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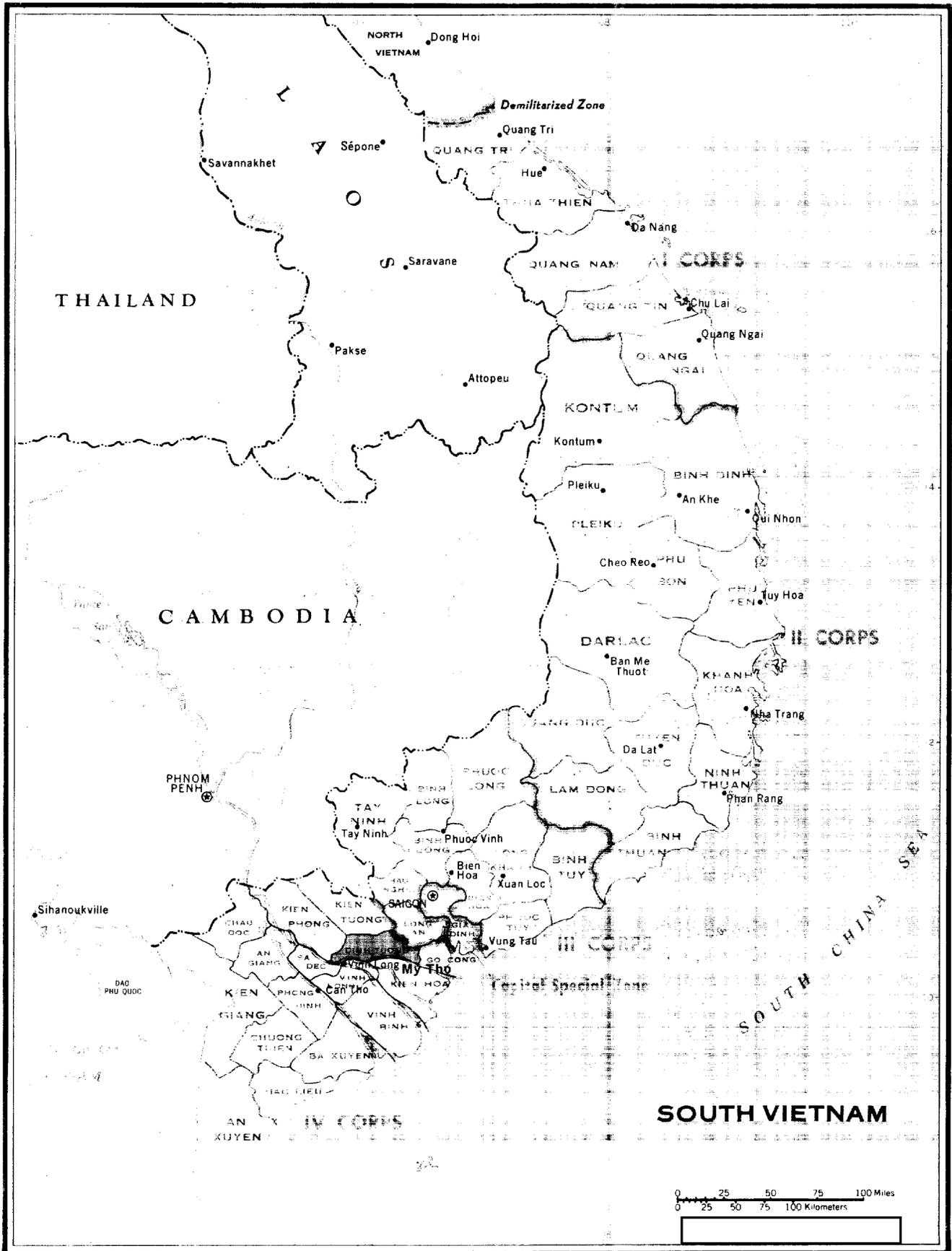
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*Vietnam: (Information as of 4:30 AM EST)

Military Situation in South Vietnam: Heavy fighting was reported in the Mekong Delta yesterday.

A battalion-sized Viet Cong force attacked a South Vietnamese Army base camp some 15 miles northwest of My Tho in Dinh Tuong Province, killing three and wounding 12 defenders. Fifteen Communists were killed in the fighting. A government reaction force has been sent into the area, but no further contact with the enemy has been reported. (Map)

Political Developments in South Vietnam: A realignment of political groupings may be under way in the Constituent Assembly.

25X1 [redacted] the assembly's second and third largest political groups have recently merged to form the Democratic Alliance Bloc. The new bloc--composed of Catholic, Hoa Hao, and VNQDD (Nationalist Party) supporters--seems to represent an effort by some Catholic elements to form a broad religious-oriented group in the assembly.

25X1 [redacted] the assembly's largest political group, the Greater Peoples Bloc, is losing the support of a number of its members who object to their bloc's identification as a "government group." It is questionable whether this development will significantly affect the government's strength in the assembly, however. [redacted]

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USSR: The Soviet party Central Committee has been called into session for a review of policy, with particular stress on the sharpening political offensive against the Chinese Communists.

The anti-Chinese thrust of the meeting was indicated by the title of party secretary Brezhnev's opening report on Soviet foreign policy, "The Struggle of the CPSU for the Unity of the Communist Movement." The economic plan and budget for 1967, to be taken up at the Supreme Soviet later this week, were relegated to second place on the Central Committee's agenda. This procedure, together with the recall to Moscow for the occasion of Soviet ambassadors, indicates that foreign policy will dominate the meeting.

The Soviet leadership presumably intends in this way to produce a display of domestic unanimity on the Chinese question and to add impetus to efforts to rally support among other Communist parties for the Soviet position on China. A formal resolution by the Central Committee on current international problems may emerge from the meeting. This would provide the basis for the Soviet position at a meeting of European Communist parties which may take place early next year.

EURATOM-IAEA: Bonn has suggested a counterproposal to the recent Polish-Czech offer to accept international safeguards on nuclear materials if West Germany would do likewise.

The counterproposal calls for negotiation of a formal agreement of cooperation between EURATOM, which includes West Germany, and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), of which Poland and Czechoslovakia are members. The IAEA would recognize the effectiveness of EURATOM safeguards within the European Economic Community, and in return, EURATOM would accept IAEA safeguards for all nuclear exports from the Community.

Since late September, the EURATOM commission has been studying the Polish-Czech proposal--which offers for the first time a possibility of international inspections in Communist countries. The commission has feared, however, that acceptance of the proposal would seem discriminatory toward Germany and weaken the development of EURATOM's own safeguard system. Moreover, the French are hostile to IAEA intrusion into EURATOM's field of responsibility, which enables France to inspect West Germany's nuclear programs.

If the West German counterproposal can be sold to the other members, including France, it would take EURATOM a step further toward supporting the single safeguards system the US has long advocated. In considering the proposal, France may find it difficult to reconcile its desire to keep tabs on the Germans, its preference for EURATOM over the IAEA, and its eagerness to accommodate Eastern Europe.

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NOTES

Turkey-Cyprus: Turkey has now described the arrival in late November of Czech arms on Cyprus as "a grave development likely to increase tension on the island." Ankara remains unconvinced that Athens was unaware of Makarios' secret arms deal with the Czechs, and the issue may cast a temporary shadow over the Greek-Turkish talks on the Cyprus question. Ankara has urged Athens to stop delivery of a second shipment originally scheduled to arrive in mid-December, and to see that the arms already delivered are turned over to the UN peace force. [redacted]

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Luxembourg: The major political parties are said to have tentatively agreed to eliminate the armed forces, and party leaders are in Paris this week to consult with NATO officials. Pressures for abolition of Luxembourg's military contribution to NATO have been mounting since the coalition fell over the issue of conscription last month. Although Luxembourg's military contingent in NATO is only token, its withdrawal would affect the attitudes of a number of other NATO countries on their commitments. [redacted]

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