDC are courting it assiduously. Its support could be decisive in a close race.

Consequences

If the Communists, Socialists, and Radicals can agree on one candidate, he would be a strong contender in the presidential race next year. A strong showing by the Christian Democrats, particularly the moderates, will improve Frei's hand at the PDC congress and give the party strong momentum for the presidential race. A strong showing by the National Party would give Alessandri's campaign added momentum.

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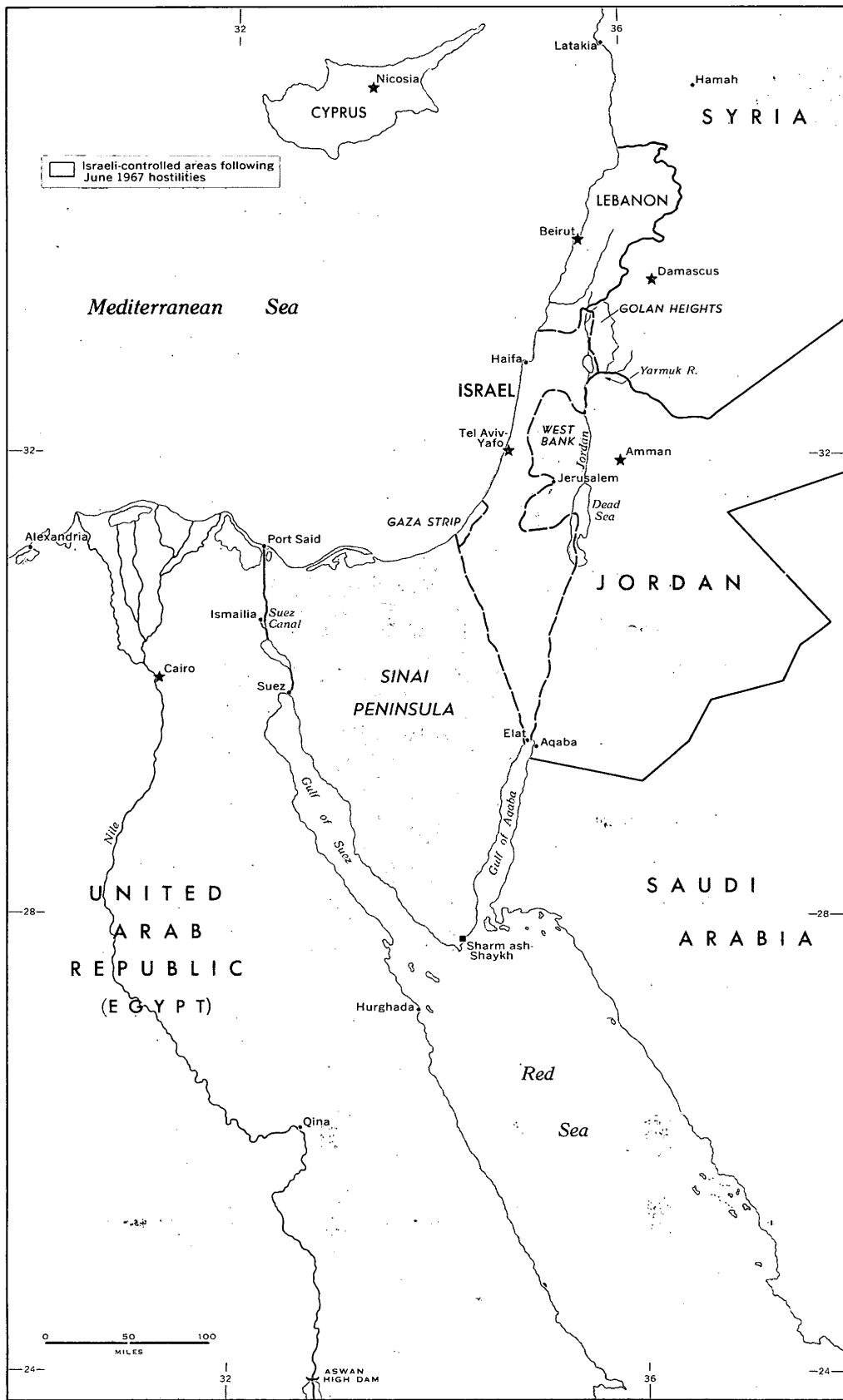
The President's Daily Brief

*3 March 1969
(Morning)*

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

I. MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS

MIDDLE EAST

The Labor Party is moving ahead with arrangements to nominate Golda Meir for the premiership, but the Dayan forces may cause trouble. Yesterday, they announced that although they did not plan to present Dayan's name to the party now, they would support no other candidate. Dayan thus may be trying to establish a bargaining position--perhaps to obtain party agreement to name him after Mrs. Meir's term as prime minister is completed. Even though Dayan cannot keep the party from nominating her, he might be able to weaken her chances for confirmation by the Knesset. He controls 10 of the Labor Party's slim 63-vote majority in the 120-member Knesset.

EUROPE

French labor and management tomorrow begin the wage talks provided for in last May's accords. Management, backed by the government, maintains that the meetings should be limited to a "review" of the wage/price situation, but the unions are hoping to turn the talks into across-the-board wage negotiations. It is hard to tell how far they can mobilize the rank-and-file behind their demands: a "day of action" in early February fizzled, but there have been signs of greater restiveness among the workers since then. If the government and the employers do nothing more than agree to piecemeal wage increases, there could be widespread labor unrest, although we anticipate nothing as serious as the situation last May.

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SOVIET AFFAIRS

The Communists are keeping up the pressure, but the Soviets are trying to promote further 11th-hour discussion of the Bundesversammlung issue by the East and West Germans.

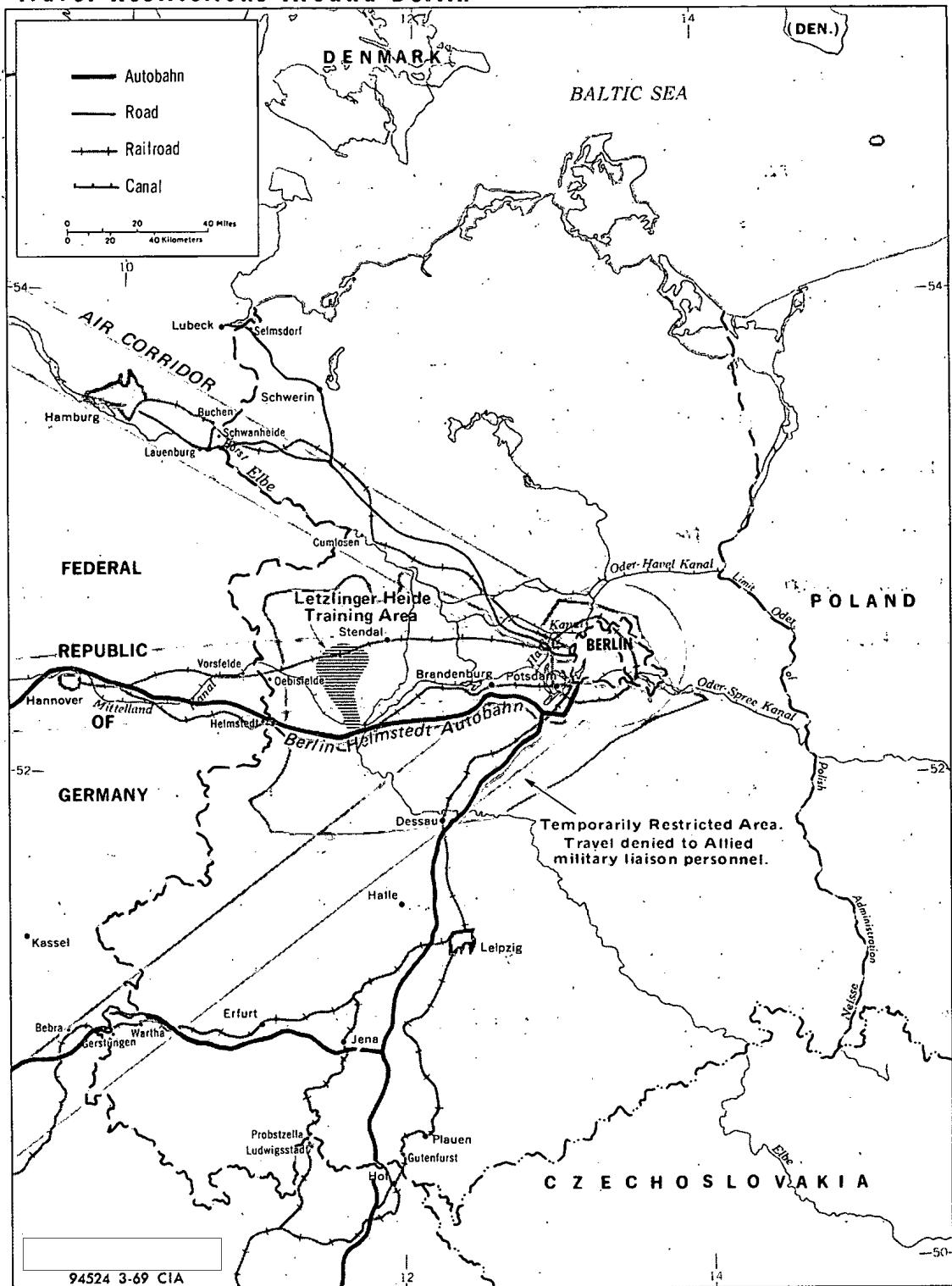
The First Secretary of the Soviet Embassy in Bonn yesterday suggested to the West German Foreign Office that one more attempt to contact the East Germans be made. He hinted he had reason to believe that a new contact might produce results satisfactory to Kiesinger. The Berlin Senat has authorized its representative to let the East Germans know he is available for further talks.

The chief Soviet controller in the Berlin Air Safety Center informed his allied counterparts yesterday that the Soviets will not guarantee the safety of aircraft carrying delegates to the Federal Assembly meeting. Delegates are booked on at least 144 flights to Berlin, most of which will leave West Germany today and tomorrow. The statement provides Moscow with a rationale for harassing the air corridors should it choose to do so.

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Travel Restrictions Around Berlin



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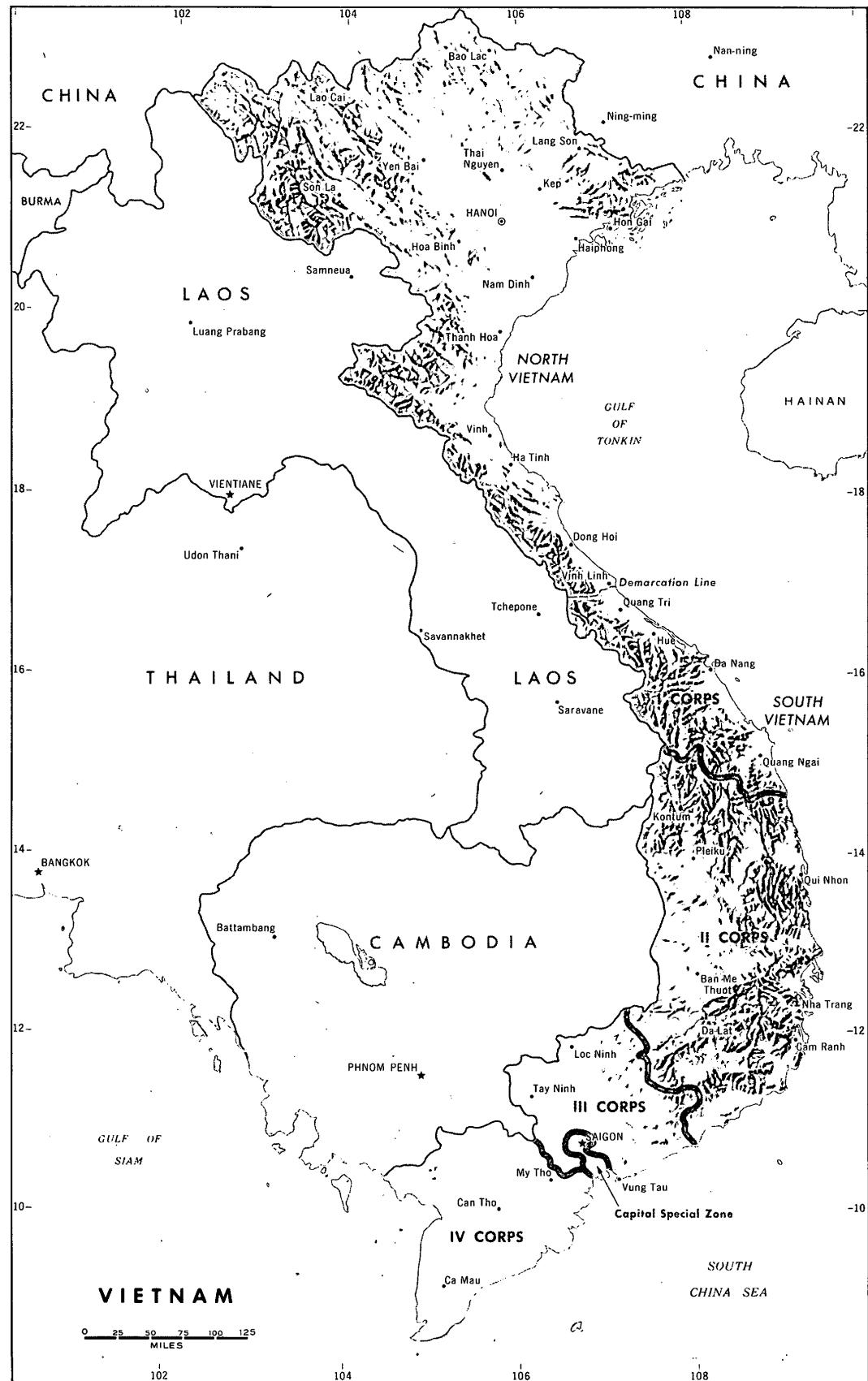
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The East Germans are continuing to delay traffic spo- radically by slowing down processing. Thus far, Pankow has not turned back traffic, despite its stated intention of banning the transport of goods used for "military purposes."

The Berlin-Helmstedt autobahn was again closed yesterday for two hours. The East Germans attributed the action to Warsaw Pact military movements on the road. Police detained for over an hour a small US convoy outbound from Berlin. This morning, another convoy was stopped on the same road about 50 miles outside of Berlin.

Preparations for a major Soviet - East German exercise in the area west of Berlin are going forward. Units from as many as five Soviet and two East German divisions may take part in exercises centered in the Letzlinger Heide Training Area between Berlin and the West German border. Travelers on the Berlin-Helmstedt autobahn have reported large numbers of Soviet tanks and troops near the autobahn. There is no firm evidence that Soviet troop reinforcements have moved into East Germany for the exercise. Despite Soviet announcements that the exercises have begun, large-scale tactical exercise activity has not been detected.

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

Soviet aircraft conducted mock low-level attacks in an area north of Berlin probably in preparation for ground support exercises in the temporary restricted area. Increased Soviet air activity, rather than the normal Sunday standdown, was noted yesterday in western East Germany.

VIETNAM

Enemy activity remained generally low over the last 24 hours. Scattered shellings and ground skirmishes declined to a level comparable with the pre-offensive period. The Communists continued for the most part to concentrate on military installations rather than urban centers, although 3 122-mm. rockets were fired into downtown Saigon this morning.

No further solid information has been developed as to when and where the Communists will commit the massive forces they have on hand for a possible second round. The principal enemy divisions threatening the Saigon area and the northern provinces are not yet showing any unusual activity, but they are still in a position to strike at any time with very little warning.

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II. OTHER IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS

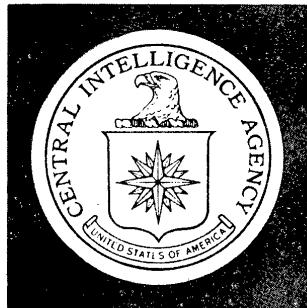
SOVIET UNION - COMMUNIST CHINA

Tass reports that Chinese troops clashed yesterday with Soviet border guards on the Manchurian frontier north of Vladivostok. According to the Soviets, the Chinese crossed the border and fired at the Soviet guards, only to be driven back. Moscow and Peking have exchanged protest notes, and each side has accused the other of killing and wounding its troops.

The Soviets and Chinese have eyed each other warily across the frontier for years. The Chinese do not acknowledge Soviet sovereignty over bits of territory at several points along the border, and the incident probably took place in one of the disputed areas. There have been periodic encounters in recent years, but this is the first time within memory that either side has claimed military casualties.

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3 March 1969

(Afternoon)

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4 March 1969

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

I. MAJOR PROBLEMS

MIDDLE EAST

There is nothing significant to report.

EUROPE

There is nothing significant to report.

SOVIET AFFAIRS

There has been no significant change in the Berlin situation. Kiesinger left Bonn for West Berlin this morning.

Brandt is already in the city.

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VIETNAM

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II. OTHER SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENTS

SOVIET UNION - COMMUNIST CHINA

Peking and Moscow are going at it hot and heavy in their propaganda war over Sunday's border clash.

Typical of the suspicion on both sides is the assertion of a Soviet diplomat in Tokyo that the rapid Chinese response to Moscow's protest suggests a degree of advance planning on Peking's part. The diplomat also revealed that only two months ago, Moscow decided to allow dependents to return to its embassy in Peking, on the theory that the era of Chinese demonstrations was past. Today Peking radio announced that 400,000 demonstrators marched past the embassy "from dawn to dusk."

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I. MAJOR PROBLEMS

MIDDLE EAST

There is nothing significant to report.

EUROPE

There is nothing significant to report.

SOVIET AFFAIRS

The day passed relatively quietly in Berlin. One section of a US convoy was delayed on the autobahn for an hour in the morning because of "maneuvers," but two British and one French convoy transited without incident. West German federal assembly members have begun to arrive in West Berlin.

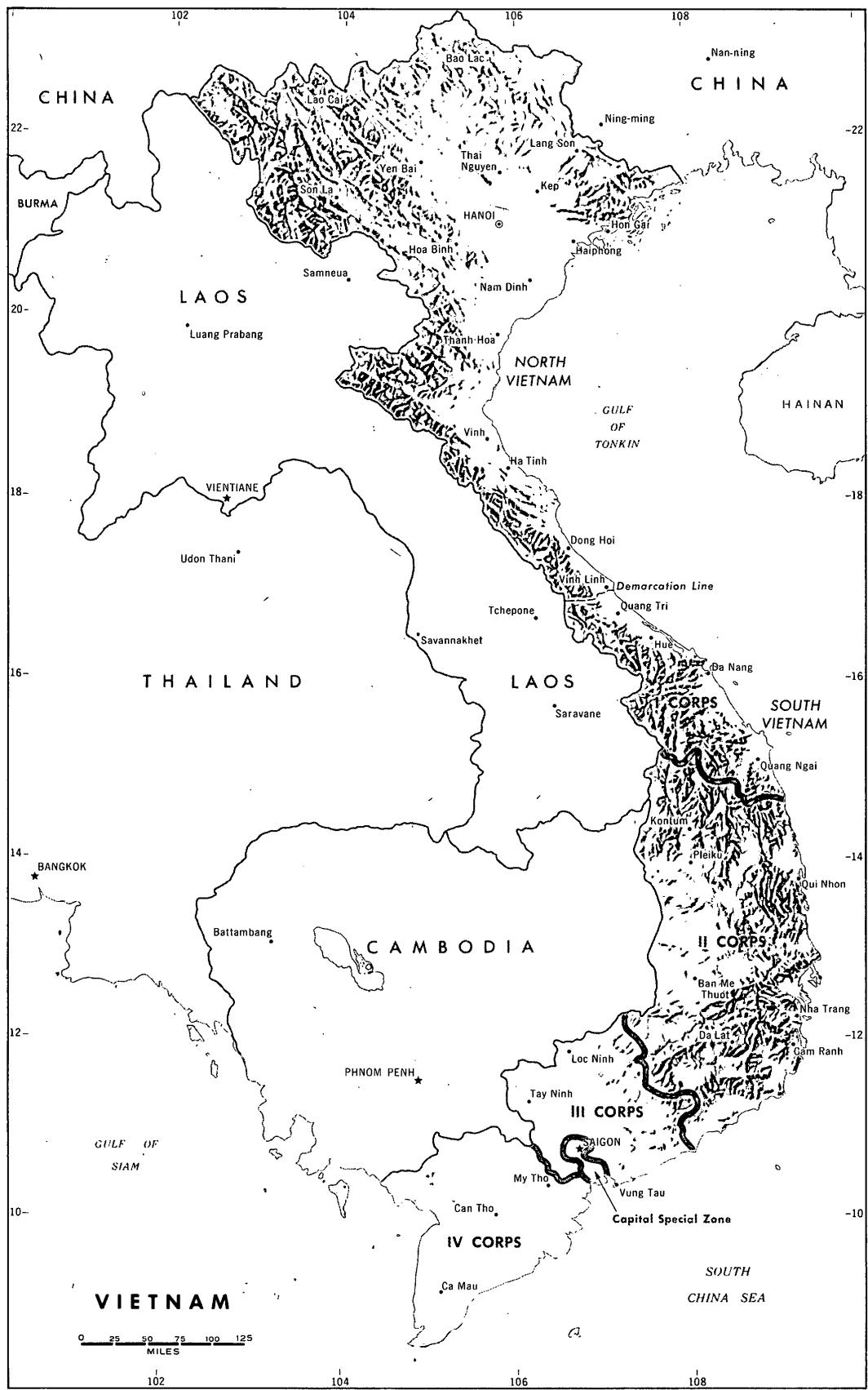
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In addition to the presidential election Wednesday, several Bundestag committees will hold sessions in West Berlin tomorrow, Thursday, and Friday.

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The immediate prospect is for the Communists to continue harassment on the scale of April 1965. The Soviets at that time showed their displeasure at a plenary session of the West German Bundestag in Berlin with jets buzzing the city, producing sonic booms, and conducting exercises in or near the air corridors to Berlin, and with military maneuvers which provided both an ominous background and a rationale for intermittent closure of the autobahns to Berlin.

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Moscow is keeping close control over the situation,
however, on the scene as well as at home.

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VIETNAM

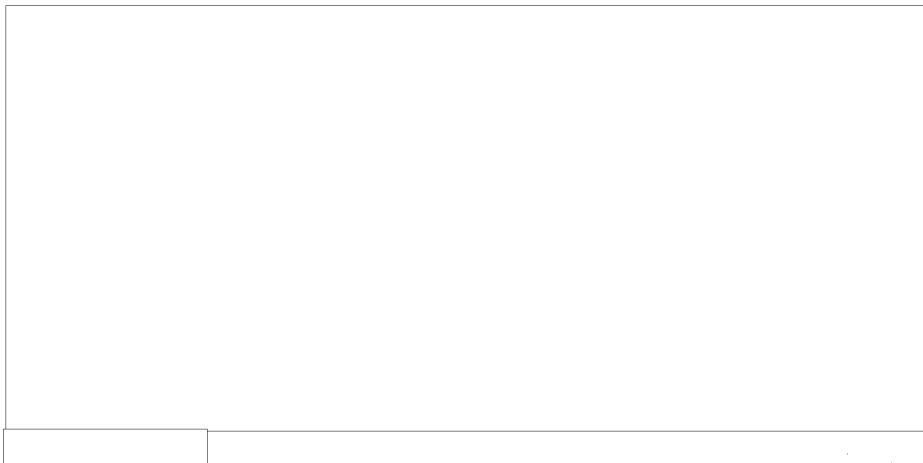
The lull in enemy activity continues with Communist-initiated incidents at a pre-offensive level. An abundance of evidence, however, points to an enemy intention to resume offensive activity shortly. One recently captured enemy directive reveals that the Communists plan to coordinate extensive political demonstrations in urban centers with further military action.

This political offensive was to stress proselytizing of members of the South Vietnamese military from 9 to 23 February; so far, we have no evidence this was successful. The proselytizing phase is to be followed from 11 to 16 March by a controlled propaganda campaign in all cities based on popular economic issues and desires for peace. Finally, a "fever-pitch struggle movement" demanding direct negotiations with the Liberation Front by a "peace cabinet" is to be waged from 17-25 March. If the enemy sticks to this time schedule, we should begin to see some attempts to get

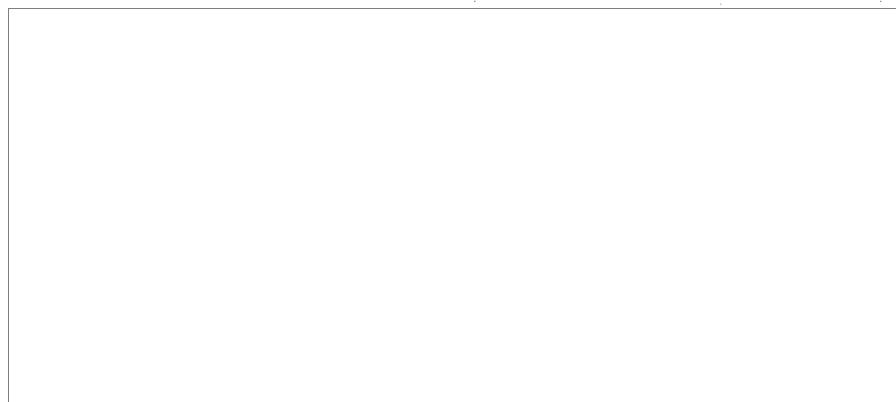
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demonstrations started within the next week and presumably
a step-up in military activity as well.

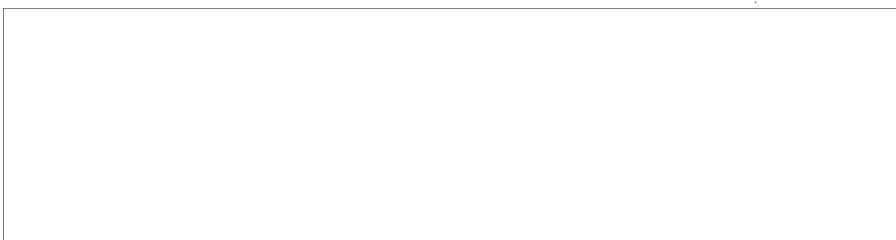
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II. OTHER IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS

COMMUNIST CHINA - SOVIET UNION

In the wake of the Sino-Soviet border clash, thousands of Chinese demonstrators harassed the Soviet Embassy in Peking today. We have heard nothing yet on reciprocal activity in Moscow.

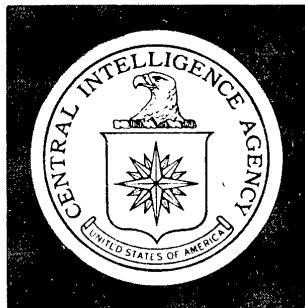
CHILE

Congressional elections on Sunday cost President Frei's Christian Democratic Party its majority in the Chamber of Deputies, although it remains the largest party in Chile. With 31 percent of the vote--far below the 42 percent it obtained in 1965--it now holds only 56 seats of 150 in the lower house. In the Senate, it gained but is still three seats short of controlling that body.

The biggest gainer was the conservative National Party, which emerged as the second largest party. We presume this was due in part to disenchantment by the middle class with Frei's reforms. The Communist and Socialist parties together polled about 30 percent of the vote. Pro-Castro Socialist Salvador Allende got the highest vote in his district, giving him an important push toward the presidential nomination by the Communists and Socialists in 1970.

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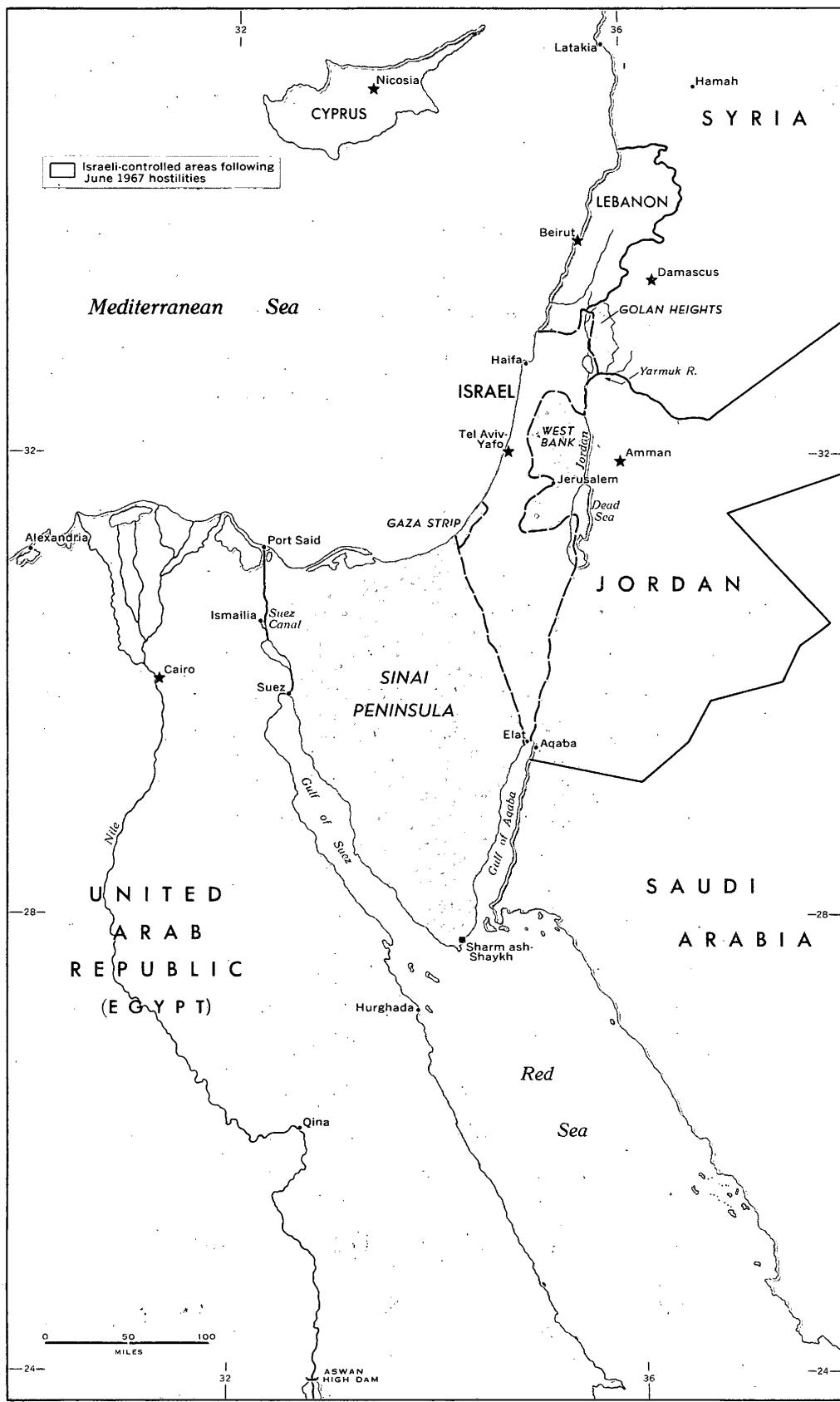


The President's Daily Brief

4 March 1969

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

I. MAJOR PROBLEMS

MIDDLE EAST

King Husayn is letting the terrorists operate more and more openly throughout Jordan. During the recent Muslim holidays, fedayeen groups collected funds in Amman, canvassing hotels and the homes of foreigners. They have also been harassing tourists, and Ambassador Symmes is worried about possible incidents involving US nationals. Jordanian security forces are now cooperating with the fedayeen's own security patrols.

Husayn's new modus vivendi with the fedayeen is no doubt based on a recognition of the terrorist movement's growing popularity in Jordan. The King also seems to think he can better control the fedayeen by working with them.

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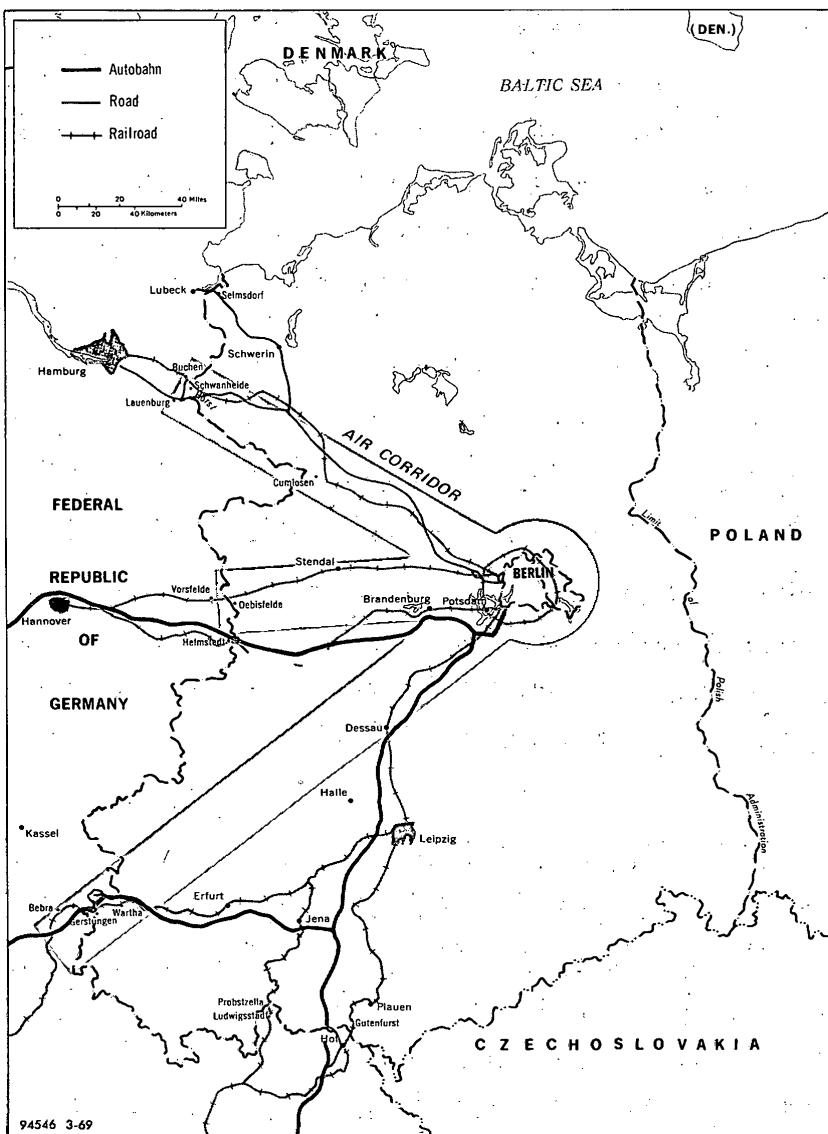


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It now appears that Moshe Dayan will defer his bid for the premiership--perhaps until the Labor Party convenes in June to decide the ranking of party leaders on the voting lists for the fall elections. Even though Dayan and his group abstained yesterday in the Labor Party vote approving Mrs. Meir's nomination as interim prime minister, he said he would stay on as defense minister. This would seem to rule out any attempt by Dayan to challenge Mrs. Meir's confirmation in the Knesset.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

ACCESS ROUTES TO BERLIN



FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

EUROPE

There is nothing significant to report.

SOVIET AFFAIRS

The East German and West Berlin negotiators met again this afternoon on East German initiative in a last-ditch effort to reach some meeting of the minds before the West German presidential election tomorrow. [redacted]

[redacted] it seems
that the East Germans offered passes for Easter and discussions on passes for other holidays if the West Germans transfer the election out of Berlin. This Chancellor Kiesinger is reported unwilling to do so late in the game; hence the meeting evidently will take place as scheduled in West Berlin and there will be no holiday passes for West Berliners.

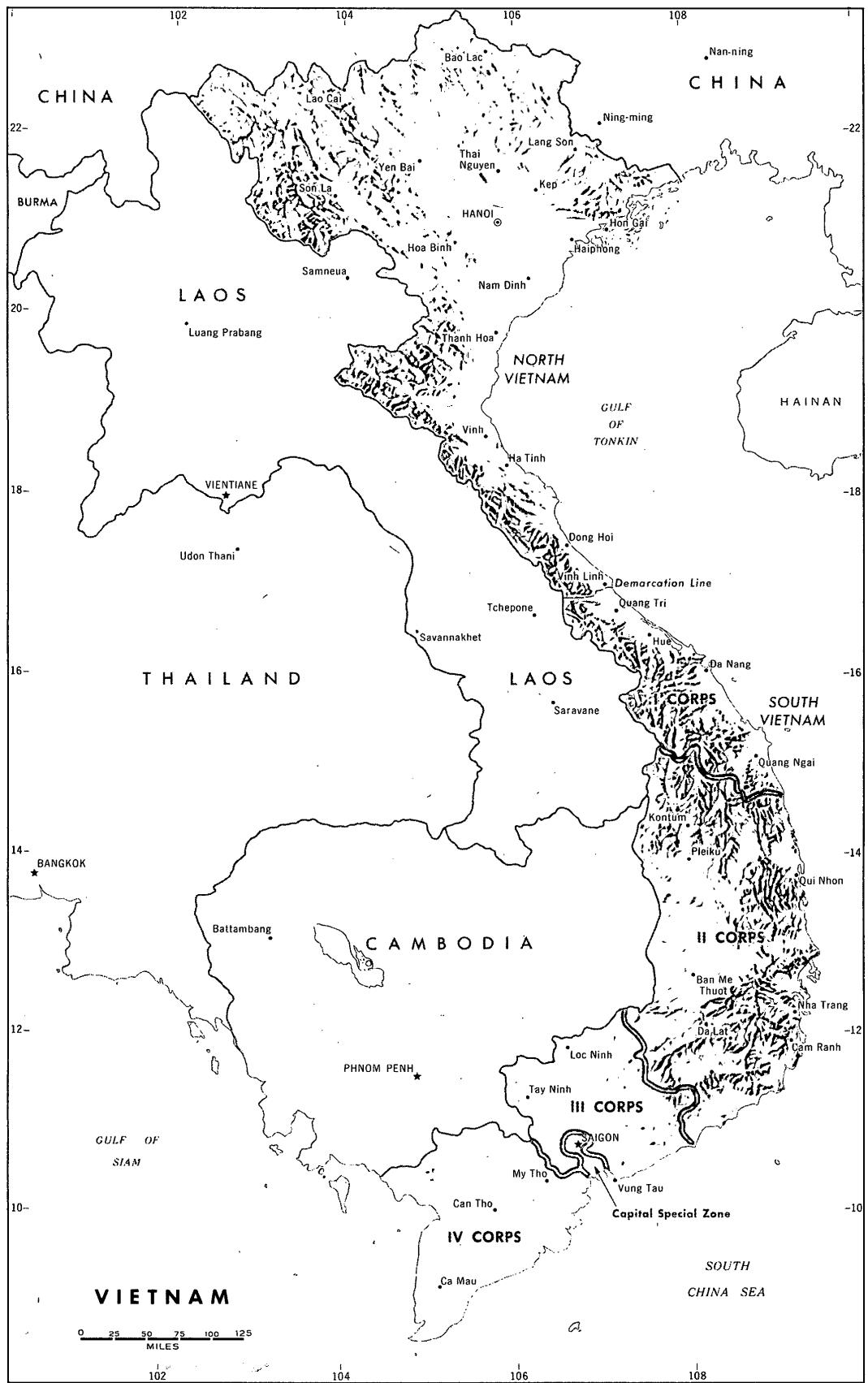
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The checkpoints at both ends of the Berlin-Helmstedt autobahn were closed to all traffic for about two hours in the afternoon. The delays were attributed to Soviet troop movements; small British and French convoys were held up, but no US convoys were involved. All other roads to and from Berlin were normal.

There was some Soviet air activity in the vicinity of the corridors. Allied air traffic continued normally, however, and the Soviet controller in the air safety center is maintaining a business-as-usual attitude.

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VIETNAM

The Communists may have kicked off the second phase
of their current offensive, at least in the highlands of
II Corps. Two major enemy ground attacks occurred there
in the last 24 hours. For only the second time in the
war, the Communists used tanks in an unsuccessful attack
on a special forces camp in Kontum Province. In the second
attack, a US infantry company taking part in a sweep 30
miles to the southwest suffered heavy losses. Elsewhere
in the country, action was generally low again yesterday.

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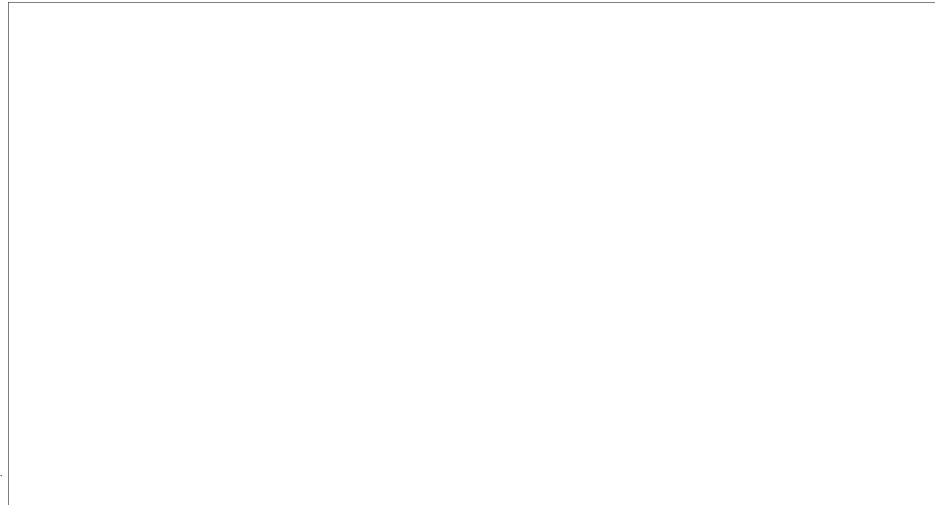
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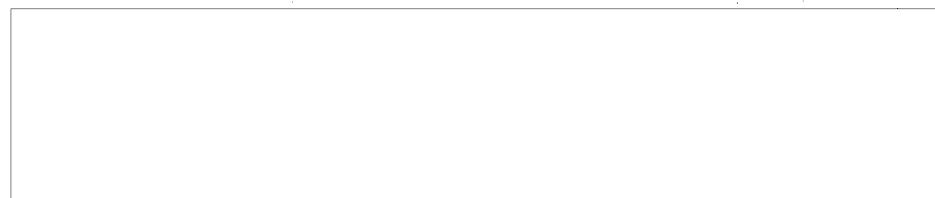
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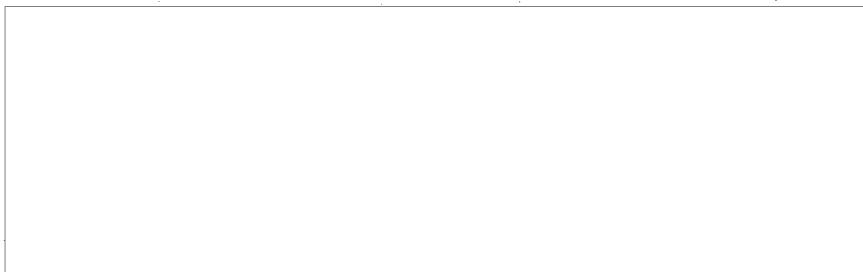
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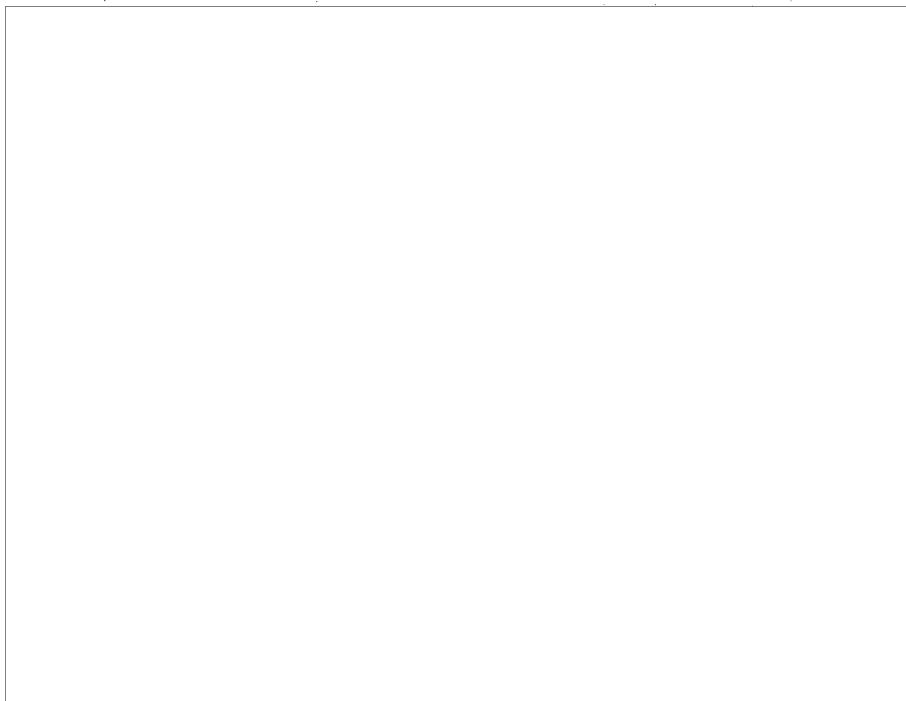
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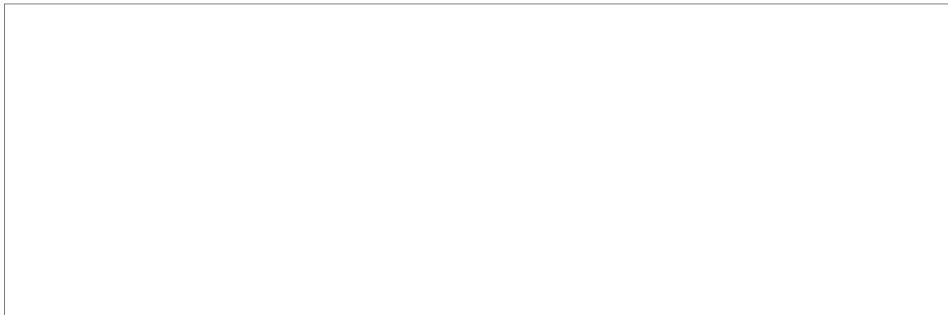


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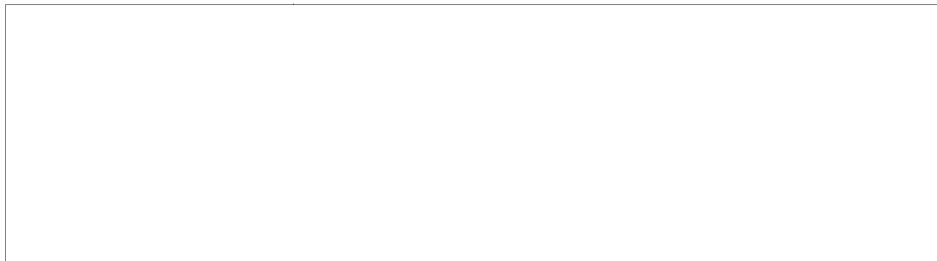
II. OTHER IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS

PANAMA



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The situation within the Guard [redacted] looks 50X1
shaky following the removal of Colonel Martinez. Major personnel shifts and organizational changes could have had a weakening effect. Although Torrijos seems to have consolidated his position, the loyalty and unity of the Guard have not been tested since Martinez' ouster.



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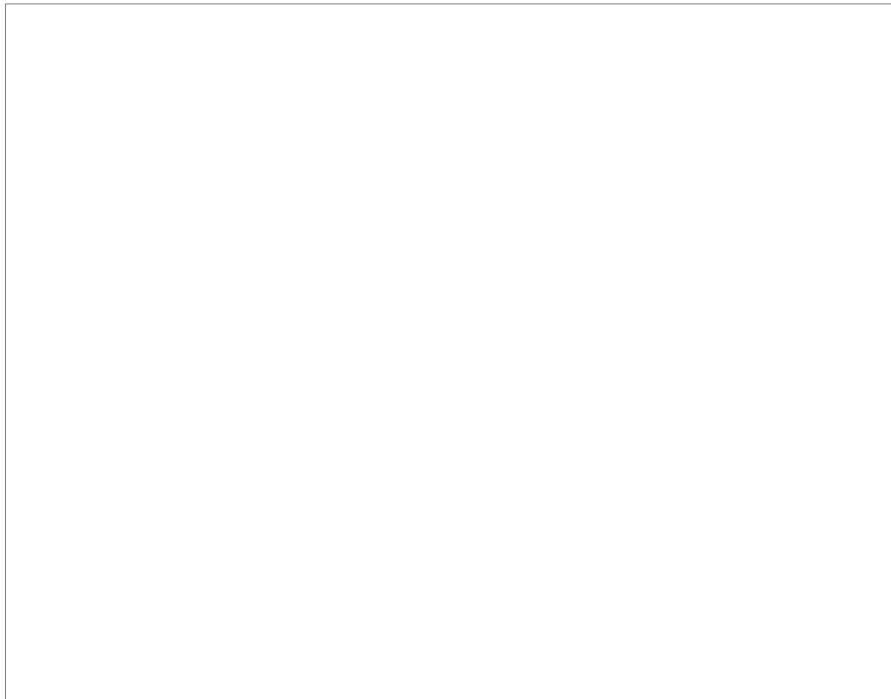
COMMUNIST CHINA

The Annex today is a discussion of the Chinese Communist leadership.

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NATIONALIST CHINA - SOUTH KOREA



ETHIOPIA

The Ethiopian government's firm response to the annual student demonstrations this year probably ensures that the situation will stay under control over the short run. The underlying discontent, however, is deeper and more widespread than in the past and now has even penetrated into the military. The Emperor and his cabinet are said to be aware of the trouble. They are doing almost nothing, however, in the way of reforms to correct the basic problems, which are not unlike student problems elsewhere.

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The regime's foundations have been getting weaker year by year. The kind of demonstrations which the student radicals are determined to continue may find these foundations even weaker than they seem.

EFFECTS OF THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION ON COMMUNIST CHINA'S LEADERSHIP

INNER CIRCLE OF POLITBURO

Mao Tse-tung
~~Liu Shao-chi~~
Chou En-lai
Lin Piao
~~Teng Hsiao-ping~~
~~Peng Chen~~

OTHER ACTIVE POLITBURO MEMBERS

Chen Yi ~~Tan Chen-lin~~
Li Fu-chun ~~Ulanfu~~
~~Ho Lung~~ ~~Lu Ting-i~~
Li Hsien-nien Chen Po-ta
~~Li Ching-chuan~~ Kang Sheng
 ~~Po-tao~~

OTHER IMPORTANT OFFICIALS

~~Lo Jui-ching~~
~~Tao Chu~~
~~Li Hsueh-feng~~ (Purged,
then partly rehabilitated)
~~Sung Jen-chiung~~
~~Yang Shang-kun~~
~~Tu Ning-i~~
~~Tsao Cheng-chih~~

Red lines are drawn through the names of those purged since 1965.

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THE LEADERSHIP OF COMMUNIST CHINA

The leadership of Communist China has gone through a violent convulsion during the Cultural Revolution, one from which it will be a long time recovering. There was a massive purge of veteran party leaders in 1966. Since then, the survivors at the top of China's power structure--an inner circle of six still dominated by the venerable Mao Tse-tung--have presented a virtually unchanging public face. This appearance of stability has persisted despite violent social upheaval, bloody factional fighting, several reversals of national policy, and the political destruction of half a dozen men in the second echelon of the leadership.

The official voices of the regime have consciously portrayed the top six as a unified team. This is misleading. Today's power center is not the loyal phalanx of Mao's lieutenants that was projected to the outside world in the regime's first 16 years. These men are, rather, a disparate group, not natural or congenial allies.

The political elite today bears little resemblance to the monolithic Politburo of the 1950s. In addition to Mao, the inner circle includes four veteran leaders and Mao's wife. Since the spring of 1967, this inner circle has been supplemented by a frequently changing secondary elite. This group now numbers eight, all of whom are new to the apex of political power.

The central figure and still the authority for basic policy is Mao Tse-tung. His role in the decision-making

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process is almost certainly decisive, but he probably does not intervene personally except on issues of major importance.

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Although arbitrary and

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suspicious, he has been forced, in the fluid political situation of the past several years, to arbitrate among competing interest groups and, on occasion, to compromise. He clearly feels that his time is running out, but despite disappointments and reversals, he has not abandoned his romantic vision of a communized, egalitarian China nor his sense that the Chinese revolution is his own creation.

In the early 1960s, Mao apparently detected a growing resistance to his policies from the entrenched party bureaucracy, and from this convinced himself that leaders in line to succeed him would sell out his revolution and turn to Soviet-style revisionism. This fear--partly paranoia, partly justified--is the overriding factor among many which have produced the "Cultural Revolution" which he unleashed in 1966. In striking at his erstwhile subordinates and the bureaucracy they controlled, Mao virtually demolished the old party machine painstakingly built up over a period of three decades. No cohesive organization has yet risen to replace it. On the contrary, the destructive energies of the Cultural Revolution have torn the body politic into competing interest groups, each striving for power--or survival--at the expense of the others.

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During the past three years a group of leaders associated with Mao's more radical policies rose rapidly on the crest of the political turmoil. These men have tended to encourage Mao to push his revolutionary ideas and to work against the established order. In opposition to this radical group, there has developed an amorphous coalition whose chief common concerns are to restore social order, stabilize the economy, and maintain national security. The most important components of this more moderate faction have been the military command structure, especially in the provinces, and the government administrators in Peking.

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This basic division seems to reach into the highest ranks of the leadership. Mao's designated successor Lin Piao, a brilliant military strategist who has led China's armed forces since 1959, may have lost the allegiance of some of the old-line military commanders who have been attempting to administer China's provinces by his unwavering support for Mao's disruptive social and political policies--which have included attacks on the military establishment. Lin still has followers in the army, but his present pre-eminence derives from Mao's faith in his loyalty.

Number three in the Peking hierarchy is the durable premier, Chou En-lai. With his fine instinct for political compromise and self-preservation, Chou has adroitly managed

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to serve Mao while at the same time moderating Mao's more extreme policies. Throughout the Cultural Revolution he has been the chief voice of reason in China and the symbolic leader of the moderates.

The other three figures in the inner circle, Mao's longtime ghostwriter and party theoretician Chen Po-ta, the secret police specialist Kang Sheng, and Mao's wife Chiang Ching, have been the principal leaders of the "Cultural Revolution Group"--the headquarters of the radicals. Mme Mao was a political nobody before the Cultural Revolution, not even a Central Committee member. When the Red Guards were unleashed in 1966, she quickly became the most vociferous spokesman for the militants. Public adulation accorded her has at times been exceeded only by that for Mao and Lin.

The next echelon of leadership has reflected the shifting balance of power in the Cultural Revolution. Six of the eight members of the secondary elite are not even members of the party Central Committee, an index of how rapidly they have risen to prominence. At levels just below this group figures have risen and fallen in kaleidoscopic fashion as the Cultural Revolution passed through phases of extreme radicalism or relative moderation. The eight junior members of the top leadership have been associated together for less than a year and are themselves split politically. Five seem to have been identified with the radical and destructive aspects of the past three years--two members of the Cultural Revolution Group, the commander of the Air Force, and two

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CURRENT LEADERSHIP ELITE IN CHINA

(Real political power seems concentrated in this group)

THE INNER CIRCLE



Mao Tse-tung



Lin Piao



Chou En-lai



Chen Po-ta



Kang Sheng



Chiang Ching

THE SECONDARY ELITE



Chang Chun-chiao



Yao Wen-yuan



Hsieh Fu-chih



Huang Yung-sheng



Wu Fa-hsien



Yeh Chun



Wang Tung-hsing



Wen Yu-cheng

The first six form the inner circle, which has only lost one member since January 1967. The next seven assumed their present status after the last purge in March 1968, and Wen was added in August 1968. These additional officials appear with the inner circle at all important public functions and presumably also carry considerable influence in the inner councils.

MAO TSE-TUNG
LIN PIAO

Chairman of party and Politburo Standing Committee (PBSC);
Vice Chairman, PBSC; Minister of National Defense; First Vice
Chairman, Military Affairs Committee (MAC)

CHOU EN-LAI
CHEN PO-TA
KANG SHENG

Member, PBSC; Premier
Member, PBSC; Chairman, Cultural Revolution Group (CRG)
Member, PBSC; Adviser, CRG

CHIANG CHING
CHANG CHUN-CHIAO
YAO WEN-YUAN

First Vice Chairman, CRG
Vice Chairman, CRG
Member, CRG

HSIEH FU-CHIH

Member, MAC; Minister of Public Security; Chairman, Peking Municipal Revolutionary Committee

HUANG YUNG-SHEN
WU FA-HSIEN
YEH CHUN
WANG TUNG-HSING
WEN YU-CHENG

Member, MAC; Chief of Staff
Member, MAC; Deputy Chief of Staff; Commander of Air Force
Member, the CRG in the People's Liberation Army; wife of Lin Piao
Vice Minister of Public Security
Deputy Chief of Staff; Commander, Peking garrison

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members of a purge group within the military. The other three--the political leader of Peking city, the army chief of staff, and the commander of the Peking garrison--have been more closely identified with Chou En-lai and the military establishment.

This small group of 14 leaders is highly unstable. It will probably be able to retain its superficial unity, but behind the scenes its members seem to be engaged in political fights which are eroding its cohesion and effectiveness.

The problems of the top leadership have been compounded because the Cultural Revolution has largely destroyed the institutional framework in which political power had been embodied since 1949. The Politburo, for example, has been badly shaken by the purges and no longer represents the pinnacle of power in China. The State Council and the party Central Committee have declined even further in importance, while the party secretariat has ceased to function. As a result the top leadership has had to rely increasingly on the army--itself strained and perhaps split by the events of the Cultural Revolution--to administer the country.

This certainly means that the views of the military establishment, and particularly those commanders who are in direct charge of most of China's provinces, carry a great deal of weight in policy formulation, but we are unclear how the military participate in the decision-making

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process. At present the leadership is placing great emphasis on rebuilding the battered party apparatus in preparation for the long-postponed Ninth Party Congress. As this effort goes forward friction between the military and civilian party personnel is likely, further confusing lines of authority.

We have little good information on how decisions are reached in Peking at present, or on the relative weight of individual members of the top leadership in the inner councils of the regime. However, some kind of consensus politics seems to be at work. In contradistinction to the situation before the Cultural Revolution, when a very few top leaders--Mao, Chou En-lai, Mao's former deputy Liu Shao-chi and former party general secretary Teng Hsiao-ping--took quick decisions and issued orders by fiat, most important decisions of the top leadership seem to be the result of wider discussion, considerable political infighting and frequent compromise.

A good example of this process was the formation--over a period of more than a year--of the "revolutionary committees" that now formally govern each of China's provinces. Political patronage considerations led to an enormous amount of bickering and pulling and hauling in the setting up of these committees, both in Peking and in the provinces themselves. Complex political rivalries and alliances slowed the process and occasionally forced the reopening of questions presumably "settled." Continued bickering has also led the top leadership frequently to issue vague directives

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that can be and are variously interpreted at lower levels, and has hindered effective follow-through on seemingly firm orders.

The political demise of the Red Guards in the summer of 1968 has also had an effect on the formulation and implementation of policy by the Peking leadership. Mao and his radical lieutenants now lack a ready means of stirring up mass action against the established bureaucracy. On the other hand, military commanders, who were in 1967 and 1968 clearly opposed to the destructive activities of the Red Guards, may now be more willing to carry out extreme Maoist social policies. Provincial military leaders who in 1967 were themselves under Red Guard attack are now pushing programs that bear a "made in Peking, by Mao" label. This apparent accommodation may have weakened the position of government officials associated with Chou En-lai, who have a vested interest in careful planning and rational policies. Some of these figures have recently seemed to be losing influence.

The present leadership in Peking is in any event faced with enormous problems, some of long standing, and some engendered by the excesses of the Cultural Revolution. It is most unlikely that the 14 leaders who at present are on top of the political pyramid in China have a common approach to these problems, and further political infighting involving both policy questions and personal rivalries is probably in prospect.

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LATE NOTES FOR THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF OF

4 MARCH 1969

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5 March 1969

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

I. MAJOR PROBLEMS

MIDDLE EAST

The Israelis claim that there has been an upsurge of sniping incidents in the Suez Canal area over the past few days and that several soldiers have been wounded, one today. The Chief of the General Staff said Israel would take retaliatory action if the Egyptian firing continued.

(Press, 5 Mar 69)

EUROPE

There is nothing significant to report.

SOVIET AFFAIRS

The East Germans closed the Berlin-Helmstedt autobahn again this morning for three hours, but as of 0700 EST (1300 local), traffic was moving normally on all roads between West Germany and Berlin and in the air corridors. One US convoy was held up on a trip from Berlin to West Germany. The rumored closing of checkpoints between the eastern and western sections of Berlin itself has not occurred and all are open to traffic.

Meanwhile, the West German presidential election was due to get under way at 1000 local time. As of 0700 EST (1300 local) no results were in, but the decision of the 83 Free Democratic members of the Federal Assembly to join the 449 Social Democrats in backing Justice Minister Gustav Heinemann makes him the favorite to defeat Defense Minister Gerhard Schroeder of the CDU.

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VIETNAM

Except for the unsuccessful attempt by assailants, some dressed in South Vietnamese military uniforms, to assassinate Prime Minister Tran Van Huong as he left his office for home at the lunch hour, the situation in Vietnam is stable.

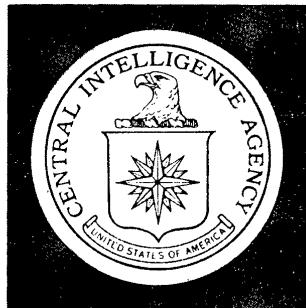
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II. OTHER IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS

SOVIET UNION - COMMUNIST CHINA

A TASS representative in Moscow has told our embassy that publicity was given to last Sunday's border incident because the "numbers involved" made any other course unfeasible. He said the Soviets regard the incident as a culmination of local tensions in the area and went out of his way to state that it is not regarded in Moscow as a deliberate political provocation by Peking.

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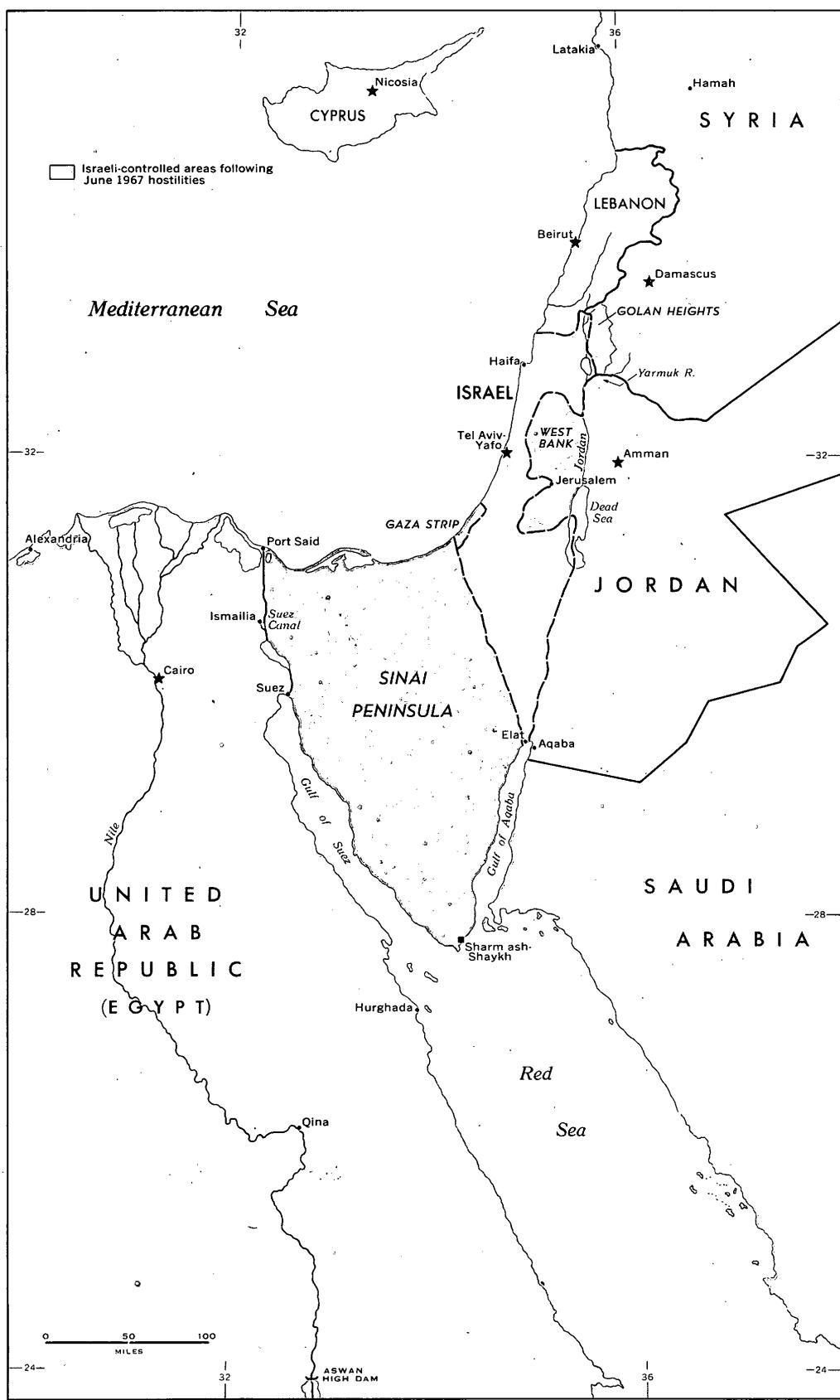


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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

I. MAJOR PROBLEMS

MIDDLE EAST

Persons unknown fired on and destroyed the Iraqi Petroleum Company's desulphurization plant in Kirkuk on Saturday. The plant is in Kurdish territory, and the action might be a prelude to the reopening of the Kurdish rebellion.

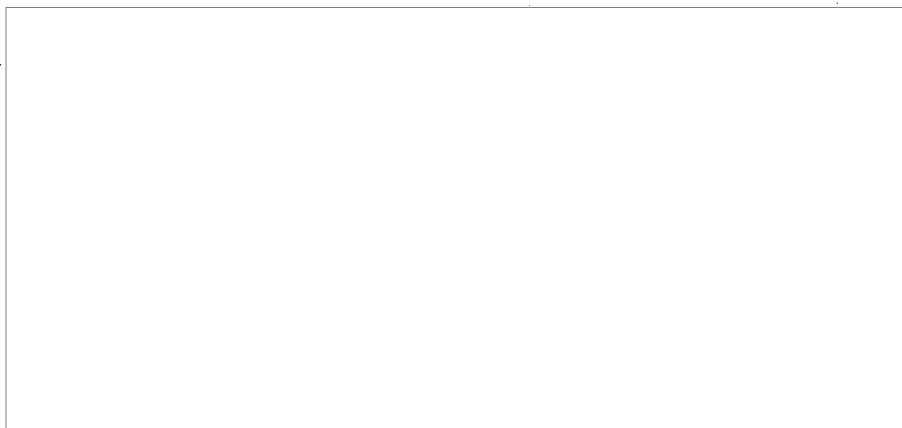
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In any case, Iraq's petroleum production has dropped from about 1.1 million barrels per day to about 440,000 since Saturday. The companies which comprise the IPC may make up the loss by increasing production in Iran--a step which would please the Shah but would cause the Iraqis substantial financial damage.

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EUROPE

There is nothing significant to report.

SOVIET AFFAIRS

The meeting of the West German Federal Assembly in West Berlin today passed without major harassment. The East Germans, however, closed the Berlin-Helmstedt autobahn twice and for the first time during the current imbroglio, closed the other two main roads to West Berlin. There was no harassment of West Berlin itself, and access from West Berlin to the Communist part of the city was not impeded.

According to West Berlin Mayor Schuetz, this week's minor harassments have had little effect upon the morale and confidence of the city's inhabitants. A Soviet diplomat in East Berlin, however, has suggested that problems concerning access to the city may only be beginning.

On 3 March, the second secretary of the Soviet Embassy Georgy Sannikov, stated that there would be no trouble over the Federal Assembly meeting, but that in the next six months the East Germans will gradually impose restrictions on the transport of industrial goods to and from the city "right down to buttons" on West German army uniforms. Sannikov said that this idea was originated by the East Germans and had been approved by the Soviets. He also

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said that should Bonn plead to Moscow to restore the status quo, the Soviets would advise the West Germans to negotiate with Pankow. Sannikov's statement may have been intended as a follow-up to the Soviet note of 26 February in which Moscow requested the East Germans to study measures designed to cut off the flow of military goods allegedly manufactured in West Berlin.

VIETNAM

While Thieu and his associates seem to have remained cool thus far in the face of the current enemy offensive and the shellings of Saigon, they are clearly beginning to feel domestic pressure to react. The South Vietnamese delegation in Paris wants to propose adjournment of today's meeting after they make an unusually brief presentation (they are last in the speaking order). The manner in which this proposal has been put to US representatives suggests that the South Vietnamese are interested in taking a reading of US firmness in the face of the shellings.

South Vietnamese Government leaders' concern probably has been made all the keener by the assassination attempt on Prime Minister Huong. This incident--in comparison to the shellings--is likely to be regarded as a more convincing demonstration of the Communists' lack of interest in negotiating with the present Saigon government. It would not be surprising if Thieu seriously considers a walkout from the talks in the near future, particularly if there are more shellings of Saigon or if there is another assassination attempt.

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South Vietnamese pressure on the US to join in some kind of unmistakable response could develop quickly. The GVN regards the understanding on the immunity of Saigon from attacks not only as fundamental to its agreement to go to Paris in the first place but also as basic to mutual trust between Saigon and Washington.

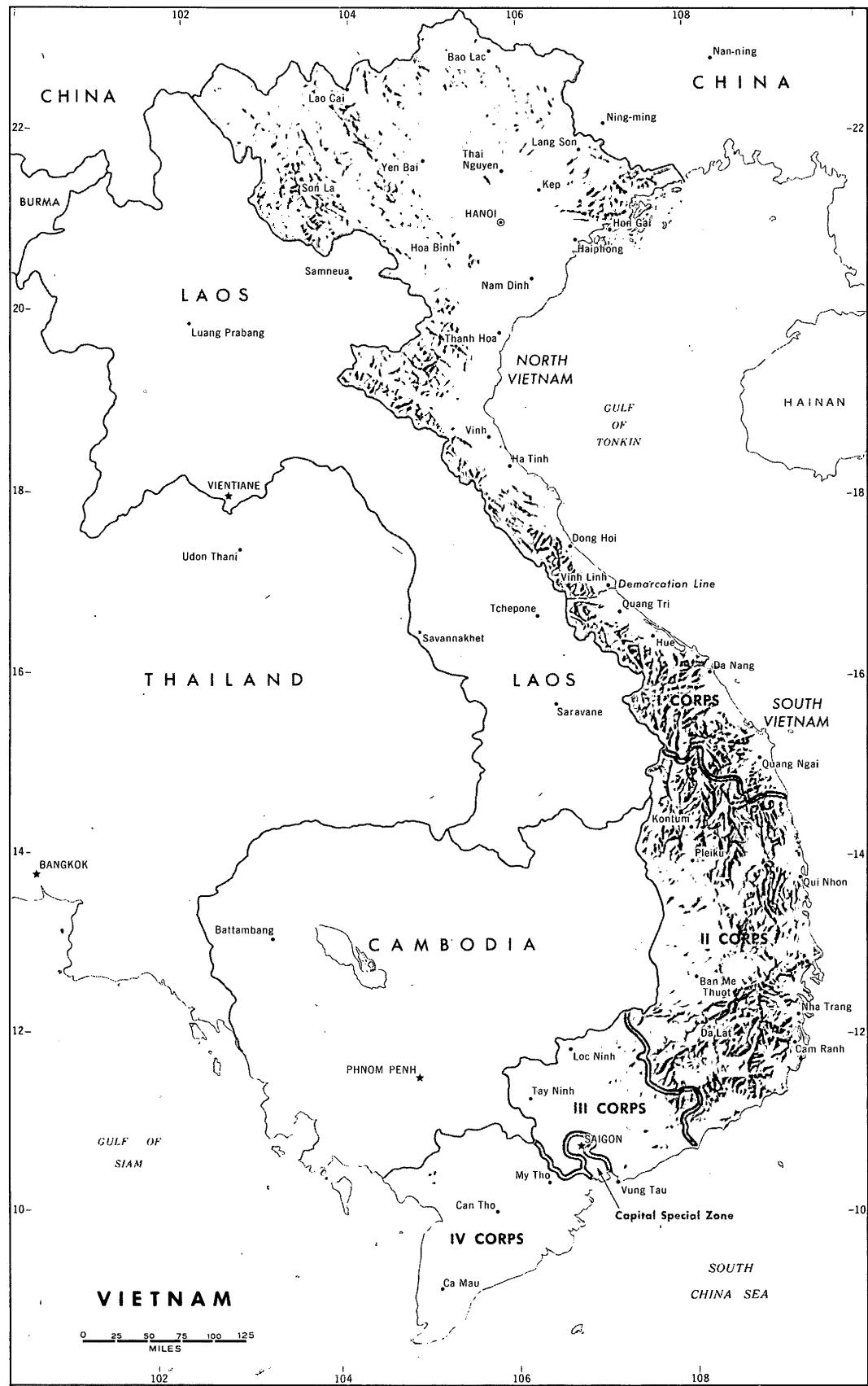
The Communists realize that even a limited shelling of Saigon can put great strains on US-GVN relations, but they also are aware that to push too far with the shellings could bring a break in the talks, something they probably do not want to see.

The assassination attempt on Prime Minister Huong may have been only the first in a series of such incidents. Captured enemy documents and prisoners have indicated that at some point in the current offensive Communist terrorists would go into action in South Vietnam's urban centers. The Communists probably believe that the death of any of the top government leaders could severely shake the GVN's stability. Huong's death in particular would remove one of President Thieu's most effective lieutenants, against whom Ky has been intriguing. In this instance, however, it is fairly clear that the Communists, not Ky, were responsible.

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The Communists seem to be standing pat in Paris, probably in expectation that the US will soon try to get private talks under way. Both Hanoi and the Front have made known their interest in private talks, especially through the Soviets and French, and they are unlikely to move much further until they see what results these probes produce.

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We are less sanguine than before that the Communists would respond positively to any kind of approach from the South Vietnamese for private contacts. They clearly are bent on having the US included in discussions with the Front and they are not likely to go very far with the South Vietnamese alone at this point.

It seems increasingly plain that once private talks are started, the Communists will press hard to put a damper on US military operations in South Vietnam, presumably by holding out prospects of similar curbs on "Front" military action.

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The major area of Communist activity over the past 24 hours was again in the central highlands of South Vietnam. In addition to continued pressure on the Ben Het Special Forces camp, the enemy staged several attacks on populated civilian areas, including the shelling of the provincial capital of Pleiku and the overrunning of a village in Kontum Province. At last report, the Communists were still holding part of the village and other parts were on fire.

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In the first few days of the current offensive, the enemy made little effort to counter the government's pacification program. Unlike last year's Tet period, Revolutionary Development cadre have by and large remained in the field rather than pulling back to defend province capitals. By remaining at their outposts, however, they are vulnerable to large unit enemy attacks.

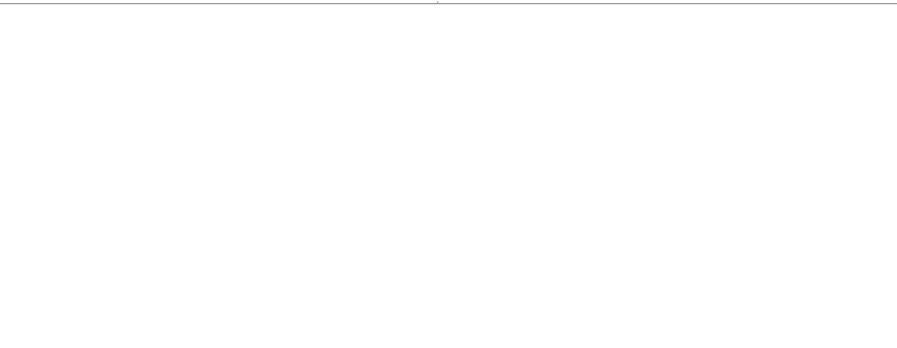
Reports are now beginning to come in from the rural areas suggesting that the enemy may have begun to focus some of his military attacks against pacified hamlets and pacification cadre. In II Corps, for example, the Communists are apparently making special efforts to seek out and kill government cadre working in the villages. Before the current Communist campaign runs its course, the enemy probably will make a fairly substantial effort to counter recent government gains in the area of pacification.

In spite of such terrorism, the first elections for local officials, which are being staged on the first four Sundays of March, were successfully completed on 2 March. Voter turnout was unusually heavy, as candidates were running for council seats in 92 villages and for administrative offices in 189 hamlets. Communist harassment was generally light and apparently ineffective.

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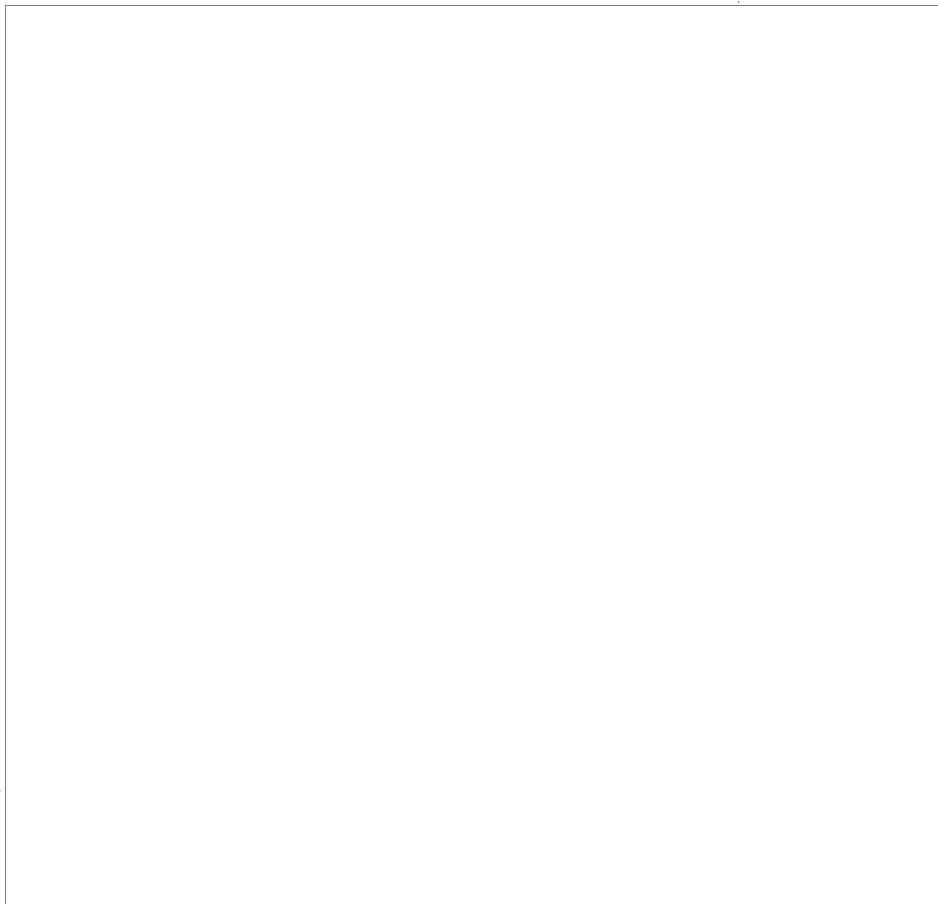
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II. OTHER IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS

KENYA

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LAOS

Communist pressure in the northeast is growing in the wake of the government's loss of Na Khang. Outposts in the general area of that main base are being threatened by advancing North Vietnamese troops. Efforts to blunt the offensive are hampered by the influx of large numbers of tribal

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refugees into the bases still under government control. In addition, government personnel and equipment losses in the recent fighting have evidently been high.

Prime Minister Souvanna interprets the attack against Na Khang as evidence that the Soviet ambassador's recent visits to Hanoi and Pathet Lao headquarters have not moved the Communists closer to negotiations. He also fears the North Vietnamese will capitalize on their recent gains by moving southwest into an area between Vientiane and Luang Prabang from which they were driven several years ago.

Souvanna has asked for additional US equipment for the army.

PERU

The Peruvian Government has tentatively decided that if the US asks it to return one destroyer because of the recent fishing boat incident, all five US ships on loan will be sent back. The return of the ships would be accompanied by an announcement that Peru cannot accept loan conditions that insult its sovereignty. Peru now has two destroyers and three smaller craft on loan from the US, but only one, the destroyer USS Isherwood, could be subject to US legislation requiring the recall of ships on loan to a country that seizes US fishing boats.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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LAWYER NOTES FOR THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF OF

6 MARCH 1962

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6 March 1969

LATE NOTES FOR THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF OF
5 MARCH 1969

I. MAJOR PROBLEMS

MIDDLE EAST

Ambassador Barbour has learned from Mrs. Meir herself that she intends to accept her party's offer to head the Israeli Government, and she expects to be able to present a cabinet to the Knesset for approval on 12 March.

[redacted] 50X1

[redacted] 50X1

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According to preliminary reports, several students were wounded today by an explosive charge set off at the cafeteria of the Hebrew University campus in Jerusalem. Over 200 students were in the cafeteria at the time. (Press, 6 Mar 69)

* * *

Israeli troops on the east bank of the Suez Canal shelled Egyptian positions across the waterway today. An Israeli military spokesman said this was in retaliation for the recent outbreak of Arab sniping along the canal. (Press, 6 Mar 69)

EUROPE

There is nothing significant to report.

SOVIET AFFAIRS

The East Germans again closed the Helmstedt-Berlin autobahn this morning for three hours. It was reopened at 0600 EST (1200 local time).

[redacted] 50X1

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

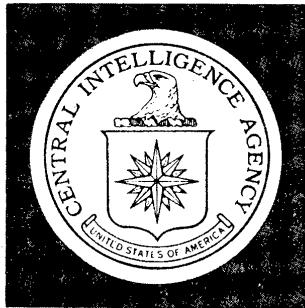
VIETNAM

The Communist shelling of Saigon yesterday with seven 122-mm. rockets killed 22 civilians and wounded 29 others. This action was probably meant to underscore the Communists' insistence that they will not curb military activities without progress in the Paris talks. The Communists clearly hope that sporadic attacks of this sort, and such terrorist acts as the assassination attempt against Huong, will shake the South Vietnamese Government and produce divisions on the allied side. (Central Intelligence Bulletin; [redacted])

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II. OTHER IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS

There is nothing significant to report.



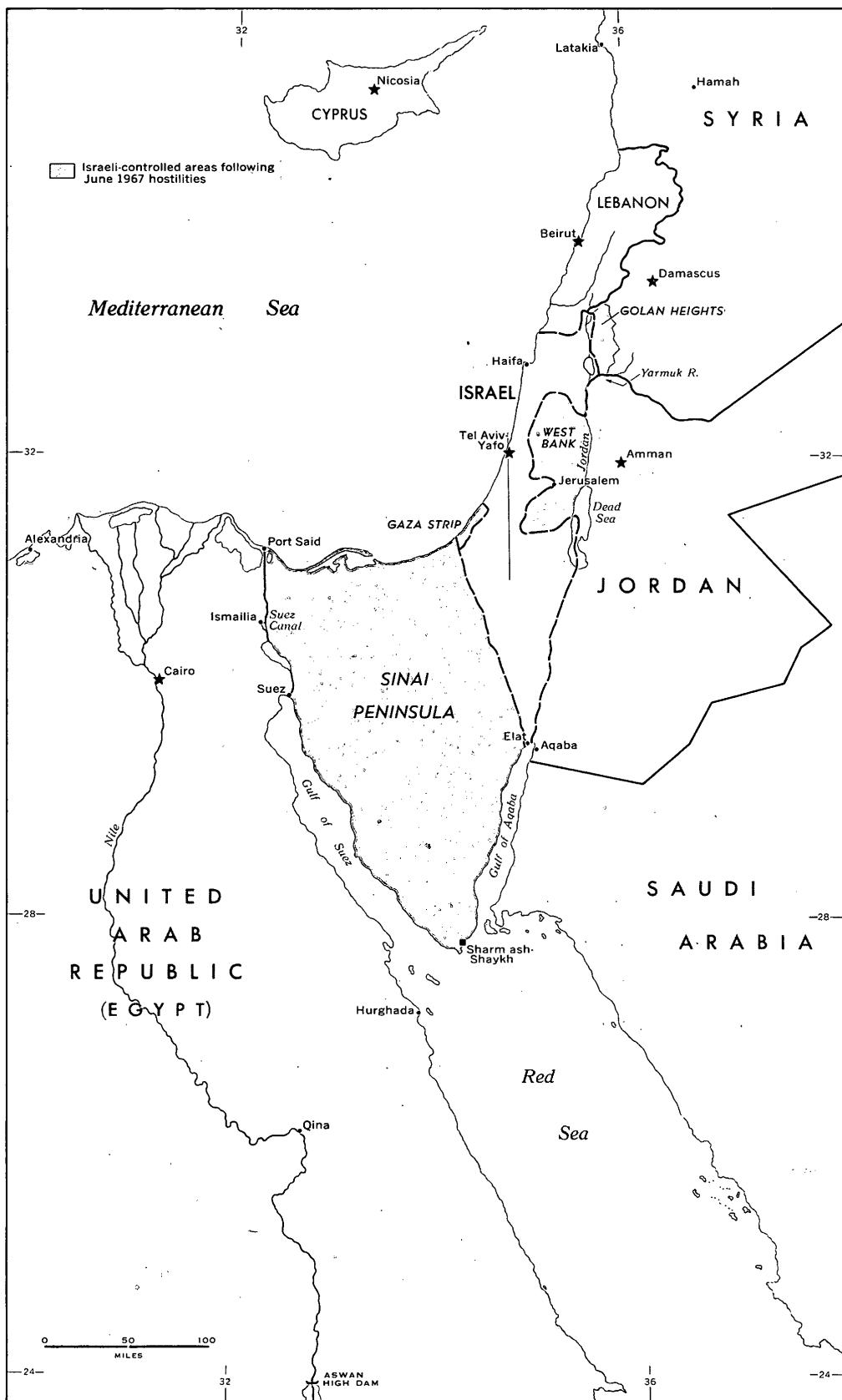
The President's Daily Brief

6 March 1969

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**LARGE NOTES FOR THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF OF
6 MARCH 1969**

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TOP SECRET

7 March 1969

LATE NOTES FOR THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF OF
6 MARCH 1969

I. MAJOR PROBLEMS

MIDDLE EAST

There is nothing significant to report.

EUROPE

There is nothing significant to report.

SOVIET AFFAIRS

The major Soviet newspapers carried a TASS item on Thursday summarizing President Nixon's press conference of 4 March. The article quotes the President on "new confidence and faith" between the US and its European allies, appending the President's disclaimer about expecting major results from exchanges of diplomatic niceties at the highest level. President Nixon's stress on US support for NATO was also brought out.

On US-Soviet relations, TASS paraphrases the President's statement that possibilities exist for bilateral negotiations limiting strategic weapons as well as on other problems. The article also notes the President's comment that the European trip was in preparation for an East-West summit meeting.

Embassy Moscow comments that while Soviet coverage of the press conference is highly selective, treatment of those portions presented is factual, continuing the neutral trend of Soviet reporting of the President's foreign policy pronouncements. Moscow is undoubtedly pleased

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

to be able to show that, although the President reaffirmed US support for NATO, another reason for his trip was to prepare the groundwork for a top-level meeting with the Soviets.. [redacted]

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The Helmstedt-Berlin autobahn has been open since 1200 EST yesterday. [redacted]

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VIETNAM

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* * *

Reports overnight say that enemy military action continues at a relatively low level. [redacted]

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II. OTHER IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS

There is nothing significant to report.

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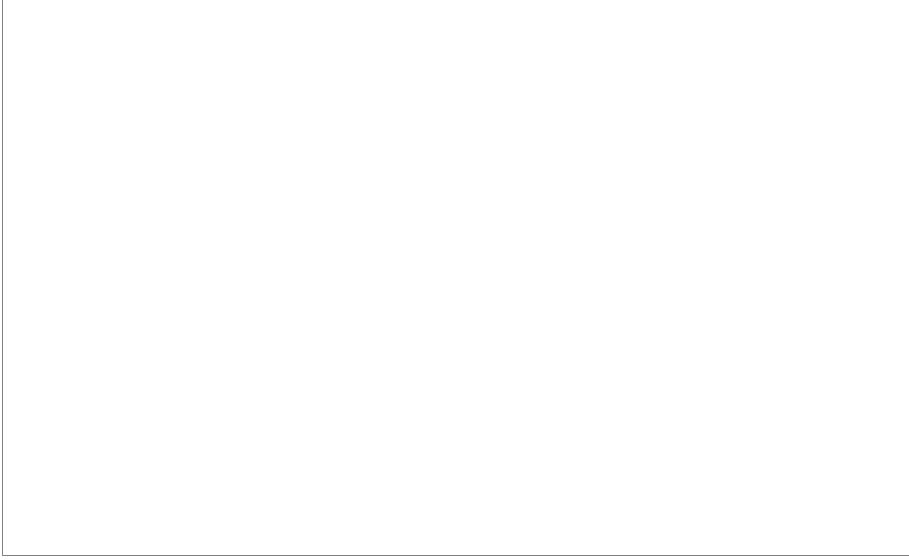
I. MAJOR PROBLEMS

MIDDLE EAST

We understand that the student body at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem has a very high percentage of army veterans. This is yet another reason why the government will feel obliged to take some kind of retaliatory action for today's bombing in the university cafeteria. Israeli tempers are also getting short once again because of persistent Egyptian sniping along the Suez Canal. For a variety of reasons--including Eban's visit to the US--the Israeli Government, however, may find it politic to postpone any retaliatory measures a bit longer.

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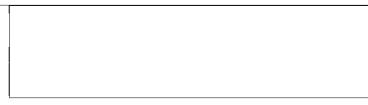


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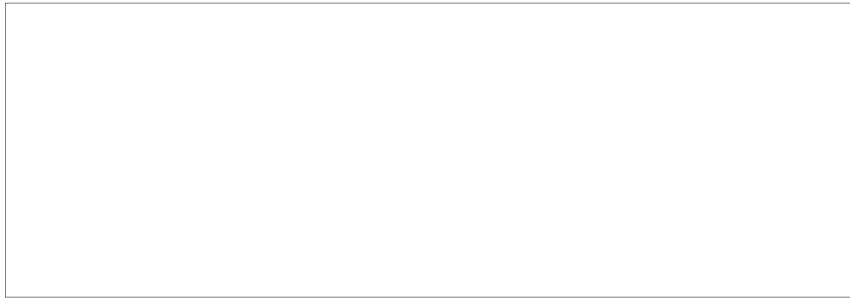


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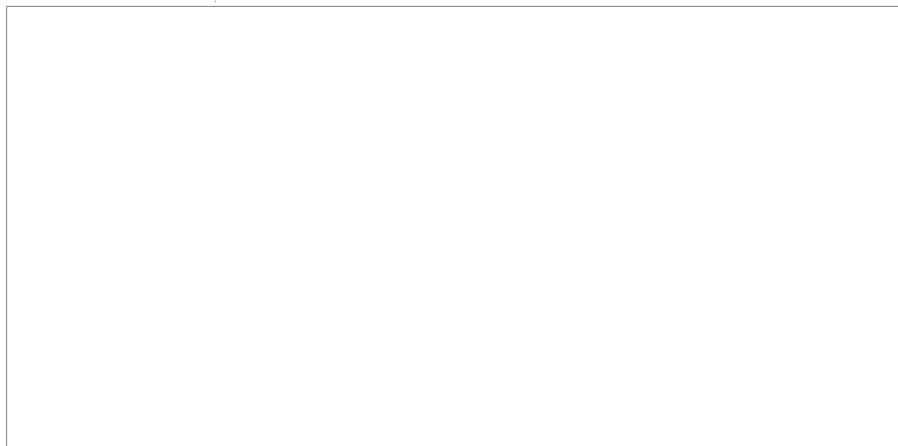
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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

EUROPE

The French trade union representatives walked out of the talks with management today. The fear of a period of labor unrest will distress already worried French speculators, and more pressure on the franc is certain to result.

Gold prices had already risen to record levels in London and Paris because of fears that the talks would produce inflationary settlement. The London closing price today was \$43.25 an ounce; in Paris, gold reached \$47.74 an ounce. Despite the existence of extensive exchange controls, money has been finding its way out of France, with one report stating that as much as 75 percent of the demand for gold in London comes from France.

Before the walkout, labor leaders had already called a general strike for next Tuesday. They learned the lesson of too much caution last May and are consulting with the rank and file about the extent and duration of the strike. Some wildcat walkouts have already begun.

* * *

Our embassy in Bonn feels that the election yesterday of Gustav Heinemann as West Germany's next president will have a beneficial effect on its relations and reputation abroad. Heinemann's anti-Nazi reputation and his election over the opposition of the rightist National Democratic

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

Party are plusses. The victory actually is a gain in prestige for the entire SPD and should mean votes in the Bundestag elections in September. Finally, Heinemann was supported throughout the three ballots by the bulk of the Free Democratic Party electors, which makes a coalition between the SPD and FDP following the fall election more of a possibility.

SOVIET AFFAIRS

The excitement in Berlin is probably about over. The military "exercises" that served as a pretext for autobahn closures seem to be coming to an end. Some Soviet units which have operated along and across the autobahns west of Berlin since the first of the week are returning to their garrisons. Their movements were used again today to justify intermittent autobahn closures.

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Soviet air activity was also considerably reduced. [redacted]

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[redacted] In their propaganda output this morning,

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neither the East Germans nor the Soviets hinted at any further countermeasures in the Berlin area.

In a post-mortem on the activities of the last week, our mission in Berlin concluded that the East Germans obviously favored taking stronger action but that Moscow apparently decided its interest in talks with the US took precedence over pleasing Ulbricht.

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VIETNAM

The Communists' speeches in Paris today continued the theme that their military action in South Vietnam is a response to allied military pressure and justified on the basis of "self-defense." The Communists do not say so explicitly, but they obviously are trying to leave an impression [redacted] that they are ready to bargain on the issue of mutual de-escalation. The Front's Madame Binh is quoted by the Western press as saying that the Front has sought to "de-escalate" the war but that the US was only intensifying it. This may be a distorted version of her remarks, but the idea is implicit in many other recent Communist statements.

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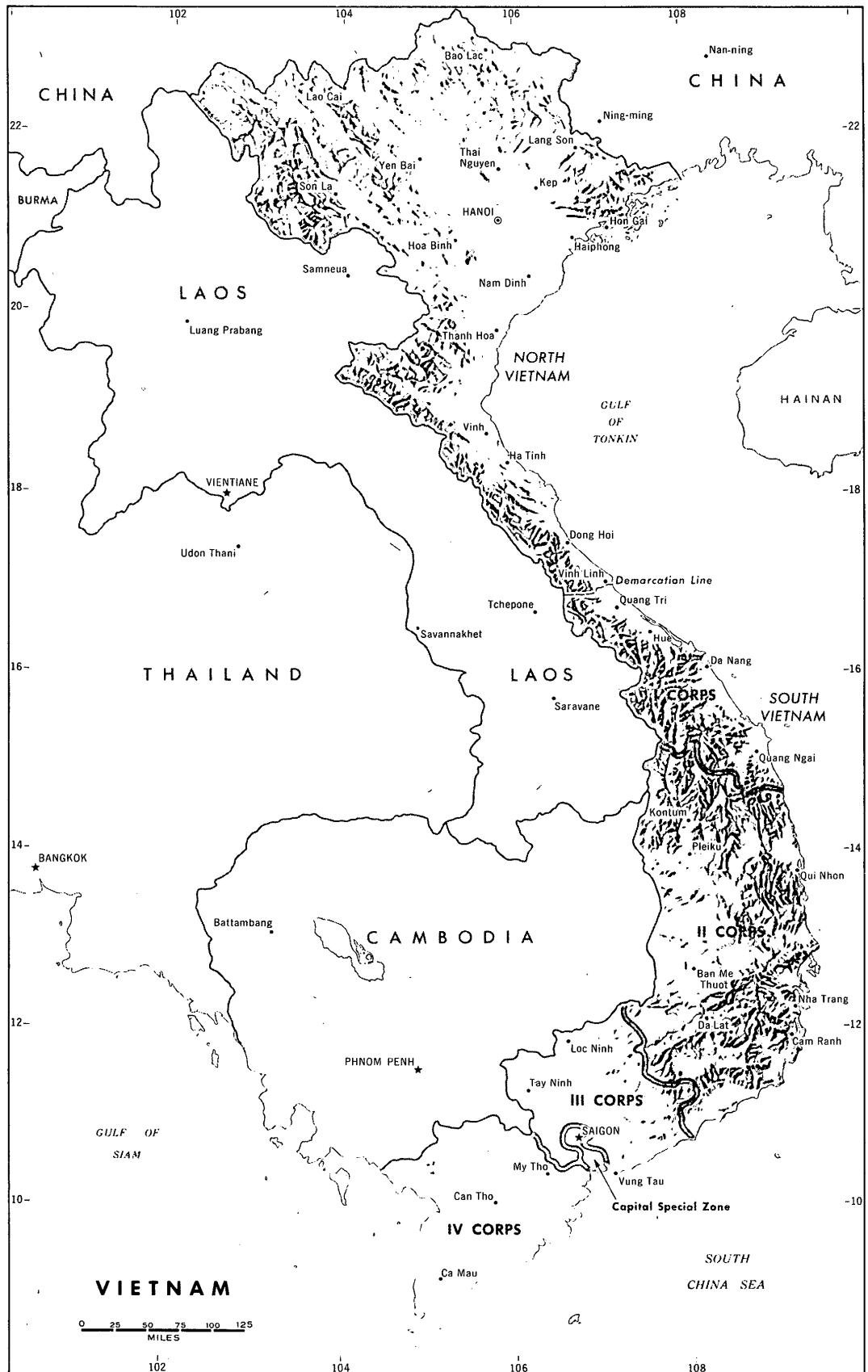
Whether this talk of de-escalation becomes a full-blown campaign depends in part on how the US moves next and, more importantly, on what results the Communists can produce through their military offensive over the next several weeks. The current drive could culminate in a "peace campaign" emphasizing political action against the Saigon government and diplomatic pressure on the US to curb allied military operations.

The Communists will probably stop short of calling for a cease-fire, but they may well become bolder in suggesting a readiness to scale down their military activity in return for similar action by the US.

* * *

Communist mortar crews in the southern half of the Demilitarized Zone lightly shelled South Vietnamese positions

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in northeastern Quang Tri Province for the fifth straight day on 5 March. No allied casualties were reported. In the area just below the central DMZ, captured enemy documents tend to confirm that elements of the 246th NVA Regiment are operating south of the zone. It is not clear when or how the 246th returned to South Vietnam after pulling back into North Vietnam last summer, although we presume it crossed over the DMZ. The documents show that the 246th took part in the heavy attacks on two US Marine bases in north-central Quang Tri Province on 25 February. Other North Vietnamese units noted south of the DMZ recently are the 27th and 138th regiments.

With the exception of the early morning rocket attack on Saigon, enemy initiated activity on 6 March continued at the same reduced level as the past few days.

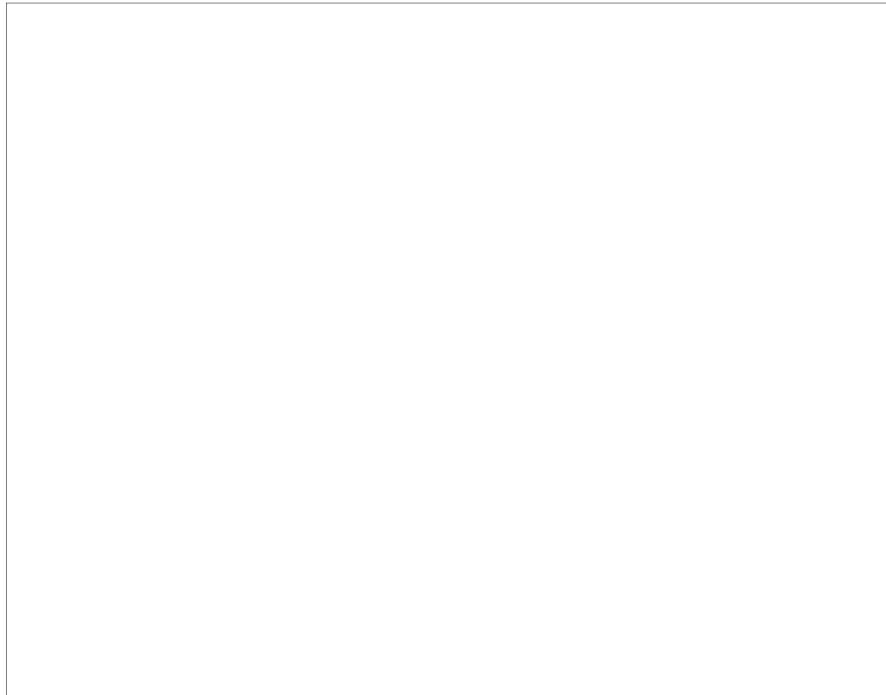
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II. OTHER MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS

PERU

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CAMBODIA

Sihanouk made his first public references today to President Nixon's letter and the possibility of a rapprochement with the US. Although he did not go into details on the recent exchange at his press conference in Phnom Penh, it is clear from his remarks that Sihanouk has not yet received the President's follow-up to the letter. He offered, however, to release four recently captured US military officers if asked to do so by the President.

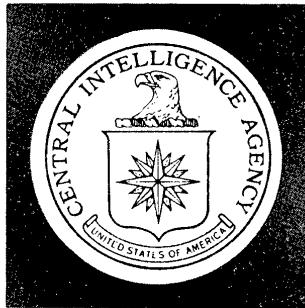
FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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Otherwise the tone of Sihanouk's remarks were clearly defensive and suspicious. He once again accused the US of mounting daily attacks across the Cambodian border. In doing so, Sihanouk made his most explicit public admission that North Vietnamese units are based in northeast Cambodia. He denied, however, as he has in the past, that the Duck Bill region in the southeast and other areas, which he said were regularly bombed by US planes, were sanctuaries of the Viet Cong.

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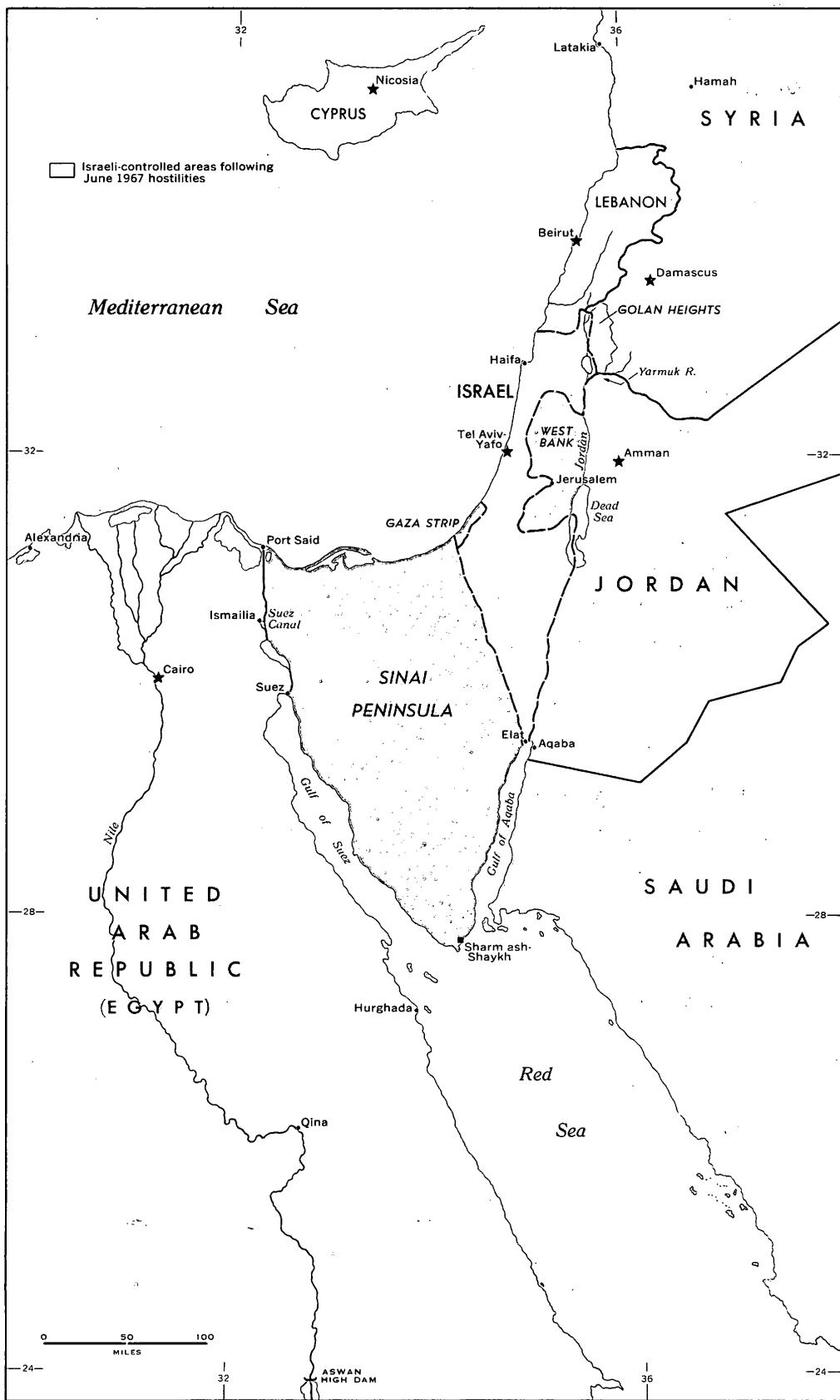
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**LATE NOTES FOR THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF OF
7 MARCH 1969**

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8 March 1969

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

I. MAJOR PROBLEMS

MIDDLE EAST

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Tel Aviv announced today that four Egyptian MIGs overflew the Sinai Peninsula this morning and that one of them had been shot down. [redacted]

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EUROPE



FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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SOVIET AFFAIRS

There is nothing significant to report.

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VIETNAM

Communist forces attacked US positions in Tay Ninh and
Binh Long provinces north and northwest of Saigon during the
night of 7-8 March.

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Indications of impend-

ing Communist action in other areas continue to accumulate.

II. OTHER IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS

SOVIET UNION - COMMUNIST CHINA

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

I. MAJOR PROBLEMS

MIDDLE EAST

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* * *

The police chief in Jerusalem told the press Wednesday that the Israelis have rounded up about 80 suspected

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terrorists. All of them, he said, are residents of Israeli-occupied territory, including Gaza and Jerusalem. He also showed the reporters enough munitions "to blow up half of Jerusalem."

When the Israelis uncover a ring such as this, the main sufferers usually are the relatives of those arrested. The press indicates that Israeli authorities have in fact begun the destruction of the suspects' houses.

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EUROPE

Kurt Birrenbach, the highly respected leader of West German public opinion, sought out Charge Fessenden Thursday to reiterate his belief that there is no alternative for Europe other than integration and that President de Gaulle's views are anathema to European unity. He fears that even French policy toward the Middle East is really designed to further the general's European theories by building up France as the spokesman for continental Europe among "the big four."

SOVIET AFFAIRS

Most of the Soviet troops deployed west of Berlin have returned to their garrisons. These moves caused a further

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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closing of the Berlin-Helmstedt autobahn for three hours today. When an American officer protested to the Soviet checkpoint commander, the latter commented that the autobahn "will not be closed long. Over-all it won't be going on much longer."

VIETNAM

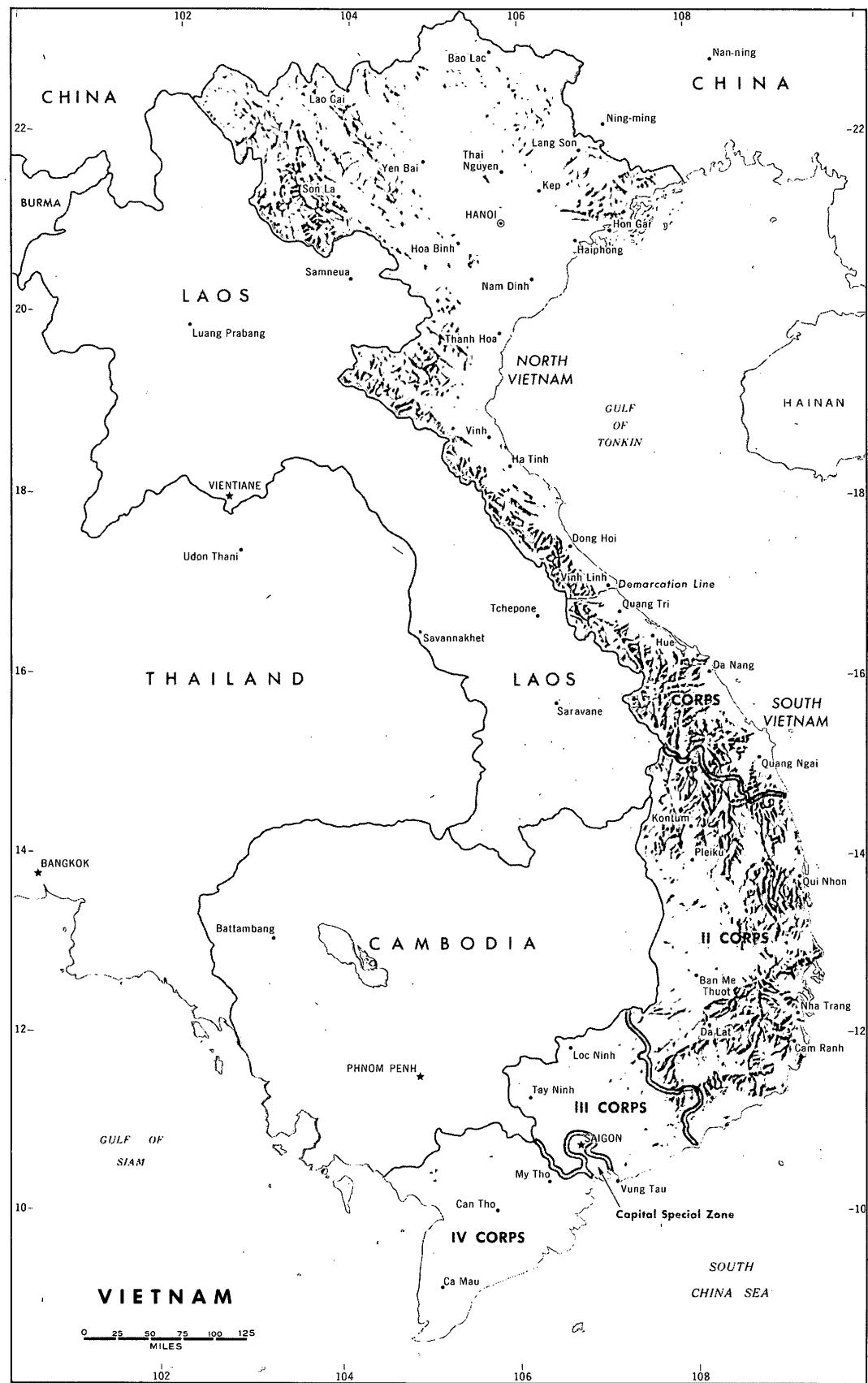
President Thieu's reflections on Communist intentions in his conversation with Ambassador Bunker on 6 March seem both realistic and persuasive. In particular, we agree with his suggestion that the Communists may be trying to erode the basis of the "understanding" on the bombing halt in the hope of some further horse-trading which might curb US military operations in South Vietnam.

It would be a crude maneuver for the Communists to attempt to trade off a cessation of attacks on cities for a halt to some specific US military actions, such as B-52 raids. Nonetheless, this may well be the direction in which they are heading. The Front's press spokesman in Paris came close to making this point yesterday when he said, in response to questions about Communist shellings and terrorist attacks, that "no agreement was reached with the US to end the war."

* * *

A North Vietnamese spokesman in Paris addressed himself today to the possibility of retaliatory air strikes against North Vietnam. He told the press that the Communists

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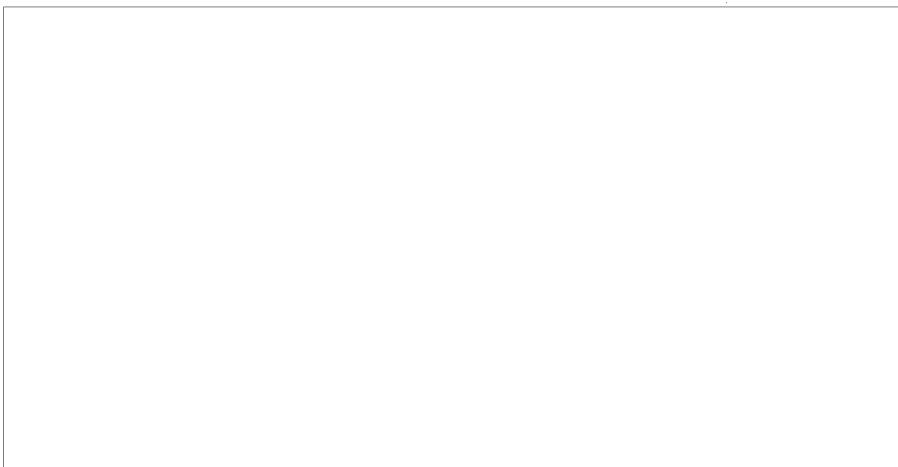
will continue their attacks in South Vietnam and asserted defiantly that North Vietnam was not intimidated by the threat of US bombings.

The Communists probably calculated before they started the current offensive round that any losses they might suffer as a result of US retaliatory strikes would be more than offset by the additional pressures this course would put on the over-all US position. In fact, given their public position the Communists would be hard put not to continue the shellings of major cities in South Vietnam in the face of US retaliatory action. Furthermore, the Communists may want to confront the US with the dilemma of retaliating in a major way and taking the adverse political pressures engendered by a "US escalation," or of not retaliating and thus exacerbating tensions between Saigon and Washington.

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Numerous indicators point to a substantial rise in Communist military activity possibly beginning this weekend, particularly in III Corps and IV Corps. During the past 24 hours, however, action in South Vietnam was at about the same level as the last few days.



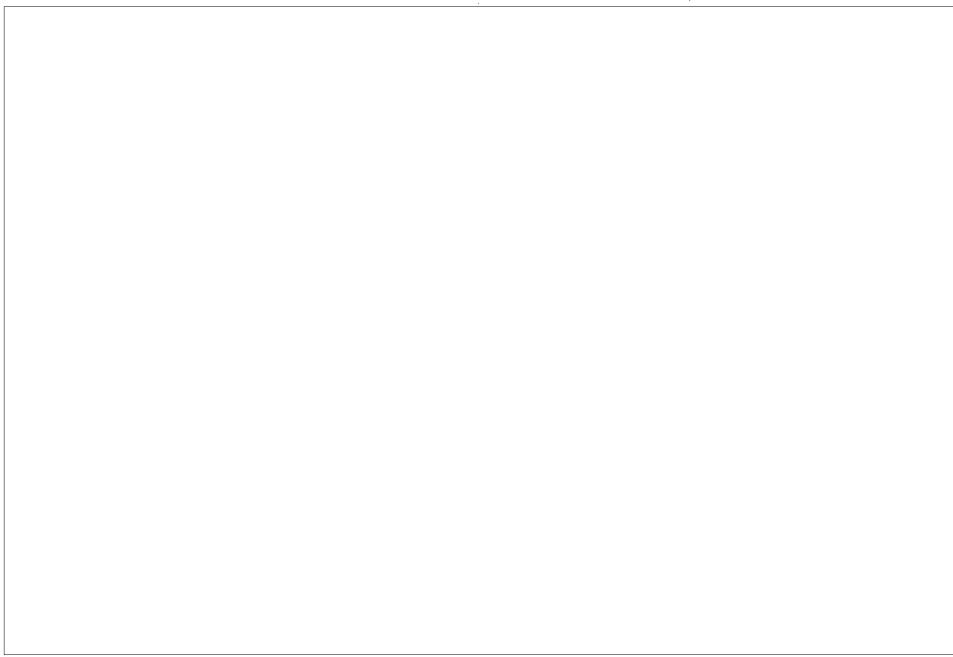
FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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II. OTHER IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS

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JAPAN

Over the past year, pressure has been building for sterner government action against leftist disorders at the universities. Many government leaders apparently are now convinced of the need for this. There has been a recent upsurge in student violence in Kyoto, and Liberal Democratic Party members have taken political soundings which indicate widespread popular discontent with student excesses. Prime Minister Sato himself has probably concluded that if he does not soon respond, intraparty rivals may use the issue to attack his leadership.

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The introduction of legislation to curb student violence probably would meet with bitter opposition from ultraleftist Socialists and Communists and might even lead to an impasse in Diet proceedings. Under these circumstances, Sato might consider it politically opportune to dissolve the Diet within the next few months and call for general elections. Such a decision would be based on his assessment that the opposition Japan Socialist Party is generally unprepared for early elections, and that the government's sponsorship of an emergency bill to restore order in the schools would be an effective campaign issue having wide popular appeal.

SOVIET UNION - COMMUNIST CHINA

However the Soviet-Chinese border incident began, both sides are now committed to treating it as a deliberate provocation by the other. Although Chinese harassment of the Soviets in Peking has eased, massive anti-Soviet patriotic rallies are continuing throughout the country. The Chinese are not likely to give the Russians the last word. Peking apparently hopes to capitalize heavily on the incident to reinforce recent propaganda appeals for a renewed display of national unity on the eve of the crucial Ninth Party Congress, now expected this month.

There have, however, been no indications that either side has significantly altered its military posture in

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the area.

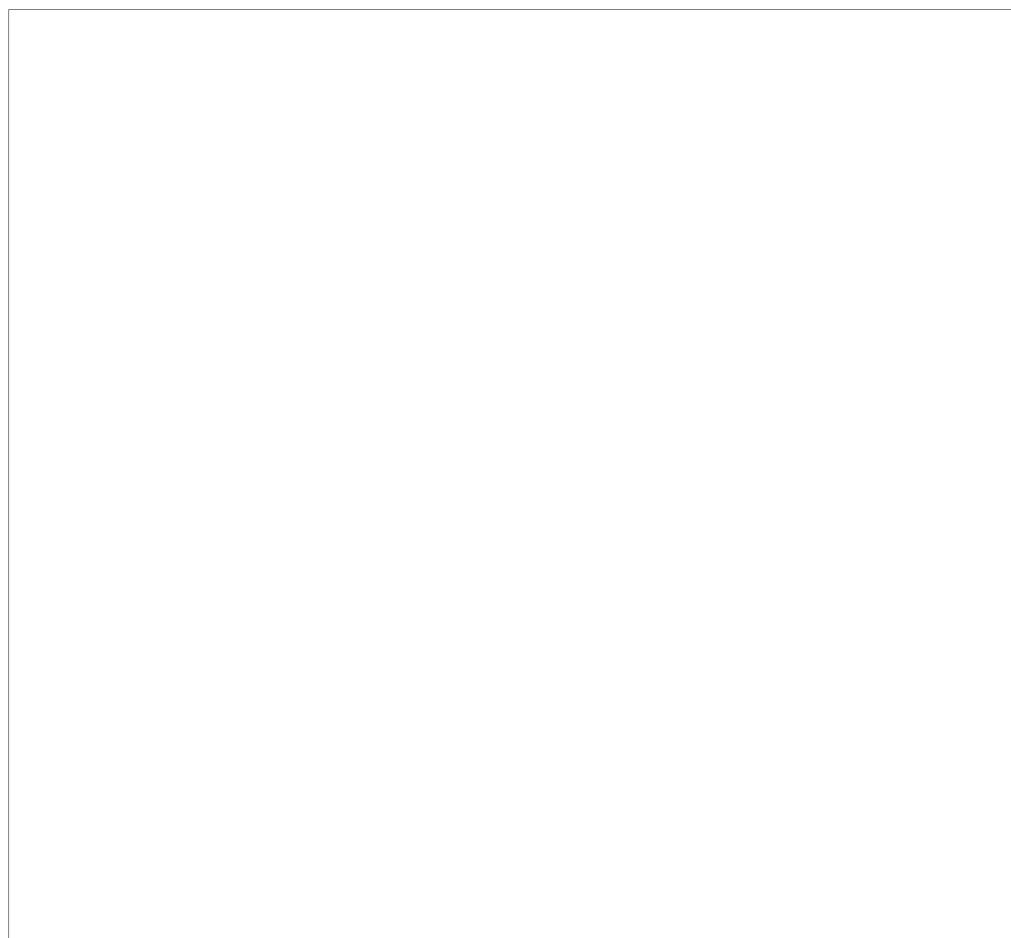
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COMMUNIST CHINA

The Annex today discusses Communist China's strategic weapons program.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY



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COMMUNIST CHINA'S STRATEGIC WEAPONS PROGRAM

A National Intelligence Estimate has just been completed on Communist China's strategic weapons program. It concludes that the program continues to be given a high priority despite recent economic and political difficulties. The Chinese may now have a limited regional nuclear strike capability consisting of a few thermonuclear weapons for delivery by their two operational jet medium bombers.

They may also have some fission weapons in stock.

Medium-range ballistic missile deployment could begin this year or more likely in 1970, reaching a force of some 80-100 launchers in the mid-1970s. If the Chinese achieve an operational ICBM by the earliest possible date--late 1972--they might have something on the order of 10 to 25 deployed ICBMs by 1975. However, it is more likely that initial operational capability will be reached later than 1972, perhaps by as much as two or three years. If so, the deployment of a force of this size would slip accordingly.

Many uncertainties leave in doubt the future pace, size, and scope of the Chinese program. China lacks the broad technical and economic resources to forge ahead as rapidly as did the US or the USSR, and this situation has been aggravated by the domestic dislocations caused by the Cultural Revolution. In general the Chinese programs have not advanced as fast as we once thought likely. However, if Peking allocates its resources and chooses priorities carefully, it can continue to make gradual progress in developing strategic missiles and nuclear weapons.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

*FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY*Background

The Chinese effort to develop strategic weapons goes back to at least 1957-58. The original program was started with Soviet assistance and appeared to be extremely ambitious. The cessation of Soviet aid in 1960 and the confusion and depression of the early 1960s resulting from the "Great Leap Forward" had a severe impact on the advanced weapons program. Nevertheless, Peking persisted in giving high priority to the development of advanced weapons and gradual progress was made. The program continued to receive a high priority throughout the Cultural Revolution. By 1966 the Chinese already had many of the facilities necessary to support an ongoing advanced weapons program.

The political disorder of the Cultural Revolution has been disruptive, however. Its ultimate cost will depend, of course, on the time it takes to re-establish political and administrative order. Even with a restoration of order, the Chinese economy can support a large-scale production and deployment of strategic weapons only by neglecting the investment requirements for healthy growth in agriculture and in the general industrial sector. This and other uncertainties suggest caution in estimating the probable rate of progress of China's advanced weapons development over the next few years.

Medium-range Missiles

[redacted] it appeared that MRBM deployment might be imminent. Though detailed information was lacking, it

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was known that the Chinese had been working on an MRBM

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It is not possible to explain the apparent delay in deployment with much confidence. Technical problems with the missile and disruptions of the Cultural Revolution may have slowed progress. It could be that priorities assigned to the development of nuclear weapons are influencing the deployment schedule or that the immediate purpose of the MRBM program was to develop technology for an ICBM.

It remains possible that the MRBM system is now ready to deploy. If so, the Chinese probably could soon do so, putting MRBMs in rudimentary field launch positions at the cost of reduced reliability and accuracy. More likely Peking will take time to prepare permanent sites with adequate support facilities. It would probably take the Chinese a year or more to prepare their first permanent launch facilities. If preparation should begin soon, it would still be sometime in 1970 before the Chinese had an operational MRBM capability.

We have no good basis for estimating the size of the MRBM force that might be deployed, but the Chinese probably would want to cover important military bases and population centers in the arc stretching from Japan through Southeast Asia and northern India. They would probably also target some MRBMs against the USSR. For these purposes the Chinese might require a force of 80-100 MRBMs. If begun in 1970, such a program could extend into the mid-1970s.

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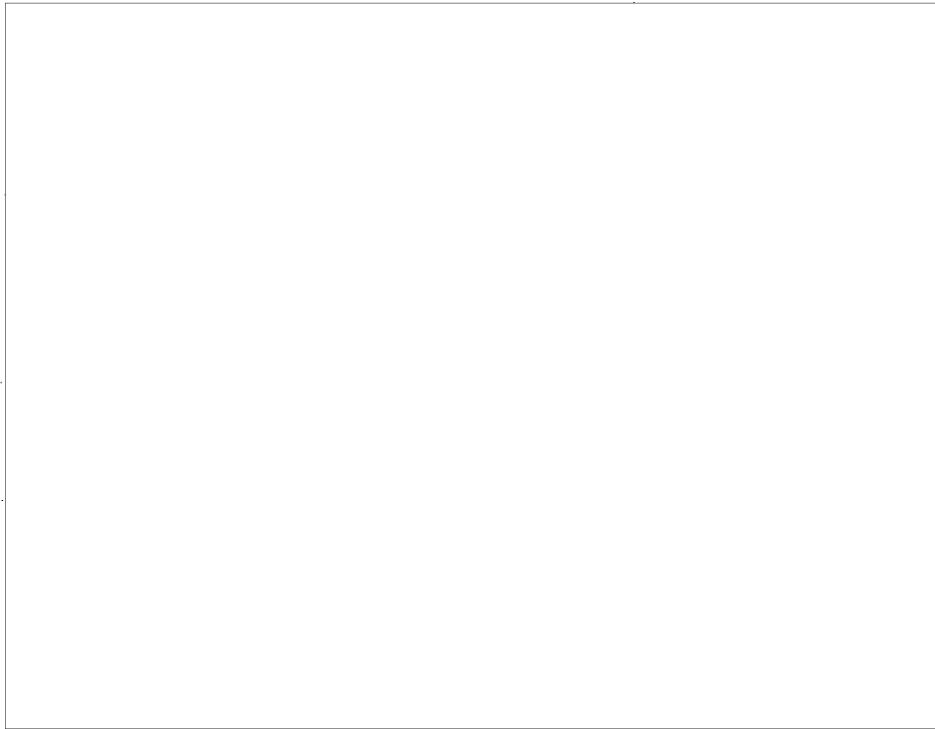
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Intercontinental Missiles

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Assuming that test vehicles were available, ICBM flight testing might begin this year. It should be pointed out, however, that in Chinese programs there have been long lapses between the completion of a facility and its effective use.

From whatever time the Chinese begin testing an ICBM, it is likely to require at least three years to achieve an initial operational capability. Thus if flight testing were to begin later this year, the earliest possible date would probably be late 1972. However, this allows the Chinese only a bit more time than required by the Soviets or the US with first generation ICBMs and assumes fairly smooth progress. In the light of China's inexperience

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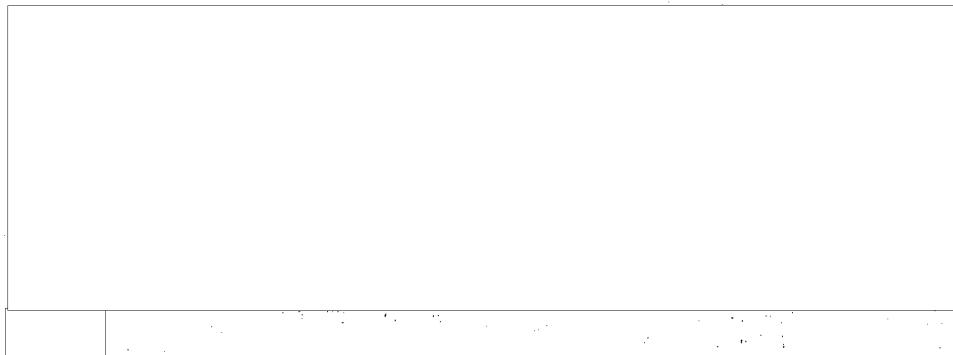
FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

and limited technical and scientific base, and considering general political and economic conditions in China, more time will probably be required. Thus, the initial operational capability is more likely to be later than 1972, perhaps by as much as two or three years.

Bomber Aircraft

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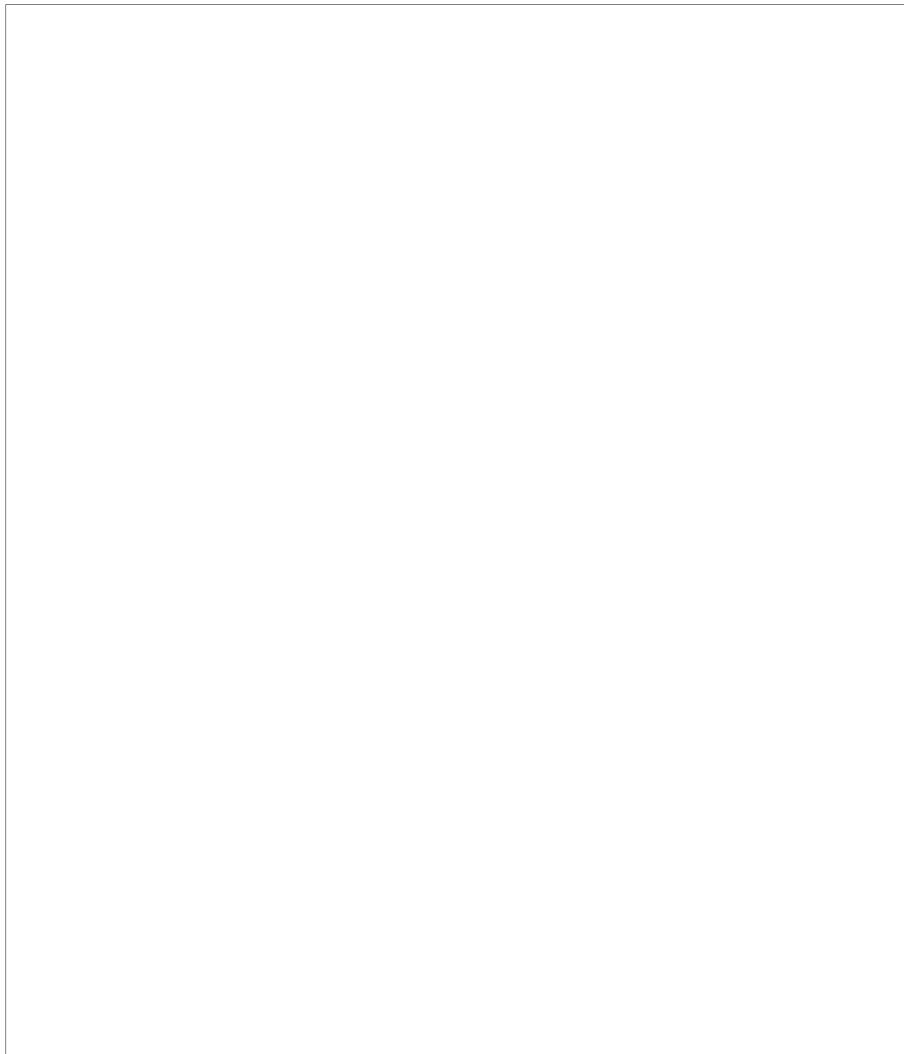
As with MRBMs, there is no good basis for estimating the number of TU-16s the Chinese will deploy. We estimate that production could reach a rate of four or five aircraft a month in about two years. Because of testing requirements and initial production problems, however, only a few of these aircraft are likely to be deployed in the next year or two. As the program proceeds, we should be able to determine production and deployment rates with fairly good confidence.

Space Program

We believe that for reasons of national prestige the Chinese will try to orbit a satellite as soon as possible. They probably will use a modified MRBM for a space booster if they attempt to launch a satellite this year.

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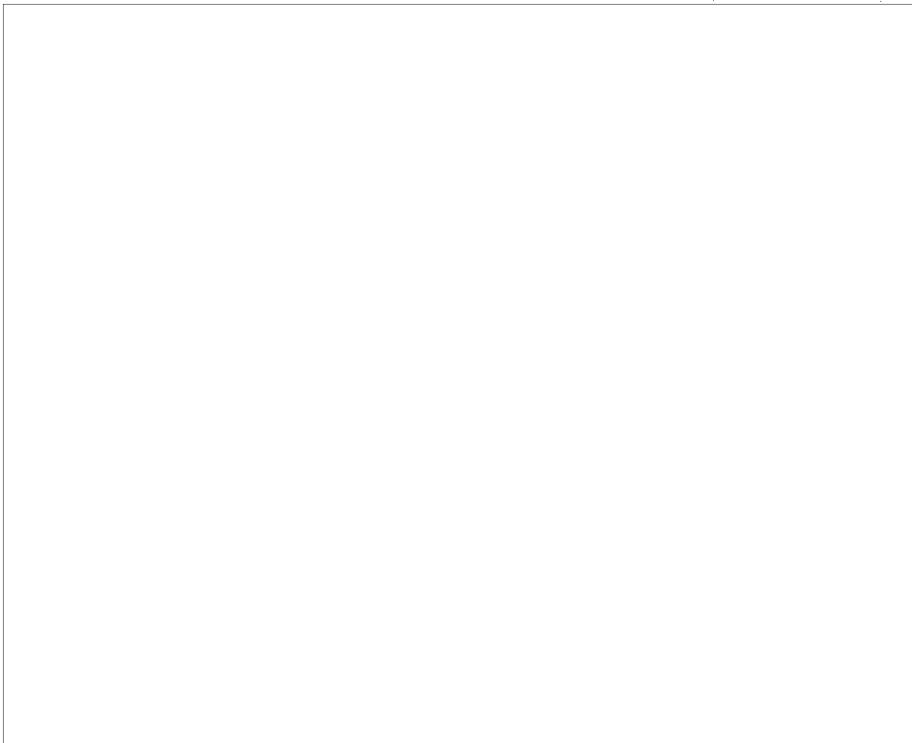
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Development of Nuclear Weapons

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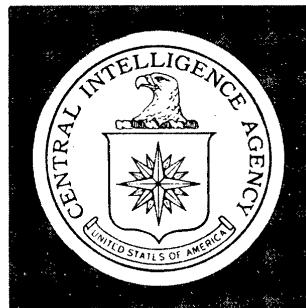
Peking's greatest achievements have probably been in the field of nuclear weapon design, where it has rapidly succeeded in developing a high-yield thermonuclear device



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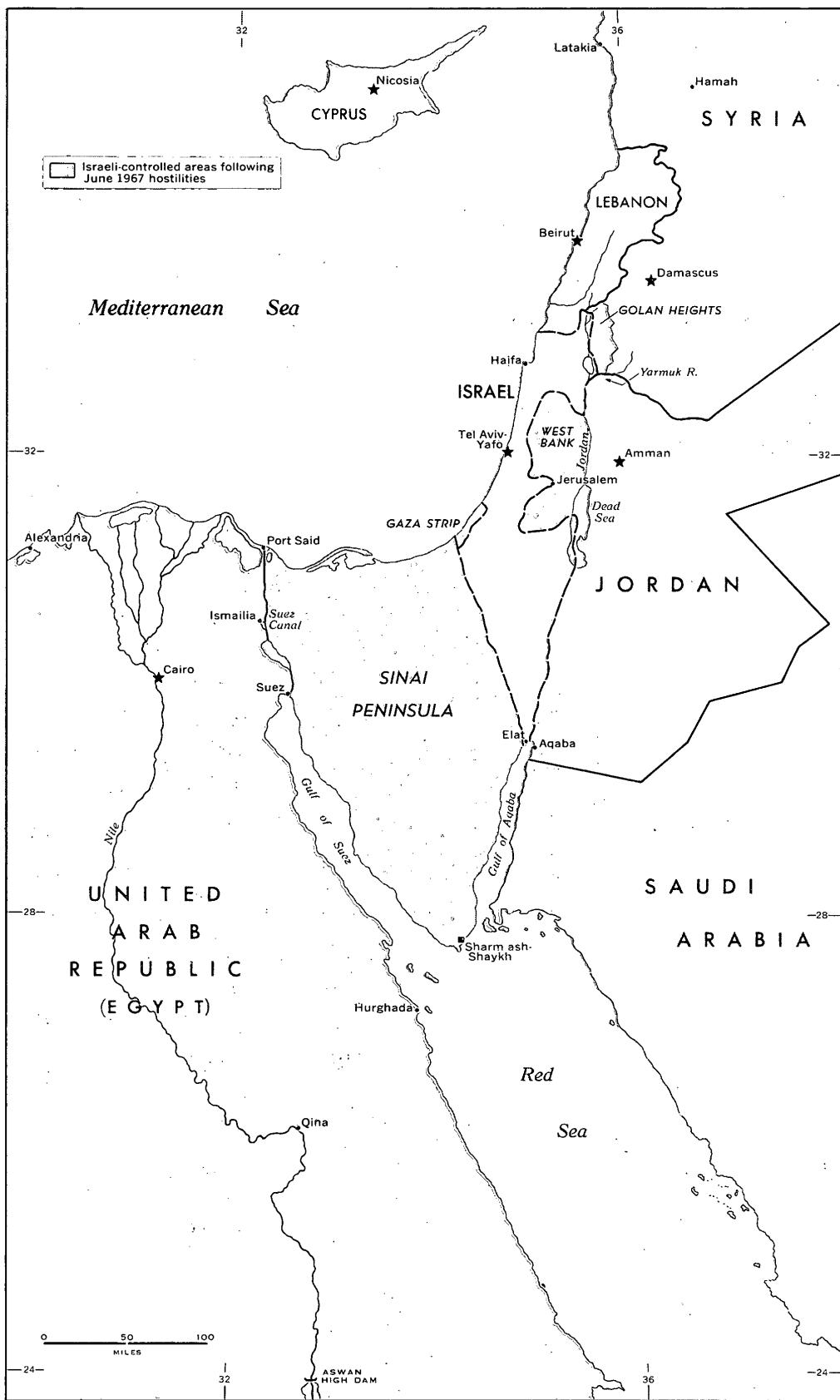


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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

I. MAJOR PROBLEMS

MIDDLE EAST

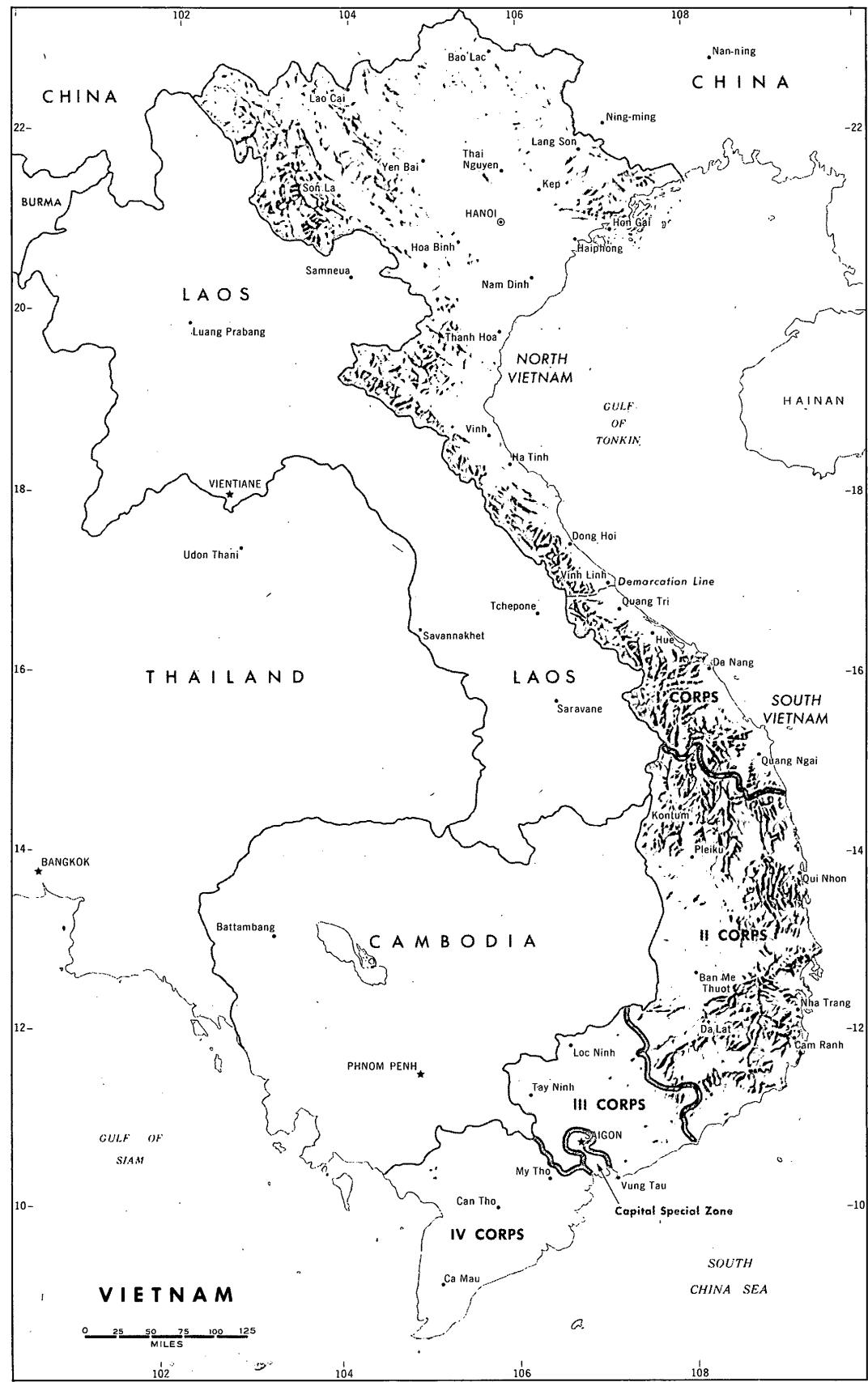
The exchange of artillery fire across the Suez Canal over the weekend--the heaviest since last fall--increases the prospect of additional Israeli action. One possibility is a strong 50X1 airstrike against Egyptian artillery positions along the Canal.

In the recent artillery duel, damage to the Egyptian oil refinery at Port Suez apparently was confined to several storage tanks. Cairo Radio reports, however, that General Riad, UAR Chief of Staff, was killed by Israeli artillery along the Canal on 9 March. Since the war of June 1967, there have been reports that Riad was not the most loyal supporter of Nasir.

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EUROPE

All three French labor organizations--Communist, Socialist, and Catholic-oriented--are now supporting Tuesday's general strike, and union leaders claim that in some industries it might extend beyond the 24-hour limit. Communist and non-Communist student organizations have also declared their support of the strike, although labor continues to stress the economic issues behind the strike and is cool to cooperation with the student aims.

SOVIET AFFAIRS

There is nothing significant to report.

VIETNAM

The pace of Communist-initiated military action increased in III Corps during the past forty-eight hours. Heaviest fighting occurred in Tay Ninh Province, where several stiff clashes were reported. An intercepted enemy message suggests that the upsurge in Communist activity was timed to coincide with Secretary Laird's visit.

The increased action noted in III Corps is expected to continue. There are indications that the Communists may attempt to raise the level of combat in I and IV corps as well, possibly beginning within the next day or two.

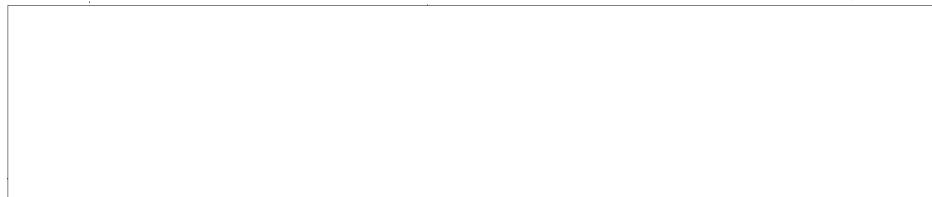
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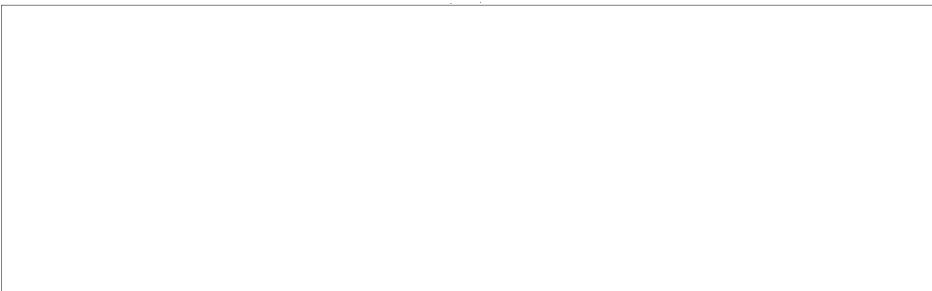
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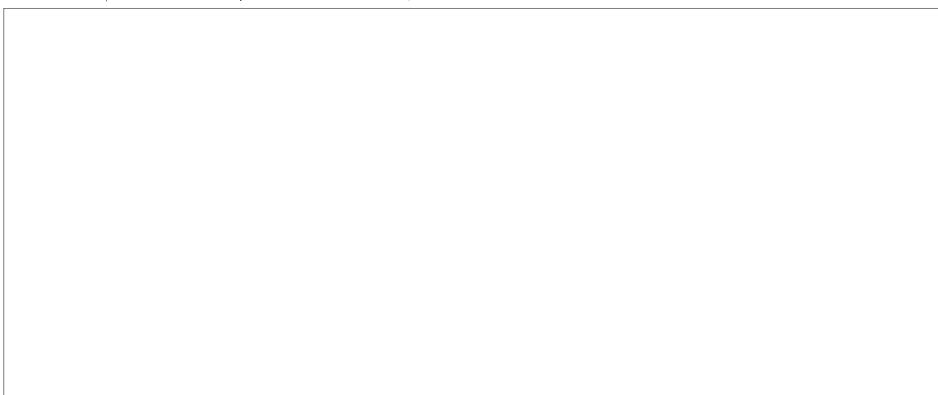
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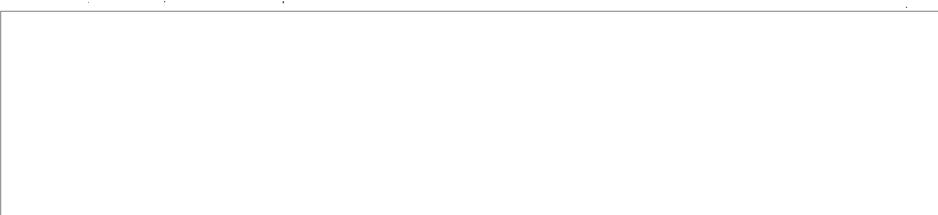
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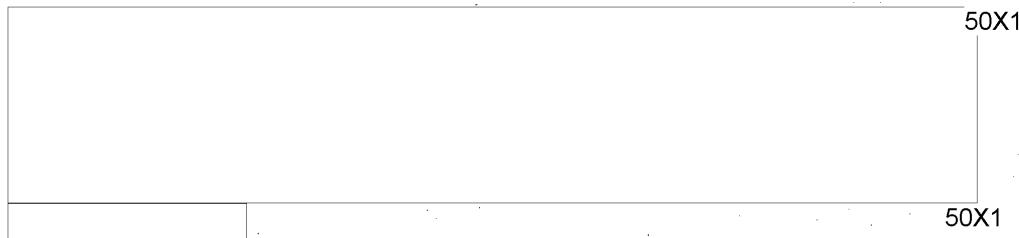
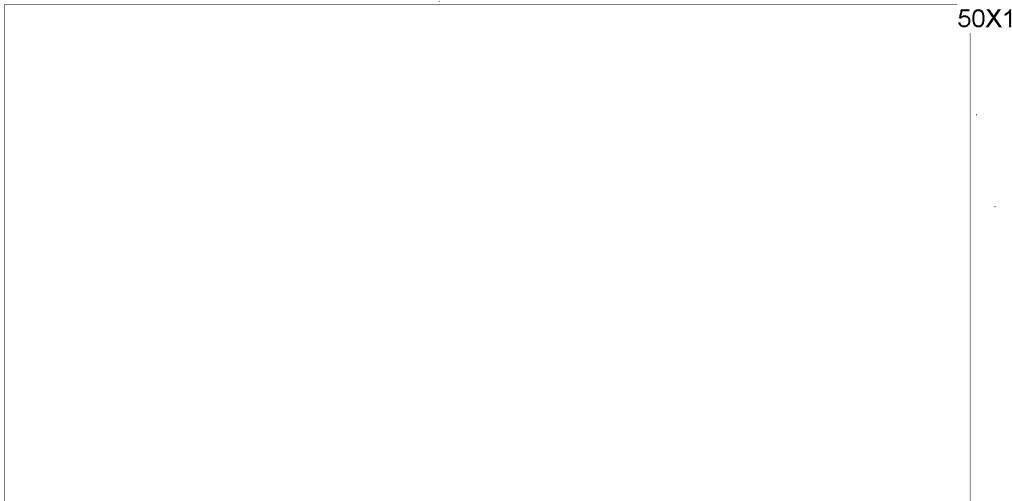
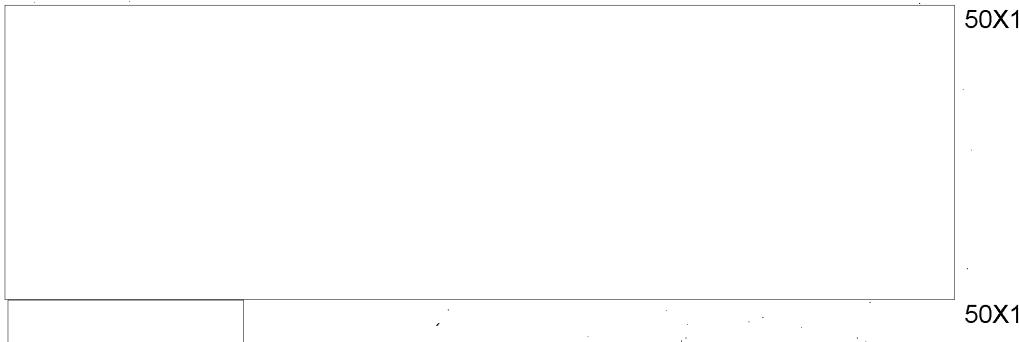
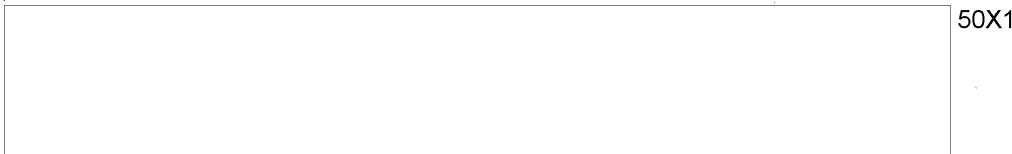
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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY



FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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Thus far in the Communists' current offensive, little effort appears to have been made by the enemy against the government's pacification program. Pacification has been brought to a halt in perhaps three provinces and has received a setback in three others. In the rest of the country, the program is proceeding on a business-as-usual basis. We think it probable, however, that before the current campaign runs its course the Communists will exercise their option to strike heavier blows against the government's pacification efforts.

* * *

President Thieu plans to name Dr. Phan Quang Dan as Minister of Agriculture. Thieu believes Dr. Dan will bring considerable energy and dynamism to that post, something which will be needed in implementing land reform policies. Dr. Dan has already told the US Embassy that he hoped to get back into the cabinet and that he particularly hoped for the Agriculture Ministry.

Opposition to Dr. Dan from the National Assembly probably has abated since last year when he was summarily removed from the cabinet because of his suggestion that the South Vietnamese Government talk with the Liberation Front. Since that time both Vice President Ky and Prime Minister Huong have made similar statements, and the National Assembly, as well as public opinion, have probably moved far enough now to make Dr. Dan's appointment acceptable. Moreover, Dr. Dan is a proven vote

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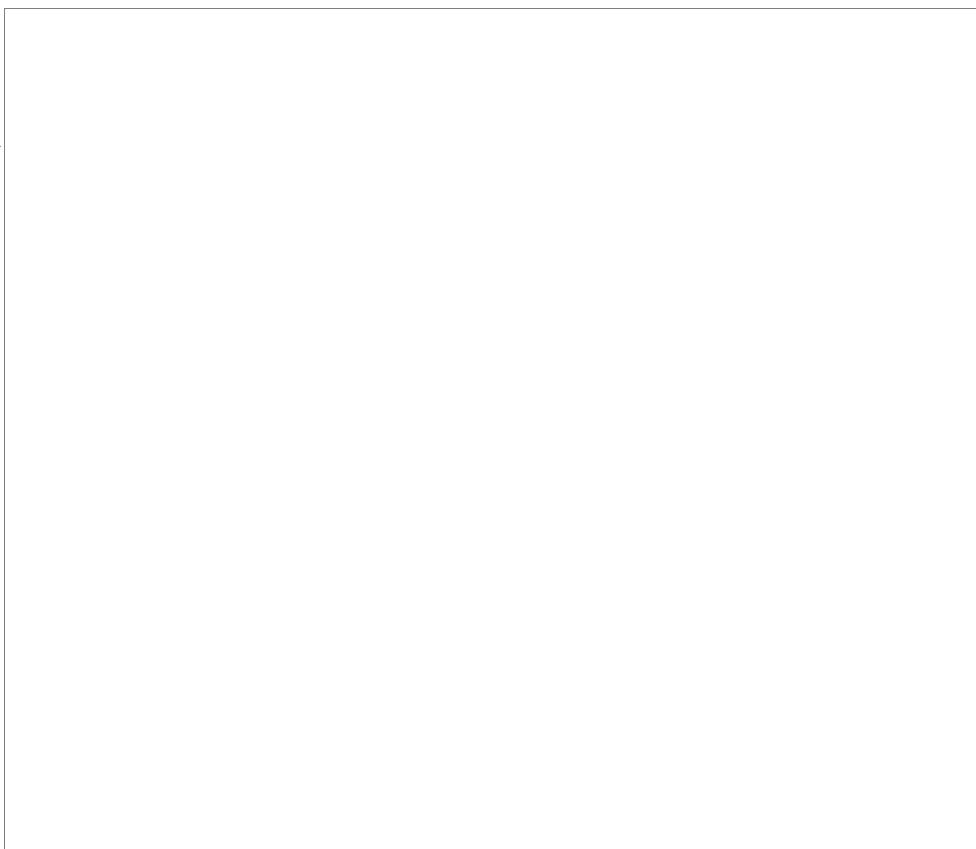
FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

getter, and his inclusion in the cabinet should help broaden popular support for the government. His enthusiasm on the subject of land reform should make him an excellent choice for the Agriculture Ministry.

II. OTHER IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS

LAOS

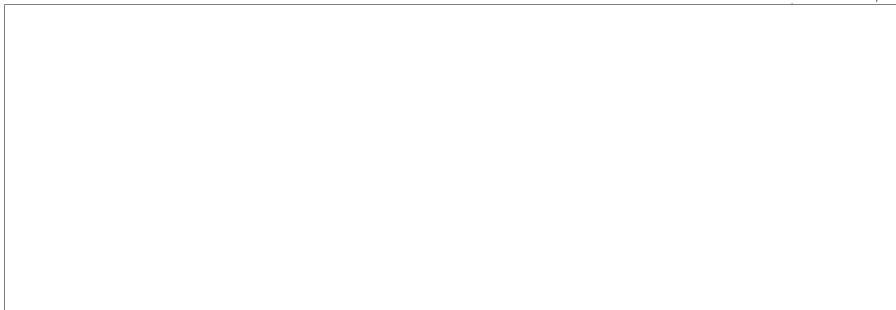
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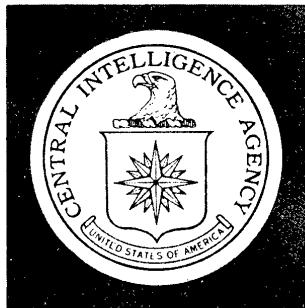
PANAMA



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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

Top Secret



The President's Daily Brief

10 March 1969
(Afternoon)

19

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

I. MAJOR PROBLEMS

VIETNAM

Hanoi has probably drawn encouragement from the lack of a US military response to the shellings of Saigon and to the movement of large units through the DMZ. The Communists probably regard this as a good sign that the US wants to explore the possibilities of a negotiated settlement and to avoid renewed escalation of the war.

It seems unlikely that diplomatic protests to the North Vietnamese in Paris will have any real effect on Communist military activities. The Communists clearly want to tie any curbs on military activities to progress in the negotiations and specifically to progress toward a political settlement. In order to get movement started, there is a good possibility that the North Vietnamese will attempt to get private talks under way by trying to channel our protests about Communist shellings toward political discussions. It seems quite clear that one of the main political objectives of the current Communist military effort is to get private quadrilateral talks started which include the National Liberation Front. We believe the Communists are ready for such talks and that they expect a beginning before long.

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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The Communists fired five rockets into Hue today, the first such incident there during the current campaign.

Allied military positions in northwestern III Corps and in the western highlands of II Corps continued to bear the brunt of Communist pressure on 10 March, with little

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

enemy action of significance reported in the DMZ area, the northern provinces, or the delta. Saigon and Da Nang were also generally quiet.

Most of the III Corps action was again centered in Tay Ninh Province where, in one engagement, an ARVN air-borne battalion and a North Vietnamese battalion clashed. The ARVN lost 44 killed and 148 wounded; 68 Communist troops were killed. Although no major enemy troop deployments were detected in III Corps on 10 March, Communist forces are in position along the Saigon River corridor to conduct heavy attacks in Tay Ninh and Binh Duong provinces, while those deployed in Viet Cong Subregion 3 just south of Saigon could move against the capital with little if any warning.

MIDDLE EAST

In their recent talks with Ambassador Lodge and others in Paris, Egyptian spokesmen Fawzi and Riad once again made it clear that the Egyptians would very much like to resume diplomatic relations with the US. Both of them seem to have tried to scotch the idea that Cairo would set conditions on the restoration of ties, but Riad insisted that domestic politics limited Nasir's freedom of action. The two officials left a strong impression that the Egyptians are determined to move as quickly as possible on the problem.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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EUROPE

It is expected that tomorrow's general strike will cause a fairly extensive tie-up of France's economic life, particularly transportation. There will be a complete shutdown of electricity for industrial users and daytime cuts for private consumers.

De Gaulle is to speak at 8:00 pm local (2:00 pm EST) on the reforms which are to be submitted to referendum next month. His speech will evidently be carried on radio and TV despite the strike. Press comments on the speech will be delayed, however, as newspapers will not publish tomorrow evening or Wednesday morning.

Even the labor leaders cannot say whether the walkouts will be extended beyond 24 hours, as this will be up to the rank and file of individual unions. The leaders are clearly determined, nonetheless, to prevent a repetition of the situation last May, when the striking workers were more militant than the union leadership.

Indications that students may be planning to join strikers in massive street demonstrations have led the government to put riot troops and police on alert.

* * *

European integrationists are redoubling their efforts to demonstrate that there is still some potential in the European community movement. [redacted]

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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Jean Monnet's Committee for the United States of Europe will meet in London this week, the first session since the three British parties acceded to it last fall. The meeting is expected to result in the setting up of a group to examine the specific problems involved in Britain's joining the Common Market. Former EEC Commission President Hallstein and the Governor of the Bank of Italy have agreed to undertake this assignment.

SOVIET AFFAIRS

There is nothing significant to report.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

II. OTHER IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS

SOVIET UNION - PAKISTAN

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

TOP SECRET

LATE NOTES FOR THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF OF

10 MARCH 1969

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TOP SECRET

11 March 1969

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

I. MAJOR PROBLEMS

MIDDLE EAST

Fighting broke out again today at 10:30 AM local time (3:30 AM EST) at three points on the Suez Canal. An Israeli spokesman claimed Egyptian forces opened fire first. As of 5:30 EST, sporadic firing was still continuing. (Press)

* * *

In his discussions with De Gaulle and Foreign Minister Debré, Egyptian spokesman Fawzi did his best to encourage the French in their view that four-power agreement is the best way to a Middle East solution. The major conclusion of the talks was that Egypt really desires a rapid, peaceful settlement and would probably be willing to accept any reasonable terms provided they could be presented as forced on Nasir by four-power and UN Security Council endorsement. Fawzi also told the French that time was of the essence because terrorist groups are so strong in Egypt, the present government can last no more than "several months" unless progress is made toward a settlement. The French are convinced that Egypt is willing to settle its own problems with Israel, leaving aside those involving Jordan and Syria--a direct contradiction of Nasir's protestations to King Husayn's representatives recently. [redacted] 50X1

[redacted]
50X1

At an airport meeting with Israel's Foreign Minister Eban before he left for the US yesterday, Ambassador Barbcur learned that Israel found no trouble with the questions put to it by UN mediator Jarring. Eban was also shown questions put to Egypt and commented that if Cairo responds positively to the question of peace with Israel, this would bring a "fundamental change for the better." [redacted]

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

EUROPE

As of 0700 EST, the strike in France was on, but there have been no reports of demonstrations or a need for force. (Press)

* * *

Yesterday's outburst by Socialist (SPD) President-elect Gustav Heinemann, in which he reiterated his opposition to the postwar rearming of West Germany and support for reunification even if it meant the dissolution of West Germany itself, was a manifestation of the fundamental differences between him and the Christian Democrats (CDU). Bad blood has existed in their relations since Heinemann bolted the CDU in 1950 in opposition to rearmament, and he has opposed the basic elements of Bonn's foreign and military policy ever since. His statement, in an interview with a correspondent for Die Welt, was obviously embarrassing, not only to the Kiesinger government, but also to the SPD. Heinemann is a political maverick, however, who has frequently expressed views at variance with his own party's policy, and he will probably continue to do so after taking over as president in July. While the incident puts an added strain on CDU-SPD relations, we do not expect a premature rupture of the grand coalition. (Press and Analysis)

SOVIET AFFAIRS

There is nothing significant to report.

VIETNAM

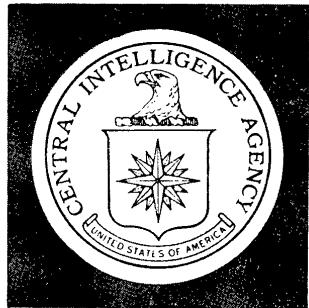
There is nothing significant to report.

II. OTHER IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS

NORTH KOREA - US

US soldiers manning an outpost five miles south of Panmunjom were fired on by North Koreans at 11:15 and 11:35 EST last night. No US casualties or damage were reported. This is the first incident involving North Korean and US military forces since last November, which was before the Pueblo crew was released. [redacted] 50X1

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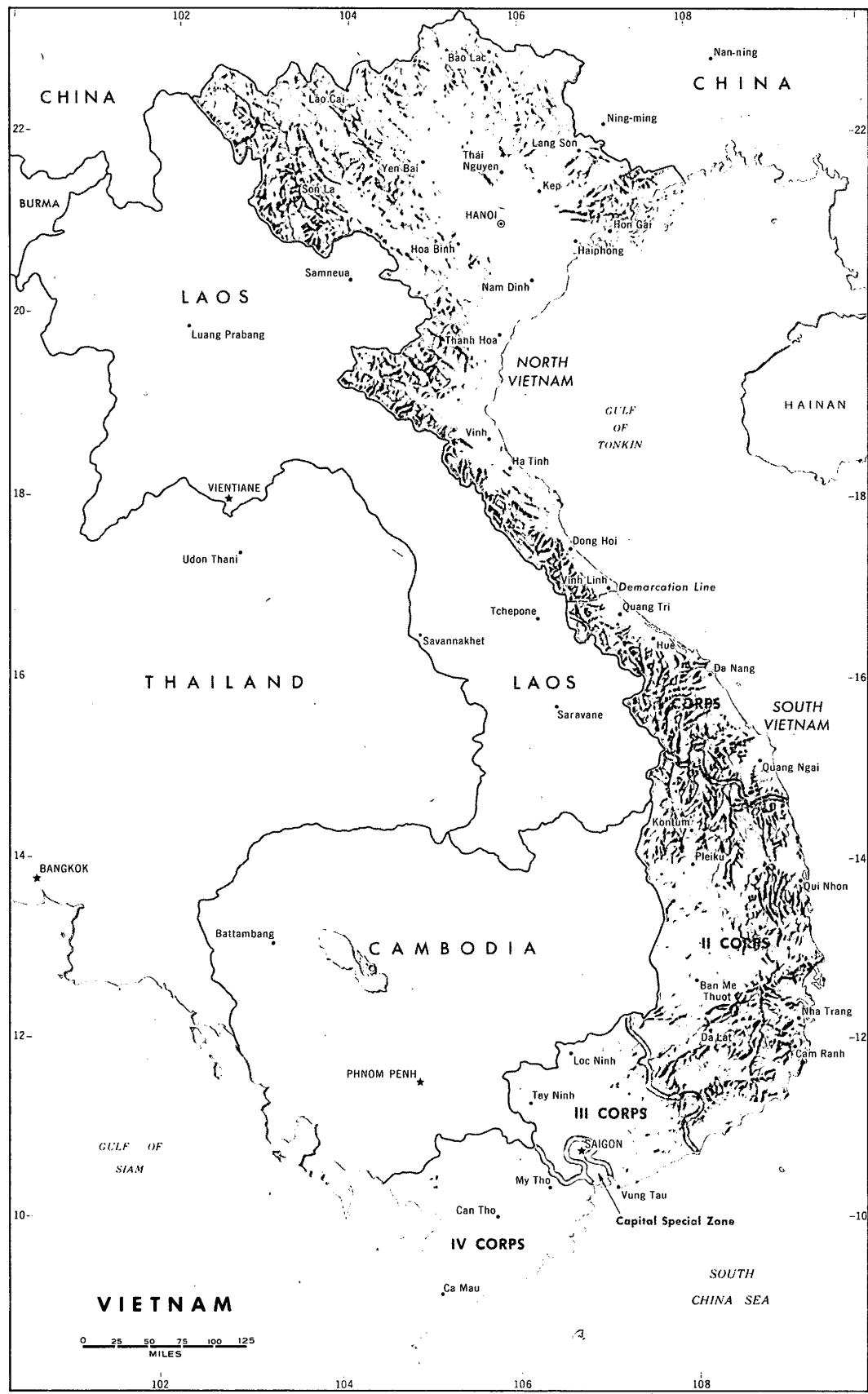
The President's Daily Brief

11 March 1969

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LARGE NOTES FOR THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

11 MARCH 69



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12 March 1969

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

I. MAJOR PROBLEMS

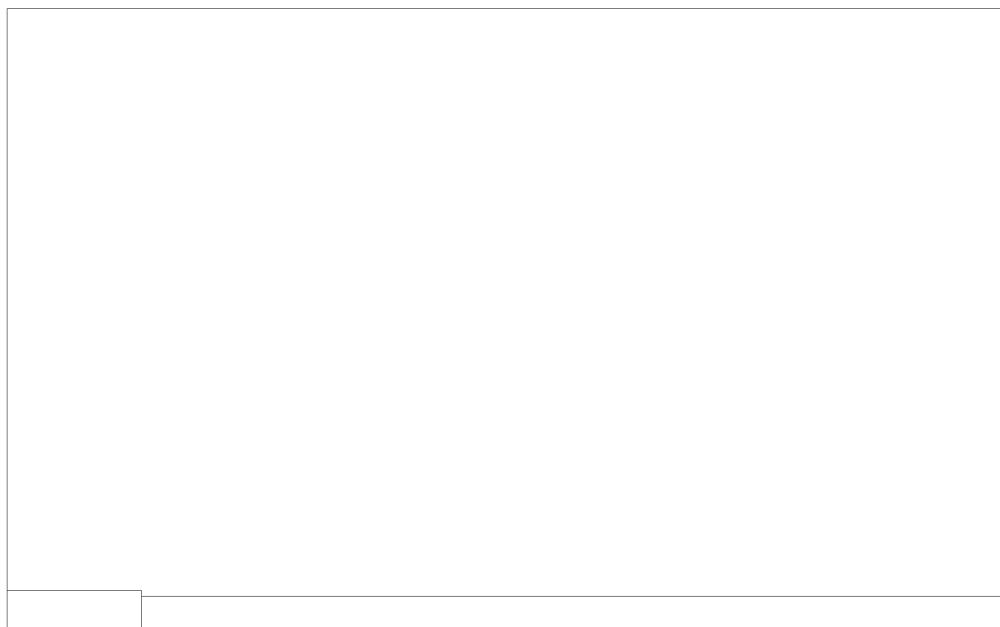
VIETNAM

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Signs that [redacted] Communist divisions in III Corps are in the final stages of preparation for ground attacks against allied installations, possibly including some in the Saigon area, have been noted recently.

There is evidence that the Viet Cong 9th Division has begun to move within southern Tay Ninh Province along its traditional approach route to the Saigon area. Prisoner reports suggest that other elements of the 9th may be moving southeast toward the Phu Tho racetrack in Saigon.

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* * *

Thieu announced four cabinet changes today including the appointment of General Tran Thien Khiem as deputy premier in charge of the pacification program. Khiem keeps his old post as interior minister. [redacted]

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

MIDDLE EAST

There is nothing significant to report.

EUROPE

France began to get back to business quietly this morning after the one-day general strike.

SOVIET AFFAIRS

There is nothing significant to report.

II. OTHER IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS

LAOS

Some 50 enemy troops attacked Luang Prabang airfield and the regional military headquarters there early today. Royal Laotian Army troops repulsed the attackers before they could occupy the airfield. Nine government soldiers were wounded and four killed. At least five aircraft were damaged or destroyed. [redacted]

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PERU

At a press conference yesterday, Velasco confirmed that a US "envoy" will arrive shortly in Peru for talks. He said that the IPC issue could be discussed, however--"this has been definitely solved and is an irreversible step." He added that they could discuss the Hickenlooper Amendment but doubted that the US will use it. (FBIS 06)

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

I. MAJOR PROBLEMS

VIETNAM

Action reported on 10-11 March included widespread shellings in all four Corps areas, and battalion-sized attacks on allied positions both in the delta and northwest of Tay Ninh city. Heavy pressure continues against special forces camps in the highlands, and enemy activity has picked up somewhat in the coastal lowlands of II Corps. Sensitive areas such as Hue, Da Nang, and Saigon were fairly quiet during the period.

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Statements from prisoners captured recently near Quang Tri city suggest Communist forces may launch an attack against the city soon. Moreover, there are continuing signs that Communist forces are moving southward in Quang Binh Province just north of the DMZ.

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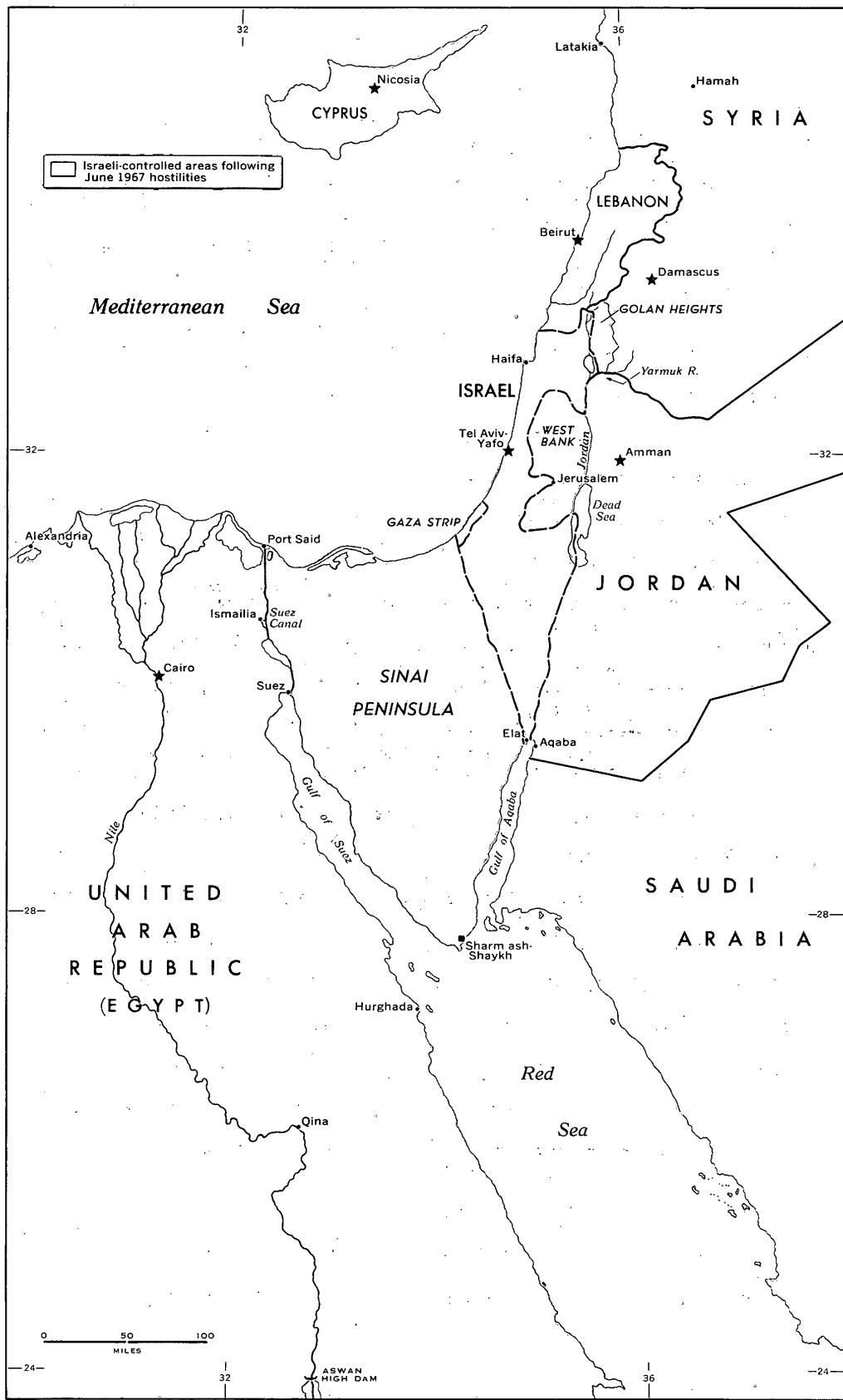
MIDDLE EAST

Another day of fighting along the Suez Canal today highlights the Egyptian interest in keeping the situation along that cease-fire line active.

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY



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EUROPE

We detect little that is new in De Gaulle's speech this afternoon. He seems to have replayed many familiar themes: the antithesis between Gaullist "progress" and the "chaos" of the opposition, the advantages of "participation" which his reforms will encourage, the implication that his opponents are engaged in a conspiracy against France, the appeal to the populace to support him personally. There was little to excite either his opponents or his supporters. Those among the former who called today's general strike probably had a sense of deja vu as they pondered the speech; we do not think they will be able to use his remarks to whip up new momentum for the strike. Nor did De Gaulle produce many sparks in his appeal for a heavy "yes" vote in next month's referendum, although there is little doubt that the populace will duly approve the reforms he has proposed.

It is still too early to predict the course of the strike itself with any certainty, but we suspect most of the strikers will be back on the job in the next day or so. If they do go back to work, there seems little chance that the strike will have put much of a dent in the positions of either management or the government, notwithstanding the massive worker turnout today.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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SOVIET AFFAIRS

There is nothing significant to report.

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II. OTHER IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS

PERU

The United States Intelligence Board has approved a Special National Intelligence Estimate on the consequences of the dispute between the US and Peru. In summary, it concludes that:

--The military regime in Peru will almost certainly not meet the requirements of US law for compensation of the International Petroleum Company. If all the forces now in train continue, the crisis with Peru will be a major one, and perhaps disastrous for Peru and US-Peruvian relations.

--The initial impact of the Hickenlooper and Sugar Act amendments themselves would not be severe, but if enforcement of the amendments indirectly caused a reduction of official and private foreign investment, the resulting economic strains could force the regime into drastic improvisations.

--Peruvian-US relations would deteriorate sharply if sanctions were applied. If President Velasco remains in office, he might even feel goaded into expropriating other US businesses and breaking diplomatic relations.

--Velasco's advisers come from all parts of the political spectrum; the leftists among them do not appear more influential than the others. All seem to be ultranationalistic and anti-American. If Velasco were replaced by more moderate generals, actions against the US might be less extreme, but no one could hold office

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

in Peru who failed to assert the country's independence of US influence.

--We doubt that Peru's recent moves to establish diplomatic economic ties with the Communist countries will produce a firm and close relationship.

--The dispute with the US may stimulate a general sharpening of resentments toward the US elsewhere in Latin America, especially in the economic sphere. As a protection against dependence on the US, other countries will probably try harder to broaden their foreign contacts and may care much less about how the US views their efforts.

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THAILAND-CAMBODIA

The path to rapprochement is still a difficult one, however, in view of the many political differences and personal animosities to be resolved.

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For Sihanouk, initiatives toward Thailand are only part of a broader adjustment to the post-war situation he anticipates. In addition to softening his attitude toward the US

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

Sihanouk has also put out feelers to the Laos government, which is now considering recognition of the Lao-Cambodian border. So far, however, Sihanouk has given no indication that he intends to make any gesture toward the government in Saigon, a sign that he still doubts that it will survive the war.

SOVIET UNION - COMMUNIST CHINA

Both sides continue to exploit the border clash of 2 March, each unwilling to abandon the propaganda field to the other. Soviet media are maintaining the high level of attack begun last Friday, although there have been no further demonstrations against the Chinese Embassy in Moscow since 8 March. Tightly controlled demonstrations were resumed in front of the Soviet Embassy in Peking today to counter the demonstrations in Moscow over the weekend.

The Soviets are charging that Peking staged the shooting incident both to discomfit Moscow internationally and to unify a badly fragmented Chinese populace. One Soviet publication has used the incident to stress that the Russians are beleaguered "from New York to Peking" and to call for increased vigilance by the Soviet populace. The Soviets are, however, avoiding specifics about the border areas that have been disputed for a long time.

There are signs that both the Soviet and Chinese military forces have been devoting increased attention to the

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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area of the border clash. Soviet helicopters and reconnaissance aircraft are flying several missions a day along the Ussuri River. Soviet reconnaissance flights, which were increased in mid-February along all of China's northern border, were further intensified after the incident.

So far, we have detected no troop movements of any consequence on either side.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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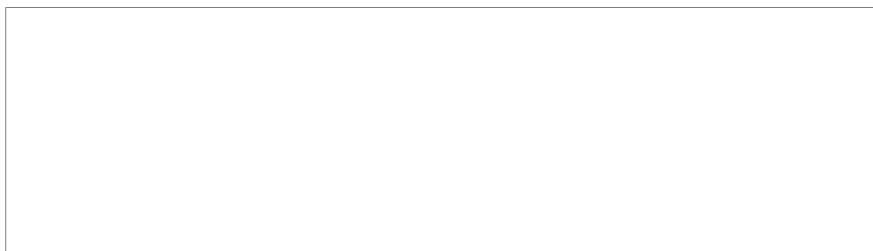
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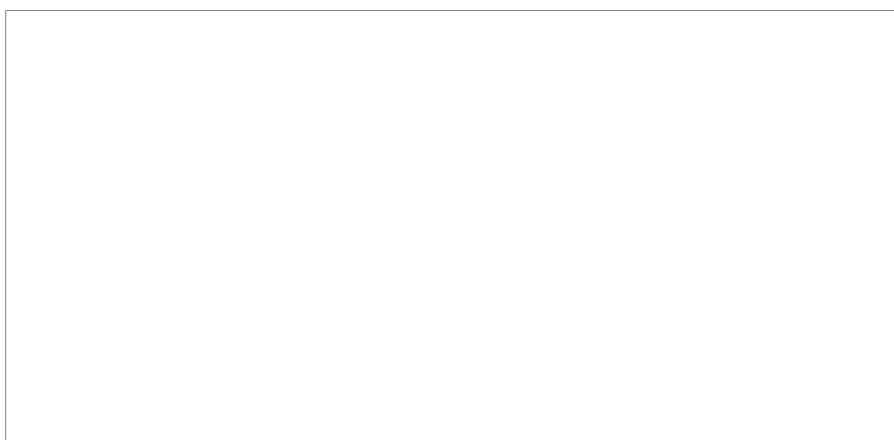
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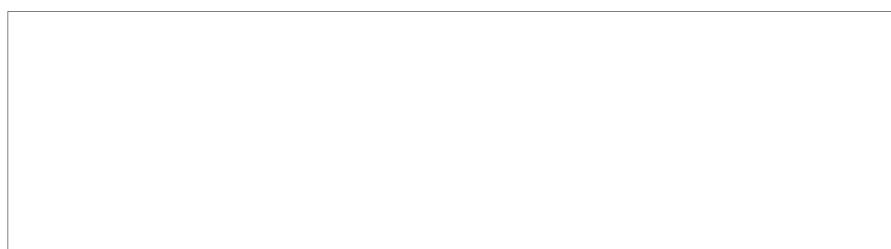
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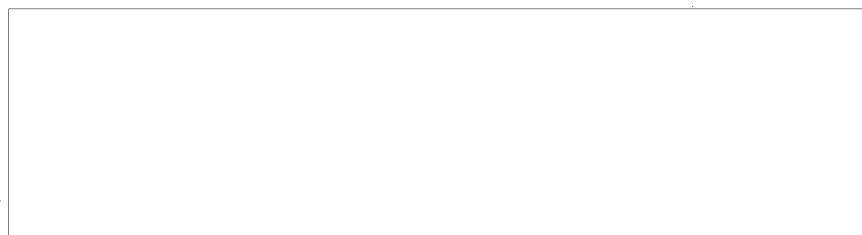
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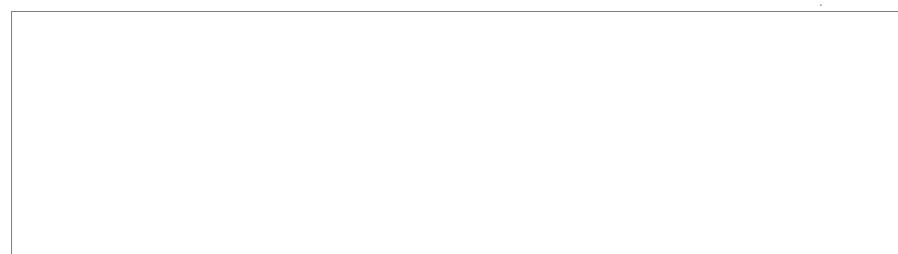
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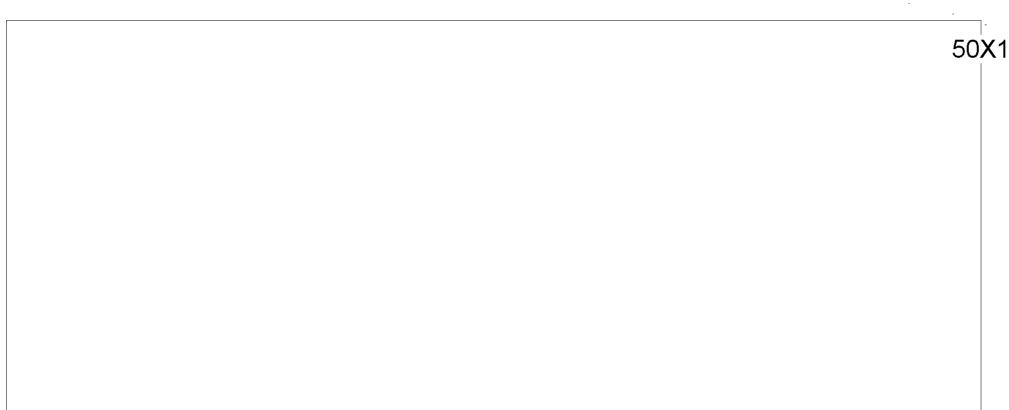
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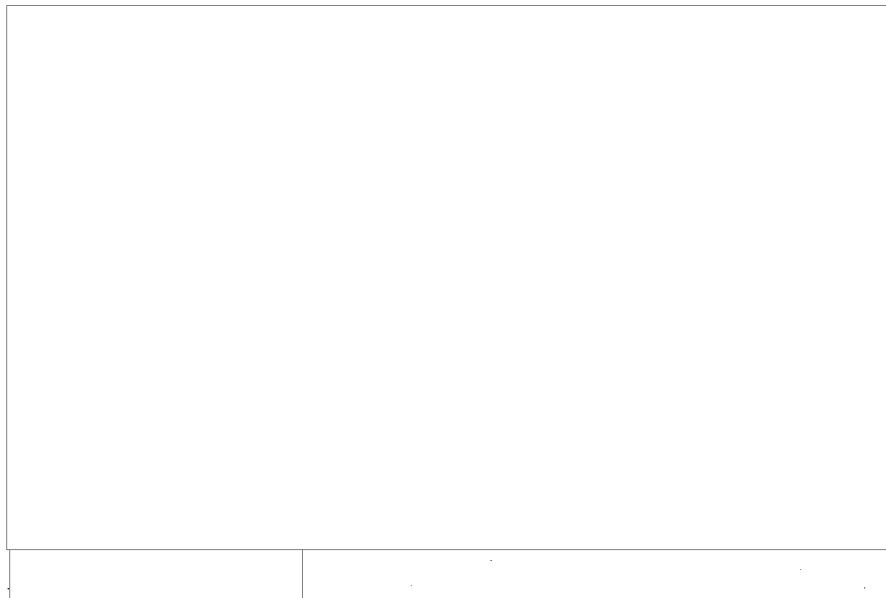


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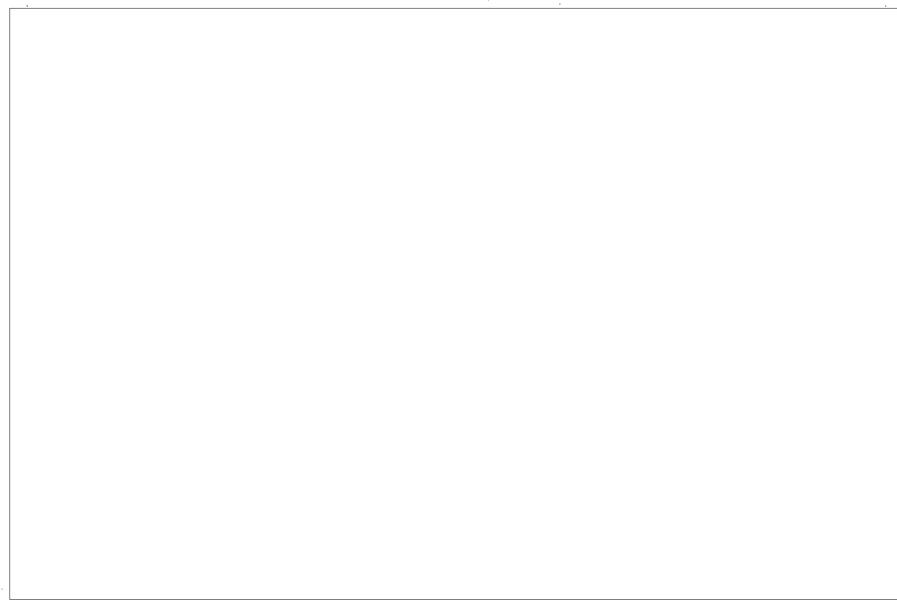
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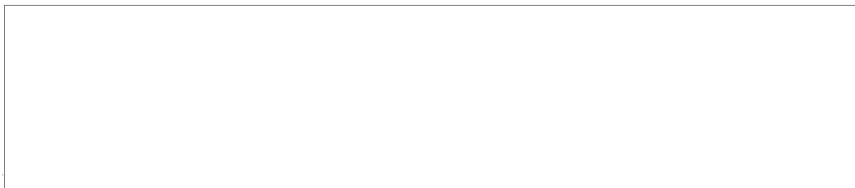


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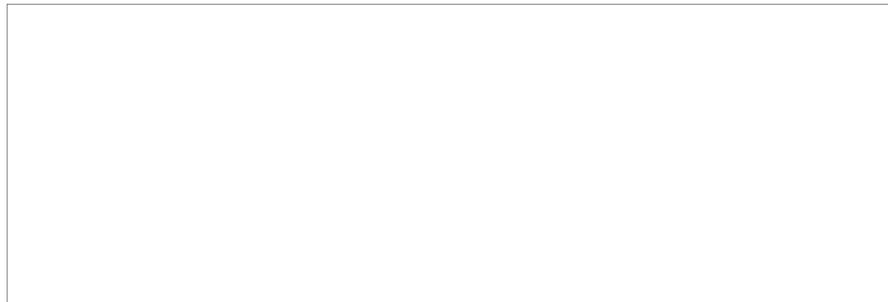
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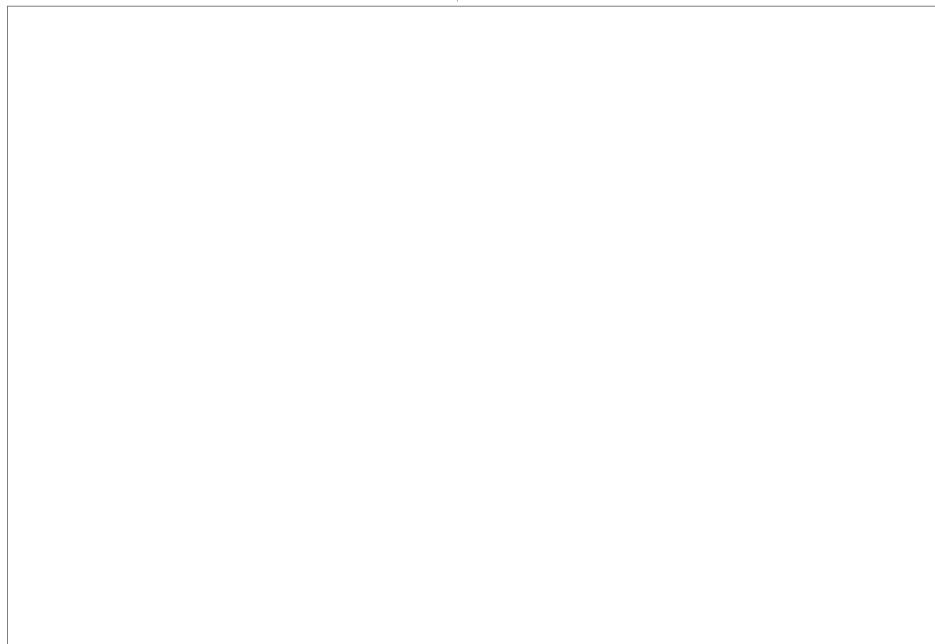
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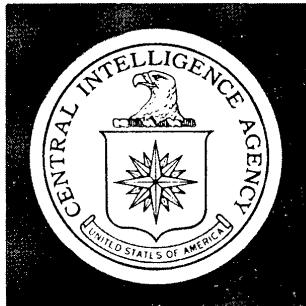


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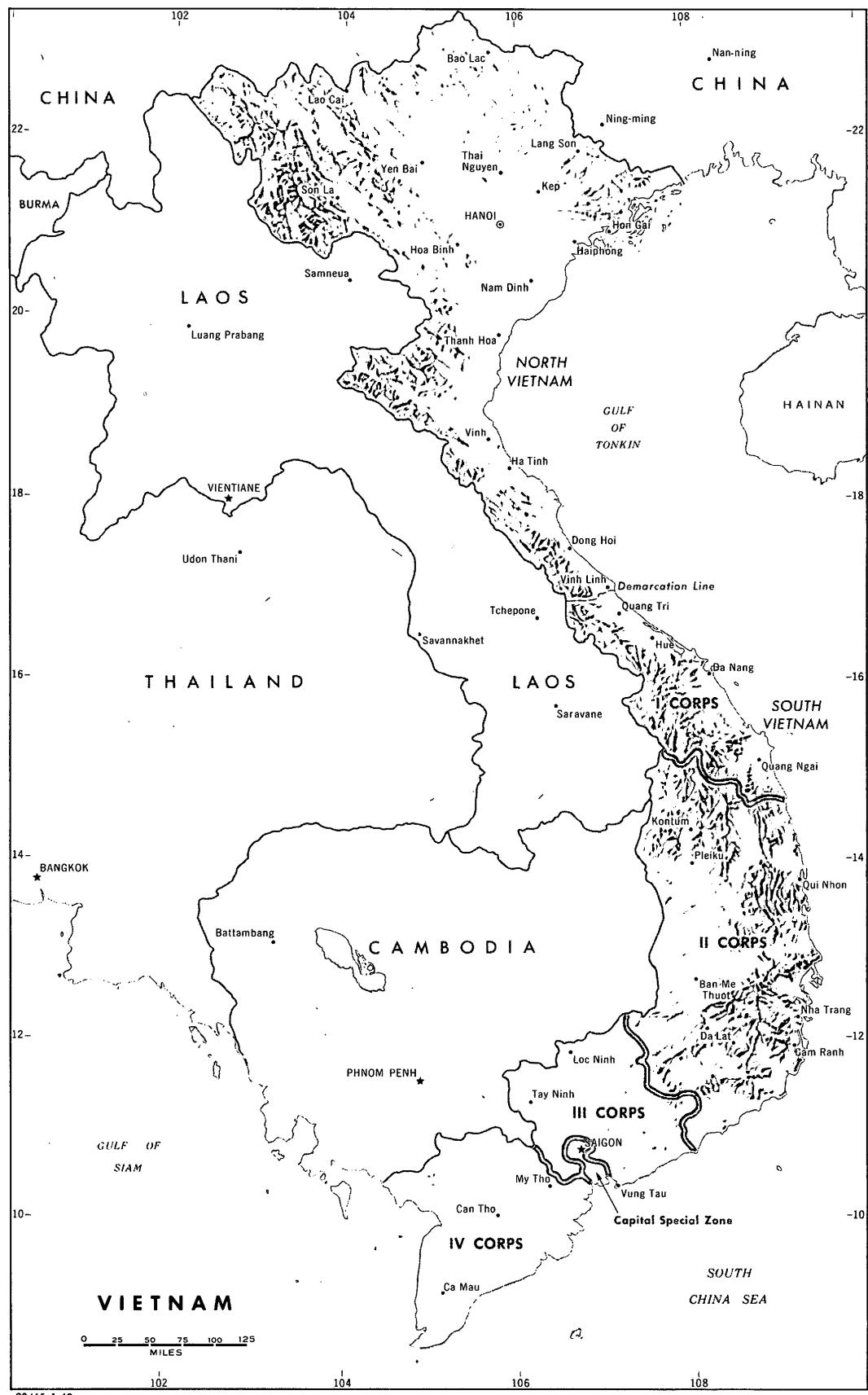


The President's Daily Brief

12 March 1969

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13 March 1969

LATE NOTES FOR THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF OF
12 MARCH 1969

I. MAJOR PROBLEMS

VIETNAM

Intercepts indicate that a minimum of eleven North Vietnamese MIGs flew to Communist China on 13 March. [redacted]

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[redacted]
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EUROPE

There is nothing significant to report.

SOVIET AFFAIRS

Reports from the US Embassies in Warsaw and Budapest indicate that a Warsaw Pact summit is to be held, apparently in Budapest, before the end of March. One source says the meeting will convene next Monday. [redacted]

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[redacted]
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MIDDLE EAST

There is nothing significant to report.

II. OTHER IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS

PAKISTAN

Ayub announced today that Pakistan's round table conference has reached "broad agreement" that direct adult suffrage should be introduced and that the country should have a parliamentary system of government. He indicated that several issues, including the extent to which East and West Pakistan should be autonomous, were still unresolved. (FBIS 24, 13 Mar 69)

JAMAICA

Violence against foreigners (as well as prominent Jamaicans) has been building up. Two Americans have been shot by unknown

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

assailants in the past few weeks, and a telephone caller recently threatened Ambassador Tobriner. The Jamaican Government has stepped up police and military raids in an effort to halt the violence, and the US Embassy is taking precautions.

[Redacted] 50X1

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

I. MAJOR PROBLEMS

VIETNAM

Military action throughout South Vietnam was relatively light during the past 24 hours.

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Recently intercepted North Vietnamese air defense communications suggest that Hanoi has fully examined the possibility of US military responses to its offensive in the South. Conversations intercepted on 7 and 8 March reflected an urgent concern with preparations for anticipated US retaliatory strikes, even as far north as the airfields near Hanoi. There was some indication that communication procedures were being established so that, if necessary, North Vietnamese jets could be flown to Chinese airfields. This occurred following US bombing of Phuc Yen Airfield near Hanoi in December 1967.

Some of this concern over retaliation no doubt stems from the recent northward deployment of US naval units in the Gulf of Tonkin and their taking station just outside Hanoi's territorial waters. On 9 and 10 March, North Vietnamese naval radar stations maintained unusually close surveillance of two US destroyers, reporting their locations at two to four minute intervals.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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The North Vietnamese are not sitting back to await the outcome of new or anticipated military actions in the field. Their interest in getting down to private talks came through loud and clear in language used by Xuan Thuy, by the Soviets, and by the Poles in the past few days. All three parties made a special effort to convince US officials that the talks ought to begin soon, and they left plenty of room for including Saigon.

In Xuan Thuy's first private meeting with Ambassador Lodge, he strongly implied that four-way talks to discuss de-escalation should be the first step, and he confirmed that the Communists wanted to focus on troop withdrawal as the initial major substantive issue.

Soviet diplomat Oberemko told a Paris Embassy officer that the US should begin talks with the Front. Like a few others pressing Hanoi's case, he left a strong impression that the Communists were eventually going to accept a change in the Saigon government's "attitude" rather than a change in its composition as a condition for progress in the talks.

Polish diplomat Lewandowski, in his conversation with Ambassador Lodge, also urged that the US should quickly move into private talks. Lewandowski's line that the US cannot expect to achieve a "position of strength" while the talks are under way is becoming a more and more prominent Communist theme. Hanoi is steadily hitting hard on this subject and doubtless will carry it on at the formal talks tomorrow. [redacted]

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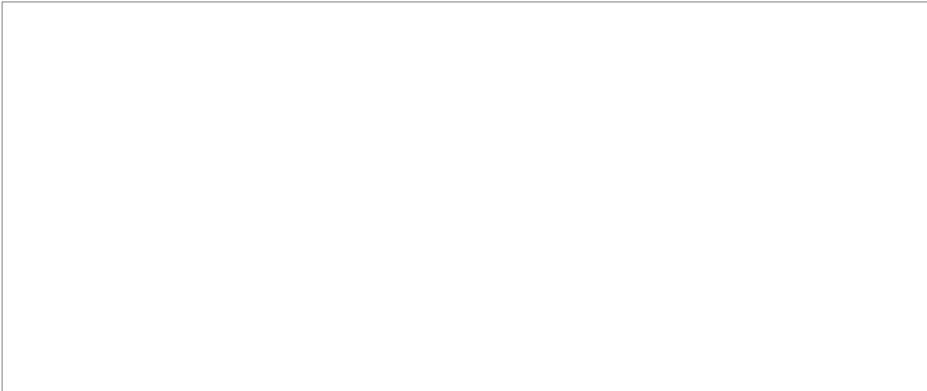
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[redacted] a story in the US press. [redacted] quotes Ambassador Harriman as saying that the Communist offensive was a response to allied military operations rather than a deliberate attempt to torpedo the talks. Hanoi radio used the quote in a broadcast on 12 March about Secretary Laird's trip, and it is a safe bet that it will be heard again in Paris tomorrow.

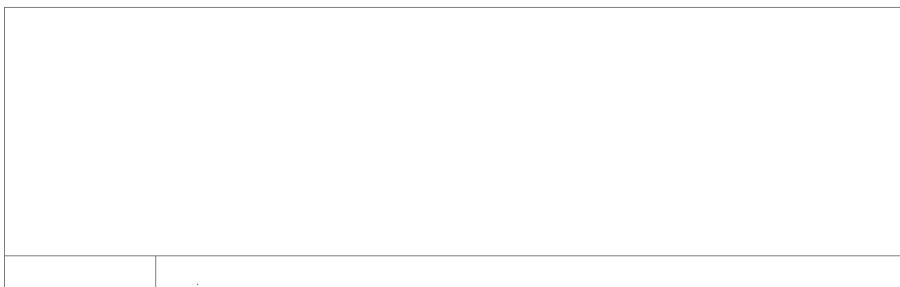
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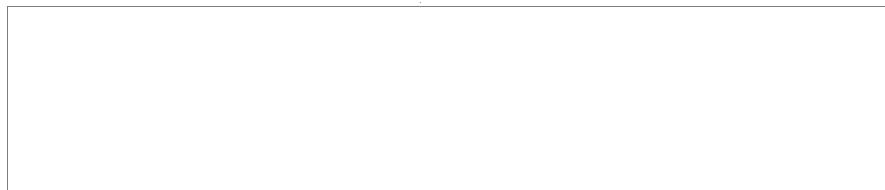
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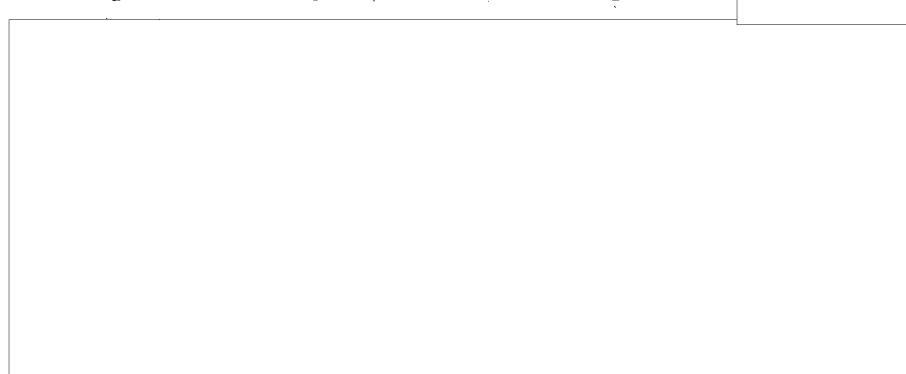
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EUROPE

Chancellor Kiesinger and President De Gaulle will hold their semiannual summit meeting in Paris tomorrow and Friday, with no significant results expected. 

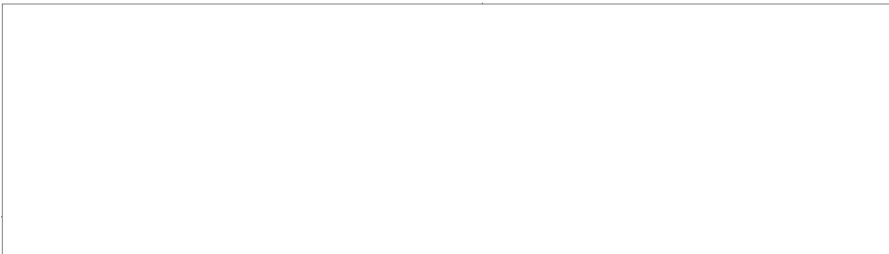
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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY



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SOVIET AFFAIRS

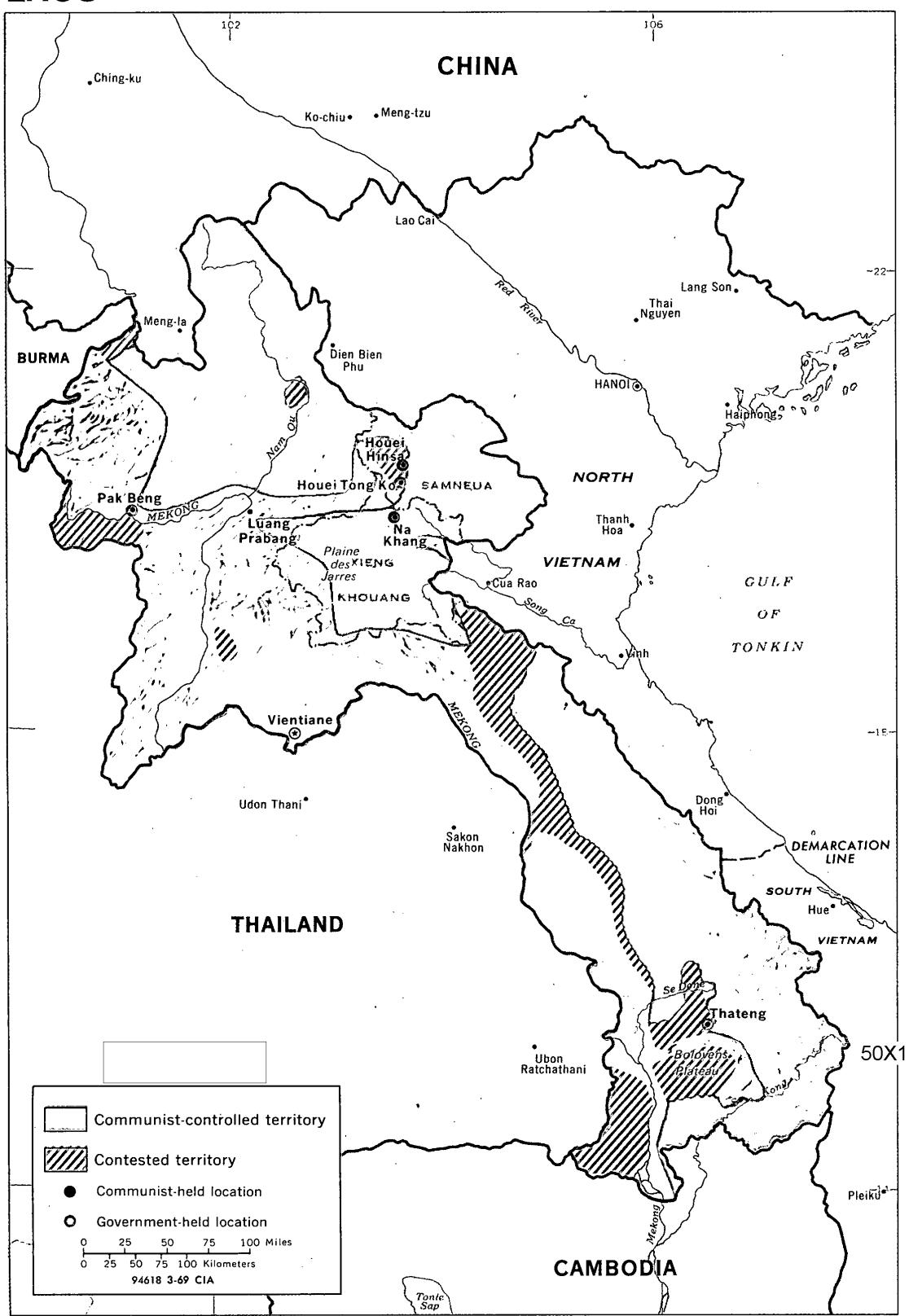
There is nothing significant to report.

MIDDLE EAST

There is nothing significant to report.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

LAOS



FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

II. OTHER IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS

LAOS

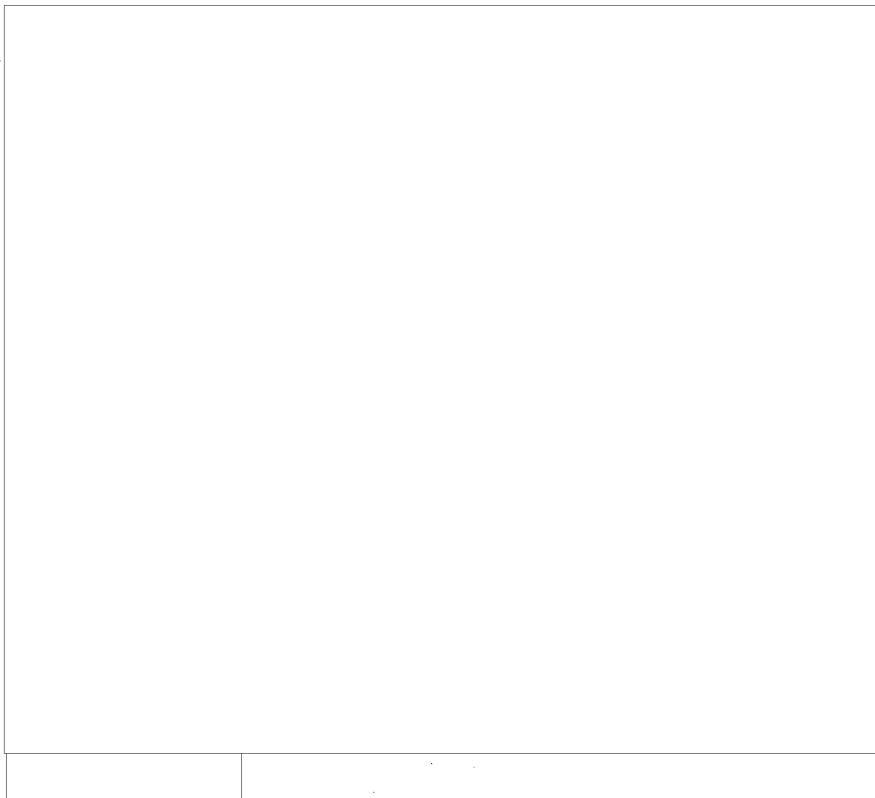
While there is a good deal of military activity, we still see no firm evidence of a major attempt by the Communists to expand into areas traditionally controlled by the government. North Vietnamese and Pathet Lao troops are pressuring some of the remaining government positions in Samneua Province, but they have failed to drive friendly guerrillas from any important base since capturing Houei Hinsa on 3 March. A Communist attack against Houei Thong Ko, a transit point for thousands of Meo refugees fleeing southward, was recently repulsed with the help of tactical air support. The Meo guerrillas have for tactical reasons evacuated a number of smaller positions west and north of Na Khang.

The enemy's raid against Luang Prabang Airfield early today was the third in as many years. The Communists also increased pressure in the vicinity of the Mekong River town of Pak Beng. In addition, the Communists are moving fresh troops and supplies into the Thateng area in southern Laos, possibly signaling a new assault against the base there. These moves will add to Vientiane's apprehensions. In fact, the most immediate danger is one of some ill-advised move by a rattled government leadership.

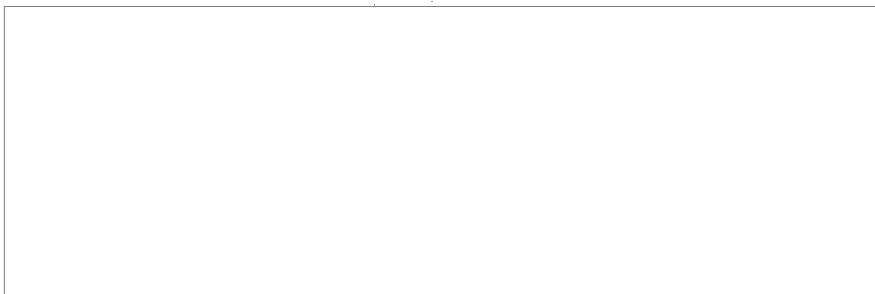
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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

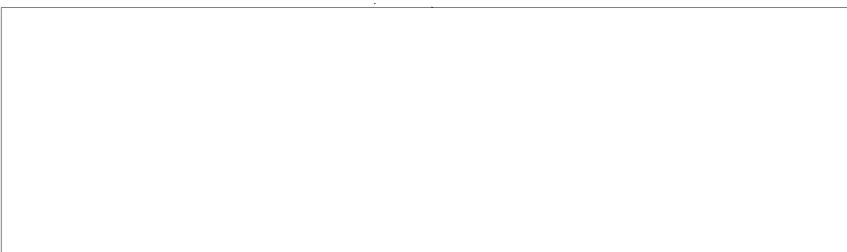
PAKISTAN



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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY**CHILE**

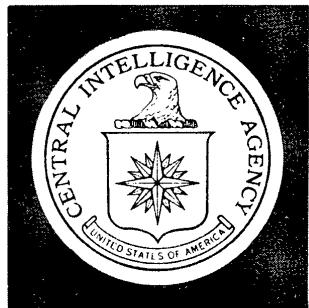
Last week's legislative elections have depressed President Frei. He regards the results, which showed both left and right increasing their vote totals at the expense of his Christian Democrats, as a grave defeat for both his party and himself. He does not believe the Christian Democrats can win the presidential election in 1970 without allies, and he thinks the party is so isolated after last week's vote that it has no hope of linking up with any other party. Nor does he see any attractive presidential candidates among his Christian Democratic colleagues. Even though the Chilean right made the most noteworthy gains last week, Frei thinks a candidate backed by the Communists and Socialists will have a better than even chance of winning the three-way presidential race which most observers believe will develop in 1970.

Frei's analysis on the whole does not differ too drastically from our own conclusions. In a sense the Christian Democrats had nowhere to go but down from the unprecedented majorities they rolled up in recent years. The vote they received last week--30 percent of the total--probably is close to a fair measure of their basic strength, and we do not expect it to drop much further.

We suspect that Frei will recover from his depression before long and will continue to push his legislative programs. He may be less interested in involving himself in partisan political affairs, however, believing that his party is on the road to disaster and hoping to keep clear.

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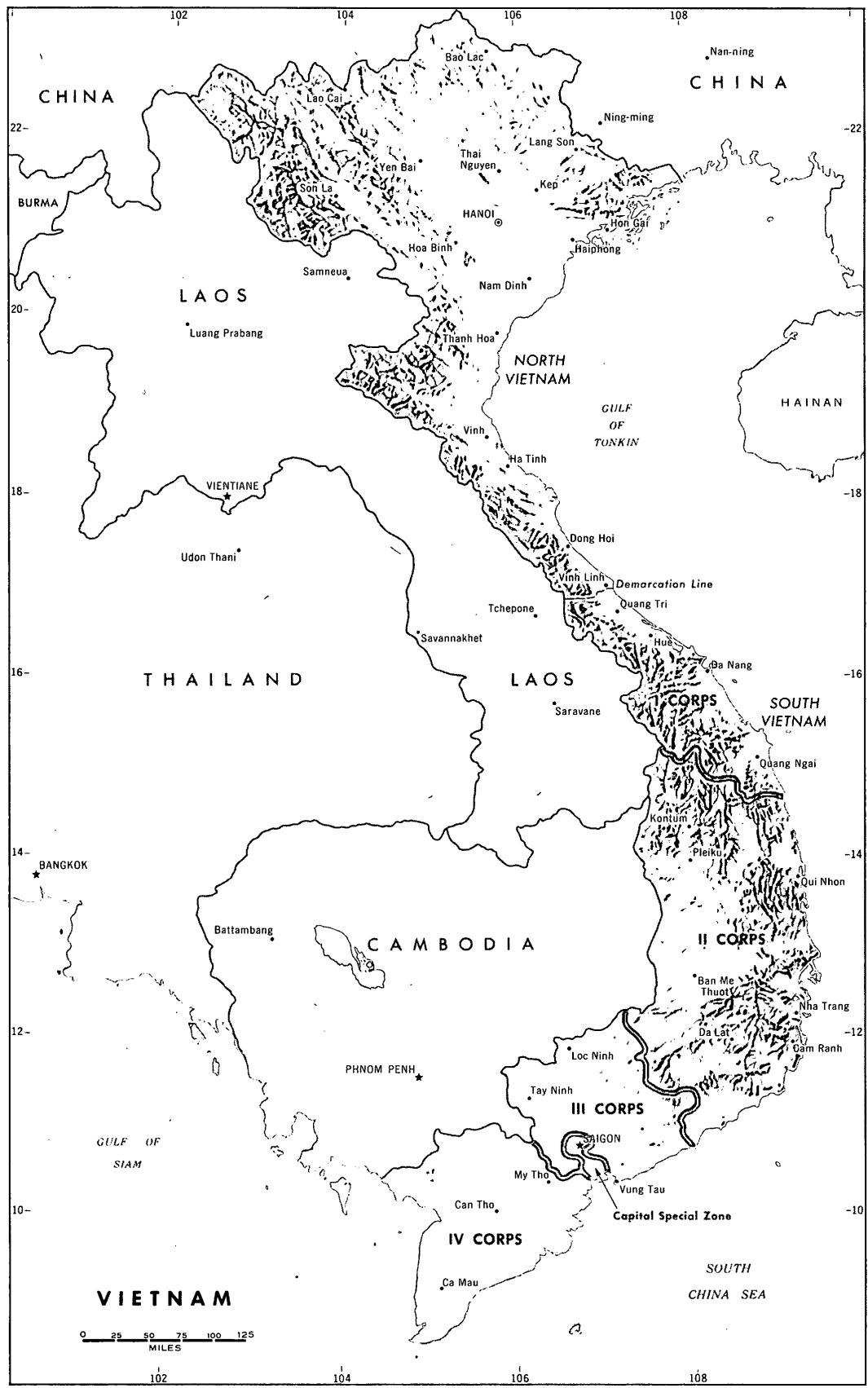


The President's Daily Brief

13 March 1969



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TOP SECRET

LATE NOTES FOR THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF OF

13 MARCH 1969

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TOP SECRET

14 March 1969

LATE NOTES FOR THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF OF
13 MARCH 1969

I. MAJOR PROBLEMS

MIDDLE EAST

Israeli jets early today struck at Arab guerrilla posts in northwest Jordan. Amman claimed there were a number of civilian casualties. (FBIS; press, 14 Mar 69)

* * *

UN observers report a considerable strengthening of Israeli forces in the Suez Canal sector, beginning the evening of 12 March. [redacted]

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EUROPE

There is nothing significant to report.

SOVIET AFFAIRS

There is nothing significant to report.

VIETNAM

Enemy-initiated activity continued at a generally low level through the early hours of 14 March. [redacted]

50X1

[redacted]
50X1

II. OTHER IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS

KOREA

North Korean border guards yesterday again fired on a US outpost along the western sector of the DMZ. No casualties were reported. (Press)

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

VIETNAM

Recent developments in North Vietnam back up other evidence that Hanoi is planning to go ahead with additional military actions in the South which run a high risk of US retaliation.

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Hanoi clearly believes that stronger Communist military action is needed to get things moving in the right direction

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

in Paris. Nothing in its current actions suggest it is likely to be deterred by the threat of US air attacks. It must calculate that the public outcry against escalation of the war would be directed mainly against the US if new air strikes were launched against the North. Moreover, the North Vietnamese almost certainly are confident that the bombing would not last long and that they could, in any event, get it stopped fairly easily by yet another temporary curb on their military activity in the South.

* * *

In South Vietnam, [redacted] Communist 50X1 divisions in the III Corps - Saigon sector have been noted recently moving to forward staging areas. Major Communist forces are now in position to launch heavy, coordinated attacks against allied bases and urban areas throughout Tay Ninh Province and adjacent areas, as well as against the Bien Hoa - Long Binh military complex. Although the enemy's divisional forces do not yet constitute an immediate threat to Saigon itself, there are some indications of preparations by independent Viet Cong forces in the Communist subregions south and east of Saigon for possible combat operations against the capital.

Enemy action remained at a generally low level during the past 24 hours. In I and III Corps, however, ARVN units took heavy casualties in clashes with Communist units.

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

14 March 1969

LATE NOTES FOR THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF OF
13 MARCH 1969

I. MAJOR PROBLEMS

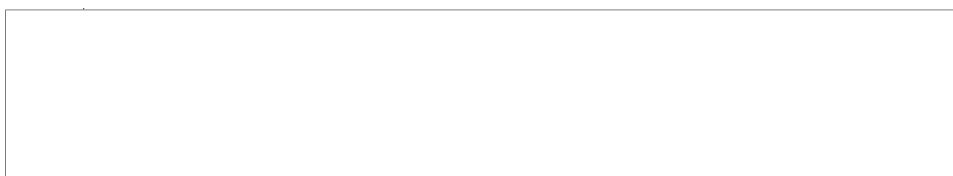
MIDDLE EAST

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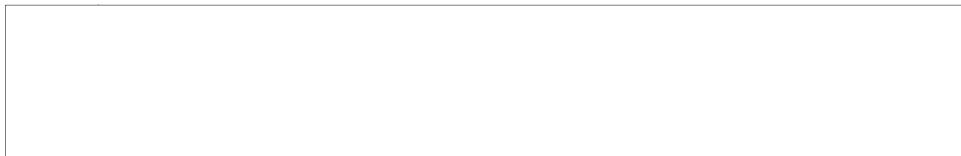
EUROPE

There is nothing significant to report.

SOVIET AFFAIRS

There is nothing significant to report.

VIETNAM



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II. OTHER IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS

KOREA

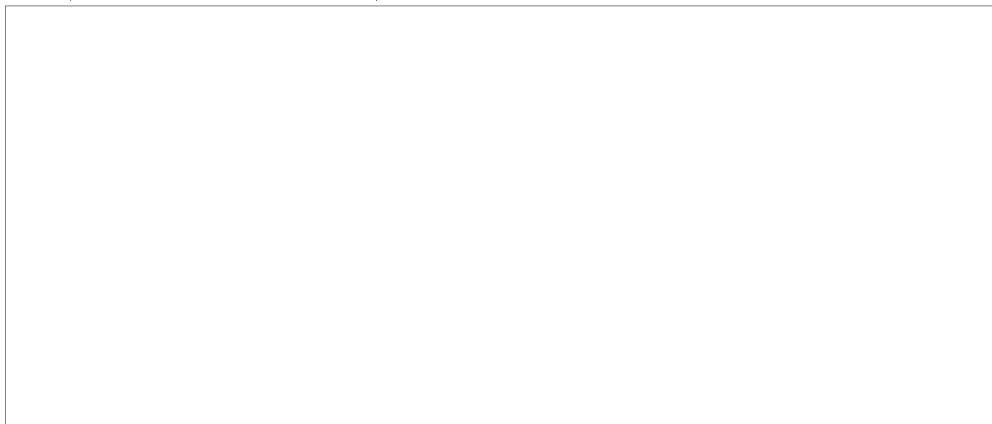
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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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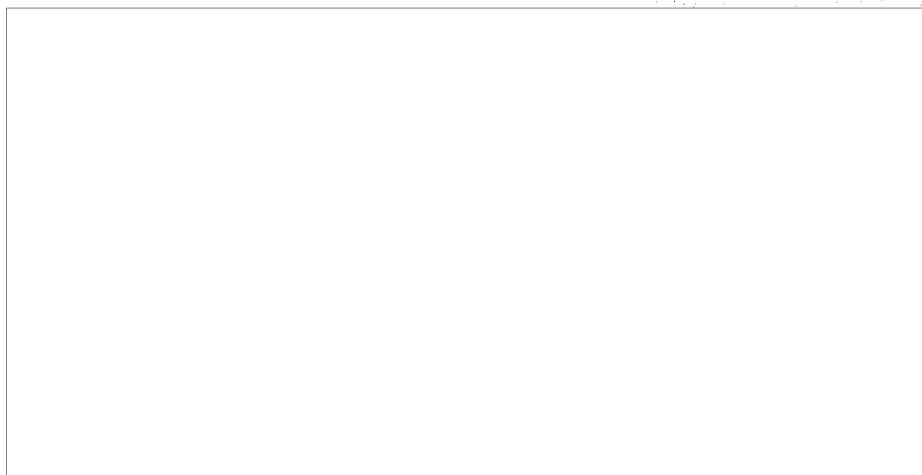


EUROPE

Britain's position in international payments took a sharp turn for the worse last month with the emergence of a trade deficit of about \$150 million. Imports edged up \$30 million despite the braking effect anticipated from the restrictive measures adopted last November. Even more discouraging was the fall of \$96 million from January in exports. This decline--the largest since the devaluation--is partially explained by the US dock strike.

SOVIET AFFAIRS

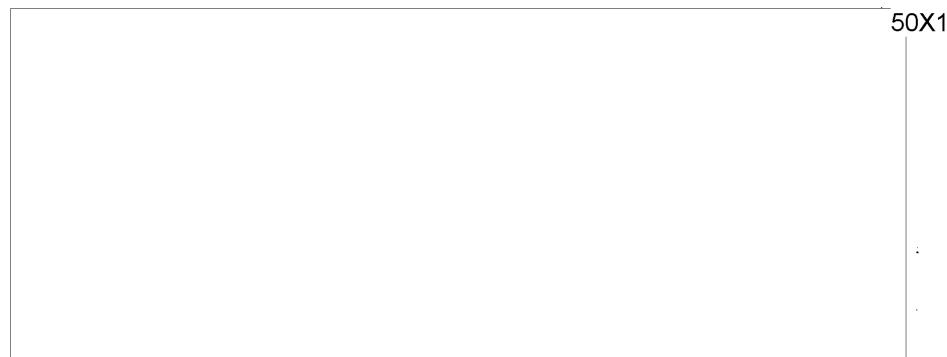
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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY



* * *

A Soviet TU-95 heavy bomber participating in a 50X1
large-scale exercise violated US airspace over Shemya
Island in the Aleutians yesterday. [redacted] 50X1



The bomber was taking part in a training mission 50X1
launched from the central USSR and involving 19 heavy
bombers and at least eight tanker aircraft. This mis-
sion may be part of a major exercise under way in the
Long Range (Strategic) Air Force. [redacted] 50X1



FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

MIDDLE EAST

There is nothing significant to report.

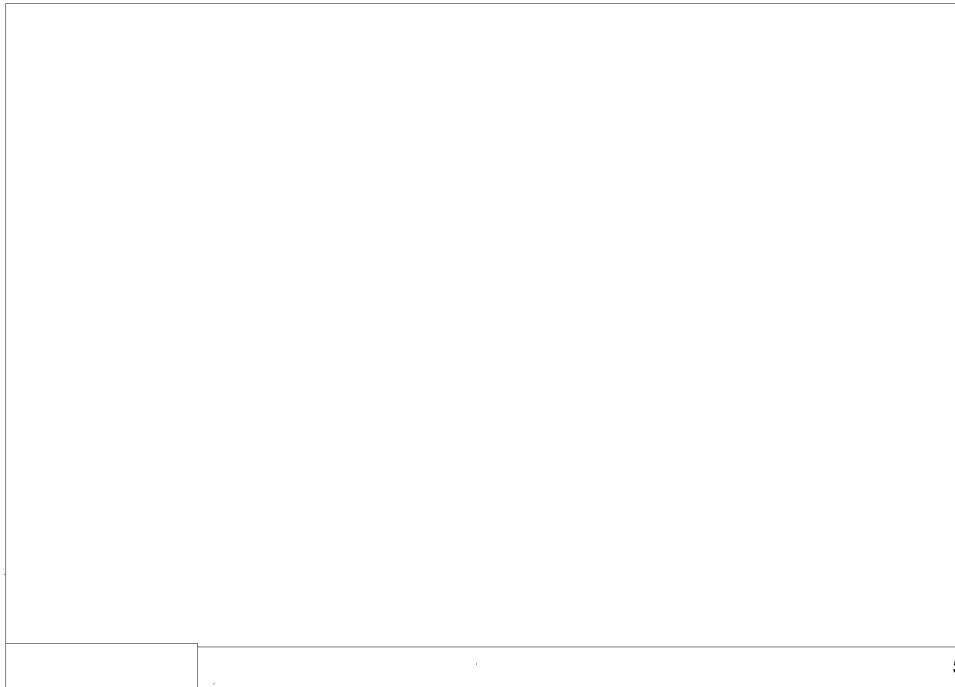
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II. OTHER IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS

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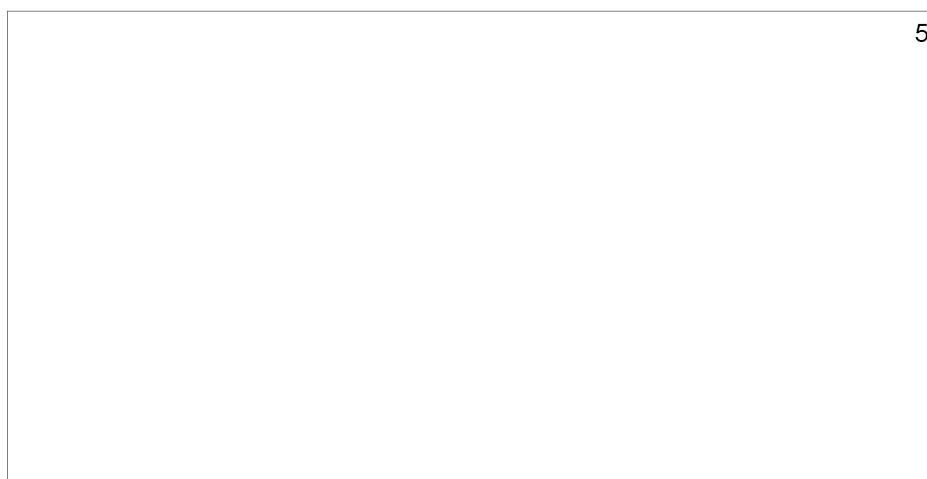
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PHILIPPINES

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

50X1

PAKISTAN

There are persistent rumors that martial law will soon be declared in East Pakistan. These rumors may be true because conditions there have reached a state of near anarchy and the provincial government has virtually abdicated its authority to student leaders.

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* * *

Ayub's initial claims that he had made real progress in his negotiations with a disunited opposition seem premature. The agreement he announced today probably includes the only changes he would like to see made.

Nevertheless, East Pakistani leader Mujibur Rahman, whom Ayub evidently agreed to back as his successor called the conference a complete failure because it did not resolve

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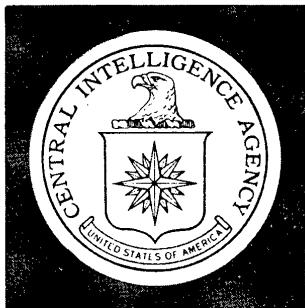
FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

fundamental regional issues. Mujibur--a long-time advocate of autonomy for East Pakistan--said he has pulled his party out of the moderate eight-party opposition coalition which has been negotiating with Ayub. Mujibur almost certainly believes that he cannot afford to support an agreement which contains no concessions to improve East Pakistan's position relative to West Pakistan.

It seems unlikely that any agreement can be effected without Mujibur's cooperation. Ayub has warned that if a workable compromise is not reached he will propose his own solutions.

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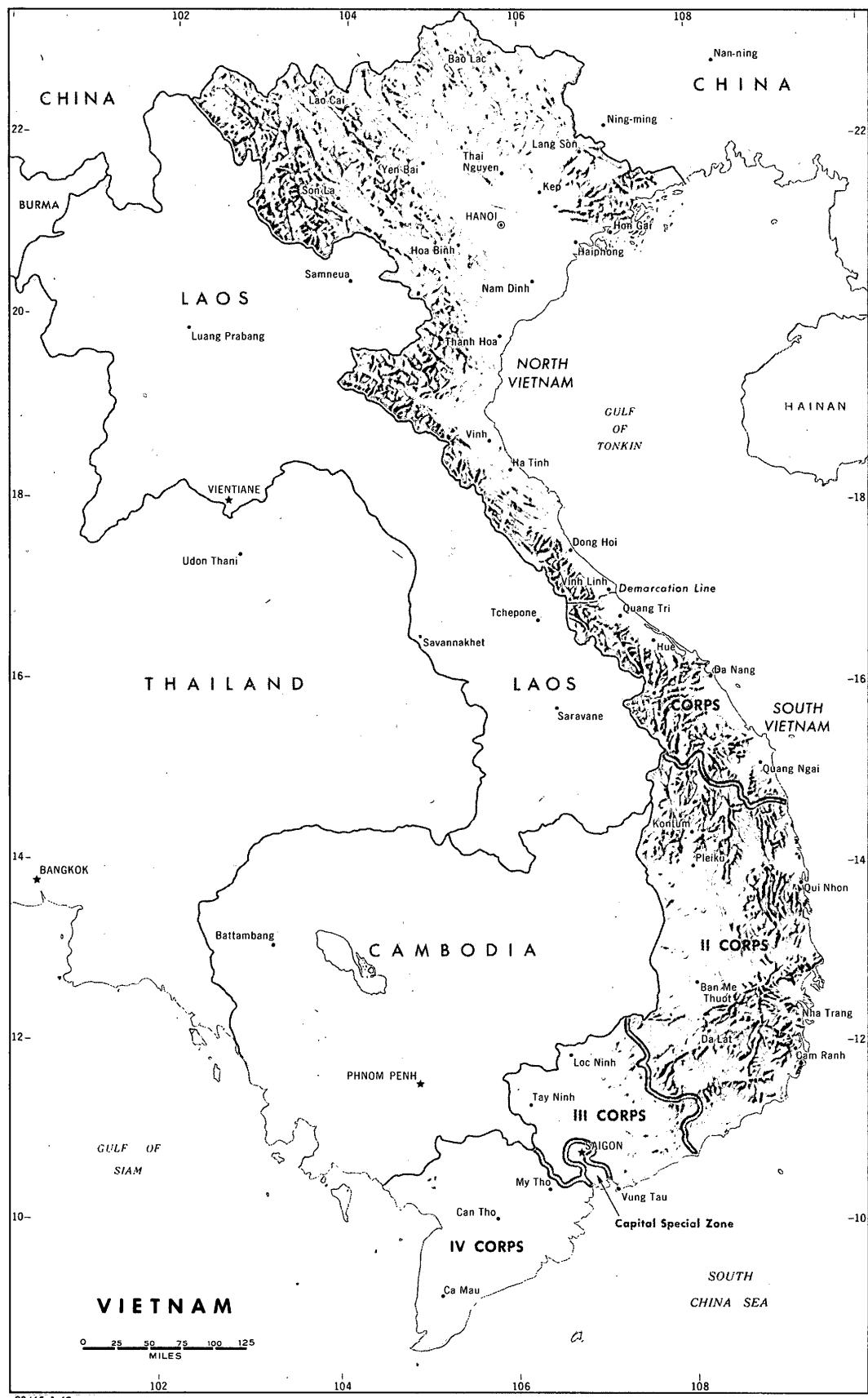
The President's Daily Brief

14 March 1969

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

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15 March 1969

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

I. MAJOR PROBLEMS

VIETNAM

During last night and early today in Vietnam enemy-initiated activity picked up markedly in the II and IV Corps areas, and there was also a relatively high level of action in the III Corps provinces surrounding Saigon. Mortars and rockets hit about 70 allied bases and towns, including four 122-mm. rockets fired into Hue; only light damage was inflicted there and no casualties were reported. This upsurge in enemy activity may represent another phase of his over-all timetable, as a document captured on 14 March called for another "highpoint" to begin at midnight 14 March (11:00 AM yesterday EST).

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MIDDLE EAST

For the second straight day, the Suez Canal area remains quiet as of 0700 EST, but sporadic firing continues across the Jordan River. (Press)

EUROPE

Both Chancellor Kiesinger and President De Gaulle attempted to put a good light on their two-day meeting which ended yesterday, and indeed our embassy in Paris thinks the talks may have cleared some of the "bad air" from French-German relations. As expected, they covered a wide range of topics but reached few agreements except the need to study closely such problems as extension of the Common Market. On WEU, De Gaulle confirmed the French boycott of the council and said WEU was a matter of no interest to France. On the Soames affair, he said the British version

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

was the "opposite" of what he told Soames. The General also indicated that France does not intend to withdraw from the Atlantic Alliance and has no objection to the stationing of US troops in West Germany.

[redacted] 50X1

[redacted] 50X1

SOVIET AFFAIRS

There is nothing of significance to report.

II. OTHER IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS

SOVIET UNION - COMMUNIST CHINA

TASS claims that mass demonstrations continued outside the Soviet Embassy in Peking today with loudspeakers blaring anti-Soviet propaganda into the mission compound.

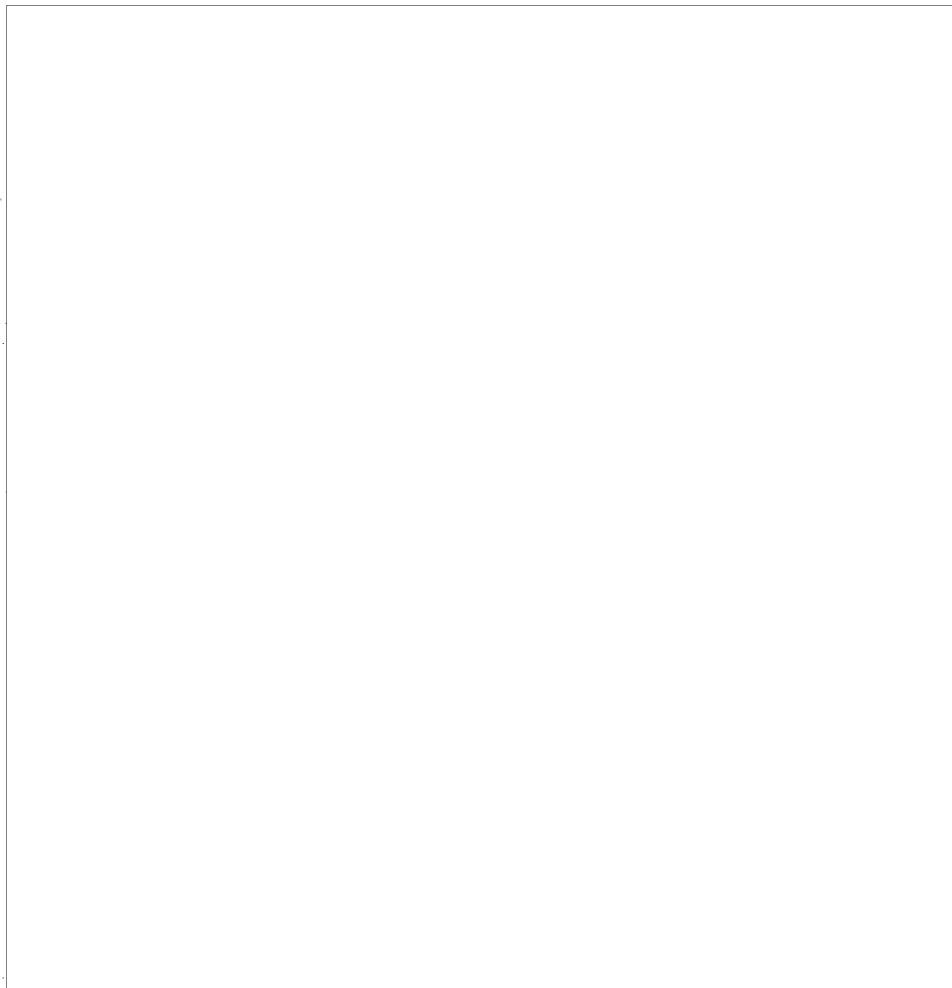
(Press)

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

I. MAJOR PROBLEMS

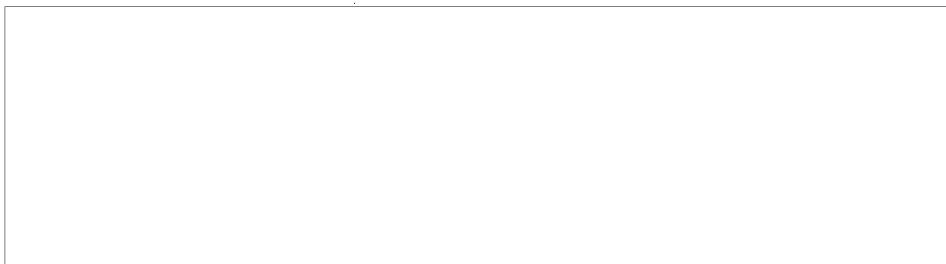
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VIETNAM



* * *

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

[Redacted]

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* * *

The level of fighting declined even further throughout much of the country on 14 March. There are no reports of new terrorist incidents in either Saigon, Hue, or Da Nang. The Communists launched another sharp ground attack just south of the Demilitarized Zone, however, killing 10 US Marines and wounding 40 at a cost of 23 enemy dead. South Vietnamese units are also reported to be in contact with a large enemy unit northeast of Saigon near Xuan Loc, but complete casualties figures are not yet available.

* * *

We are unable to confirm a French press report that the USSR claims Peking has closed its borders to all Soviet rail shipments for North Vietnam. [Redacted]

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[Redacted] at least 260 tons 50X1

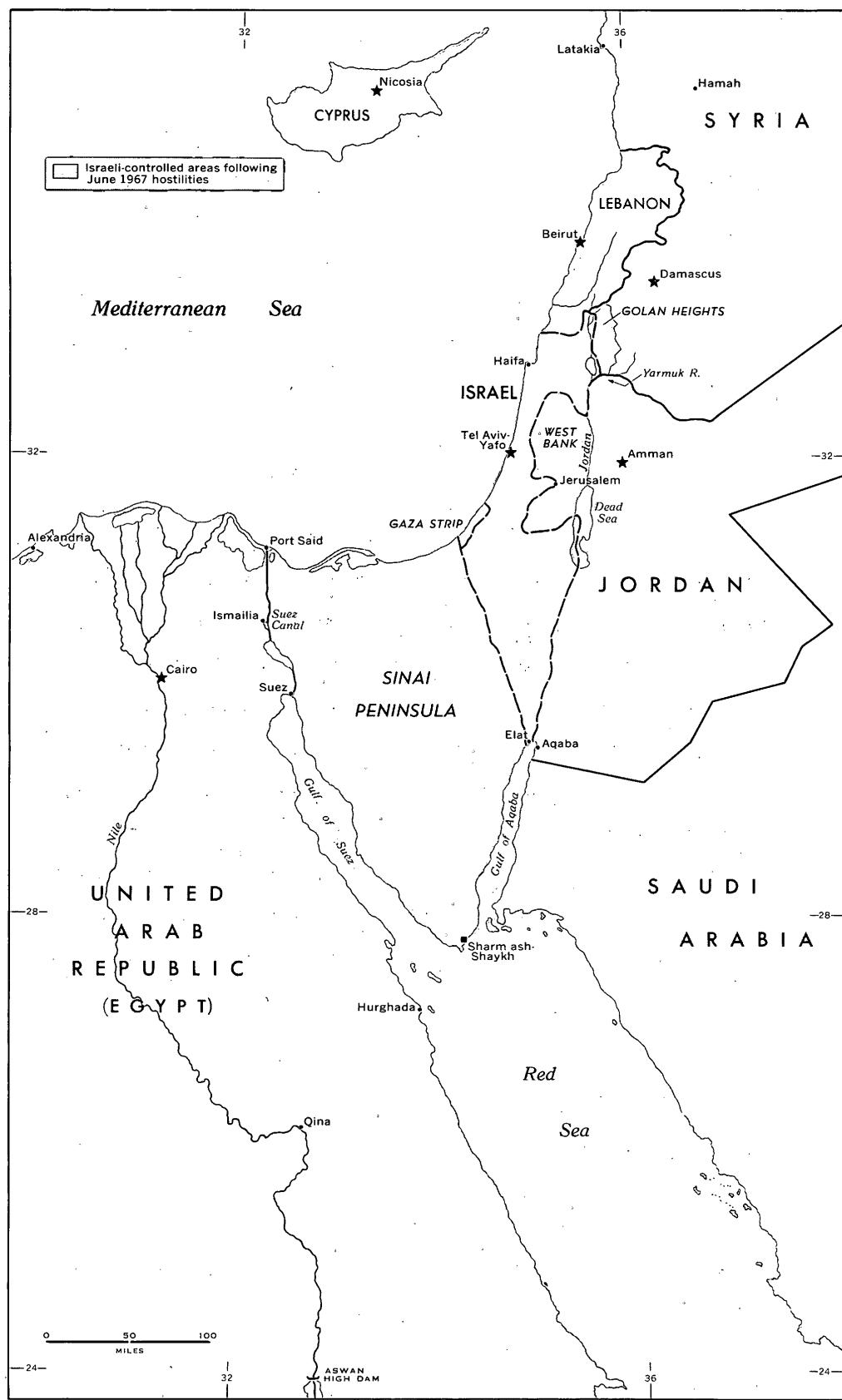
of Soviet explosives, most of which are probably destined for North Vietnam military consignees, are currently moving on the Chinese rail system. [Redacted]

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[Redacted] 50X1

Rail transit through China is used to deliver all Soviet military equipment to Vietnam, but most of the nearly one million tons of ordinary supplies going to North Vietnam from the USSR each year move by sea. Some industrial

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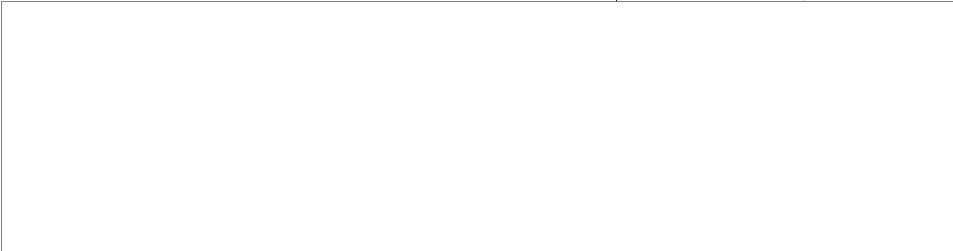


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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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equipment and vehicles, however, have also been delivered by rail.



MIDDLE EAST

The Suez Canal was quiet today, but UN observers reported yesterday that the Israelis were "beefing up" their forces in the canal area. We suspect Tel Aviv is getting ready for extensive retaliation if the Egyptians start shooting again. The most likely targets would be Egyptian artillery emplacements on the canal. We think Tel Aviv would go after them with aircraft on the theory that a cross-canal operation on the ground would be too costly, but the Israelis may be thinking of combining an air strike against the guns with a helicopter-commando raid against some strategic target deep inside Egypt.

SOVIET AFFAIRS

There will be a major Warsaw Pact meeting next Monday and Tuesday in Budapest. The roster of the Soviet delegation includes Brezhnev, Premier Kosygin, Foreign Minister Gromyko, and Defense Minister Grechko. The Warsaw Pact Commander, Marshal Yakubovsky and the Chief of Staff of the Joint Armed Forces are also traveling to Budapest. It is expected that the other Pact members, including Rumania, will send delegations of similar rank. The participants

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are expected to discuss European security and the "high command" of the Pact. Other likely topics include Pact maneuvers and transit of Pact forces through the territories of member countries.

Also on Monday, representatives of at least sixty Communist parties are scheduled to meet in Moscow to draw up final plans for the "World Communist Conference" which the Soviets hope to stage in May.

EUROPE

There is nothing significant to report.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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II. OTHER IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS

KOREA

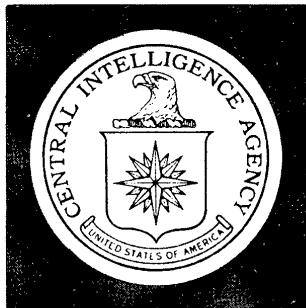
There are signs [redacted]

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North Koreans are preparing to step up incidents along the Demilitarized Zone--undoubtedly in response to the current US - South Korean military exercises. Pyongyang's main purpose in instigating incidents probably is to reinforce its propaganda claim that the exercises are a serious threat to peace.

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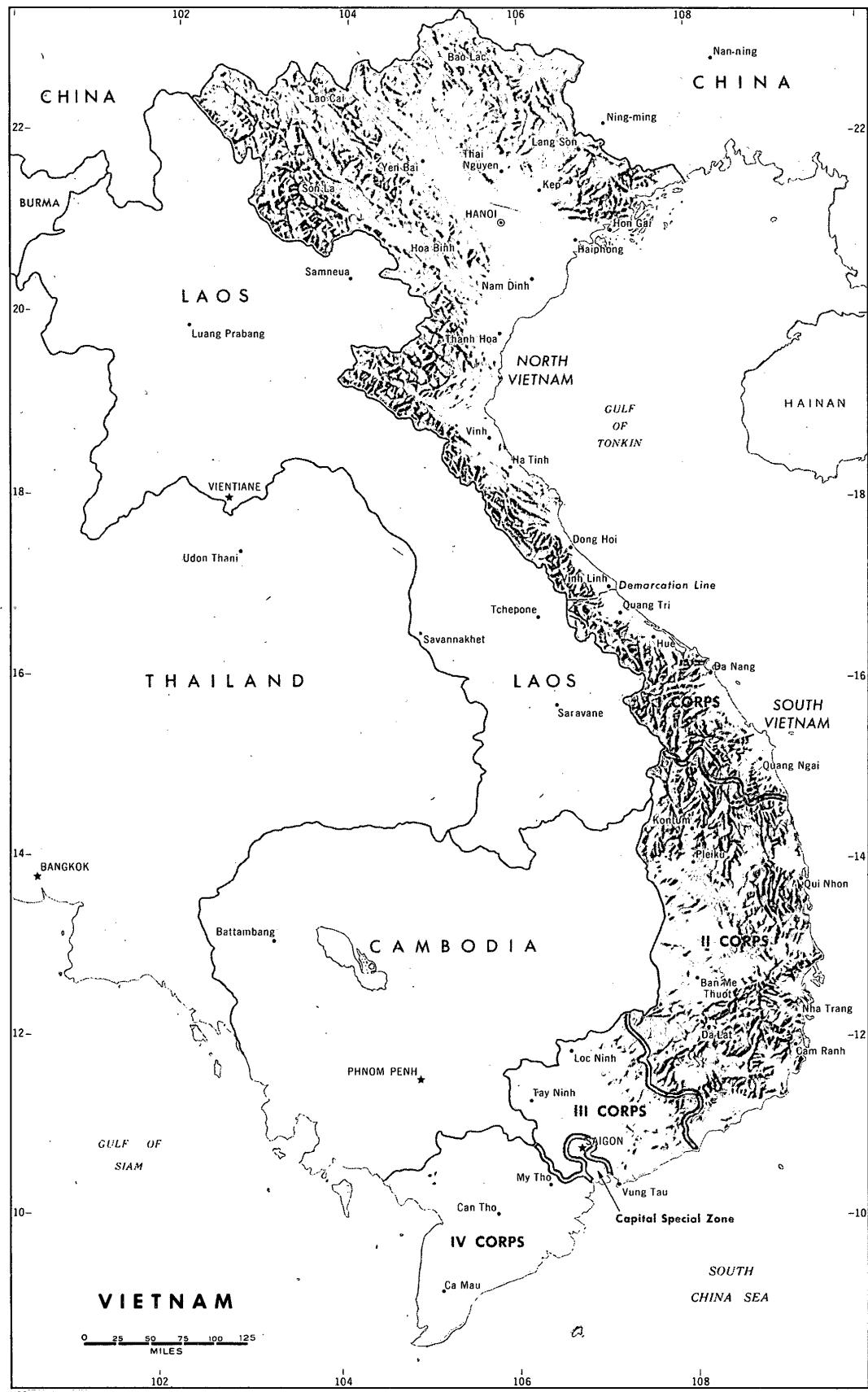
The President's Daily Brief

17 March 1969
(Afternoon)

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TOP SECRET

14

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



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TOP SECRET

18 March 1969

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

I. MAJOR PROBLEMS

VIETNAM

Enemy-initiated actions in the capital military district were about double the usual rate last night. These include a terrorist incident in Saigon and five firefights in Gia Dinh Province; casualties were light.

Elsewhere, the situation was relatively quiet. [redacted]

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[redacted]
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SOVIET AFFAIRS

The story behind the 120-minute Warsaw Pact summit conference in Budapest yesterday has not yet unfolded. The main point in the final communiqué merely states that the participants approved "new regulations on combined armed forces and combined commands." This suggests that the discussions--at least nominally--succeeded in drawing the member states into closer military cooperation. Rumania's readiness to subscribe to the new arrangements, however, may well mean that little has changed. The Rumanians have long resisted Russian efforts to obtain control over Rumania's armed forces.

A Washington Post story this morning alleges that the Rumanians vetoed a major Soviet effort to "integrate" Rumania's forces under the Pact. The New York Times claims that disagreement emerged at the meeting over a Soviet attempt to get a resolution condemning the Chinese as "aggressors." There is nothing substantial at this point to back either of these claims.

The Soviet leaders are already en route back to Moscow by train. The Rumanians, East Germans, and probably others have also left. This means that there was little or no time for bilateral talks after the formal meeting adjourned.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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(Central Intelligence

Bulletin, Press, News Ticker)

EUROPE

There is nothing significant to report.

MIDDLE EAST

Cairo radio says the Israelis shelled Egyptian positions south of the Bitter Lakes area of the Suez Canal today.

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II. OTHER IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS

SOVIET UNION - COMMUNIST CHINA

A Pravda military correspondent claims that Chinese forces fired on Russian border troops with mortars and machineguns last night near the disputed island. There was no mention of casualties.

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I. MAJOR PROBLEMS

VIETNAM

Enemy-initiated actions declined on 16-17 March, following the spate of shellings and ground actions over the weekend. Hue, Da Nang, and Saigon were free of terrorist activity. Sharp new engagements were reported northeast of Saigon, however, and in Kontum Province in the central highlands.

SOVIET AFFAIRS

Today's Warsaw Pact summit meeting ended two hours after it began with the participating countries signing a "declaration on Europe" and a final communiqué. It was the shortest meeting ever held. The start was delayed from morning until afternoon, probably to permit time for bilateral discussions either on the Sino-Soviet border conflict or on the final wording of one or both of the documents.

The circumstances are most unusual, however, and it is not at all clear what is going on.

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EUROPE

In a public opinion poll earlier this month, 77 percent of those Frenchmen queried thought the recent trip of President Nixon constituted an important element for the evolution

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

of good relations between France and the US (35 percent very important and 42 percent rather important). A majority--52 percent--continued to feel that France should neither be on the side of the US nor the USSR. Those who felt that France should be on the side of the US rose from 13 percent in 1967 and 19 percent in 1968 to 24 percent in 1969.

MIDDLE EAST

There is nothing significant to report.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

II. OTHER IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS

KOREA

Four North Korean infiltrators yesterday attacked a police station on South Korea's east coast about 55 miles south of the Demilitarized Zone. This was the first armed infiltration since approximately 120 guerrillas landed along the east coast last November. The raiders, dressed in South Korean military uniforms, killed one policeman and a civilian and planted a time bomb in the police station before shooting their way out of the harbor and sailing north. The attack probably was coordinated with current North Korean harassment along the DMZ in connection with the US - South Korean military exercises.

[Redacted] 50X1

SOVIET UNION - COMMUNIST CHINA

[Redacted] 50X1

Soviet aircraft have not flown to Hanoi through

[Redacted] 50X1

China for several months. Inauguration of the new route at this time may be connected with recent Soviet-Chinese border incidents.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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In February 1965, after the US began the bombing of
North Vietnam, Moscow tried to send 30 AN-12s to Hanoi
with military aid.

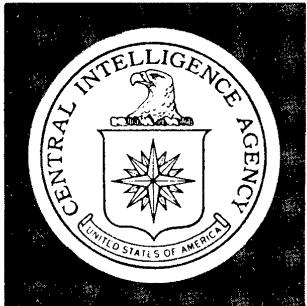
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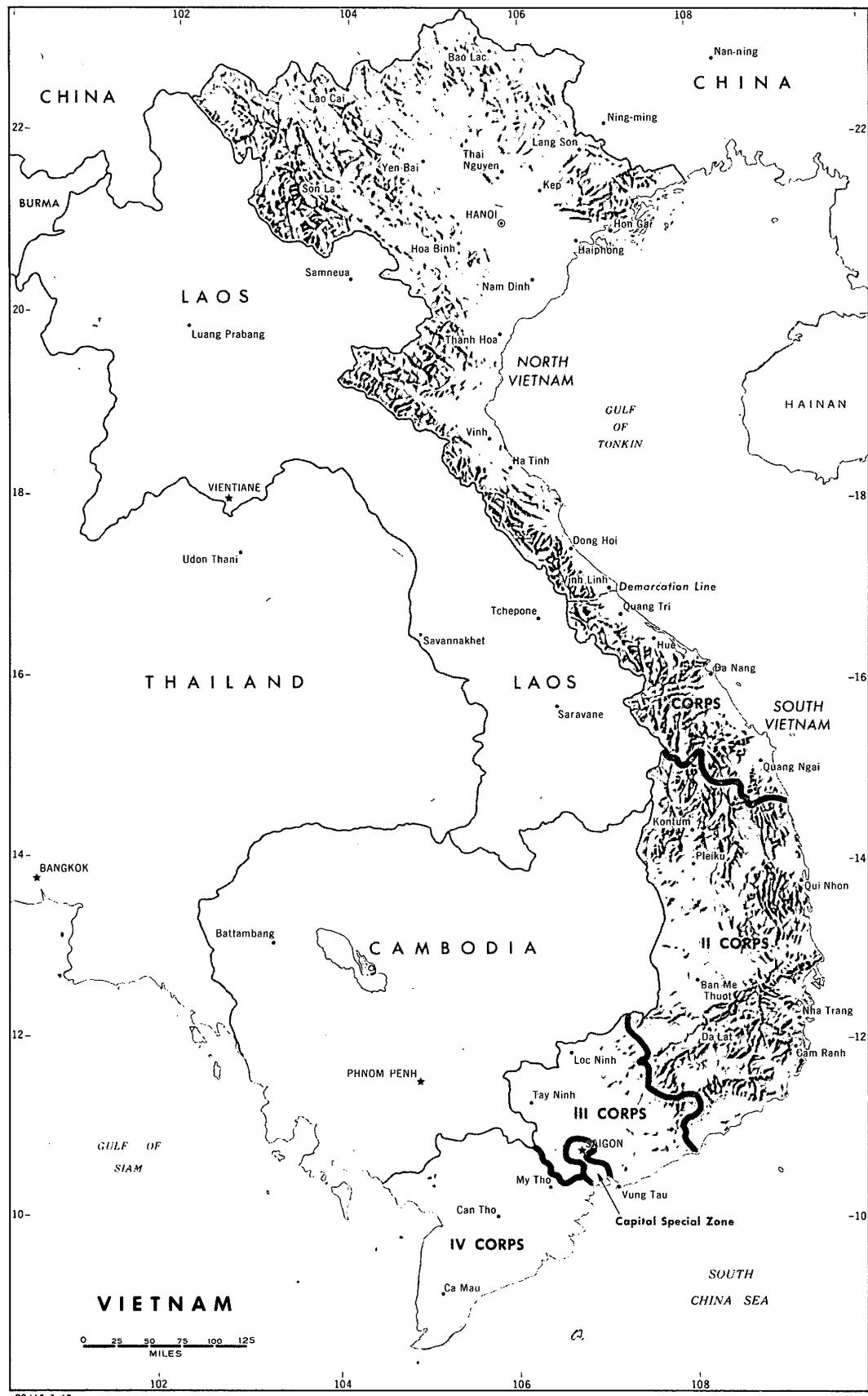
The President's Daily Brief

17 March 1969
(Morning)

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

I. MAJOR PROBLEMS

MIDDLE EAST

Israeli aircraft attacked terrorist bases in Jordan again today, according to press reports.

SOVIET AFFAIRS

There is nothing of significance to report.

EUROPE

There is nothing of significance to report.

VIETNAM

Soviet Ambassador Zorin shed no new light on the Vietnamese Communist line during his luncheon conversation with Ambassadors Lodge, Shriver, and Walsh last Friday. Zorin seemed mainly bent on giving the US a shove toward moving the talks forward. His new note of urgency is reminiscent of the advice the Soviets were giving last October when they repeatedly told the US to move rapidly on the bombing halt or lose a favorable opportunity for progress in the talks. Their approach at that time clearly reflected basic decisions in Hanoi and was not just another means of pushing the US in the right direction.

Zorin conveyed somewhat the same impression on Friday by saying the pace in Paris must be accelerated or we would "miss the train." In particular, he said, the Soviet border

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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clash with China on 2 March underscored the "urgent need" for progress toward a settlement in Vietnam.

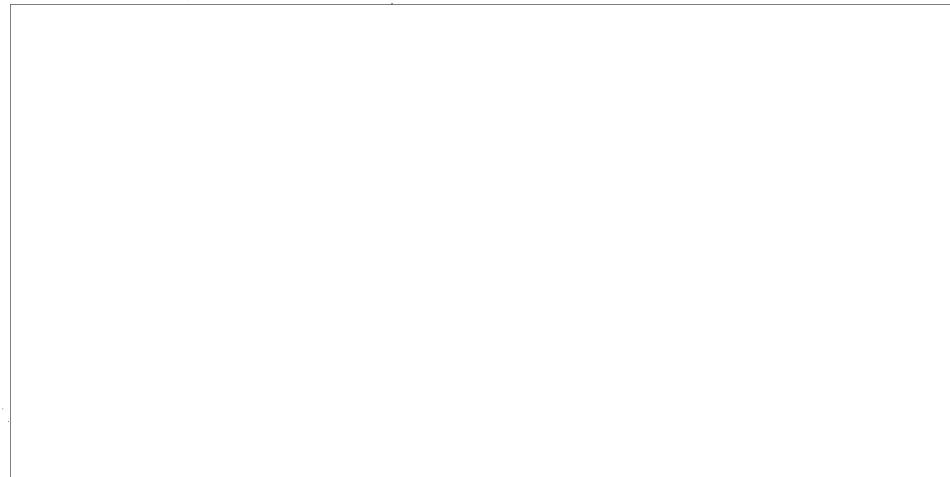
Zorin confirmed beyond doubt that the Vietnamese Communists are ready for private talks with the US. His claim that Hanoi and the Front are not prepared to talk to the GVN representatives is party line material and should not be considered the final word from the Vietnamese Communists. The latter recognize they will have to deal with the GVN eventually; they probably expect this to happen sooner rather than later.

As long as the Soviets show no sign of doing anything more positive than advising unilateral US concessions, Zorin's line that we need to move fast must be treated as primarily an attempt to pressure the US. The new Sino-Soviet border incident, however, and allegations that Peking is again interfering with Soviet rail shipments through China to North Vietnam make it almost certain that we are going to hear more of this theme from Moscow.

There are too many new cross-currents in Moscow-Peking-Hanoi relations at the moment to determine how North Vietnam is being affected by these developments or how they might influence Communist strategy for the war. Sino-Soviet tensions inevitably have an impact in Hanoi, and they are doubly unsettling when the regime is engaged in military activity which runs high risks of producing US retaliation against the North.

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY



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The Communists conducted mortar and rocket attacks against allied military positions throughout the country and against selected urban centers during the first hours of the weekend, but the results were generally unimpressive. The sharp ground fighting that began east of Saigon on Friday continued throughout the weekend, spreading to other nearby provinces.

Saigon was hit by four rockets which did little damage on 15 March, the day following the rocket attack on Hue. Da Nang, however, was not hit.

Communist forces are continuing to make extensive use of the Demilitarized Zone, as activity picked up in that area. On Saturday, some 15 rockets were launched, apparently from positions within the DMZ, against allied installations at Cua Viet, and the Communists launched ground attacks just south of the Zone on 16 March, inflicting heavy casualties on an allied platoon.

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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Heavy ground action in III Corps included clashes in Tay Ninh, Binh Long, Bien Hoa, and Long Khanh provinces, but the enemy has not yet committed the bulk of his divisions surrounding the capital.

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* * *

Nhan Dan, the Hanoi party daily, took note of President Nixon's press conference of 14 March in an editorial today. The editorial countered the President's comments on Vietnam with a fairly straight reiteration of the Communist demands for a US withdrawal and a settlement based on the Liberation Front's program.

II. OTHER IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS

SOVIET UNION - COMMUNIST CHINA

Russian and Chinese versions of the border incident over the weekend differ, but both sides indicate that this second

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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clash was larger than the one on 2 March. This time, artillery was used by both sides. The Soviets evidently had been patrolling the disputed island area heavily since the first encounter, and trouble probably stemmed from a Chinese decision to challenge these patrols.

The fighting has not spread to other areas, but there may well be more incidents over the disputed island. The Soviet protest note on Saturday said that Chinese and Soviet border troop representatives had met on 12 March, but apparently resolved nothing.

[redacted] 50X1

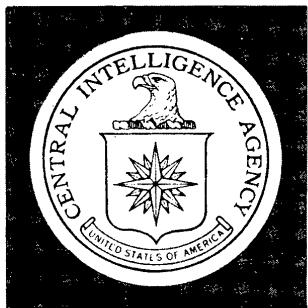
UNITED KINGDOM - NIGERIA

Prime Minister Wilson will make a three- or four-day visit to Lagos beginning 26 March.

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

Top Secret



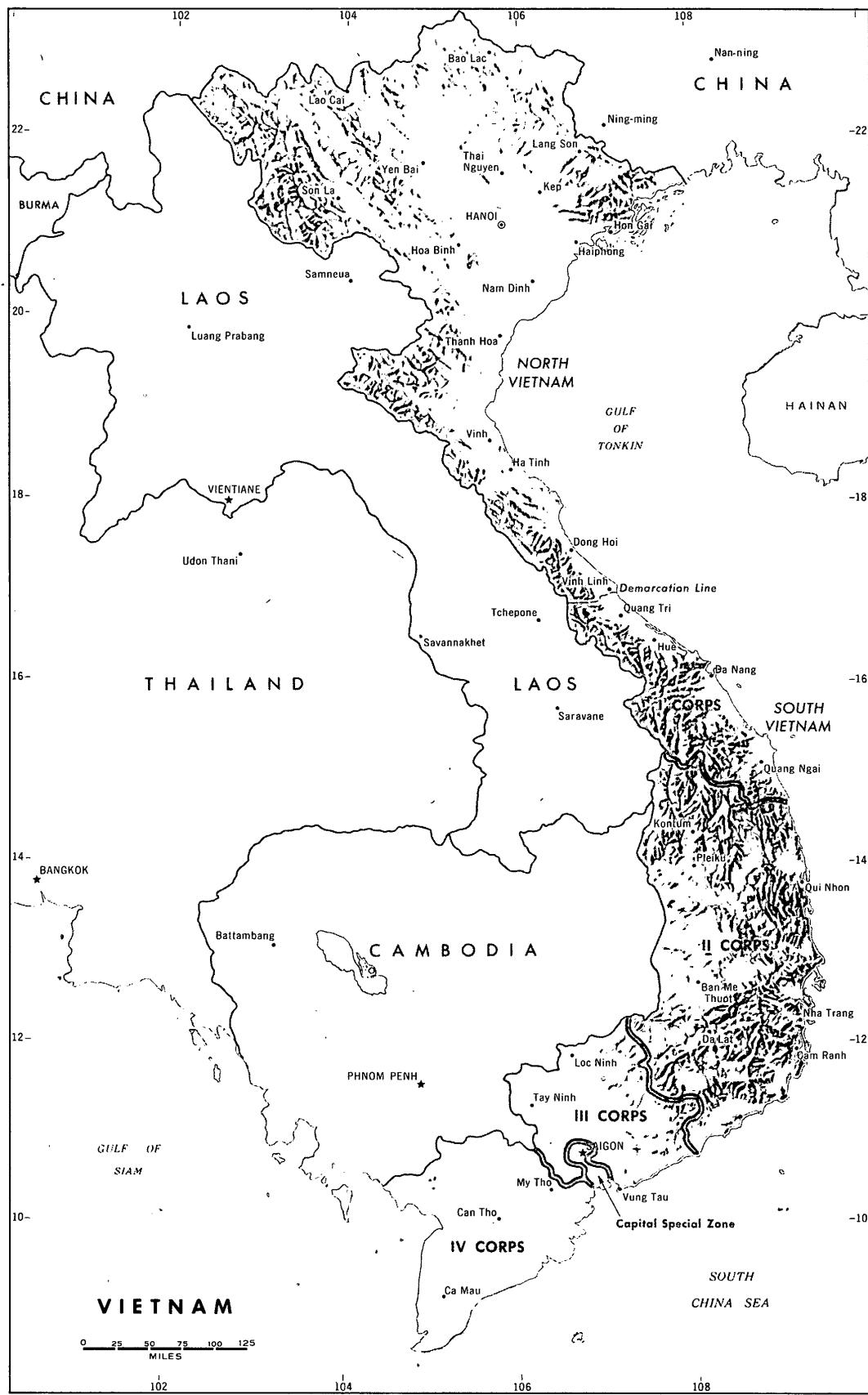
The President's Daily Brief

18 March 1969

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

I. MAJOR PROBLEMS

VIETNAM

The tempo of the Communists' offensive eased considerably throughout much of South Vietnam today. Some sharp fighting continued in III Corps northeast of Saigon. Most signs point to another wave of attacks during the period 19-24 March.

50X1

MIDDLE EAST

50X1

* * *

The ban on Jewish emigration from the USSR to Israel, which was imposed at the time of the Arab-Israeli war in 1967, has been lifted. According to the Dutch, who are custodians of Israeli interests in the USSR, the number

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

19 March 1969

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

I. MAJOR PROBLEMS

VIETNAM

The Communists fired seven rockets into Da Nang city early today, Saigon time. There were 27 military and civilian casualties.

50X1

MIDDLE EAST

Israeli jets are reported to have made another strike today against Arab guerrilla posts in northwestern Jordan. An Israeli military spokesman, making no reference to an air strike, said Israeli forces fired across the Jordan River in response to shelling by mortars. (Reuters; FBIS, 19 Mar 69)

EUROPE

There is nothing significant to report.

SOVIET AFFAIRS

There is nothing significant to report.

II. OTHER IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS

SOVIET UNION - COMMUNIST CHINA

Today's issue of the Soviet army newspaper Red Star alleges that another border incident occurred yesterday. The Chinese opened fire, according to the newspaper, and "our troops gave a worthy reply." There is no mention of casualties. (UPI Moscow, 19 Mar 69)

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

permitted to leave has risen substantially, and emigrants are not limited to hardship cases but include all ages and professions.

Moscow probably hopes that, by permitting increased but limited emigration, it can reduce Israeli hostility to the Soviet role in the Middle East without arousing the Arab states; probably for this reason it has not publicized the new policy.

EUROPE

There is an increasing expectancy in Portugal that the new US administration will bring about an improvement in relations. This feeling is based on an interpretation of the November elections as a repudiation of previous US policy toward the underdeveloped and nonaligned areas and a renewed emphasis on Europe. Also involved is the Portuguese belief that its African policy is correct, will be successful and deserves the support of all Western powers.

Ambassador Bennett points out that Lisbon now expects positive US actions to support its African policy. Even if these hopes are unrealistic, a failure to achieve them will bring disillusionment and anti-US reaction on the part of an introverted and self-righteous government.

Foreign Minister Nogueira, who considers himself a personal friend of President Nixon, is a leading proponent of the view that the US will come around to the support of

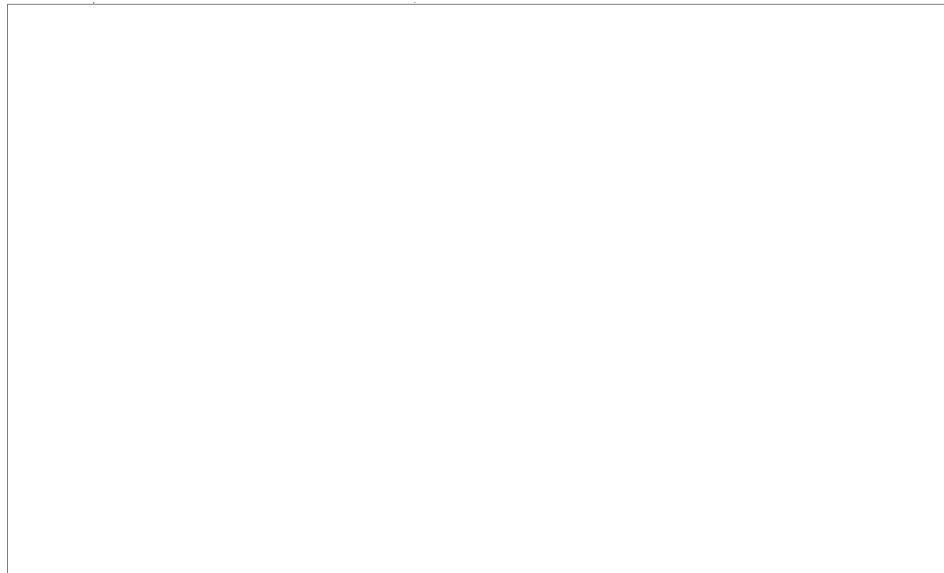
FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

Portuguese overseas positions. Nogueira wants to remain after the April NATO meeting for a discussion of Portuguese-US relations.

* * *

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SOVIET AFFAIRS

There is nothing significant to report.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

II. OTHER IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS

PAKISTAN

Violence is spreading in rural areas of East Pakistan, but the city of Dacca itself is relatively quiet for the moment. The consulate general, in fact, has noted some signs that the city's populace is growing weary of continued chaos. It is too early to tell whether these feelings are strong enough to give the government something to build on; in any case, rumors that the army is preparing to impose martial law are continuing to make the rounds. Army officers are talking openly of contingency planning for such a move, and substantial numbers of troops have been moved from West to East Pakistan.

The army probably would try to take charge if it became convinced that all alternatives had been exhausted. Pakistani army men have a healthy respect for the problem of trying to control an aroused East Pakistani population by force alone, however, and they are not likely to rush in precipitately.

LAOS

Prime Minister Souvanna Phouma has scaled down Meo leader Vang Pao's plan for a major offensive in northeastern Laos, noted in the 10 March Daily Brief. Souvanna's decision to withdraw his earlier endorsement was based on a realistic appraisal of available forces rather than on political considerations. Any government offensive,

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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therefore, will apparently be confined to harassment and guerrilla warfare. No attempt will be made to seize and hold enemy territory.

The Communists meanwhile have not pressed their advantage in the northeast following the fall of Na Khang over two weeks ago.

SOVIET UNION - COMMUNIST CHINA

We have been examining Moscow's handling of the Sino-Soviet border clashes, especially the high level of diplomatic and propaganda attention given to the subject since 7 March. We believe the best explanation for this unusual effort is simply the seriousness of the clashes, the desire to fix responsibility on Peking, and the fear that if they continue the Soviets will be forced to respond more forcefully.

In our examination we considered several hypotheses which have been advanced to explain the Soviet response to these incidents--that the publicity given the first clash was to take attention away from the West German election in Berlin, to gain support for the world Communist Conference in May, to whip up a vigilance campaign against dissenters and liberals, to establish the claim that the Chinese were at fault so that the record would be straight if it became necessary to retaliate in strength. No single one of these hypotheses seems completely satisfactory, however.

We think, on balance, that the Soviets are not trying to build up a case for large-scale military retaliation.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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Such a move would keep alive an issue which they have traditionally tried to play down, and they could not be certain what sort of a response it would elicit. Faced with ideological fragmentation in both East and Western Europe, girding for disarmament negotiations with the West and faced with a resource allocation problem at home, it is improbable that they desire an inflamed border with as large and hostile an adversary as China.

This does not mean, however, that they will adopt a timid attitude. If the Chinese feel strongly about a Soviet presence on the island, further encounters are likely. The question now is whether either side will try to take and hold other disputed points along the border and thus risk a spread of the clashes.

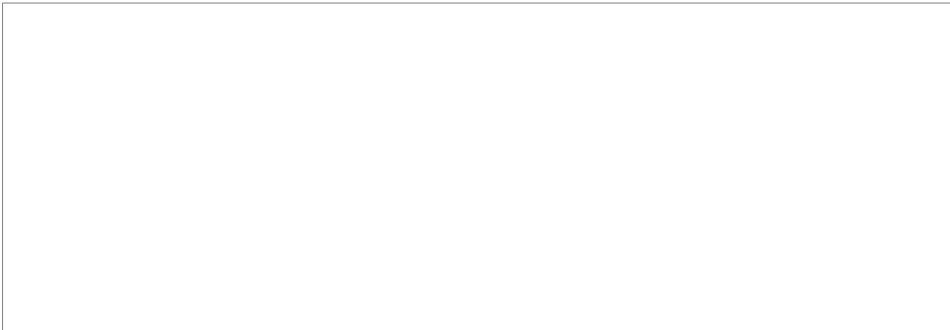
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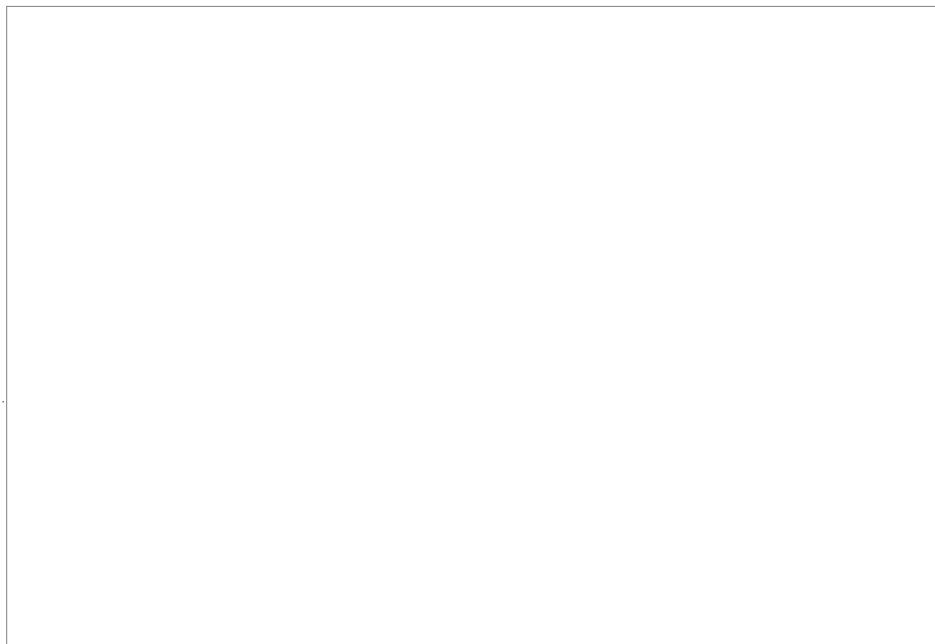
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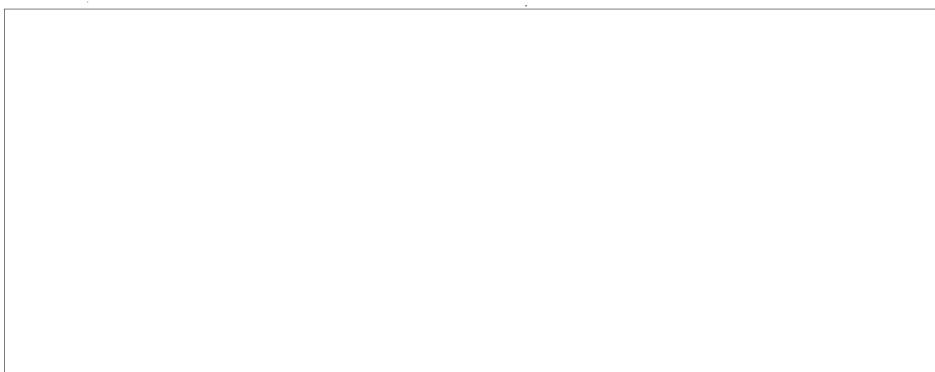
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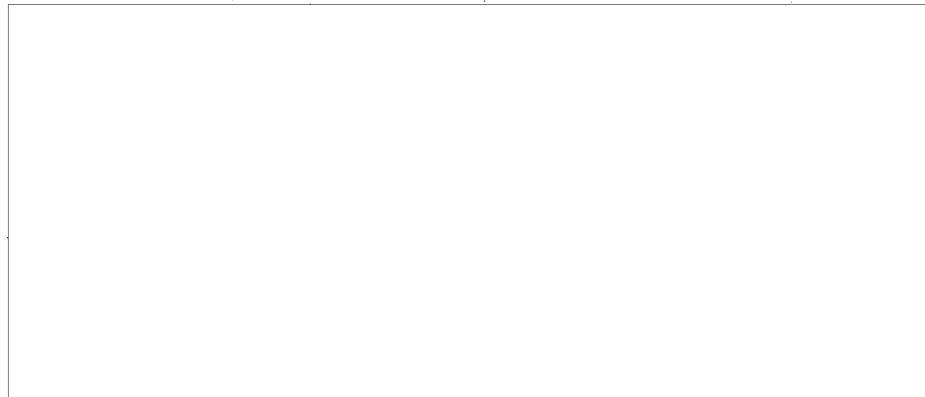
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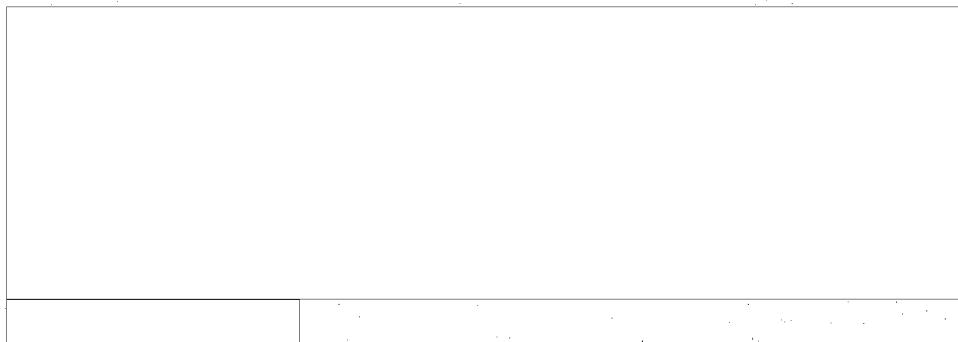
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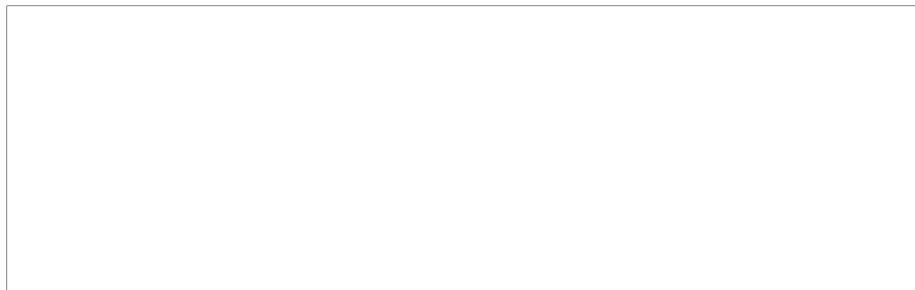


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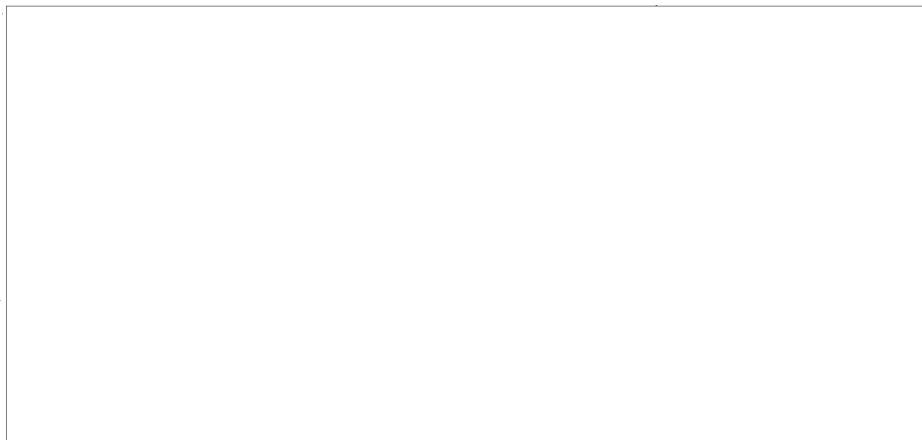
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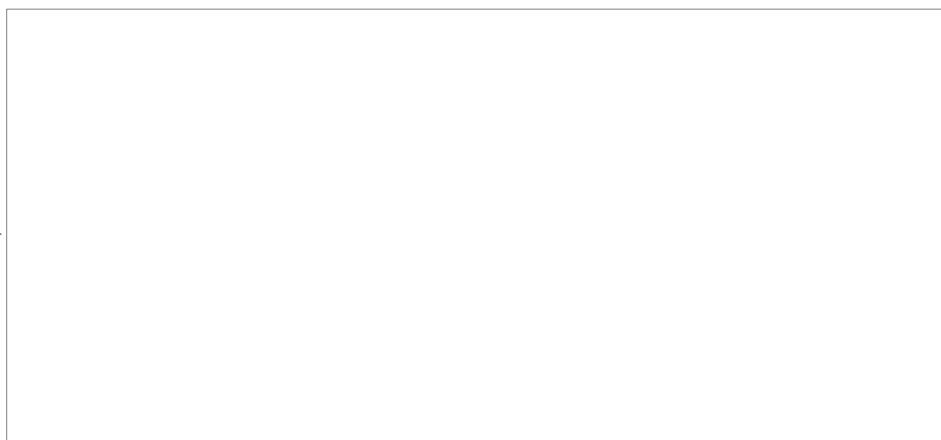
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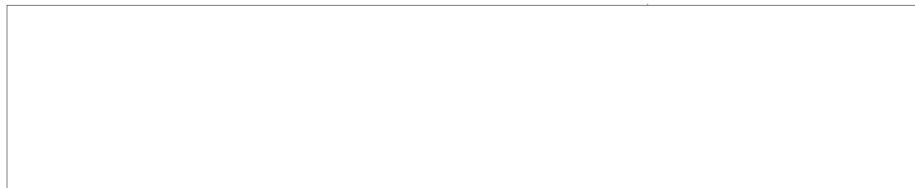
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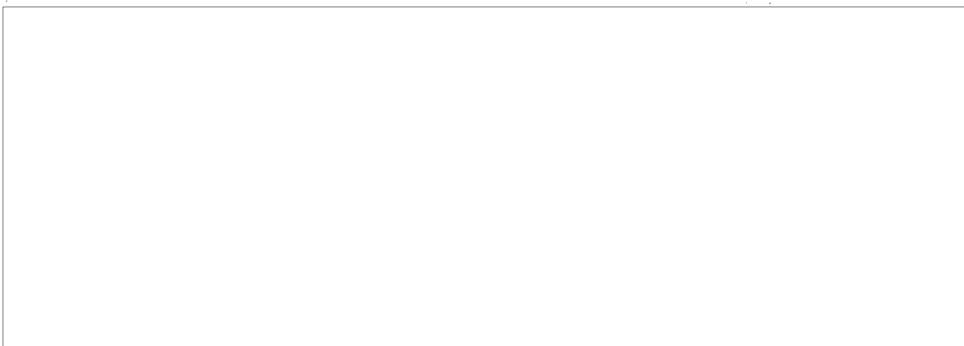
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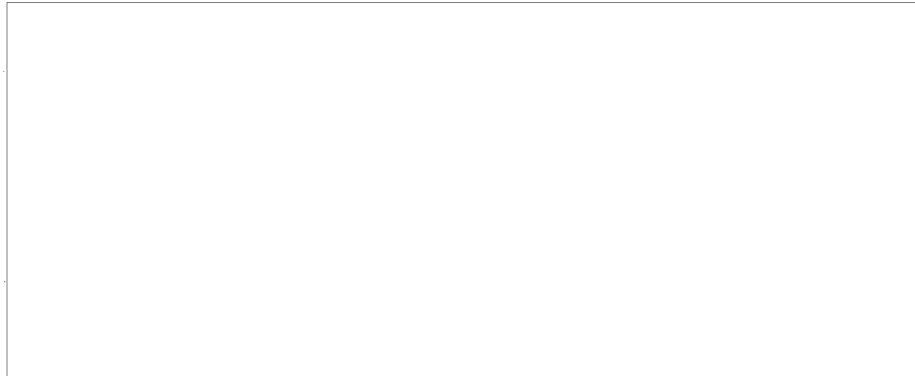
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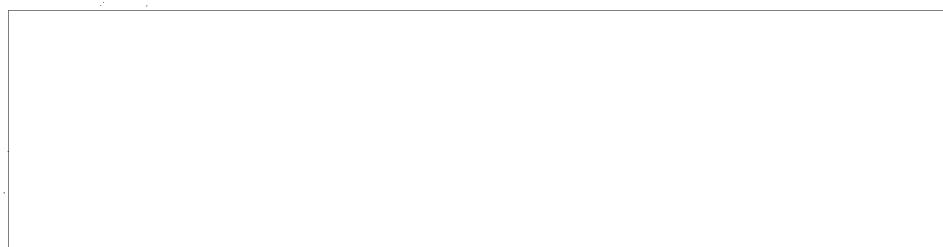
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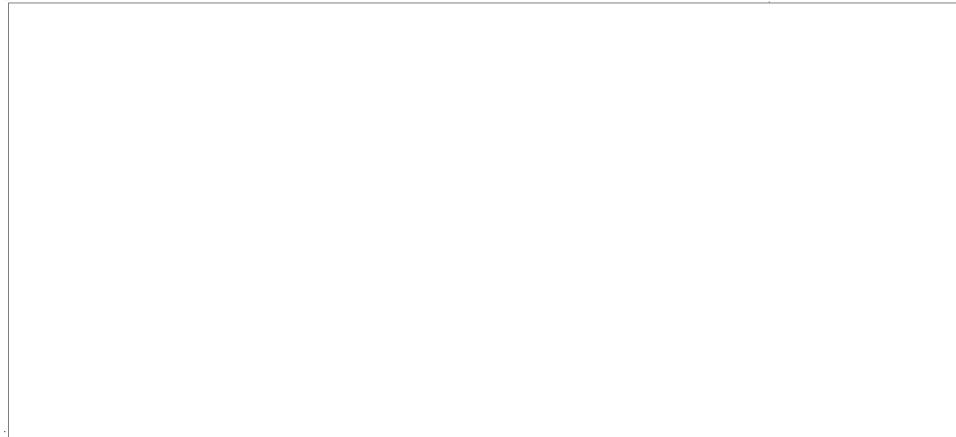
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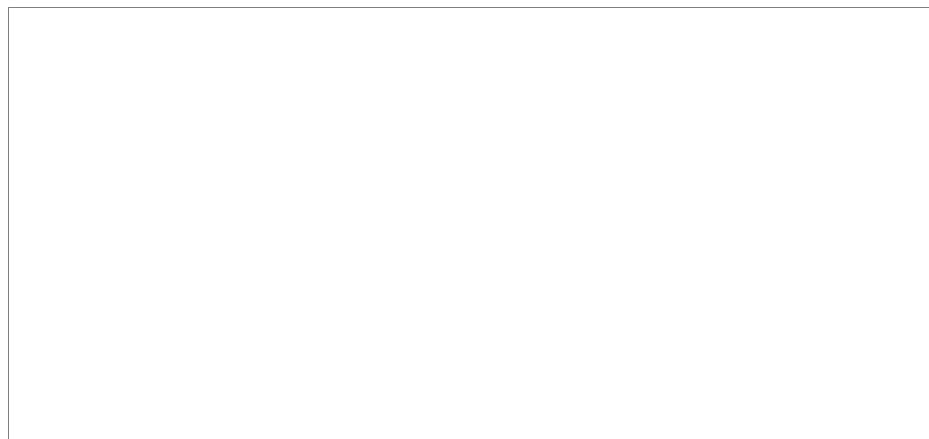
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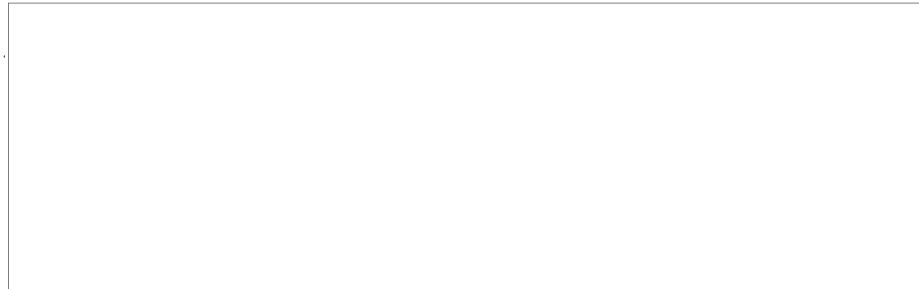


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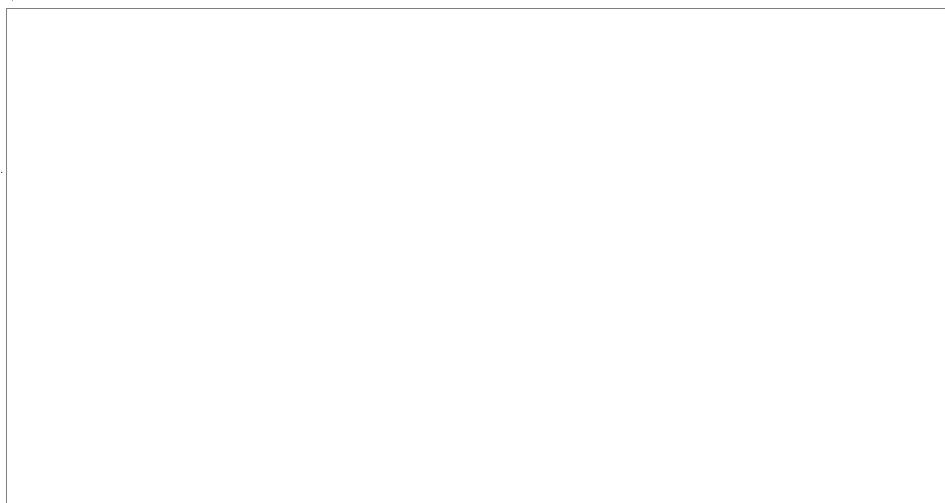
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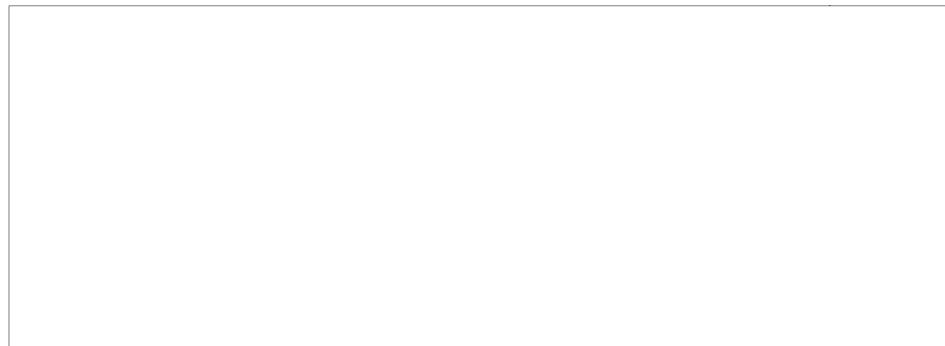
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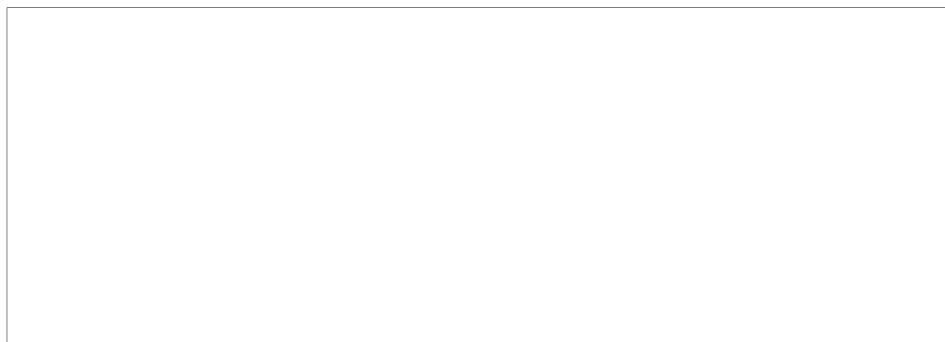
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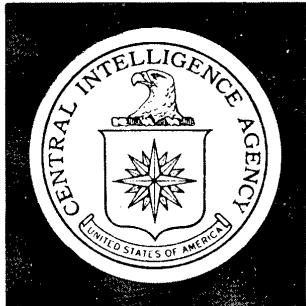


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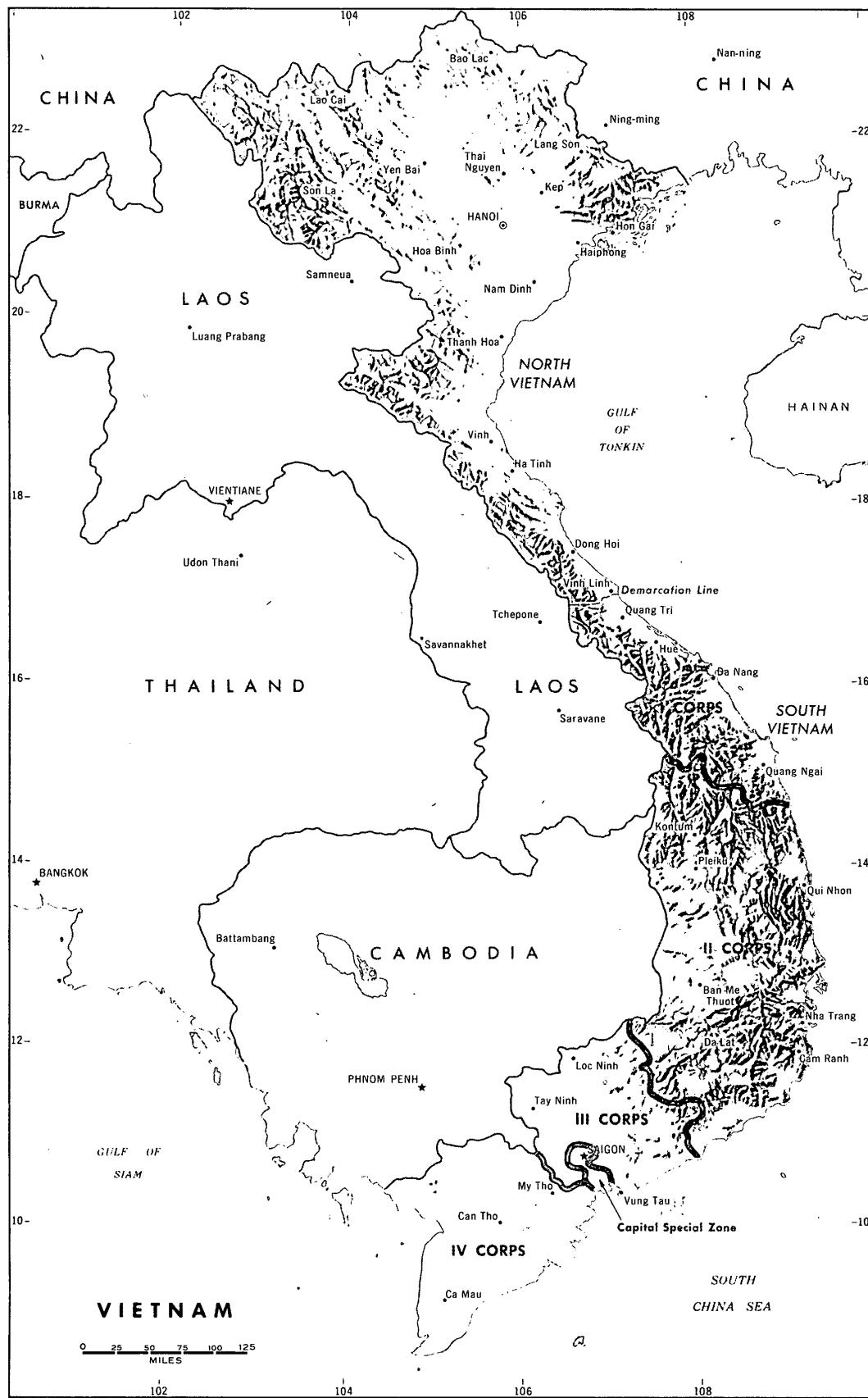
The President's Daily Brief

19 March 1969

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20 March 1969

LATE NOTES FOR THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF OF
19 MARCH 1969

I. MAJOR PROBLEMS

VIETNAM

The number of MIG-19s to arrive in North Vietnam from China has risen from six reported last night to 16. Ten additional aircraft flew from unidentified Chinese airfields to Kep this morning. Five were flown by North Vietnamese pilots and five by Chinese pilots.

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[redacted] These MIG-19s will join an inventory which, as of mid-March, included 49 MIG-21s (20 still in China) and 115 MIG-15/17s (87 based in China).

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The military situation has remained relatively quiet over night.

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MIDDLE EAST

There was another exchange of fire on the Israel-Jordan border this morning. Two Israeli border patrolman were injured. As of 7:00 AM EST the Suez Canal area was quiet. (Press)

* * *

Prime Minister Golda Meir told Ambassador Barbour that Israel could not accept any recommendation from four power talks which included the USSR and France. If such recommendation was acceptable to the Arabs, it would, by definition, be so adverse to Israel's interests that its refusal would be certain. She asked that the US hold off on substantive four-power talks and take a reasonable time (some weeks) to discuss the situation with Tel Aviv. She felt certain "nothing terrible" would happen in the near future in terms of an outbreak of war.

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FOR THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

EUROPE

There is nothing significant to report.

SOVIET AFFAIRS

There is nothing significant to report.

II. OTHER IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS

SOVIET UNION - COMMUNIST CHINA

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* * *

A Soviet radio broadcast has, indeed, reminded Peking of Soviet nuclear might, as an article in last evening's Washington Star by Victor Zorza points out. Moscow has chosen to do so through an unofficial propaganda medium--a radio outlet which has been consistently extreme and scurrilous with broadcasts to China (it has compared Mao to a monkey king and has charged that Mao's chief lieutenant was having an affair with Mao's wife). Because this device was used we do not regard the implied Soviet threat as a serious statement of intent but the Russians will not mind if it gives the Chinese some food for thought. (Source: Analysis)

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

I. MAJOR PROBLEMS

VIETNAM

The conversation between Ambassador Bunker and President Thieu on Monday shows the extent to which Thieu has considered the problem of dealing with the Communists and of working out a settlement with them. His statements to Ambassador Bunker exuded confidence, but they also reflected a sober understanding that some hard bargaining lies ahead. Thieu gave every impression, however, of being ready for some horse trading with the Communists.

On the subject of private talks with the Communists, Thieu was most forthcoming, agreeing to bilateral US-Hanoi talks, or four-way talks to include the NLF. [redacted]

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[redacted]
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Thieu's realistic assessment of what talks with the Communists will entail was highlighted by his remark that "Hanoi is not going to abandon the baby in the marketplace," a reference to his judgment that North Vietnam will insist on guarantees for the status of the Liberation Front before agreeing to pull its own troops out of the South. Thieu told Ambassador Bunker that he was prepared to offer the Communists a variety of ways to enter the political life of South Vietnam, including not only participation in the regular elections scheduled over the next few years, but even a special national election in which they could participate.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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In sum, Thieu seems, on the eve of the opening of private discussions, to have a confident attitude and at least a general idea of what he wants from the enemy and what he is prepared to give in return.

* * *

The North Vietnamese will probably respond to our bid for opening bilateral private talks by demanding three-way talks, excluding the GVN. There is no way of telling how long they might stick on the three-way demand. Eventually they will probably fall back to a four-way formula. They probably will not budge from their four-way demand or take up substantive issues until they have nailed down a solid role for the Front as the prime representative of the Communist side on matters affecting South Vietnam.

Thus, they are unlikely to agree at first to any scenario in which US-DRV talks are being held on such matters as withdrawal, while GVN-NLF talks are going on regarding political issues in South Vietnam. This sort of an arrangement might be worked out later, after four-way talks have been held and the competence of the Front to deal with political matters related to South Vietnam has been acknowledged by the US.

* * *

According to recent intercepts, the USSR is still sending rail shipments to North Vietnam via China. The press report on 15 March that the Chinese had closed their borders to such shipments clearly was an exaggeration. Any holdup at the time may have been temporary or a localized problem.

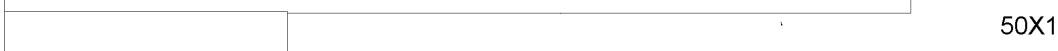
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There are persistent signs that major Communist forces may soon begin coordinated attacks throughout the II Corps - Saigon area, unless pre-empted by intensified allied spoiling operations. Prisoners taken on 18 March say they were scouting approach routes in preparation for a multibattalion attack on Saigon's outskirts slated for 22 March. In addition, communications intelligence reflects enemy preparations for a new phase of combat. Except for an isolated incident of terror which wounded some US servicemen, Saigon itself remained fairly quiet. Six large rockets fell on a Vietnamese military training center near the Tan Son Nhut Air Base causing light casualties.

The rocket attack at Da Nang yesterday highlighted coordinated Communist harassing attacks throughout the southern three provinces of I Corps. Casualties were relatively light, however, except where a sharp battle developed several miles south of Da Nang. There was little action nearer the DMZ, and reports that another North Vietnamese regiment had recently moved into Quang Tri Province have proved to be erroneous.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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MIDDLE EAST

Israel will reject the US proposals on the Middle East which Secretary Rogers recently discussed with Foreign Minister Eban, according to an article published today in Tel Aviv by a well informed Israeli journalist. The journalist noted that the proposals had been "softened" after Eban objected to them but that "Israel is not prepared under any circumstances to accept that softened position." [redacted]

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[redacted] 50X1

EUROPE

The Gallup poll for March published today shows that the lead of the Conservative Party (52.5 percent) over the Labor Party (34 percent) declined by four points since February. This marked the fourth straight month in which Labor has risen. Furthermore, Prime Minister Wilson's personal performance in the poll showed an increase of 3 percent while Heath's declined from 34 to 32 percent.

SOVIET AFFAIRS

There is nothing significant to report.

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II. OTHER IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS

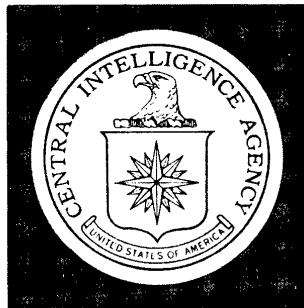
PAKISTAN

Pakistan moved closer to the imposition of martial law today with the home minister's announcement that governors in East and West Pakistan are to take "preventive and punitive" measures to quell disorders. Since the army is the only force strong enough to implement such orders, the pronouncement has a hollow ring unless the government intends to back it up with troops.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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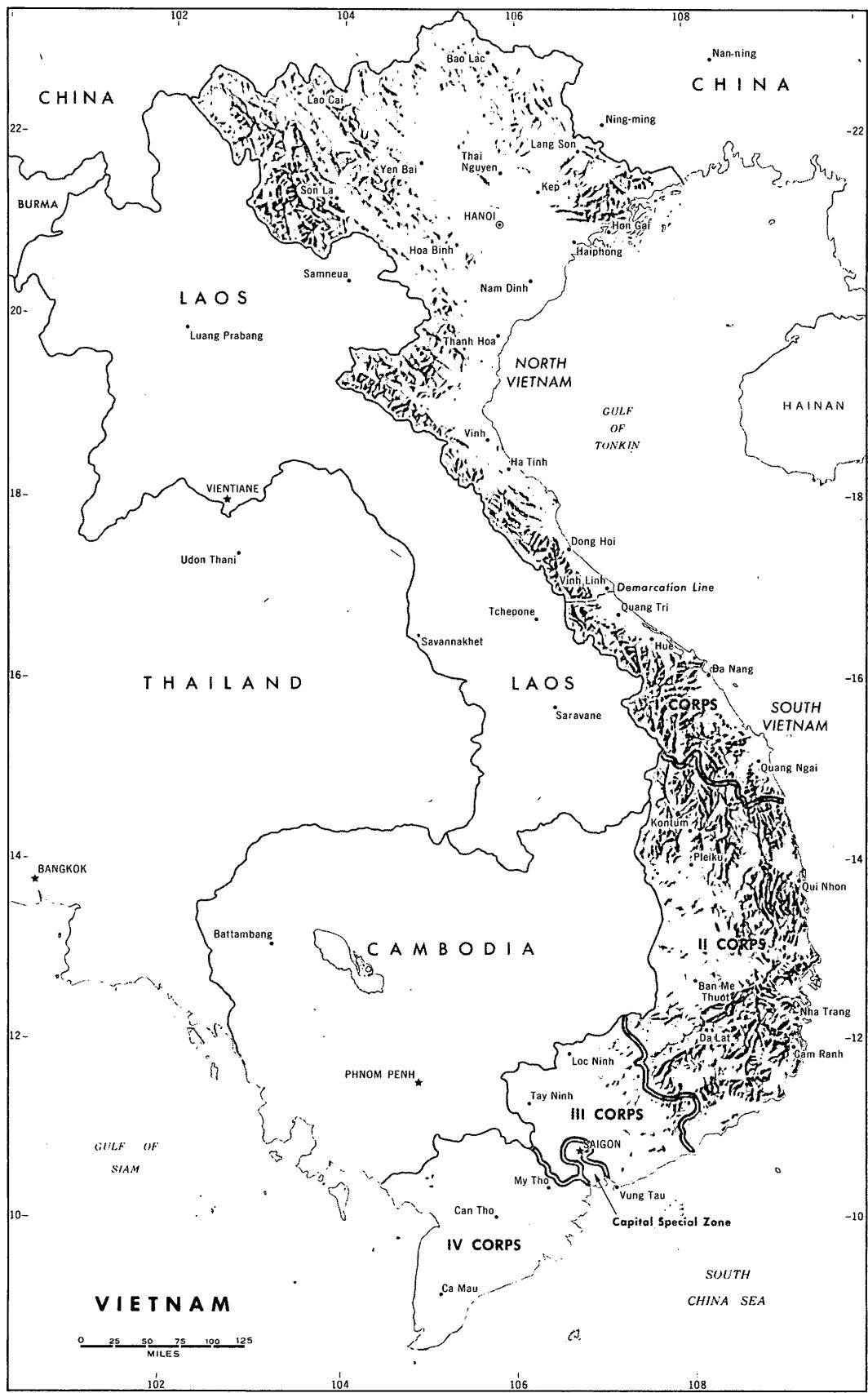


The President's Daily Brief

20 March 1969



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21 March 1969

LATE NOTES FOR THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF OF
20 MARCH 1969

I. MAJOR PROBLEMS

VIETNAM

Communist-initiated activity in II Corps rose to the highest level since early March. Most of the incidents were indirect fire attacks against military installations.

[redacted] the increase may signal the beginning of the next phase of the offensive in II Corps.

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[redacted]

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MIDDLE EAST

The Egyptians have reiterated to Minister Bergus that Husayn will be speaking for Nasir as well as himself during his visit to Washington. Husayn has been authorized to tell President Nixon that Nasir is "more than willing to resume relations with the US," and that it is now up to Washington to do "something." When Bergus asked if Nasir would consider that the US had done "something" if it assured the Egyptians of its support for Security Council resolution 242 on the Arab-Israeli dispute, he was answered affirmatively.

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The Saudis have weighed in with a gloomy appraisal of the Middle East situation. They told Ambassador Eilts yesterday that Husayn's visit was the "last chance" to prevent new hostilities.

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Jordanian Foreign Minister Rifai told Ambassador Symmes that the Jordanians and the Egyptians would be submitting their answers to Jarring's recent questions sometime between 22 and 24 March. The answers will be "essentially" positive,

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

but both Amman and Cairo see a need to be "accurate and cautious" when putting something in writing and they will not be as forthright as Jordan has been orally with Jarring.

[redacted] 50X1

SOVIET AFFAIRS

There is nothing significant to report.

EUROPE

There is nothing significant to report.

II. OTHER IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS

There is nothing significant to report.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

I. MAJOR PROBLEMS

VIETNAM

Evidence pointing to a new wave of enemy action throughout South Vietnam over the coming weekend continues to mount. Saturday night will mark the beginning of the second month of the Communist campaign, and the enemy may try to repeat its actions of a month ago when more than 100 incidents of shelling and ground attacks occurred.

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[the enemy may launch extensive sapper activity in Saigon and Da Nang beginning this weekend.]

* * *

There are tenuous indications that more North Vietnamese main force elements may move into the DMZ area. The headquarters of what is believed to be the 325th Division located in the Dong Hoi area of North Vietnam recently said in a message that it was about to move. (A North Vietnamese Division normally numbers about 8,000 men.) Two units, probably advanced elements of this division, have already been identified south of the DMZ. Another subordinate is located just north of the zone.

SOVIET AFFAIRS

Today's issue of Pravda carries the first Soviet editorial commentary on the US decision to develop an

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ABM system. In it, the Soviet practice of carefully avoiding direct criticism of the President is continued. The article cites a cost figure of one hundred billion dollars, an obvious attempt to present the case in its most extreme form. It directs its criticism at the Pentagon, however, rather than the President. The editorial also avoids any implication that the decision will affect possible strategic arms limitation talks between the US and the USSR.

EUROPE

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MIDDLE EAST

There is nothing significant to report.

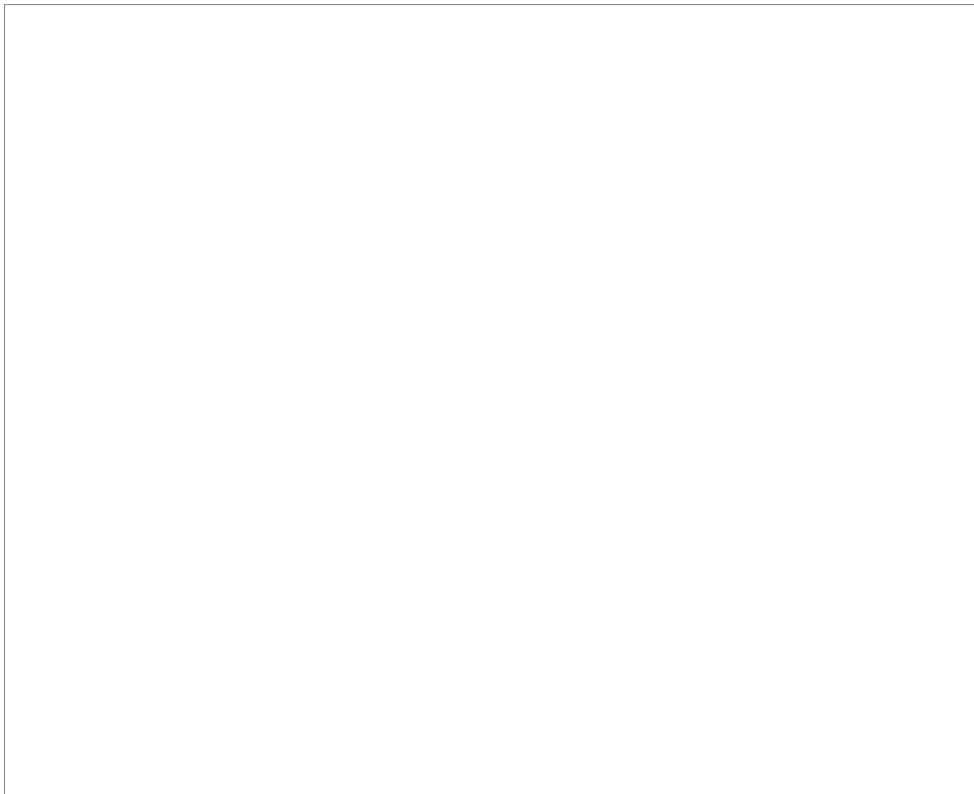
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II. OTHER IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS

THAILAND

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[redacted] Thanat, as well as other Thai leaders, believe that the time has come for Bangkok to take a hard look at post-Vietnam options to its staunchly pro-US posture. Although far from sanguine about the possibilities, the Thai fear that the US security commitment to Thailand may suffer as a result of a Vietnam settlement and that it would be prudent to act accordingly.

PERU

Velasco's government has removed the top officers of Peru's central reserve bank and replaced them with men who

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

will probably be dominated by the ministry of finance. The ousted officials were implicated in a scandal which centered around alleged illegal foreign exchange transactions by the International Petroleum Company. They had been an important moderating influence on the government, and we expect severe economic restrictions, including tighter foreign exchange controls, to follow their removal.

SOVIET UNION - COMMUNIST CHINA

Soviet newspapermen have told Embassy Moscow that an official statement on the border situation is being prepared which will express a willingness to discuss border demarcation problems and seek a solution. The sources added, however, that Moscow is determined to deal "seriously" with future "provocations" along the border.

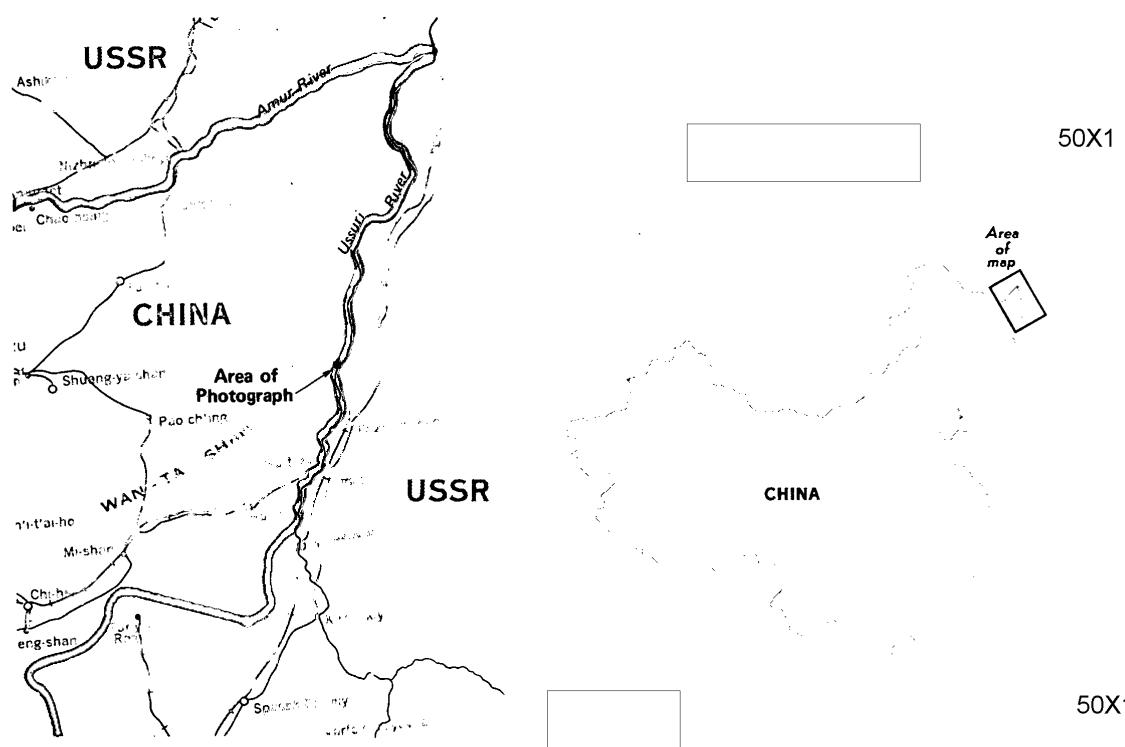
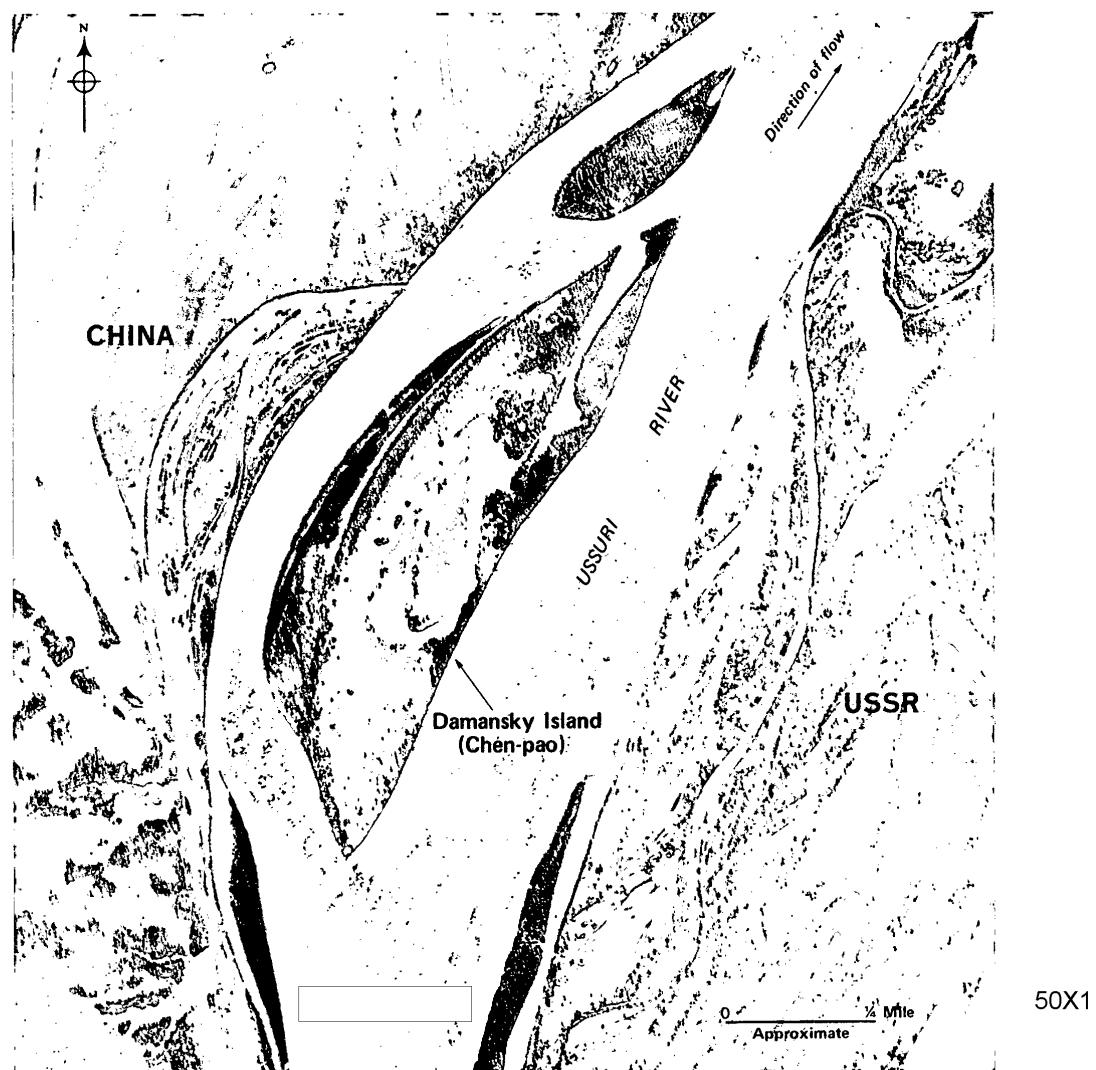
Given the present temper between the two countries, a serious dialogue on border problems seems doubtful. Discussions on border demarcation in 1964 broke down with no positive results. Both sides have blamed the other for the failure of these talks.

To back up the idea that they are leading from strength, Red Star, the Soviet army newspaper, published a front page editorial today urging Soviet troops to prepare for "the final goal, the inevitability of a rocket blow against the enemy if he encroaches on our peaceful labor."

There is more background on the dispute in today's Annex.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

Scene of Recent Sino-Soviet Clashes



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THE SINO-SOVIET BORDER DISPUTE

Both sides report that sporadic fire fights are continuing in the vicinity of Damansky Island (called Chen Pao by the Chinese), although apparently there have been no serious clashes since last weekend. The Soviets are maintaining strong patrols on the island and our most recent satellite photography--taken on 12 March--shows the tracks of what we presume to be Soviet vehicles.

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The Soviets this month have established something approaching possession of the island, but there is still the question of legal ownership. Until 2 March both Peking and Moscow seemed content to leave this, as a practical matter, an open question. Both sides sent patrols to the island when the river was frozen, but neither sought to establish complete control or permanent positions. Now, of course, both are firmly on record as claiming sovereignty over the island and lives have been lost in support of these claims.

Of the conflicting claims, the Chinese seem to have the better argument on both legal and geographic grounds. The pertinent 19th century treaties refer only to the river as the state boundary, leaving literally hundreds of islands subject to dispute. Even if the main channel of the river

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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is considered to be the boundary, constant channel shifts open
the way to argument.

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[redacted] the main channel runs
east of the island and, therefore, if one accepts the main
channel argument, the island is legally Chinese.

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[redacted] A comparison of 1938 Japanese maps
and recent satellite photography shows only a few changes.

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A small island has been formed off the northwest tip of Damansky Island and the shape of the downstream end of Damansky has been altered. (The Ussuri River runs from south to north.) The position of Damansky Island in the river has not, however, shifted perceptibly.

Normally, Damansky is completely uninhabited and evidently supports no economic activity. The island has evolved as a result of the deposit of sedimentary materials; consequently it is low and poorly drained. Farming some 10 miles to the southeast on the Soviet side of the river is the nearest economic activity of any consequence. The Chinese side of the river in the immediate area is almost completely undeveloped. The roads and paths in the area appear to be used only by patrolling border guards.

After the ice breaks up, usually in mid-April, the river is used to a limited degree for navigation, principally

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

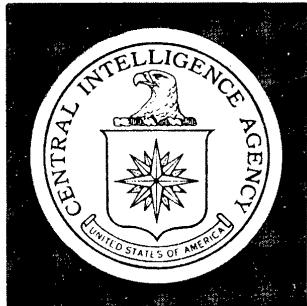
by Soviet vessels. After the breakup this year, the matter of control may become academic because a good portion of the island will probably be under water and access to what remains will be difficult. The Soviets have already made public reference to the flooding and the "disappearance" of the island in what could be a first step toward easing the situation.

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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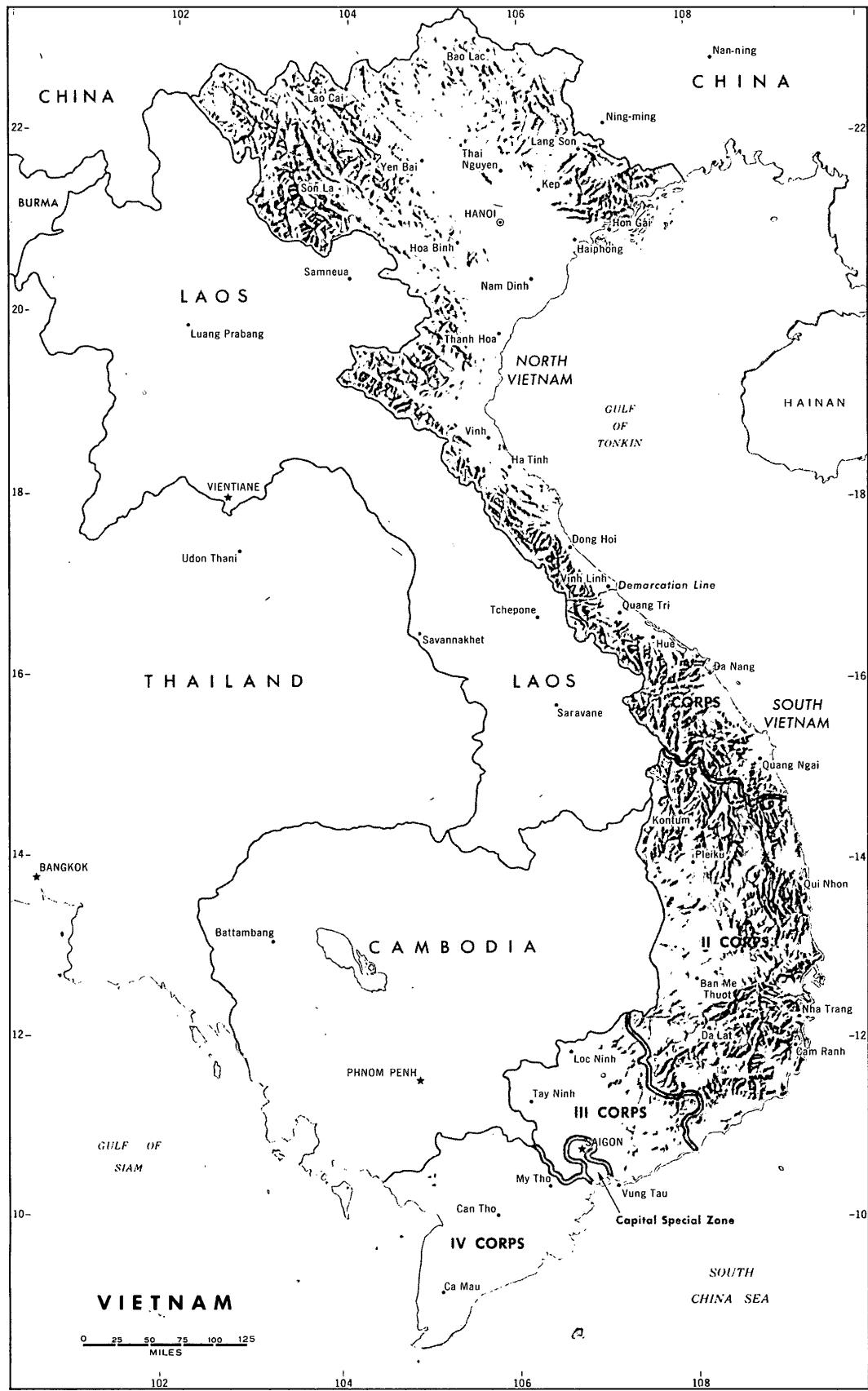


The President's Daily Brief

21 March 1969



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93465 1-69

22 March 1969

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

There have been no significant new developments overnight.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

I. MAJOR PROBLEMS

VIETNAM

As Hanoi reviews the results of the past month's offensive, even those leaders with lesser expectations must be dissatisfied with the generally ineffective military performance of their forces, especially over the last two weeks.

The Saigon government and the South Vietnamese people have taken the offensive in stride, no significant differences have cropped up among the allies, and the impact on the outside world has probably been less than the Communists wanted. The failure of the offensive to bring about any kind of movement in the situation, either in South Vietnam or in Paris, is probably a source of considerable frustration to Hanoi.

In particular, the North Vietnamese are undoubtedly puzzled by the measured US reaction to attacks against the cities and actions in the DMZ which run against the "understanding" on the bombing halt. The Communists probably not only calculated that some form of US military retaliation was likely, but also believed that such a response would work to their advantage by once again heating up the pressures on the US to make political concessions in order to end the war.

Disappointment with the offensive may be tempered, however, by a belief that widespread coordinated attacks are demonstrating that Communist forces still constitute a serious threat.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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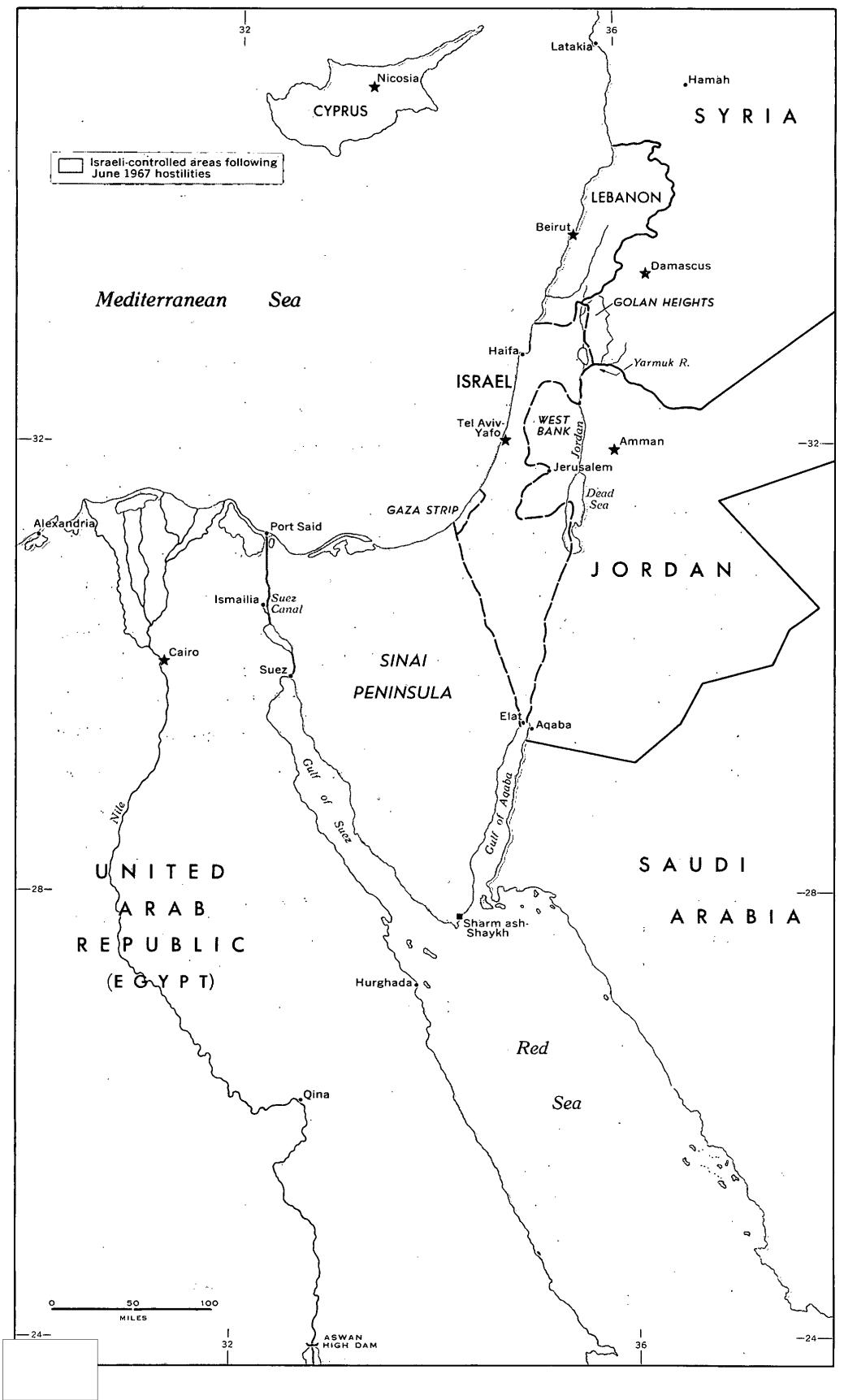
The North Vietnamese to our knowledge have not yet reacted to the current US bid for private talks. This reluctance may be only an attempt to play hard to get, but it could also point to disagreement or uncertainty in Hanoi about how to proceed in Paris. The military situation in the South provides ample reason both for disagreement and uncertainty. All the evidence at present indicates that the Communists intend to drag out the offensive for some time yet, certainly into April. Even if private talks are opened relatively soon, the Communists are unlikely to alter these plans.

EUROPE

SOVIET AFFAIRS

The East Germans, perhaps at Soviet prodding, have stopped obstructing traffic between Berlin and West Germany and apparently have even made the procedures for

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processing the traffic less onerous.

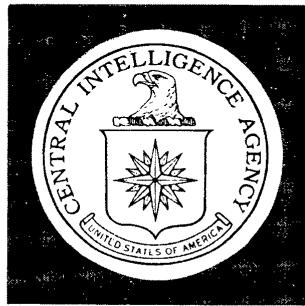
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MIDDLE EAST

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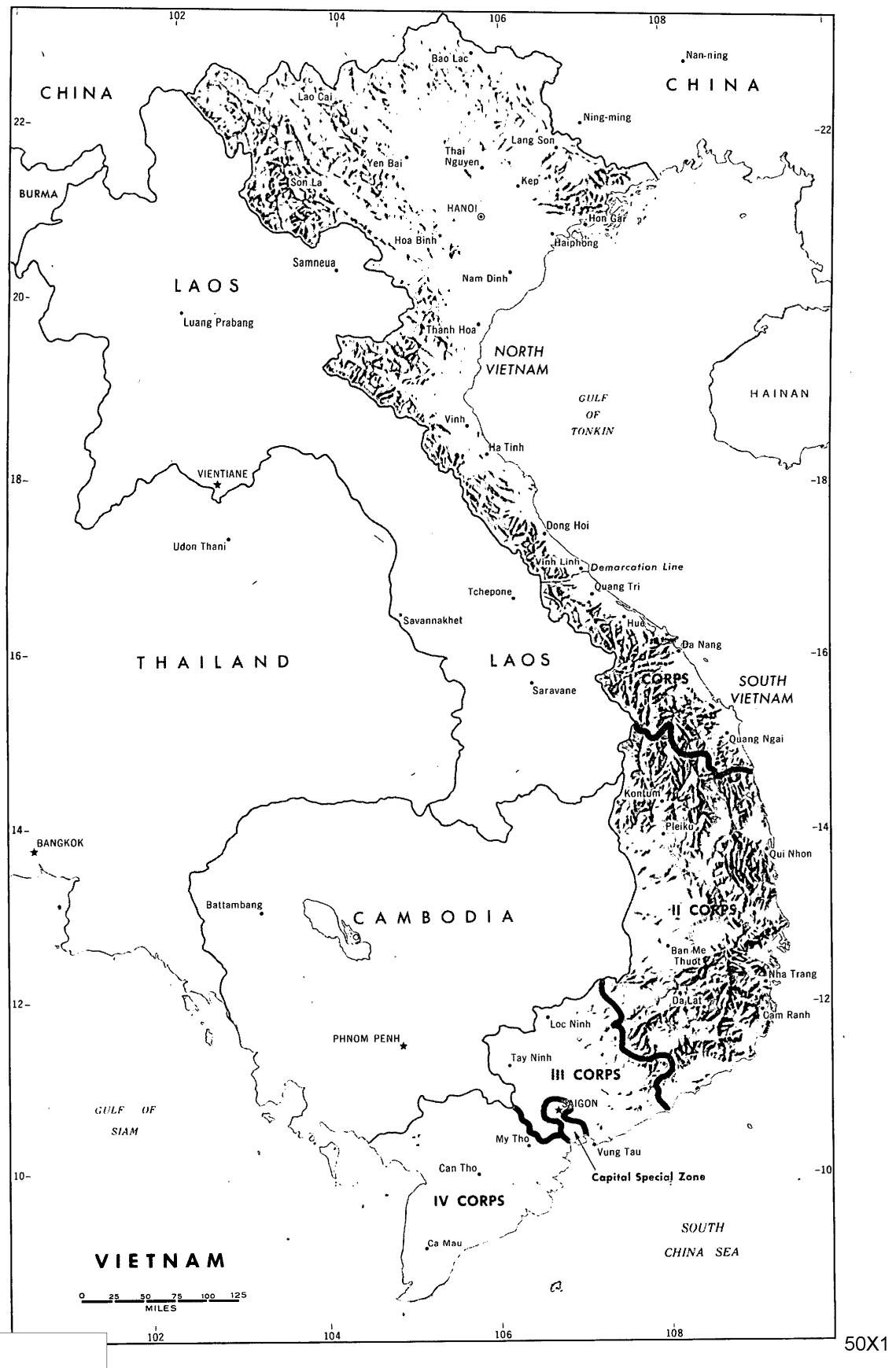


The President's Daily Brief

24 March 1969
(Afternoon)

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25 March 1969

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

There have been no significant ~~new~~ developments overnight.

[Redacted]
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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

I. MAJOR PROBLEMS

VIETNAM

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SOVIET AFFAIRS

The Soviets have launched [redacted] reconnaissance satel-

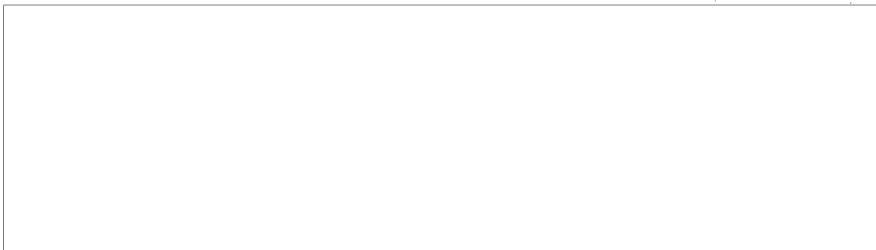
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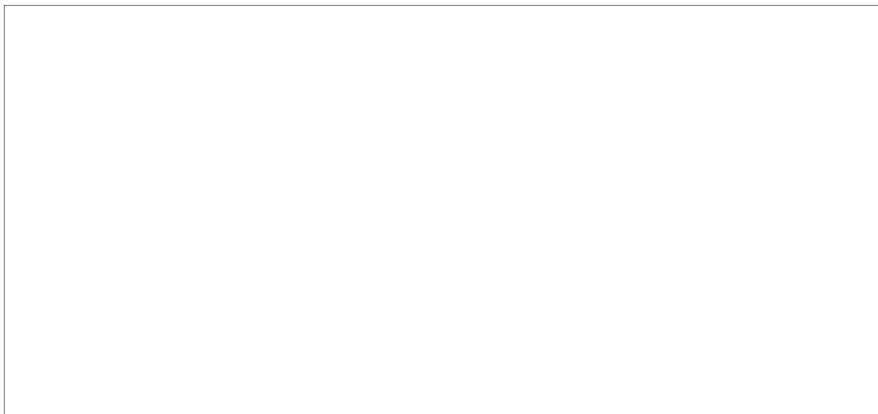
MIDDLE EAST



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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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EUROPE

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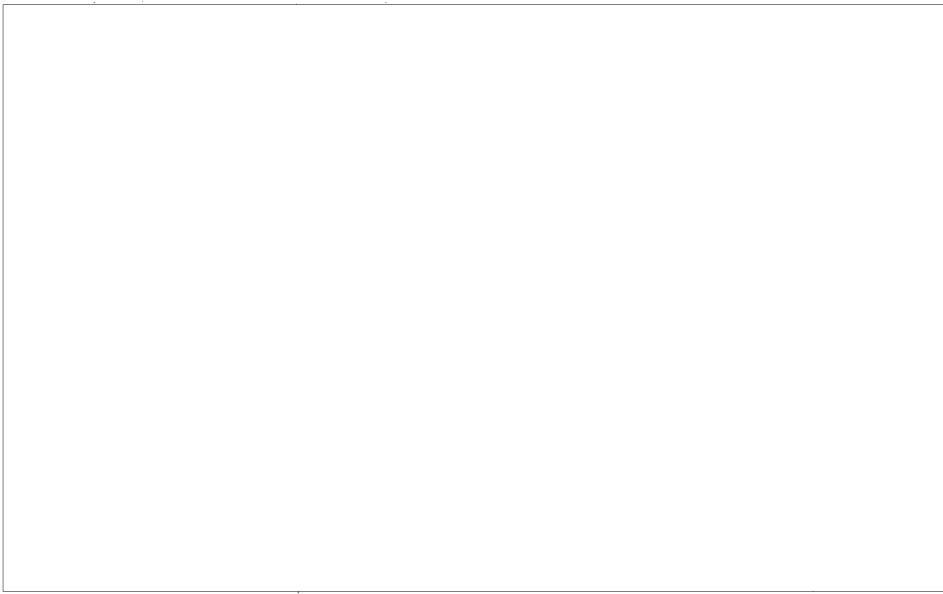
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II. OTHER IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS

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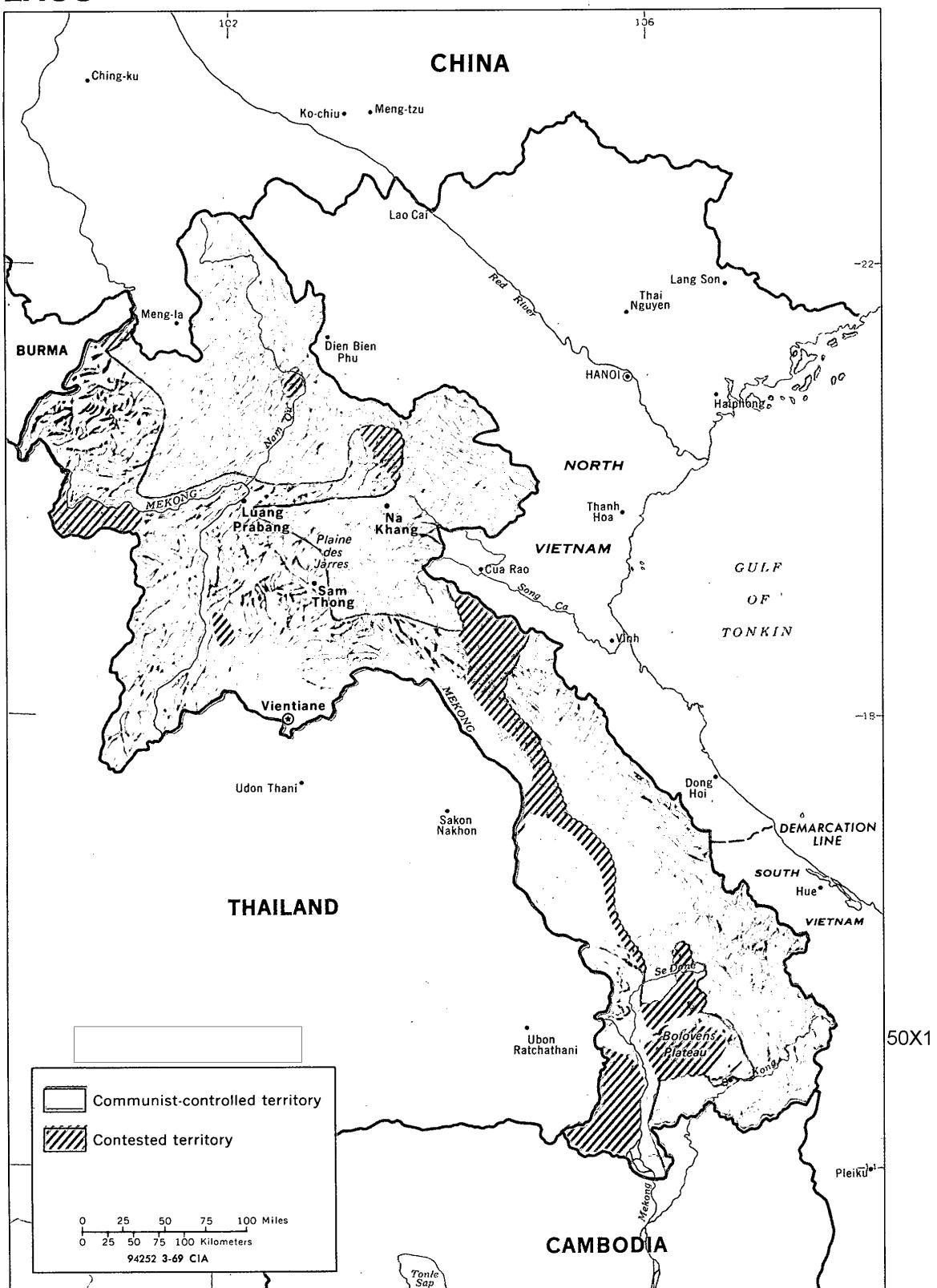


PAKISTAN

The urban areas of East Pakistan seem to have quieted down somewhat, perhaps because the populace is exhausted and perhaps also because the government has recently shown more decisiveness. Troops are being used occasionally to restore order in East Pakistani cities as well as in parts of West Pakistan, and both Ayub and his home minister have recently denounced the unrest in strong terms. The returning quiet in Dacca and other cities may also be due in part to opposition leader Mujibur Rahman's calming influence.

Too much should not be made of this; reports from the East Pakistani countryside say that violence is continuing

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

LAOS

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

unabated there, and the calm in the cities is extremely fragile. The lessening of violence and the government's new-found assertiveness are hopeful straws in the wind, however.

LAOS

The government has launched an intensive air campaign to disrupt Communist forces around the Plaine des Jarres.

[redacted] pilots say their attacks have caused a large number of secondary explosions. Present plans call for at least three more weeks of heavy strikes.

50X1

The enemy has moved cautiously since capturing Na Khang over three weeks ago, and the government's subsequent loss of a number of positions in the area has been more a result of the sagging morale of its troops than of enemy ground assaults.

50X1

There is some danger that the severity of the air strikes and the fact they are being directed against positions that have not been attacked until now [redacted]

50X1

[redacted] could trigger the enemy attacks they are designed to forestall.

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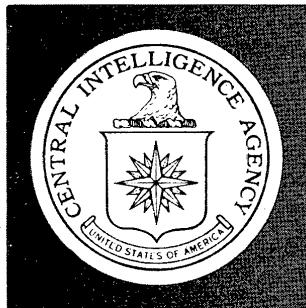
FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

ITALY-COMMUNIST CHINA

Foreign Minister Nenni has told the Dutch foreign minister that Italy has decided to "drop the subject" of recognizing Communist China. Nenni said there had been a "total absence of reaction from Peking" to Italian overtures earlier this year. He added that any further initiative will have to come from Peking.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

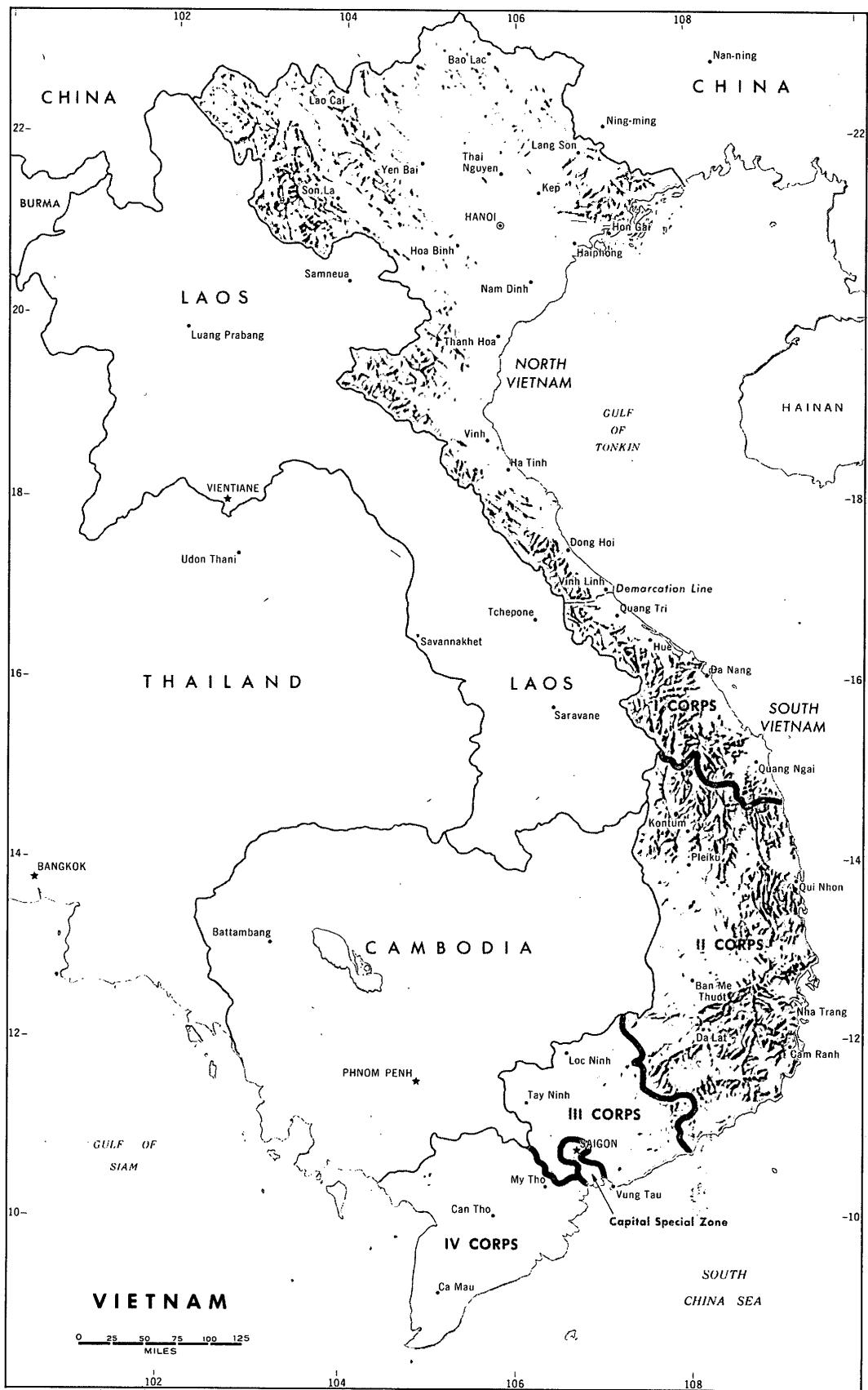
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The President's Daily Brief

24 March 1969
(Morning)

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

I. MAJOR PROBLEMS

VIETNAM

In his private meeting with Ambassador Lodge on 22 March, Xuan Thuy indicated that the North Vietnamese are in no hurry to open private four way talks or to use the two-way talks to get immediately into any meaningful dialogue. North Vietnam's procrastination in accepting the US invitation and its apparently deliberate avoidance of any private contact during the public session on 20 March seem designed to dispel any impression that the Communists are eager to get on with a settlement. Although it is possible that Xuan Thuy had to wait for new instructions from Hanoi, this seems unlikely in view of the routine nature of his remarks. He did not depart from well established hardline positions on any of the issues presented by Ambassador Lodge.

Although he insisted on a unilateral US withdrawal, Thuy said if the US expressed a "willingness to withdraw," the North Vietnamese would "create conditions" that would enable it to do so. This is similar to the language used by the North Vietnamese in their efforts to obtain a bombing halt. It may have been intended to suggest the possibility of unacknowledged NVA withdrawals.

Thuy was especially hard on Saigon, perhaps in an effort to promote direct US talks with the Liberation Front. Here again, however, the Communists probably thought it necessary to take an initially hard line. There are other indications

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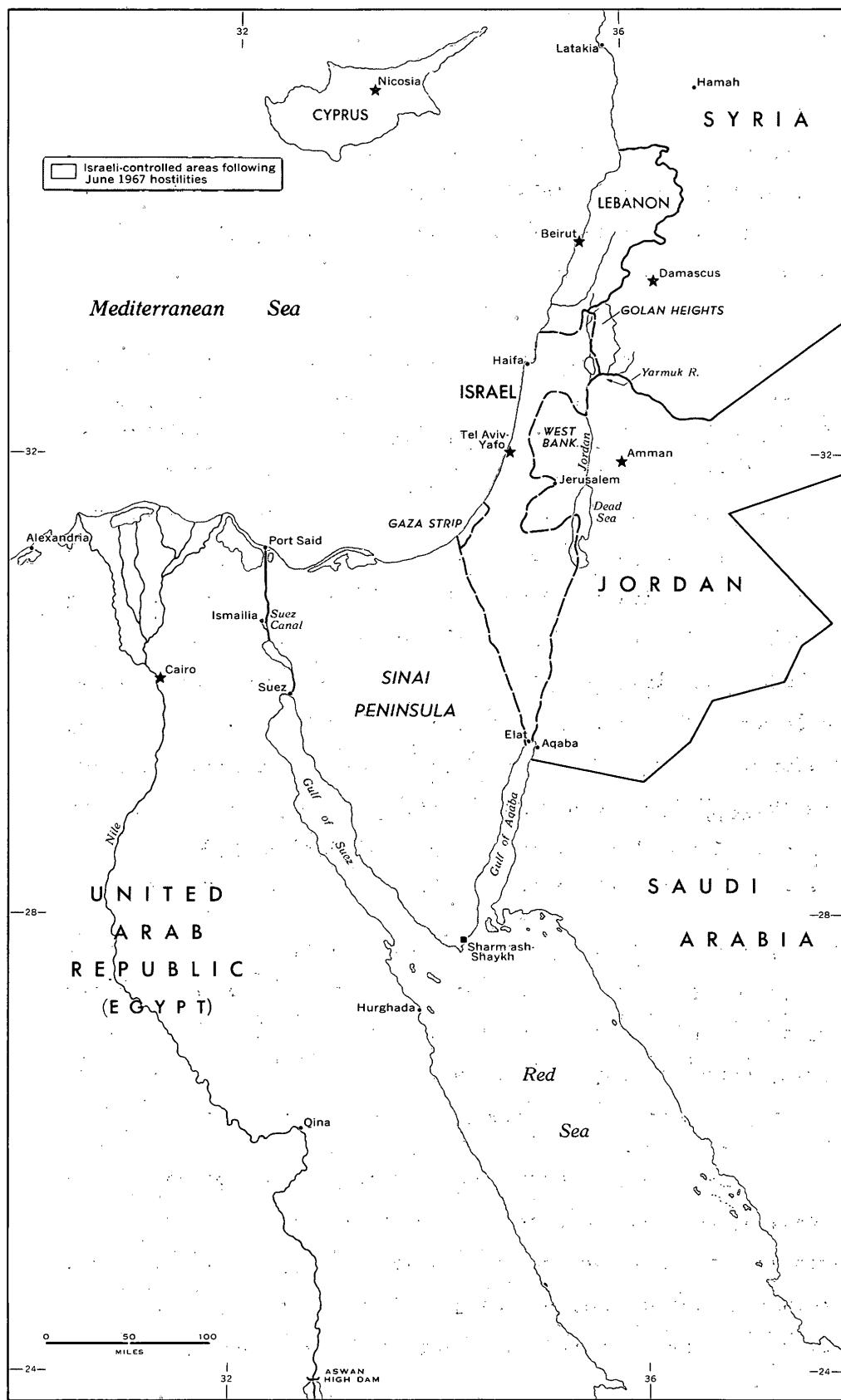
that the Communist attitude toward Saigon has some give in it. Even Liberation Front delegate Tran Buu Kiem in last Thursday's public session left room for Saigon when he said all four parties could discuss a settlement (on the basis of the Front's five points, of course, and after unconditional US withdrawal).

The Soviets do not seem to boggle over including Saigon in private talks. Soviet Counselor Tchernikov strongly implied to Assistant Secretary Bundy on 19 March that if the US was interested in talking only to Hanoi, then the Liberation Front ought to be talking concurrently with Saigon in private.

Thuy, however, ignored Ambassador Lodge's challenge that Hanoi and Washington could hardly deal with the Communists' four and five points when some of these points involve the internal affairs of the South Vietnamese. When Ambassador Lodge pointed out that the Communists' own rule book insists these matters can be settled only by the South Vietnamese, Thuy took refuge behind the Communists' traditional public position--the Front is the true spokesman of the South Vietnamese and the US must "deal" with it.

The North Vietnamese also revealed some nervousness over the possibility that Peking might interrupt Soviet aid shipments. Thuy warned the US not to take comfort from the renewed tension between Peking and Moscow, but his allusion to the possibility of interruptions of military aid strongly implied apprehension on the part of Hanoi. The Soviets showed the same nervousness in the 19 March conversation with Bundy. Tchernikov insisted that the Chinese have interrupted air shipments

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY



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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

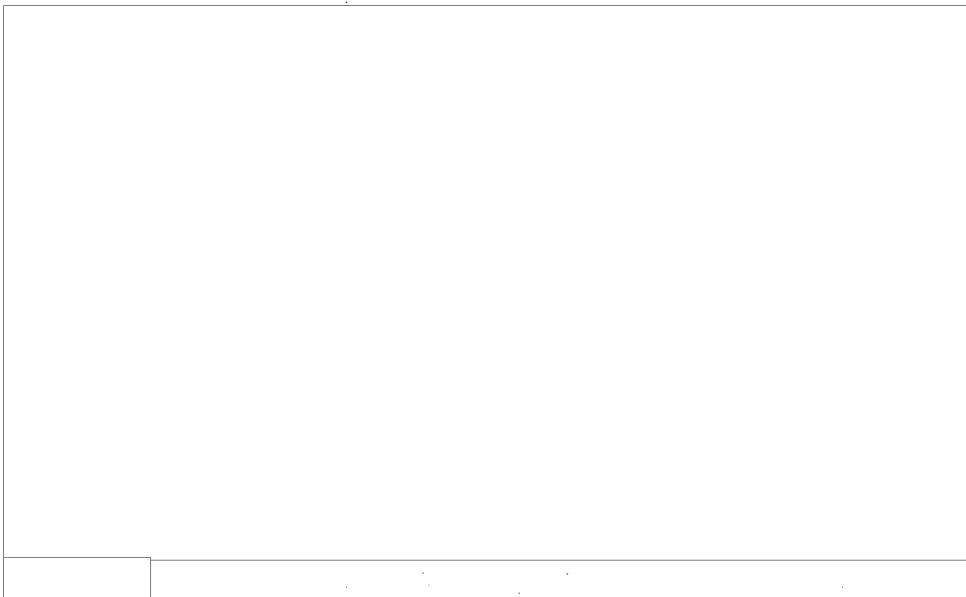
during the current border flare-ups and will probably continue to do so. He maintained, however, that aid would get through even if it had to be sent by sea.

There is still no firm evidence that the Chinese have significantly interfered with aid shipments. [redacted] 50X1

[redacted] 50X1

Tchernikov's remarks about sea shipments are at variance with Moscow's previous reluctance to send identifiable military aid to Vietnam in this manner. 50X1

* * *



[redacted] 50X1

MIDDLE EAST

For the first time in six days there was an artillery duel at the southern end of the Suez Canal today. An Israeli army spokesman said Egyptian and Israeli guns were exchanging

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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heavy fire along a 15-mile front. There was no report of casualties. The recent lull in fighting in this area has been attributed to sandstorms.

SOVIET AFFAIRS

The East Germans sent out "high-level feelers" during the past week suggesting that an improvement was possible in relations with West Germany. Pankow was willing to stop writing about arms production in West Berlin, to reopen the Rothensee Lock and Mittelland Canal, as well as stop the harassment of traffic. In return the West Germans were asked to unfreeze East German savings accounts in West Berlin and settle East German postal claims. The West German cabinet will consider the question at its session next Wednesday and our embassy thinks Bonn will probably grant some concessions in the postal or economic field if anti-West German propaganda and traffic harassment continue to taper off.

EUROPE

There is nothing of significance to report.

II. OTHER SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENTS

INDONESIA

President Suharto is consolidating his control over the army.

[redacted] he wishes to restore primary military authority

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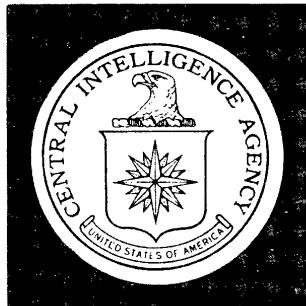
FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

to the army general staff; in recent years much authority has been assumed by regional commanders. With the anti-Communist security program well in hand, Suharto apparently sees a tightened army structure as a practical move both to increase his own political control and to achieve greater consistency in government administration. He is especially interested in strengthening central direction of the government's five-year economic development plan.

In a farewell meeting with Ambassador Green, however, Suharto gave the impression that he was aware that economic stability and progress will not automatically resolve the Communist threat and that the influence of the Communist Party of Indonesia is greater in certain quarters than previously suspected although recent insurgencies in Java have been crushed. He expressed to the Ambassador his concern over the deteriorating condition of his military equipment and the capabilities of the army to cope with the insurgency threat.

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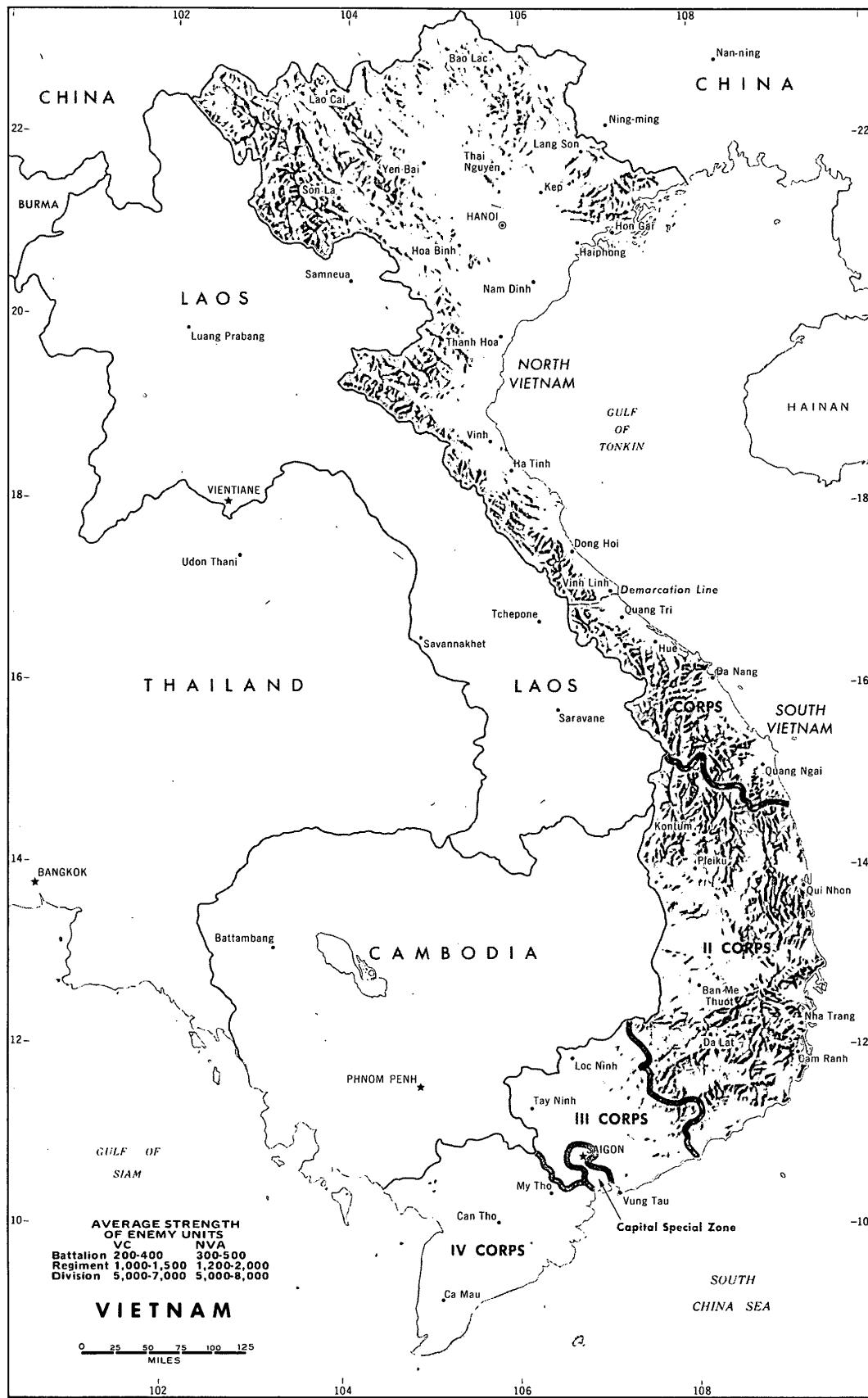


The President's Daily Brief

25 March 1969

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25 March 1969

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

I. MAJOR PROBLEMS

VIETNAM

There were four terrorist attacks in and around Saigon yesterday which killed and wounded a number of South Vietnamese. The major northern cities of Hue and Da Nang were generally free of enemy action. [redacted]

50X1

MIDDLE EAST

[redacted]
50X1

EUROPE

There is nothing significant to report.

SOVIET AFFAIRS

There is nothing significant to report.

II. OTHER IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS

PAKISTAN

The US Consul in Dacca reports that life in the city seems normal this morning. Businesses are open and street traffic is moving without hindrance. All Americans in the area are safe. [redacted] West Pakistan is evidently also relatively quiet. [redacted]

50X1

50X1

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

General Yahya Khan, in a nationwide broadcast this morning, claimed that he will go through with the constitutional reforms promised by Ayub and that he will prepare the country for free elections. (Associated Press)

KOREA

The North Korean news agency announced that border guards killed and wounded most of a US patrol that crossed into North Korean territory today. (FBIS 07 and Reuters 46) [redacted] the action in fact was a fire-fight between North and South Korean forces; there is no tally of friendly losses.

50X1

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

I. MAJOR PROBLEMS

VIETNAM

President Thieu's announcement that South Vietnam is ready to hold private talks with the Liberation Front and that Ky has already communicated this to the Front seems calculated to head off a new campaign of criticism in the US against Saigon.

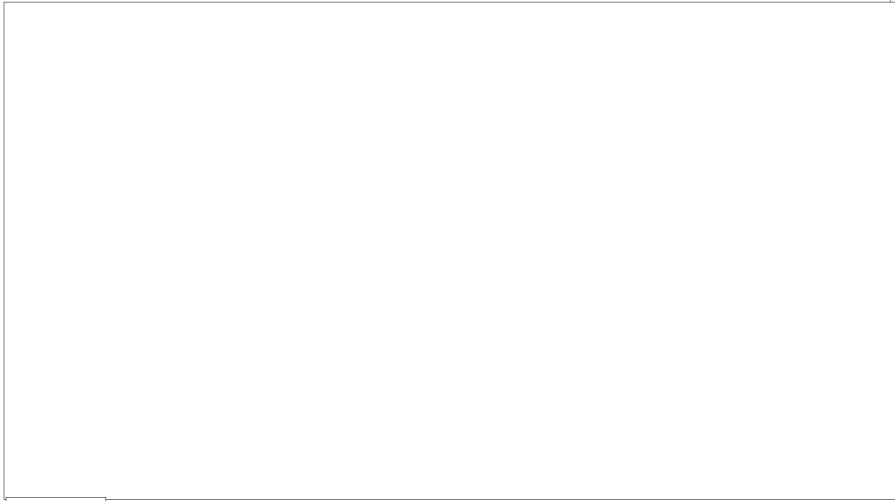
Thieu is probably concerned primarily about the prospect of growing criticism of the war by US Congressmen. He has already shown some anxiety about such pressures on the new US administration

[redacted] 50X1

[redacted] 50X1

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[redacted] 50X1



[redacted] 50X1

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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MIDDLE EAST

The replacement of Bahjat Talhuni as Prime Minister by the more articulate and sophisticated Abd al-Munim Rifai is probably an effort by Husayn to have a strong man on hand during the period of four-power negotiations. The remaining members of the new cabinet are all veteran performers on the Amman political scene and their choice in most cases seems to represent an effort to satisfy various elements within the country. The appointment of the pro-fedayeen Akif al-Fayis as Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior may be a reflection of the growing strength of the fedayeen and the King's desire to placate them.

EUROPE

There is nothing significant to report.

SOVIET AFFAIRS

There is nothing significant to report.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

II. OTHER IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS

PAKISTAN

Ayub's resignation today is an admission of his failure to halt Pakistan's drift toward chaos. He had hoped to stem the tide with his announcement last month that he would not run for re-election and his accompanying promise of constitutional reform, but these half-measures produced only a brief lull. The decline resumed this month; disruptive strikes brought considerable economic dislocations throughout the country, and East Pakistan slid into anarchy and terror. Although the central government apparently was aware of the situation, it took little remedial action until last week.

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Deployment of

troops in recent weeks indicated that the military was preparing for today's move to martial law.

Yahya Khan--the new commander--is a man of some military ability but not an outstanding leader or one who commands wide respect. He has evidently been loyal to Ayub but may harbor some political ambitions of his own. He gained the top position because he commands the Army--the country's largest military service. The other military figure likely to come into prominence is Air Force chief

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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Nur Khan, a competent [redacted] man who 50X6

probably was denied the top spot in part because he commands a smaller service.

Whether Yahya Khan and the largely West Pakistani military can succeed where Ayub failed remains to be seen. They should have little trouble handling the remaining unrest in West Pakistan--chiefly labor and communal disturbances. In East Pakistan, however--where the military is viewed as a symbol of the tainted regime and of West Pakistan's long-time domination of the East--their task will be much more difficult. At least for the short run the military will probably move cautiously. [redacted]

50X1

50X1

[redacted]
The troops can probably subdue the cities, where less than 5 percent of the province's population of 70 million lives, but control of the countryside is problematic.

The best guess at the moment is that the military intends its intervention as a stopgap measure to restore order and, if possible, to enable the elections to be held later this year. The army, however, may end up questioning the value of holding elections under the present circumstances, especially when the choice would be among disparate and largely discredited political forces unlikely to produce a stable government. Indeed, the military may simply decide that Pakistan cannot yet afford the luxury of democracy and that it must continue to rule the country.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

PAKISTAN - SOVIET UNION

The recent visit of Soviet Defense Minister Grechko to Karachi laid the groundwork for an increasingly close military aid relationship with Pakistan. The discussions two weeks ago centered on broadening the list of military equipment to be supplied under an agreement signed in July 1968.

[redacted] 50X1

[redacted] 50X1

[redacted] 50X1

[redacted] 50X1

[redacted] 50X1

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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NIGERIA

CIA economists have recently examined the Biafran food crisis. They conclude that much of Nigeria's former Eastern Region (which includes Biafra) can expect a serious shortage of food between March and June, a seasonal "hungry period" when caloric intake drops about 20 percent even during normal times. In those areas where the food supply already has been barely adequate to keep the population alive, the lack of both carbohydrates and protein will become even more severe. The shortage of carbohydrates should ease in the summer months when the harvest begins, but a large segment of the population will still need protein from outside sources.

SOVIET UNION - COMMUNIST CHINA

There has been no shooting reported in the area of the disputed island for the past week

50X1

50X1

Soviet propaganda on the incidents is still playing largely on patriotic and nationalistic themes. At the same time there is a hint of a shift in Soviet media toward the larger issue of border demarcation. Chinese commentary on the clashes has decreased considerably as Peking has shifted focus to the themes of Soviet "social imperialism" and "collusion with imperialism."

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

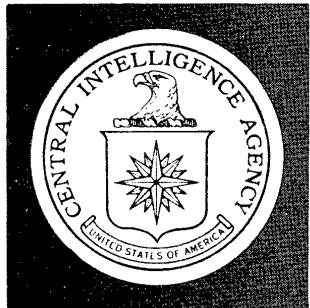
FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

The Yugoslav press agency has reported that a plenary session of the Soviet Central Committee will be convened in the next few days. The border dispute is a likely topic for such a meeting.

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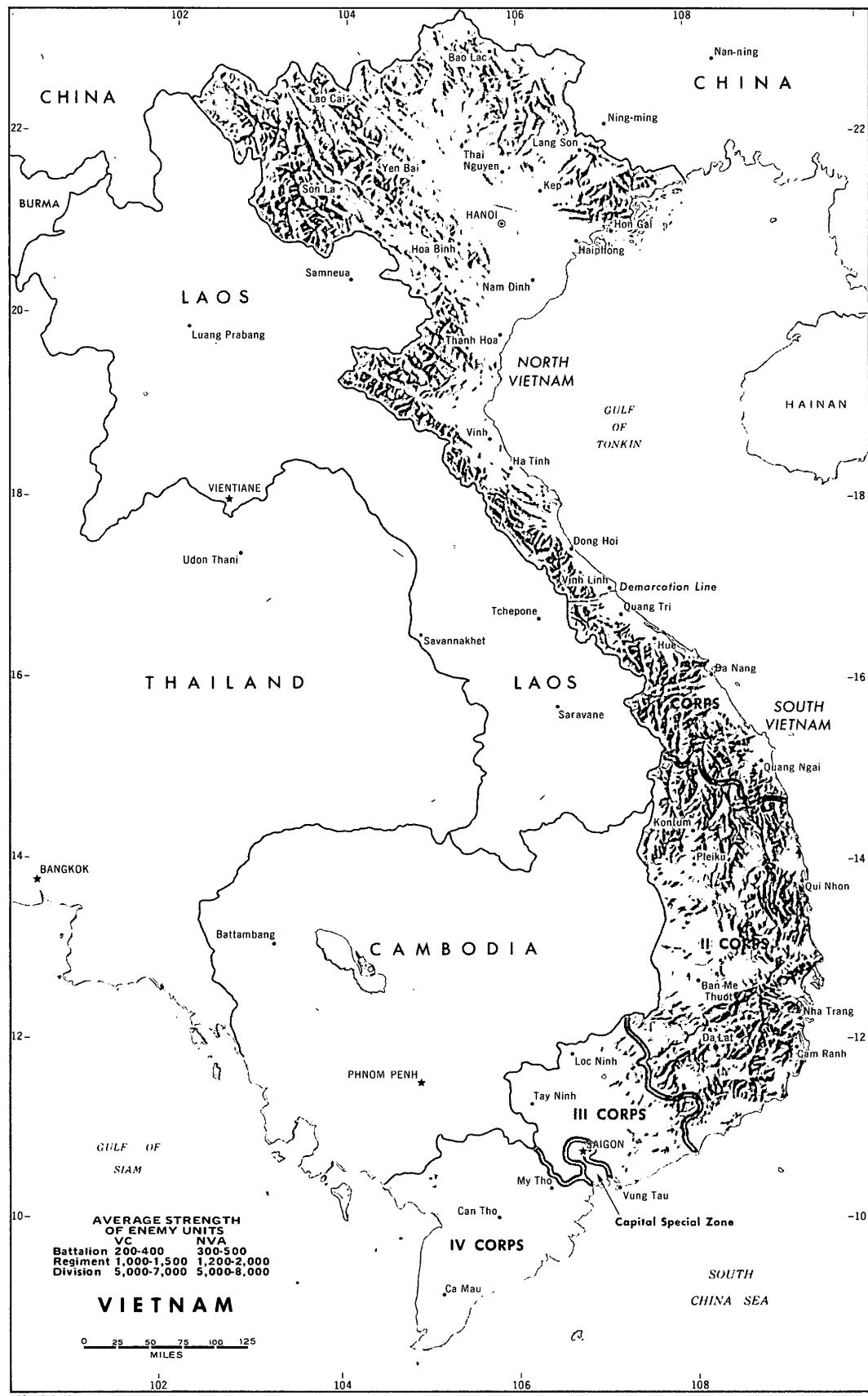
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26 March 1969

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26 March 1969

LATE NOTES FOR THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF OF
26 MARCH 1969

I. MAJOR PROBLEMS

VIETNAM

The Viet Cong radio today called Thieu's proposal for secret talks with the NLF a "crafty trick aimed at covering up the United States' bellicose and stubborn attitude," according to press reports from Saigon. (UPI 037A, 27 March)

50X1

SOVIET AFFAIRS

MIDDLE EAST

There is nothing significant to report.

EUROPE

There is nothing significant to report.

II. OTHER IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS

PAKISTAN

Ambassador Oehlert saw Ayub and General Yahya this morning. Both emphasized that Ayub's decision to step

26 March 1969

down had been his own, and Yahya asserted that the military will be maintaining Ayub's economic and political policies until a civilian government can be established.

[redacted] 50X1

[redacted] 50X11

The country remains generally calm, but [redacted] 50X1

[redacted] some unrest is likely as soon 50X1

as the regime's numerous opponents begin to find their footing.

[redacted] 50X1

PERU

[redacted] 50X1

NIGERIA

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

I. MAJOR PROBLEMS

VIETNAM

Once the Communists have digested Thieu's statement of willingness to talk privately with the NLF, they may well dismiss it publicly in the way they have brushed off other remarks by South Vietnamese officials. The "no comment" approach adopted by Communist representatives in Paris yesterday, however, indicates they are not going to make such a move without some consideration in Hanoi.

Regardless of what the Communists say publicly, Hanoi will take Thieu's statement, as well as President Nixon's remarks yesterday on negotiations, as signs that the US is anxious to achieve progress in the talks and to move toward negotiations. Fundamentally, progress in Hanoi's terms requires "recognition" of the National Liberation Front as the prime spokesman for the Communists on matters concerning South Vietnam.

The Communists are not likely to respond to Thieu's statement with any initiative of their own. Hanoi probably calculates that pressures on the US for progress in the talks will grow if the Communists continue to stall in Paris and are able to string out their current military effort in South Vietnam. They undoubtedly believe that this situation will produce further initiatives from the allied side.

For the time being, the Communists probably would discourage any South Vietnamese bid for private contacts

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

with the Front, but without closing the door altogether. Before they accept the idea of bilateral GVN-Front talks, however, they probably want to involve the US at least in some preliminary discussions which include the Front. Perhaps they are pointing toward some kind of informal four-way contacts during the tea break at the plenary sessions in order to get the ball rolling.

* * *

The politically minded militant Buddhists and some other local observers clearly believe that the Thieu government overplayed its hand when it allowed a military court to hand down an unexpectedly harsh sentence to Thich Thien Minh. The militant Buddhists are organizing prayer meetings and are circulating protest letters accusing President Thieu, a Catholic, of trying to "annihilate" Buddhism. They have noted the warning implicit in the sentencing of Minh, however, and are proceeding with caution.

Significantly, moderate Buddhist leader Thich Tam Chau, who has been fairly close to the government, seems to agree that the government made a serious mistake.

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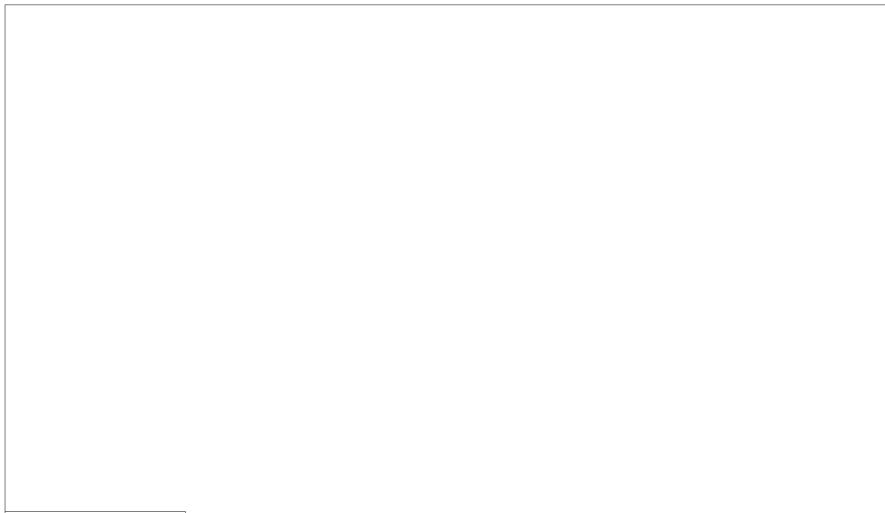
Another political bellwether, Senator Tran Van Don, has issued a statement of concern about Minh's sentence and has urged the government and the militants to compromise their differences.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

Despite considerable concern that the sentence has set back national unity, there is also widespread recognition that the militant Buddhists are trying to make political capital of it. There is no evidence thus far that the militants have been able to generate much popular indignation against the government.

50X1

MIDDLE EAST



50X1

EUROPE

The French government has been holding firm in its decision to keep wage increases to about four percent, and so far the unions have been unable to mount an effective counter-attack. Although the recent one-day general strike drew an impressive number of participants, it did not give labor the leverage it hoped to get against the government. Privately owned industries are

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

evidently moving toward negotiations--a move supported by the government and the employers' association. For the moment, at least, De Gaulle seems to have won the battle and labor is in retreat.

Nevertheless, wildcat strikes in the railway industry have served to illustrate general uneasiness in the nationalized sector, which is now the most fragile area on the French social scene. Unions representing the nationalized industries have been meeting this week to chart a course of action.

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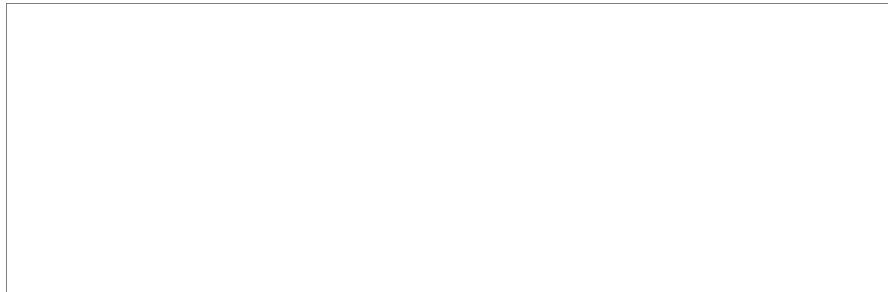
According to his chief aide, Willy Brandt wants to resume his dialogue with the Soviets in Bonn and hopes to schedule a meeting with Ambassador Tsarapkin before Easter. The West Germans do not have a clear idea of what topics to raise at the meeting, but feel the renunciation of force issue offers a point of departure.

SOVIET AFFAIRS

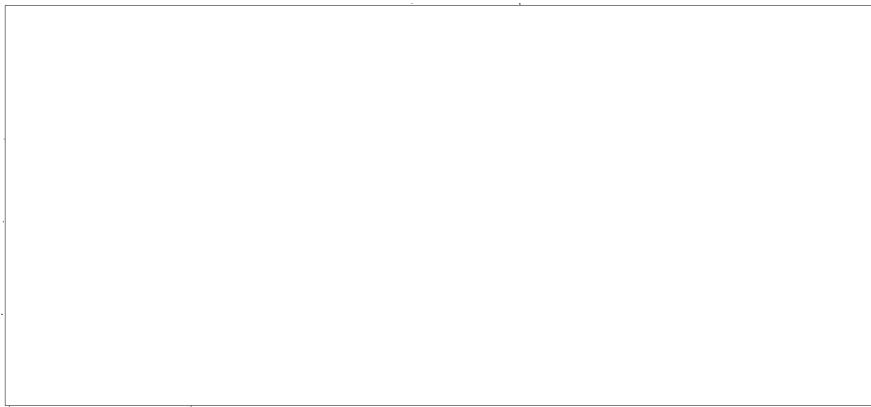
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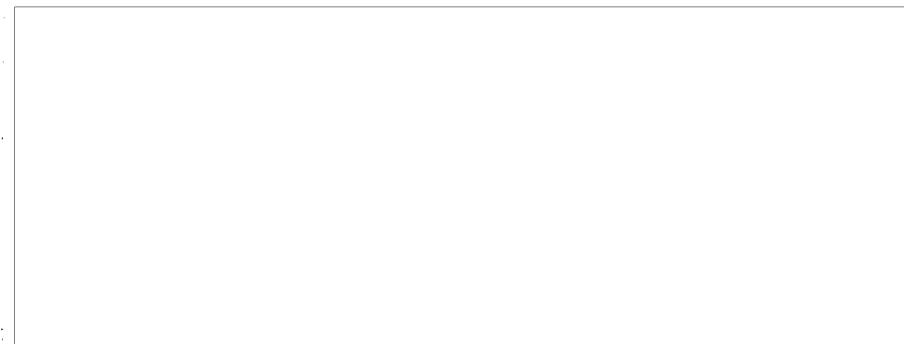
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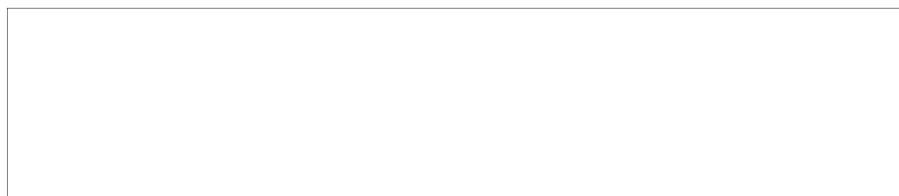
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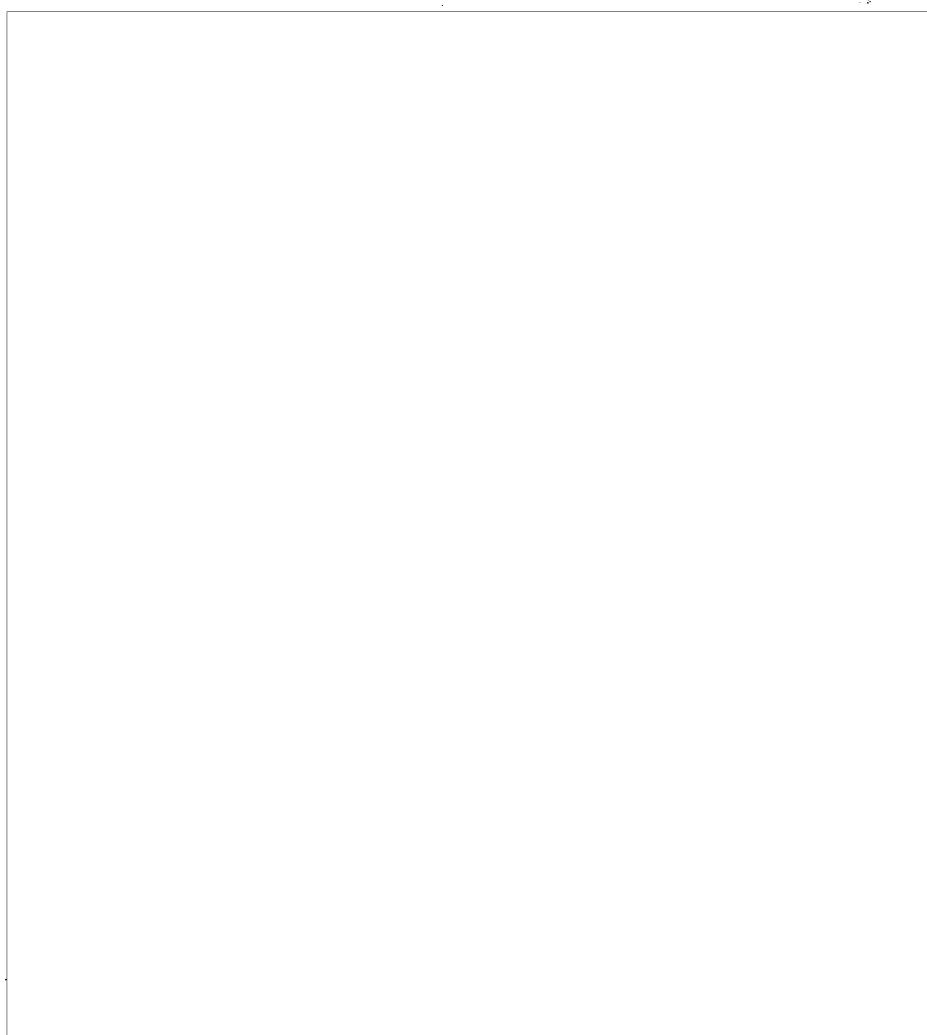


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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY



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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

II. OTHER IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS

PAKISTAN

The transition to martial law in Pakistan seems to be going smoothly so far. Army rule is being greeted with considerable relief in much of West Pakistan, and available evidence (not much of the countryside has been heard from) suggests the East Pakistanis are at least acquiescent. The military in the east is trying not to offend the populace. It is still not at all certain that the lid can be kept on there, particularly if East Pakistani leftists decide to provoke a clash with the military.

NIGERIA

Radio Biafra has now announced Ojukwu's willingness to receive Prime Minister Wilson during the latter's visit to Nigeria. This is a more forthcoming attitude than the Biafrans have taken up to now.

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50X1

We still do not believe that either Biafra or the federal government is willing to modify its basic war aims, however.

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50X1

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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[REDACTED] 50X1

Intercepts indicate that the Biafrans are about to retake Owerri, an important road junction and the closest point of federal approach to Ojukwu's capital at Umuahia.

PERU

[REDACTED] 50X1

[REDACTED] 50X1

NATIONALIST CHINA - SOVIET UNION

Chiang Kai-shek has shown growing interest over the past year in developing contacts with the Soviet Union. His initial overture toward Moscow was a directive to tone down Taiwan's propaganda attacks against the USSR. There have been subsequent meetings between representatives of the two countries, and Chiang has recently instructed one of his most trusted diplomats to develop contacts with Soviet officials in Europe.

Chiang apparently is seeking to exploit Soviet hostility toward Maoist China, and Moscow's consequent willingness

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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to engage in at least semi-official contacts with the Nationalists, to dramatize Peking's isolation and to enhance the Nationalists' international position. Taipei presumably hopes a display of Soviet interest in such contacts will discourage non-Communist governments from seeking diplomatic relations with Peking.

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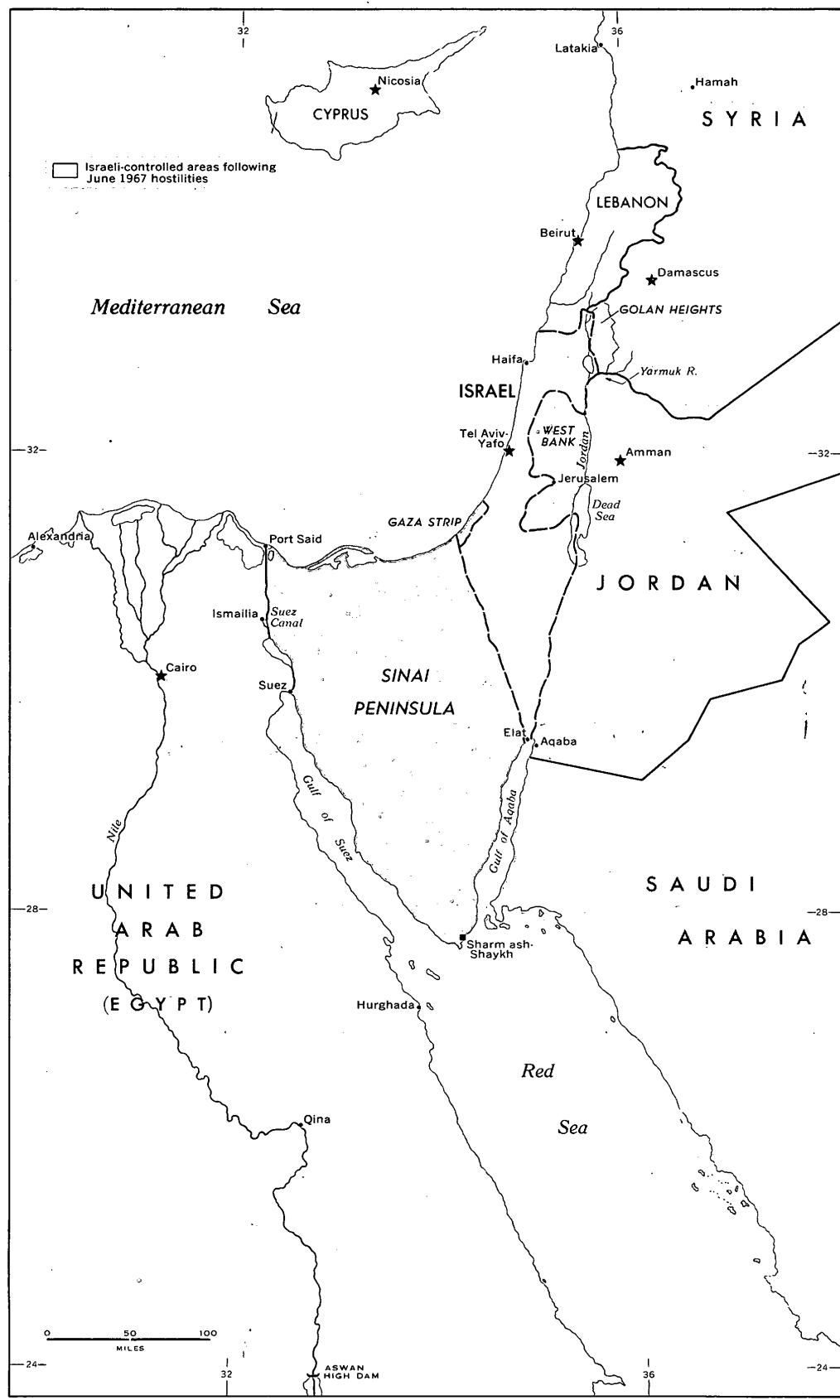
The President's Daily Brief

27 March 1969

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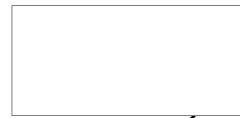
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TOP SECRET



LATE NOTES FOR THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF OF 27 MARCH 1969

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TOP SECRET

28 March 1969

LATE NOTES FOR THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF OF

27 MARCH 1969

I. MAJOR PROBLEMS

SOVIET AFFAIRS

The deputy leader of the Soviet delegation to the ENDC has told a member of our delegation that Moscow has not yet decided whether to ratify the NPT before the Bonn government signs but that he personally thought his government would follow a "cautious policy of waiting" for the West German signature. He admitted this was inconsistent with the Soviet appeal for an early entry into force of the NPT, but said "many elements in Moscow are not flexible when it comes to West Germany." [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

The pattern of Israeli air attacks on Jordan over the past two weeks indicates that the Israelis have adopted a policy of "preventive" attacks on Arab commando bases and concentrations. The objective is apparently to keep the Arab guerrillas on the move, to interfere with training, break morale, and make terrorist activity generally more difficult.

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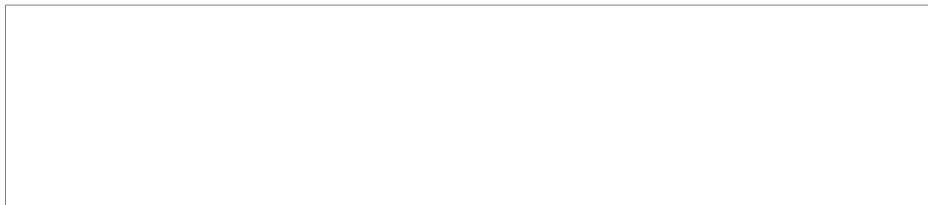
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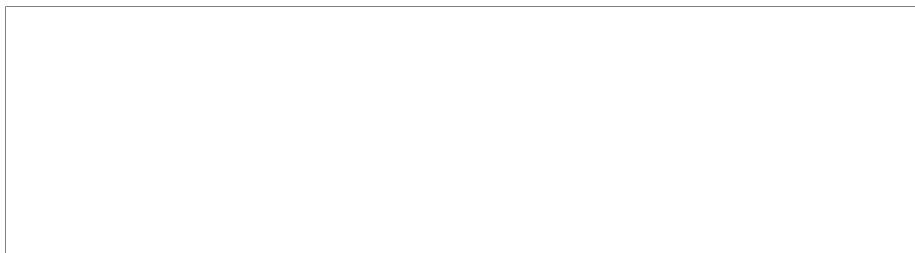
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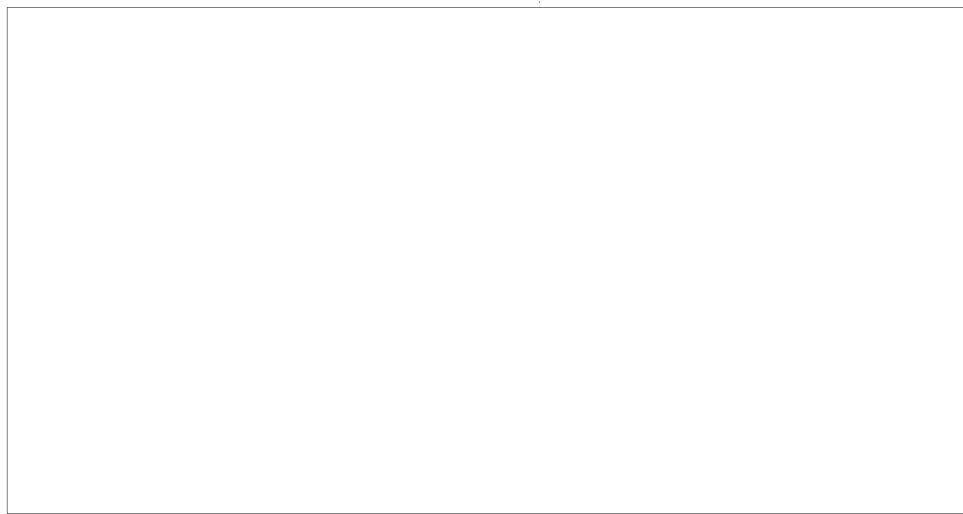


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SOVIET AFFAIRS



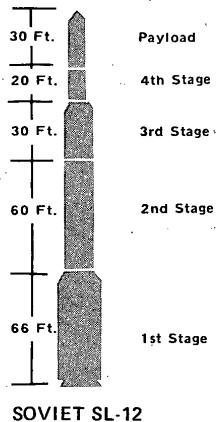
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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

Failure of Large Booster Deals Setback to Soviet Space Program

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SOVIET SL-12

| | |
|---|-----------------|
| Lift off thrust | 2.5 million lbs |
| Earth orbit payload (pounds) | 45,000 |
| Payload on lunar trajectory (pounds) | 13,000 |

SOVIET SL-12 RECORD

| DATE | EVENT | RESULT | REMARKS |
|-------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------|---------|
| 10 March 1967 | Cosmos 146 | Partial failure | 50X1 |
| 8 April 1967 | Cosmos 154 | Partial failure | |
| 22 November 1967 | Circumlunar attempt | Failure | |
| 2 March 1968 | Zond 4 simulated circumlunar mission | Success | |
| 22 April 1968 | Circumlunar attempt | Failure | |
| 14 September 1968 | Zond 5 circumlunar mission | Success | |
| 10 November 1968 | Zond 6 circumlunar mission | Success | |
| 16 November 1968 | Proton 4 | Success | |
| 20 January 1969 | Circumlunar attempt | Failure | 50X1 |
| 27 March 1969 | Attempted Mars probe | Failure | |

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

The Soviet space program suffered a major setback yesterday when its largest operational booster--the SL-12--failed during an attempt to launch a probe toward Mars.

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The Soviets probably intend the SL-12 to be the workhorse for their space program in the 1970s, but it has been plagued with problems throughout its development, having fully performed its mission only four times in ten attempts.

So far, the SL-12 has been used primarily in the circumlunar program--this latest attempt was the first time it has been tried in the planetary exploration effort. Its poor performance probably is the principal reason that the Soviet circumlunar program is at least one year behind schedule; this denied Moscow the opportunity to attempt a manned circumlunar flight before the US Apollo 8.

Apart from its effect on the space effort, the dismal record of the SL-12 seems likely to have caused considerable disappointment within the Soviet hierarchy. This could, in turn, arouse questions, and attendant political controversy, about the allocation of scarce resources.

VIETNAM

The Liberation Front has turned aside Thieu's public bid for private talks with the Front, but has not rejected the idea outright. The response was negative in tone and shot through with propaganda attacks, but it carefully

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avoided closing the door to the possibility of such a dialogue.

For example, after attacking both the US and the GVN, the Liberation Front statement went on to assert that the Front delegation came to Paris with the "serious intention of helping, with the other sides, the conference to achieve positive results." Of even more significance is the Front's failure explicitly to refuse Thieu's offer.

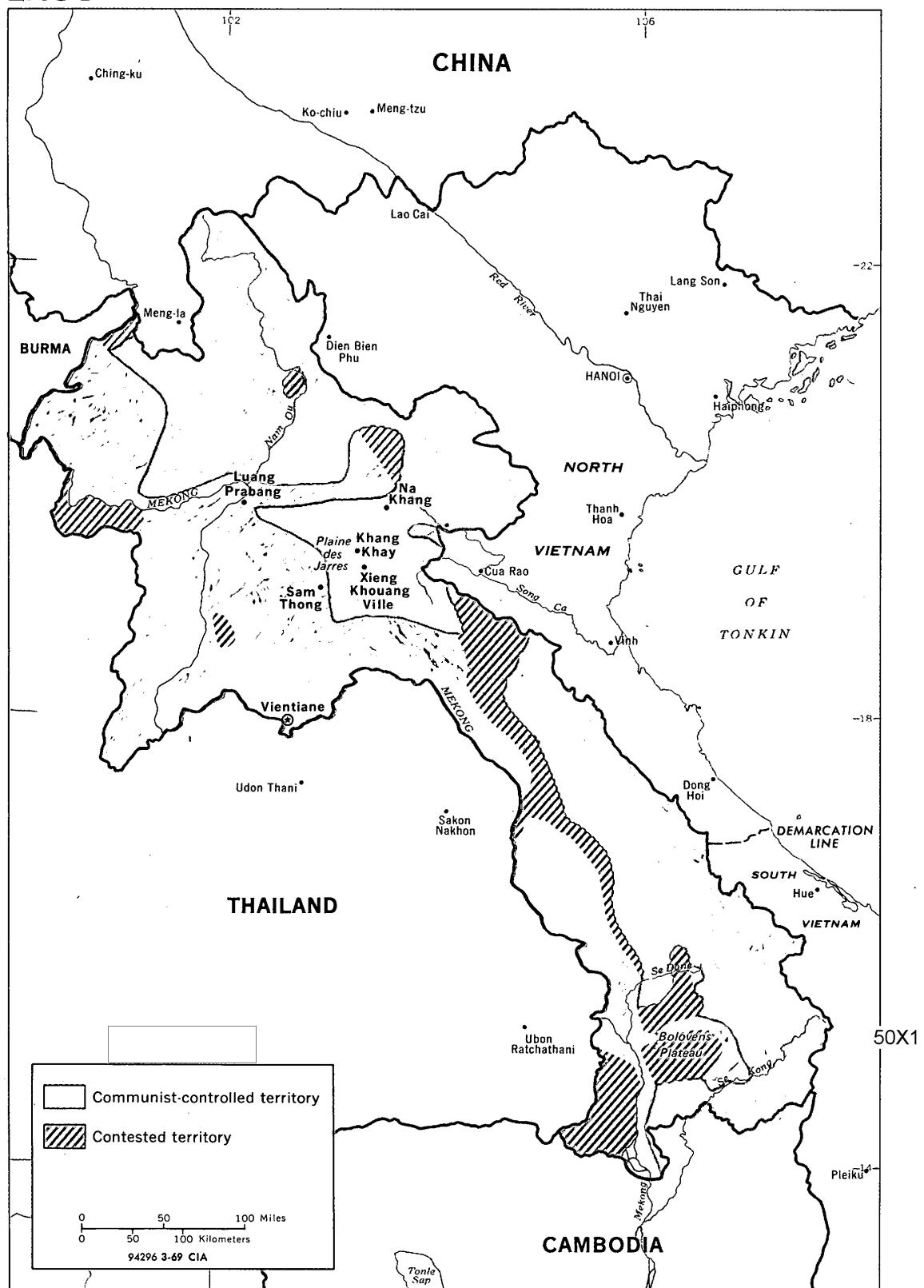
The Communists clearly realize that Thieu's statement has put them on the spot. They almost certainly consider it to have been a clever propaganda move, and their reply was aimed at attempting to counter Thieu's success. At the same time, the Communists wanted to avoid locking themselves into a totally negative position. The Communists realize they will eventually have to deal with the Thieu government, and they do not want to close out any options on the form such meetings will take.

EUROPE

There is nothing significant to report.

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LAOS



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II. OTHER IMPORANT DEVELOPMENTS

LAOS

Souvanna has now asked US officials for air strikes against Communist centers in the Plaine des Jarres area that previously have been relatively immune from attacks. Bombing restrictions have been lifted from military targets in and around Xieng Khouang Ville and the eastern portion of

[redacted] 50X1

The request to hit these prime Communist bases followed a gloomy cabinet meeting yesterday on the enemy threat in the northeast. There has in fact been little change in the situation since our last review in the Brief of Monday afternoon. One more government position has changed hands--we suspect through withdrawal rather than enemy action--and there is still the possibility of a Communist thrust against friendly guerrilla headquarters at Sam Thong.

BRAZIL

The long-pending deal for Brazil to purchase two British submarines appears to be nearing conclusion.

[redacted] 50X1

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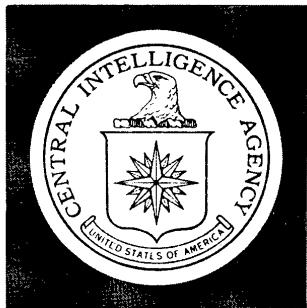
Last August the Brazilian foreign minister was told by the US ambassador that if Brazil bought new submarines, it would risk incurring penalties under the Conte Amendment. The warning was received calmly.

Application of penalties would probably strengthen the hand of those nationalists in the military who have advised the government to assume a more neutral posture in world affairs. Moreover, the Brazilians would probably not be dissuaded from making whatever military equipment purchases they thought were necessary.

IRAQ - EAST GERMANY

There are rumors that Iraq will soon recognize East Germany; it would be the first non-Communist state to do so. If the East Germans get recognition, they undoubtedly will step up their pressures on other Arab states.

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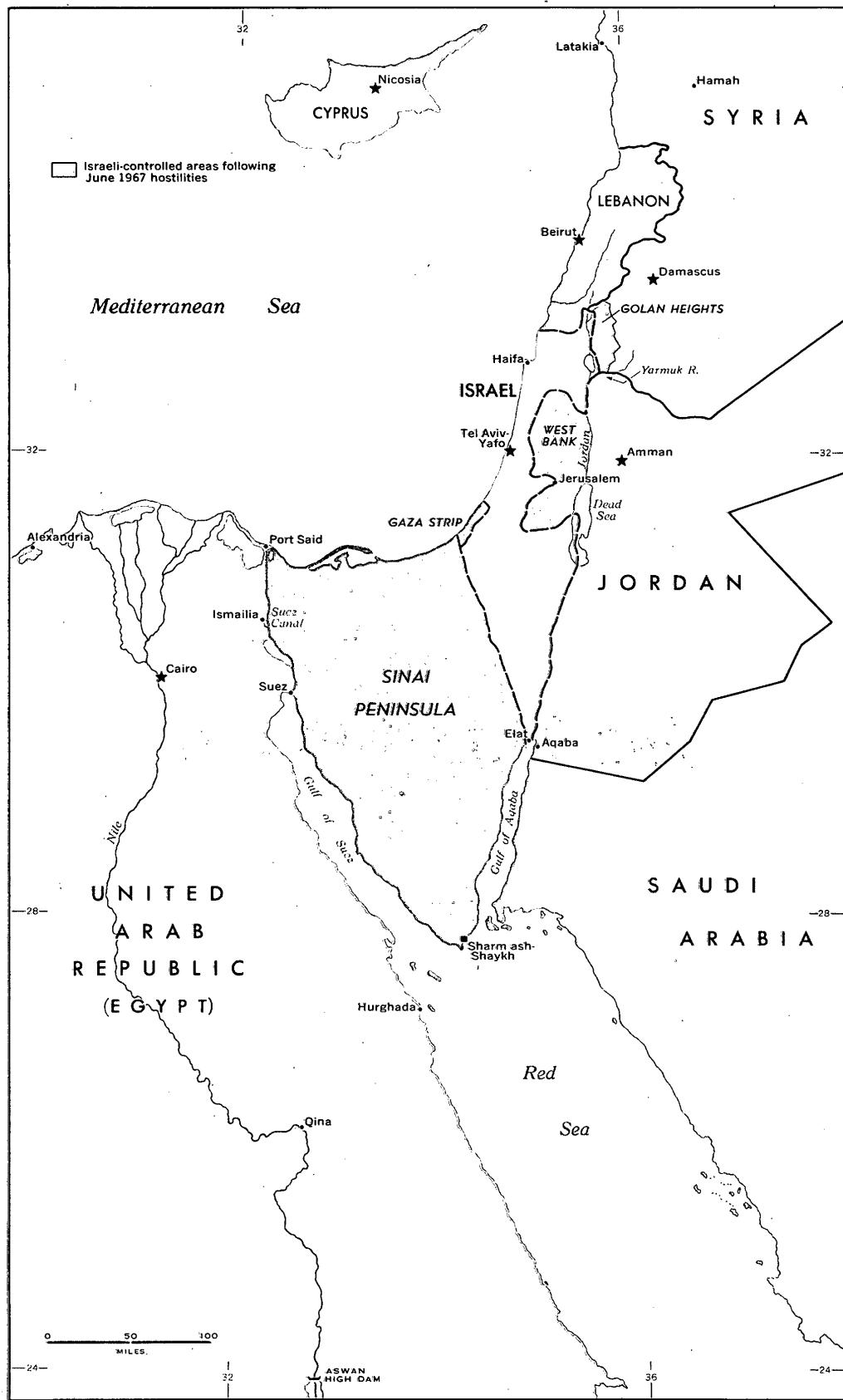


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LIAISON NOTES FOR THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF OF 28 MARCH 1969



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TOP SECRET

29 March 1969

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

I. MAJOR PROBLEMS

VIETNAM

There have been several recent reports of an enemy intent to launch further widespread attacks shortly. One Viet Cong defector has said the round of fighting in April will feature intensified attacks against key targets in the provinces, presumably provincial and district capitals and allied outposts. He claims that while a concerted attack against Saigon is not planned, an attempt will be made to infiltrate three battalions of several hundred men each into the southern part of the city. (Central Intelligence Bulletin, 29 Mar 69)

There is nothing significant to report on other areas.

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I. MAJOR PROBLEMS

MIDDLE EAST

Nasir's speech on Thursday

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[redacted]
attacked the US position as one of total support for
Israel. The US, he claimed, "bears a great responsibility
for the dangerous road on which the Middle East crisis is
proceeding."

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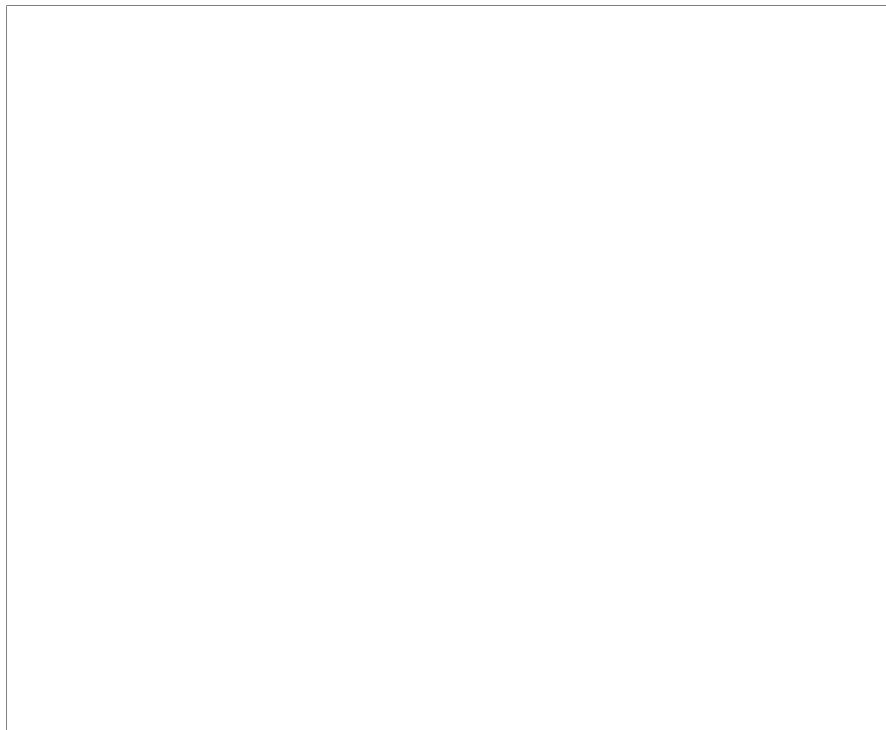
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SOVIET AFFAIRS

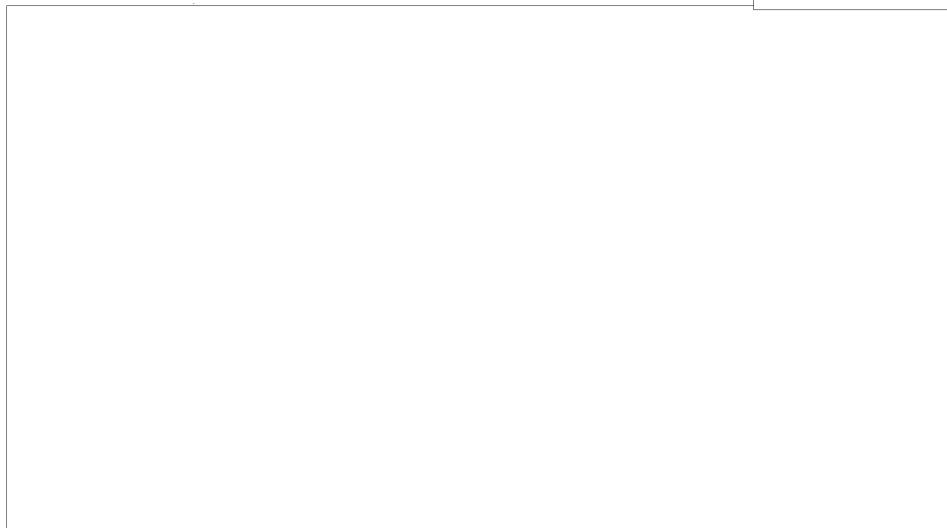
Several Communist parties [redacted] are

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seeking ways to dilute the impact of the world Communist
conference now scheduled for 5 June in Moscow. [redacted]

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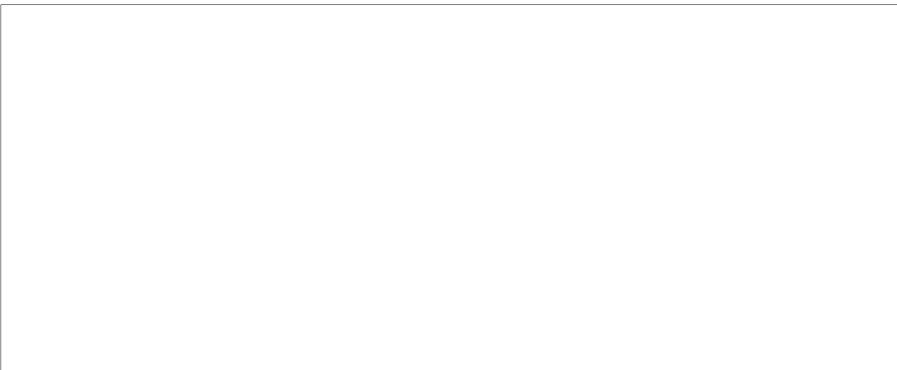


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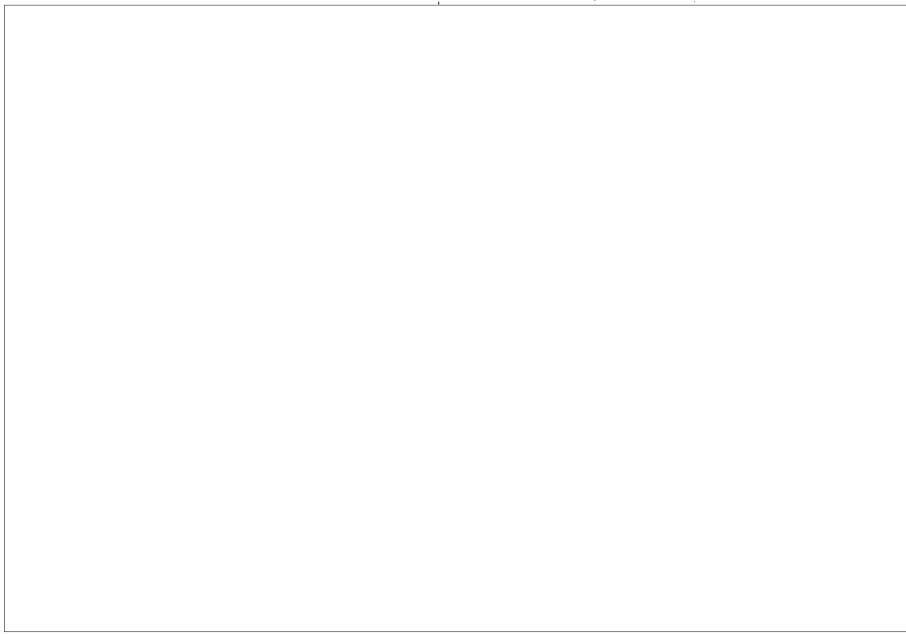
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The US Embassy in Moscow assumes that after so many preparatory sessions (another is scheduled 23 May) the Soviets will be reluctant to consider a further postponement beyond 5 June. It believes questions of prestige and face will induce them to compromise since they are not entering the conference from a position of strength.

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EUROPE



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VIETNAM

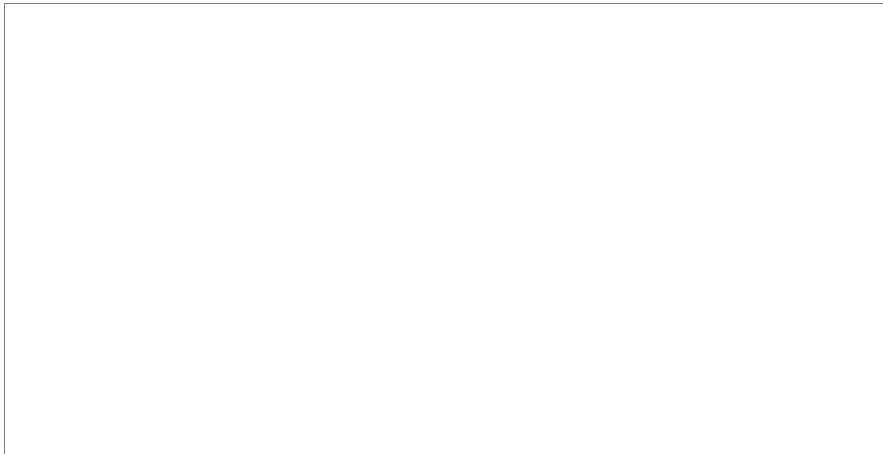
The Communists will probably consider yesterday's Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearings as evidence that the US administration is under strong pressure to end the war, and that this pressure will grow and work to their advantage as time passes. If this assessment of their reaction is correct, Hanoi is likely to continue stalling in Paris in belief that our side eventually will make new proposals, both for the format of private talks and for settlement of the main issues of the war.

South Vietnam's leaders will also take particular note of warnings by some Committee members that they will push the US administration harder unless significant progress is evident in the Paris talks within a few months. Saigon views with deep concern any indication that the US administration will come under strong pressures to force the South to make substantial concessions to the Liberation Front.

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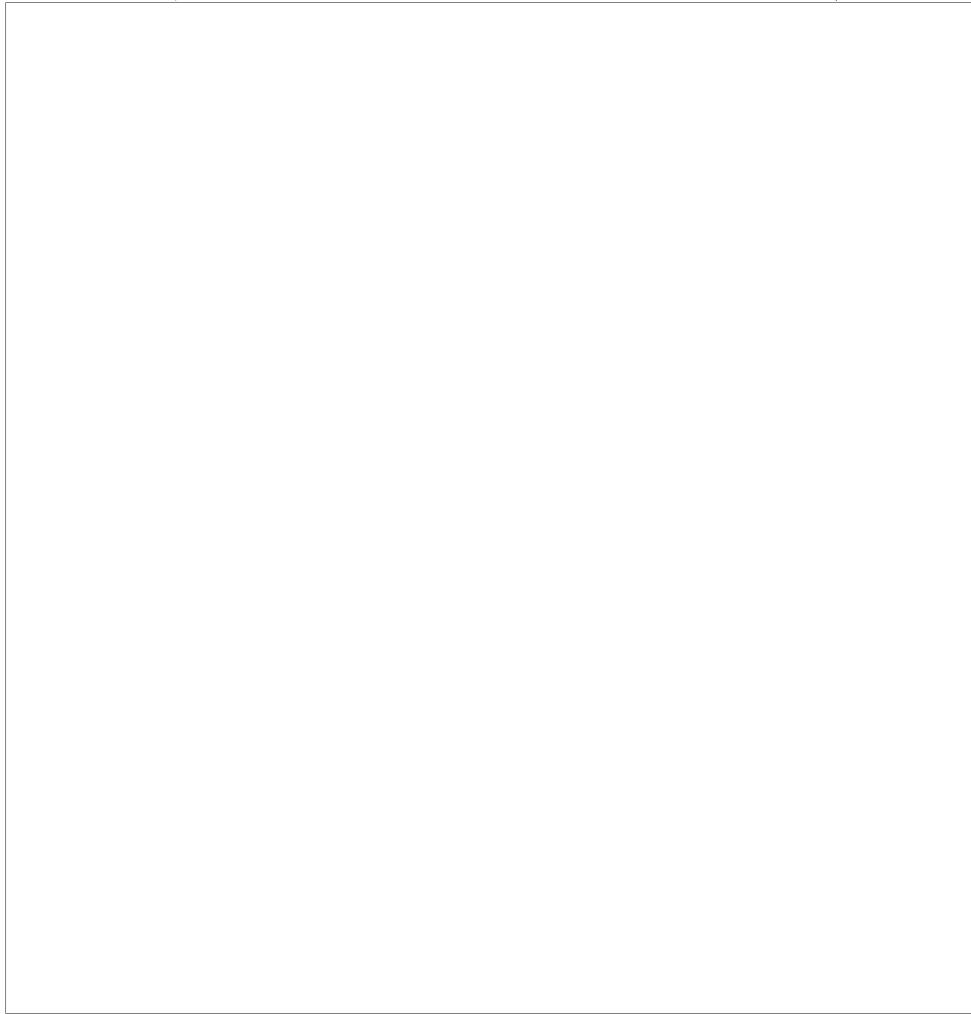
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II. OTHER IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS

PAKISTAN

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SOVIET UNION - COMMUNIST CHINA

The Soviet press continues to exploit the border issue.

Today's Pravda carries a report of Chinese shelling of the disputed island. No date is given, however, and neither side

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has referred to troop clashes since 15 March. The wording of the Pravda article suggests that neither Chinese nor Soviet forces have established fixed positions on the island, but Soviet patrols visit it and both sides are digging in on their respective sides of the river.

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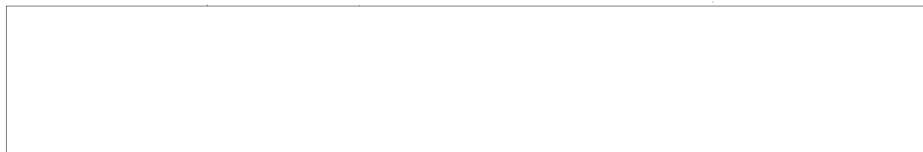
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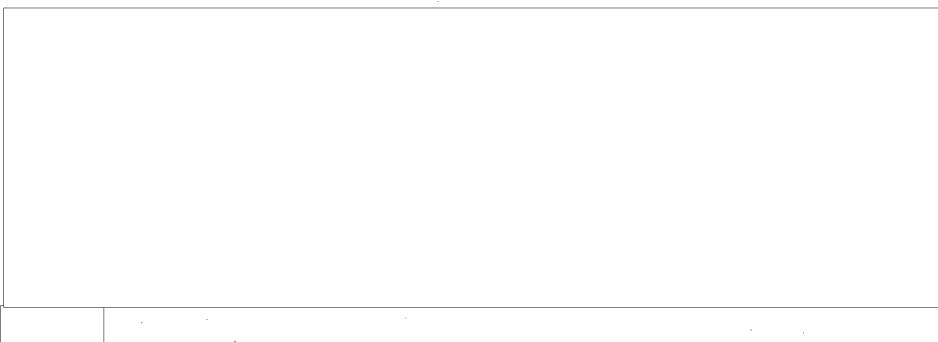
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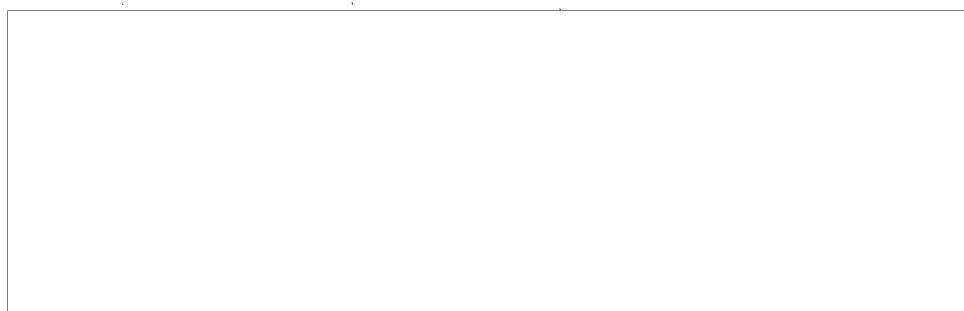
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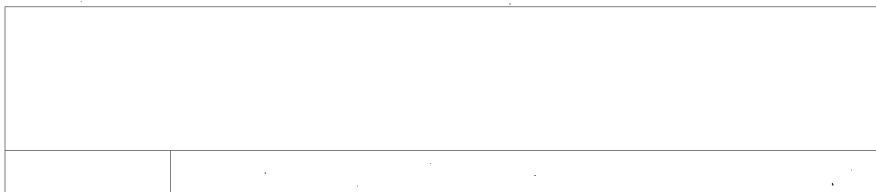


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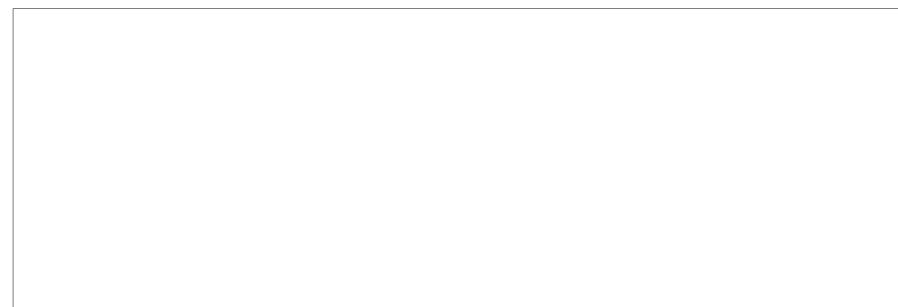
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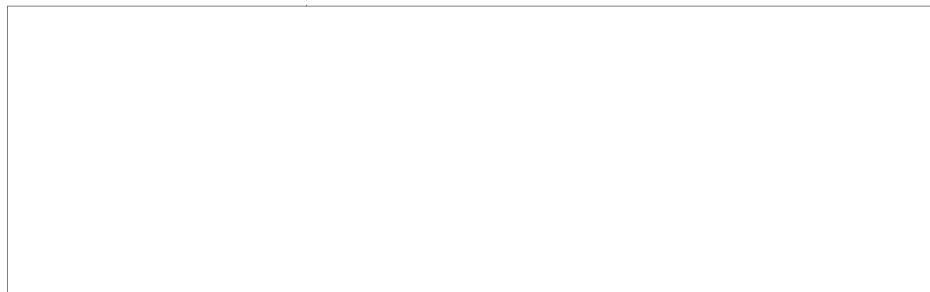
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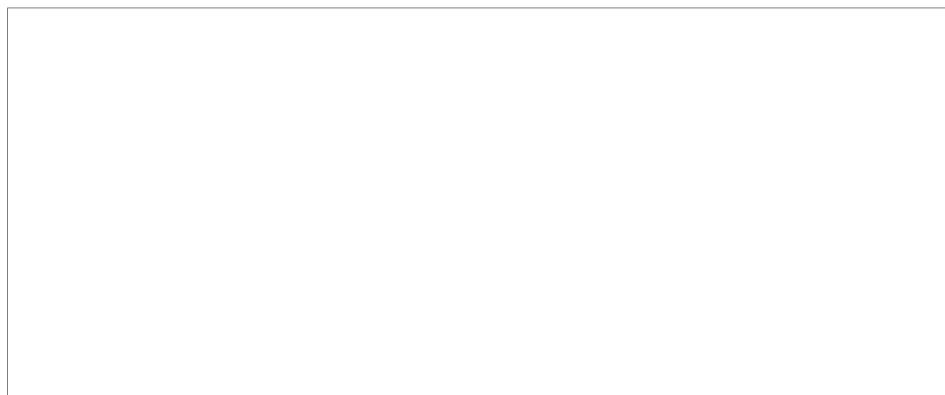
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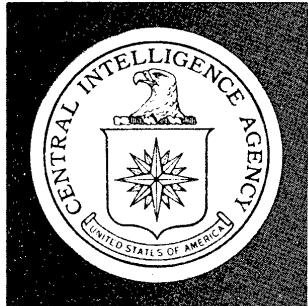


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The President's Daily Brief

*31 March 1969
(Afternoon)*

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LATE NOTES FOR THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF OF

31 March 1969

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TOP SECRET

1 April 1969

LATE NOTES FOR THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF OF
31 MARCH 1969

I. MAJOR PROBLEMS

SOVIET AFFAIRS

Defense Minister Grechko and several members of the Soviet General Staff flew to Czechoslovakia yesterday. We have no indication whether this quick trip is connected with the weekend demonstrations in Prague or with the military exercises currently going on in Eastern Europe.

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VIETNAM

The military situation in Vietnam is generally quiet,

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MIDDLE EAST

There is nothing significant to report.

EUROPE

There is nothing significant to report.

II. OTHER IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS

CANADA

The press in Ottawa says Prime Minister Trudeau will announce the results of Canada's review of its NATO policy in Parliament tomorrow.

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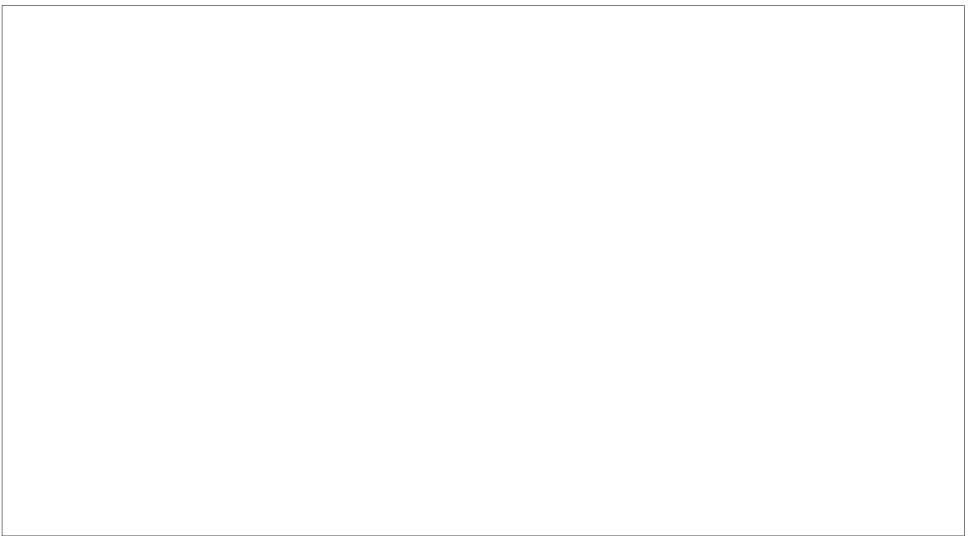
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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

I. MAJOR PROBLEMS

SOVIET AFFAIRS

Warsaw Pact units are currently conducting several exercises in Europe.

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This marks the first Warsaw Pact exercise with Czech participation since the Soviet intervention last August.

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Finally, a large Soviet naval force is continuing exercises in the North Atlantic some 600 miles west of Ireland. After two days of activity, most of the ships were resupplying today. They can soon be expected to regroup for surface tactical or antisubmarine operations.

VIETNAM

There is nothing significant to report.

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

PHILIPPINES

[redacted] President

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Marcos had the following things in mind when he decided to come to Washington for the Eisenhower funeral:

--Primarily, he simply wanted to pay homage to President Eisenhower, for whom he had deep respect.

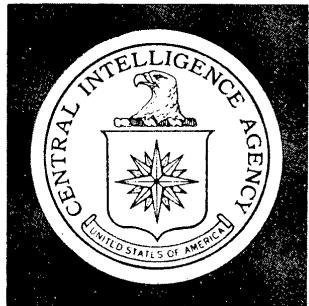
--He also thought the trip would do him no harm as a politician running for re-election in the Philippines.

--He believed a brief meeting with President Nixon [redacted] 50X1 would help Philippine-US relations.

PAKISTAN

The military regime has so far succeeded in combining discreet firmness toward potential opponents with conciliatory gestures on some important issues. The government has promised a new drive against bureaucratic corruption, and private employers are being ordered to honor all pay increases granted in recent months. In East Pakistan the authorities have experienced the first signs of open discontent--minor ones so far--and have moved effectively to keep them in bounds.

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The President's Daily Brief

*31 March 1969
(Morning)*

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HJY

LATE NOTES FOR THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF OF

31 MARCH 1969

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1 April 1969

LATE NOTES FOR THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF OF
31 MARCH 1969

I. MAJOR PROBLEMS

SOVIET AFFAIRS

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VIETNAM

50X1

The military situation in Vietnam is generally quiet,

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MIDDLE EAST

There is nothing significant to report.

EUROPE

There is nothing significant to report.

II. OTHER IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS

CANADA

The press in Ottawa says Prime Minister Trudeau will announce the results of Canada's review of its NATO policy in Parliament tomorrow. Embassy Ottawa has been informed, however, that the chances of his doing so are only fifty-fifty. Tomorrow is the last time Parliament will meet before

the NATO ministerial meeting in Washington. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]
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PERU

There have been several recent signs that the government intends to move against APRA, Peru's only well-organized political party and traditionally the archenemy of the Peruvian military. Press reporting from Lima suggests that

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much may be made of alleged collusion between APRA and CIA in the course of this campaign.

A long-scheduled cabinet reorganization is to be made today. There is no sign that either President Velasco or Prime Minister Montagne will use the occasion to move against the other.

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

I MAJOR PROBLEMS

VIETNAM

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

EUROPE

The Concorde supersonic transport is encountering serious technical difficulties which will probably keep it from becoming an economic success. Of the many problems that have plagued its developers, noise and weight have been the most intractable. It apparently can be heard 21 miles away on takeoff, for example. The passenger load has been reduced from 140 to about 110 in an unsuccessful effort to cope with the weight problem.

The British have begun to voice grave doubts about the feasibility of the whole project, but the French are still enthusiastic, at least in public. The desire for prestige and continued technological gain could still bring the Concorde into limited production and operation.

* * *

The French populace is approaching April's referendum on reform of the Senate and on administrative decentralization with indifference and some hostility, according to the polls. Only 24 percent of those questioned said they planned to vote "yes," 23 percent said they were voting "no," and 53 percent said they had no opinion. Such attitudes only four weeks before the referendum will incite the government to step up its "hard-sell" campaign even further. [redacted]

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[redacted]

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

SOVIET AFFAIRS

The Soviets have begun a new attack against Josef Smrkovsky, the Czech reformist and supporter of Dubcek, who was speaker of the Czechoslovak legislature until January. Pravda today charged that Smrkovsky took part in the weekend demonstrations which ended in the sacking of the Soviet airline office in Prague. The paper claimed that this was not the first time Smrkovsky had been involved in an "anti-Soviet outburst." In a warning to the Prague leadership as a whole, Pravda also asserted that the Czech party had failed to criticize publicly the anti-Soviet demonstrations just over a week ago.

MIDDLE EAST

There is nothing of significance to report.

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II. OTHER IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS

NIGERIA

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