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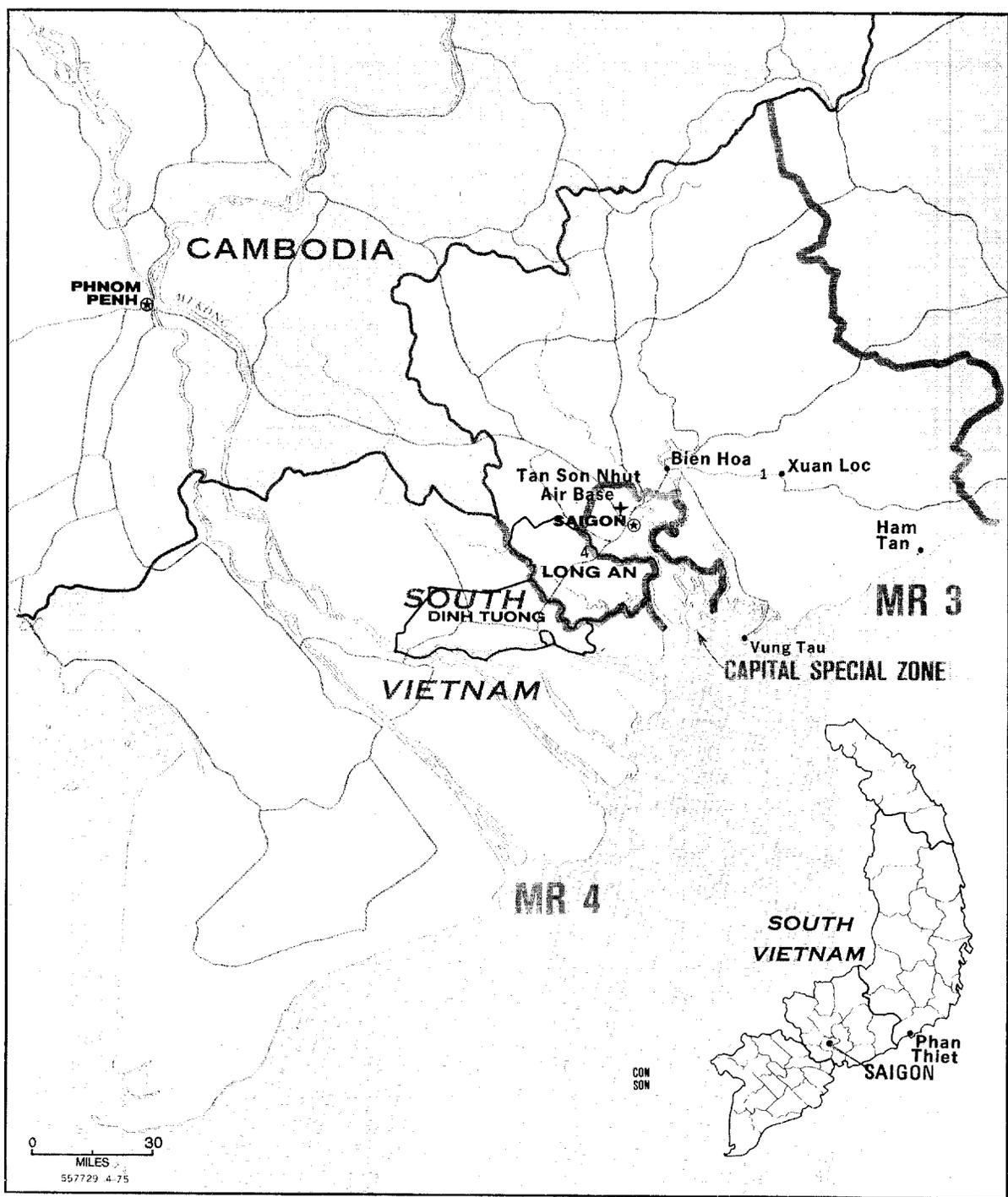
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SOUTH VIETNAM

The government's position on the Xuan Loc battlefront is deteriorating rapidly and the threat is quickly shifting to Bien Hoa. Government forces are collapsing in and around Xuan Loc--some have been hit hard while others have fled.

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

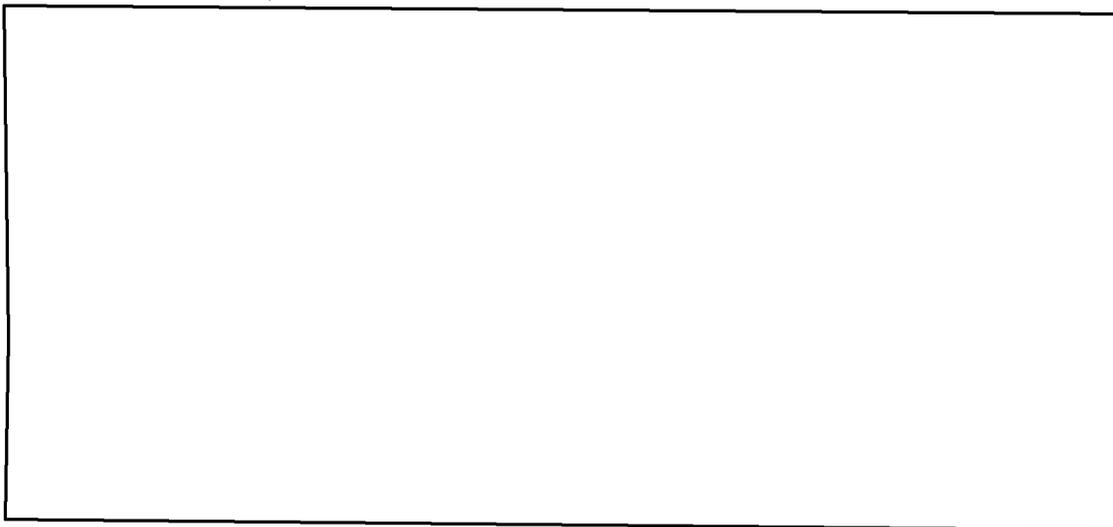
One marine brigade has been deployed on the eastern flank of Bien Hoa, but another brigade failed to arrive yesterday to man the city's northern defenses. With a large share of Saigon's forces being chewed up at Xuan Loc, the government appears to have insufficient fighting units remaining to stop the communist thrust toward Saigon from the east.

South Vietnamese units in the delta provinces have been fighting well and so far have managed to thwart communist efforts to sever Route 4, a key highway to Saigon. The communists, however, have massed a substantial force--more than three divisions--in Dinh Tuong and Long An provinces just southwest of Saigon. With such a large force in position, the communists may soon try to overpower the two government divisions defending the road, isolate other South Vietnamese units south of Dinh Tuong, and begin a major drive against the capital. Press reports state that communist sappers attacked the government's communications center at Phu Lam on Saigon's southwestern suburbs last night, but were driven off by South Vietnamese ground forces and helicopter gunships.

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Saigon has decided to evacuate Phan Thiet, its last enclave in Military Region 2, thereby opening the coastal route for communist forces to move south into the provinces east of the capital. The North Vietnamese began heavy tank and infantry attacks against the Phan Thiet area early today. A communist onslaught in this area would encounter little resistance from broken government troops still regrouping along the coast at Ham Tan. This would permit the communists to move quickly on to Vung Tau--the government's last remaining important port on the eastern coast. Several North Vietnamese divisions are located along the coast, and all of them could be in the region in a few days.



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CAMBODIA

A number of leading military figures and some civilian leaders, including former Supreme Council president General Sak Sutsakhan, made eleventh-hour escapes from Phnom Penh. Former prime minister Long Boret, Republican Party strongman Sirik Matak, and former president Lon Nol's younger brother Lon Non are among those who remain in the capital, presumably in communist hands. Long Boret and his family were left behind by helicopters making a dramatic last-minute departure from Phnom Penh's stadium. Lon Non played a part in arranging the government surrender/

Sirik Matak apparently made no effort to escape.

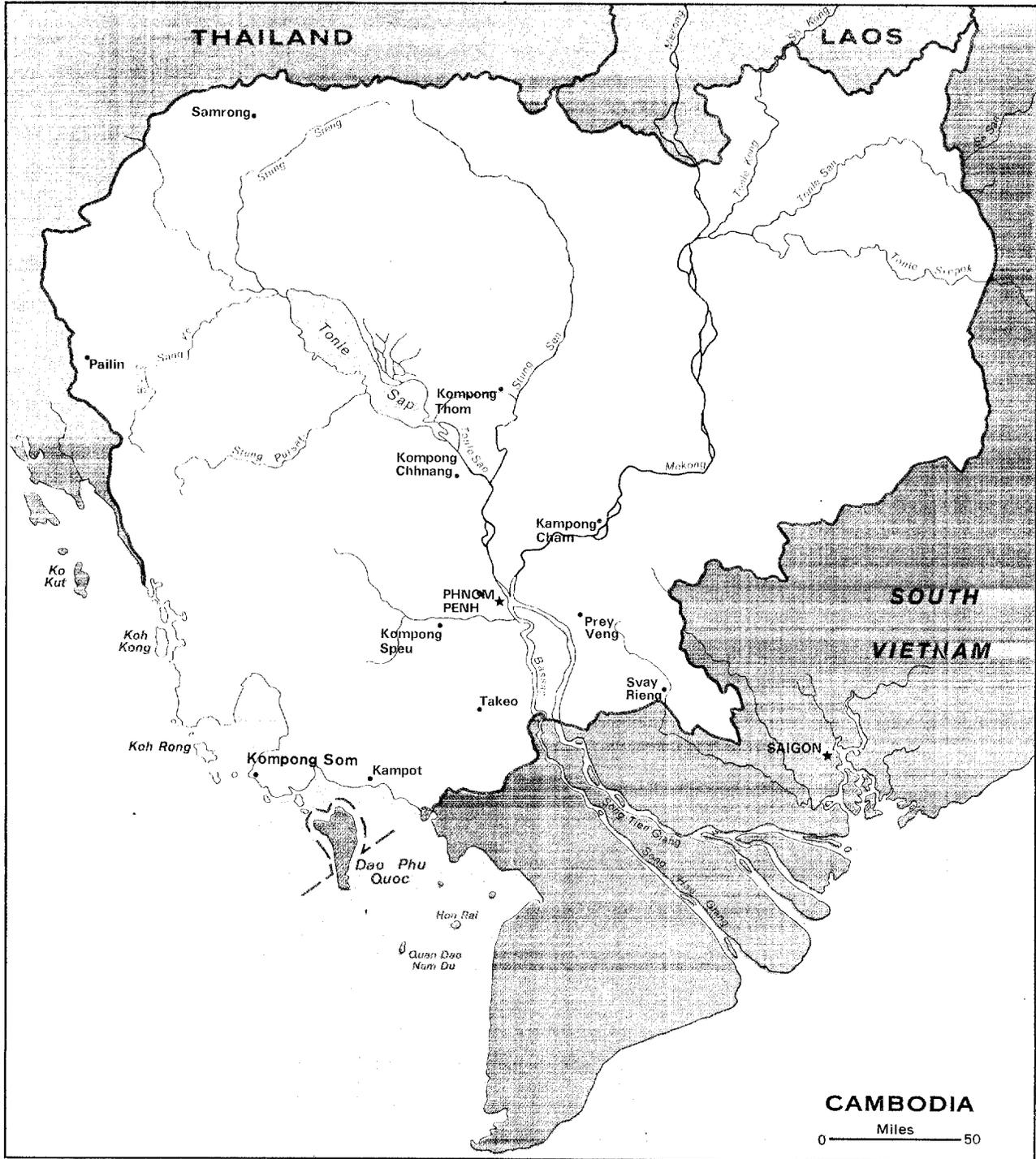
At last report, the communist take-over was proceeding/

UN officials in Phnom Penh report that the communists are observing the hotel where most Westerners were staying as a neutral zone.

Although some newsmen are still managing to file stories from the capital, the communists will probably begin clamping down on external communications as they consolidate their control over the city. So far there has been no formal announcement of the establishment of a new regime in Phnom Penh./

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

The situation remains confused outside Phnom Penh. Government garrisons at Kompong Speu and Kompong Cham have surrendered, but government commanders at Kompong



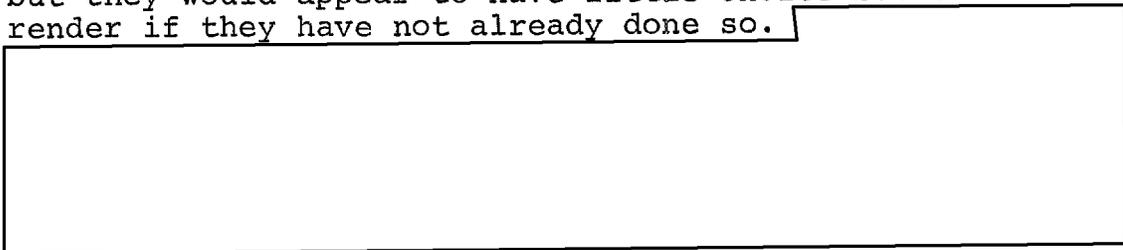
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Som, Kompong Chhnang, Kompong Thom and a number of towns in the northwest claim that they will fight on as long as possible. There has been no word on the status of the isolated enclaves of Kampot, Takeo, and Svay Rieng, but they would appear to have little choice but to surrender if they have not already done so.

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LIBYA-EGYPT

The tension between Libya and Egypt that has been gradually building over the last several months flared up this week with both sides publicly threatening to sever diplomatic relations. Although the two countries are showing some restraint, the situation is reminiscent of the imbroglio last summer that led to the withdrawal of the Egyptian military mission from Libya, the recall of Libya's Mirage aircraft from Egypt, and reinforcement of border guards on both sides. This time over 200,000 Egyptian civilians in Libya have become pawns in the dispute.

The Libyans, apparently infuriated by President Sadat's recent public characterization of Qadhafi as "insane," issued a formal protest to the Egyptian ambassador on Wednesday, charging Sadat with "flagrant intervention in Libyan affairs." The message warned that Qadhafi and the Revolutionary Command Council were firmly united and that Sadat's "campaign" to drive a wedge between them and his attacks on Qadhafi could lead to a break in relations. In an attempt to keep the door open for dialogue, the note challenged Sadat to revitalize the moribund joint committees set up in 1973 to work out a merger between the two countries.

The Libyan protest note drew a quick communiqué from Cairo rejecting the Libyan note and holding the Libyan leadership directly responsible for the safety of the resident Egyptian community. Although Qadhafi was again singled out for blame, the communiqué was relatively moderate. The possibility of severing diplomatic ties was suggested, for instance, in carefully hedged language.

The Egyptian communiqué suggested that Cairo, in retaliation, may be considering the recall of Egyptian civilian workers seconded to the Libyan government. Such a move could place the large civilian community in serious danger. US officials in Tripoli believe many

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Libyans are eager to go on an anti-Egyptian rampage which could quickly get out of control. Qadhafi, however, will move cautiously with regard to resident Egyptians without whom Libyan schools, hospitals, and the economy would be seriously disrupted.

Nevertheless, the atmosphere may be too highly charged for such practical economic and political considerations to serve as effective constraints. Resentment of Egypt is one of the few issues that firmly unites the Libyan leadership and its people and brings out their most irrational tendencies. Having been rebuffed repeatedly in his attempts at reconciliation with Sadat, Qadhafi now probably feels only the barest need for restraint in his campaign against Sadat and his policies.

The Libyan leader has little direct political leverage to use against the Egyptians. He can, however, continue propaganda harassment on such sensitive issues as Sadat's close relations with the US and his "poor" handling of Egypt's economic problems. Tripoli might also use such assets as it may have among conservative religious factions and the armed forces inside Egypt to foment domestic problems for the Egyptian leadership. Qadhafi's threat to resign, which he has used often to rally his colleagues, is also intended to unnerve Sadat, who under similar circumstances in the past has felt compelled to mend fences with his temperamental neighbor.

Sadat's recent outbursts against Qadhafi probably stem from a genuine fear that the Libyan is willing and able to conduct subversive operations in Egypt. In periods when Sadat feels confident of his position in the Arab world, he has been able to control his emotions--or at least his tongue--and has ignored Qadhafi as not constituting a threat. In periods such as the present, when Sadat and his policies are under attack in the Arab world, he feels vulnerable to subversion by Libya and fearful that other Arabs, such as the Syrians and Palestinians, will join forces with Libya in an attempt to upset his negotiating strategy.

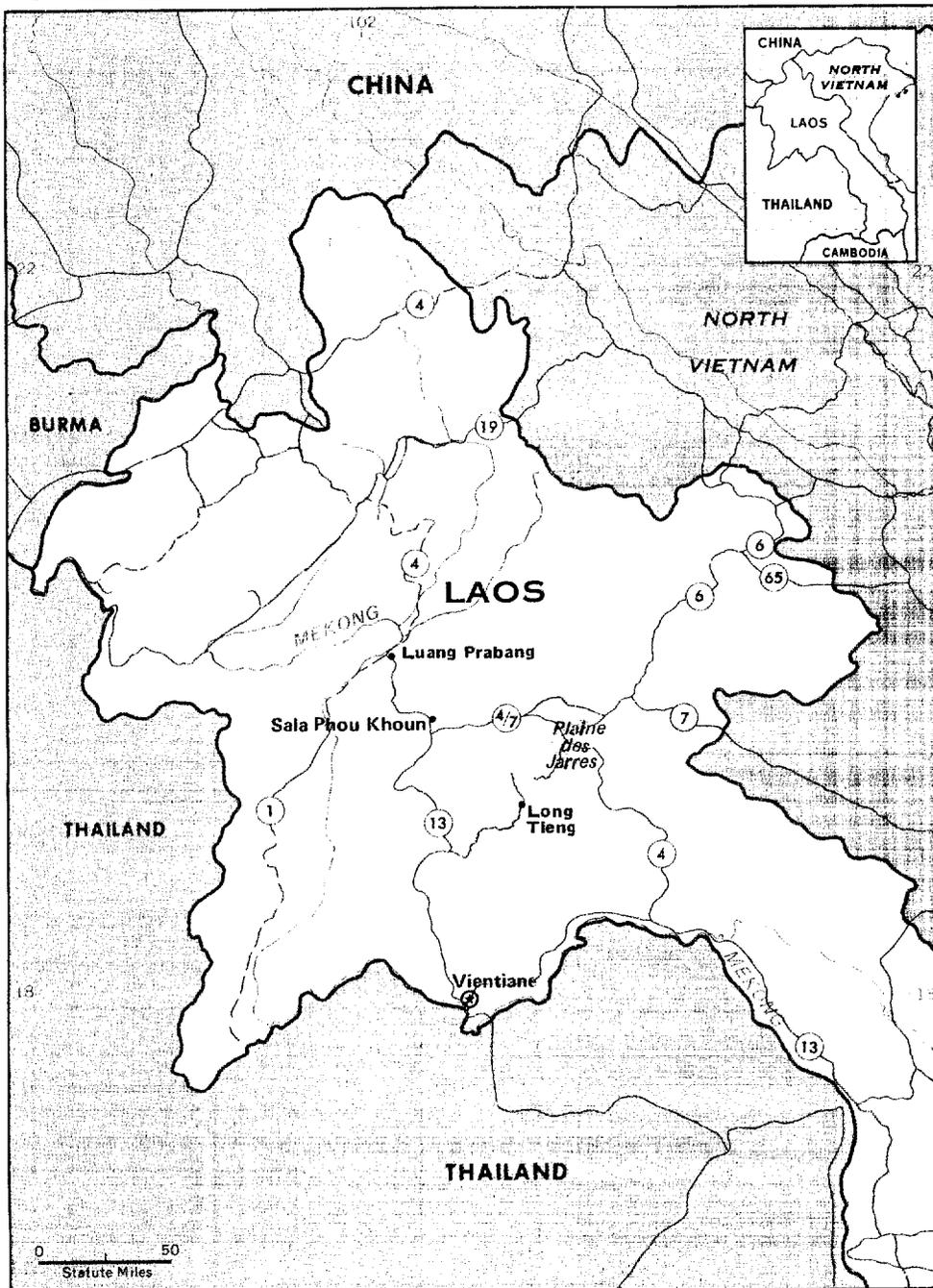
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Sadat tends to resort at these times to scathing public attacks on Qadhafi designed to discredit him with other Arabs and with those Egyptians who might be inclined to pay heed to Libya's anti-Sadat diatribes. He has thus far never considered a complete break with Libya, however, probably in the belief that this would heighten rather than diminish any threat posed from that quarter.

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Northern Laos



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LAOS

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Pathet Lao forces have become increasingly aggressive in the Sala Phou Khoun area of northern Laos.

Sala Phou Khoun is a strategic crossroads town located at the junction of routes 7 and 13, approximately 100 miles north of Vientiane and about 25 miles west of the Plaine des Jarres. It has been controlled by the non-communists since the February 1973 cease-fire in Laos.

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Fighting in the area subsided yesterday, however, with the non-communists still in control of the junction and nearby positions along Route 13.

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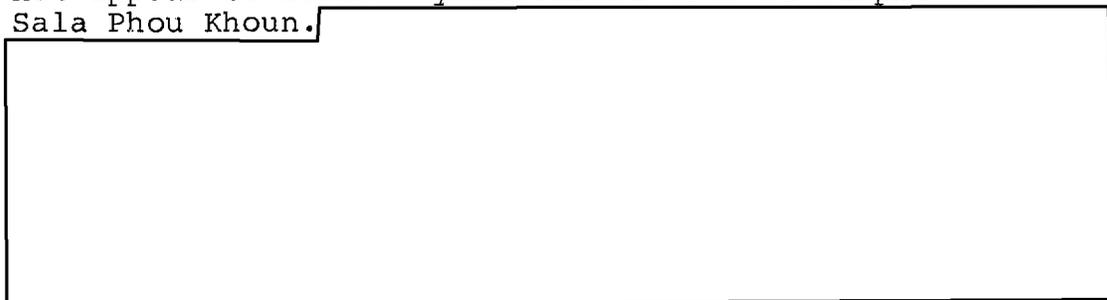
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[redacted] senior non-communist military leaders will almost certainly interpret the actions at Sala Phou Khoun as an indication that the Pathet Lao have been emboldened by communist battlefield successes in Cambodia and South Vietnam into adopting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

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



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USSR-IRAQ

The brief official visit to Moscow of Iraqi strongman Saddam Husayn, which ended April 15, probably has not lessened concern in the Kremlin about Baghdad's drift away from the USSR.

The USSR was miffed at Iraq's failure to consult it before the Iran-Iraq accord was signed

Moscow fears the accord will encourage Baghdad to follow the example of Egypt and become more independent of the USSR while seeking closer ties with the West. In a speech during the visit, Soviet Premier Kosygin failed to endorse the accord and cautioned that "imperialists" still have designs on Iraq.

In his remarks, Kosygin implied that Moscow is concerned that the Baathist regime will further reduce the influence of the Iraqi Communist Party, which now has a nominal role in the government. He said that Moscow regards the cohesion of leftist forces as an "earnest" of Iraq's revolutionary credentials. The Soviet leader also hinted at Soviet misgivings over Baghdad's suppression of the Kurds.

The tone of the communiqué and Saddam Husayn's speech in reply to Kosygin suggest that Moscow had little success in persuading Baghdad to moderate its opposition to discussion with Israel.

Kosygin had championed closer cooperation among Syria, Iraq, and Egypt, arguing that a united position would enable the Arabs to confront Israel more effectively.

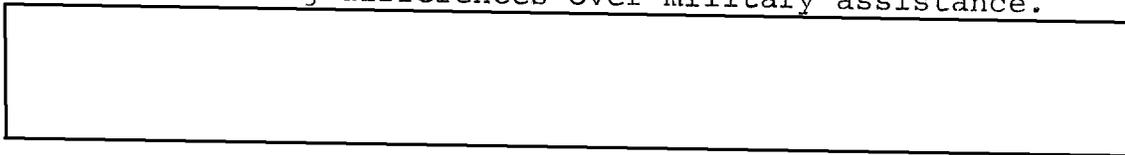
Kosygin, however, did appear to refer to Baghdad's charges that Syria has diverted water from the Euphrates River when he urged that "all" obstacles to Arab unity be removed.

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The visit appears to have been short on substantive accomplishments, with new agreements limited to a consular convention and one on cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. The Iraqi and Soviet chiefs of staff participated in the discussions and may have talked about continuing differences over military assistance.

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TURKEY

The newly installed government of Prime Minister Suleyman Demirel, which won a narrow vote of confidence last Saturday, will have to perform a delicate balancing act if it is to provide effective leadership. Demirel must deal with serious strains that will inevitably develop within the governing coalition and, at the same time, parry attacks from a determined opposition.

In his first major speech since the parliamentary vote of confidence, opposition leader Bulent Ecevit charged corruption in the vote and warned that he would require only eight honest men "without gambling debts or weaknesses exploitable by big profiteers" to bring down the government. The eight votes represent the difference between the 218 votes cast against the government last Saturday and the 226 needed to deny the government a vote of confidence under the constitution.

Ecevit, however, probably does not want to be blamed for plunging Turkey into another government crisis and has claimed that his Republican Peoples' Party will play a "moderate" opposition role. He hopes that the government will make enough legislative and policy mistakes to assure a victory for his party in the next election.

Demirel's Nationalist Front coalition partners [redacted] are united primarily by a desire to be in the government and to avoid elections [redacted]

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[redacted] One of the partners--the Islamic-oriented National Salvation Party--is noted for its uncooperative and obstructionist tactics; it was instrumental in breaking up the previous government in which it participated along with former Prime Minister Ecevit's party. The Salvationists, which challenge Turkey's choice of Western models for modernization, oppose foreign private investment and tourism and advocate a vague, utopian economic policy. Their holding of important economic portfolios does not bode well for the economy.

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Another vulnerability of the Demirel government is its dependence on the small Pan-Turkish National Action Party, a group even more extreme than the Salvationists. Led by Alpaslan Turkes, this national socialist party boasts of its right-wing "commandos," many of whom have been involved in recent clashes between left- and right-wing students. Turkes' party, which has only three seats in parliament, is overrepresented in the government with two posts, although it does not head a ministry.

Both of the extreme right parties in the coalition advocate a hard line on Cyprus and can be expected to oppose giving up any of the territory now held by the Turkish Cypriots. Both also oppose Turkey's membership in NATO and the EC. Although Demirel and his foreign and defense ministers are experienced and moderate figures, they may have the same trouble Ecevit had in keeping the extremists in line.

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Demirel appears determined to show the military, which forced him to resign in 1971, that he is capable of effective rule and that it was wrong to unseat him. Although the military still dislikes and mistrusts Demirel, it will probably maintain a "hands off" policy unless there is a dramatic rise in civil unrest or Demirel tries to take some form of revenge against the armed forces.

The next months will be critical for the government. If it can survive until the summer when the students and parliament go into recess, it should have a long breathing spell. In August, Demirel will be able to use the annual military promotions and reassignments to try to build support within the army.

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INDIA

New Delhi's first scientific satellite, programmed to be launched by the Soviet Union, has been delayed for technical reasons until mid-1975. Meanwhile, the country's space scientists are proceeding with their own space launch vehicle programs for the future, including a liquid-fueled booster, in collaboration with the French.

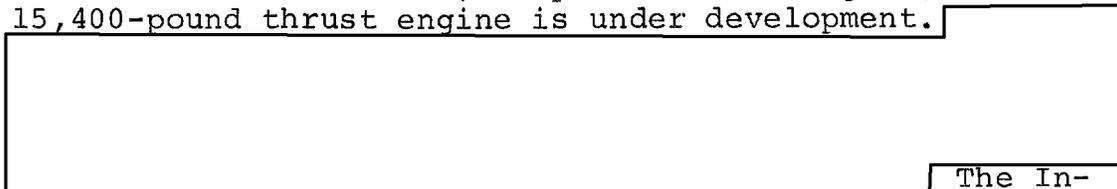
A native designed space launch vehicle, SLV-3, is currently under development. It is a solid-propelled, four-stage, 34,000-pound rocket which is to be used to place a small satellite into a near circular orbit by 1978.

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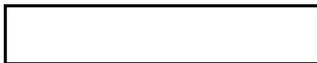


Indo-French collaboration on a new project for the development of liquid-propellant engines will provide the technological base necessary for the initial development of high-thrust rockets. The Indians have already conducted a test of a 6,600-pound thrust engine, and a 15,400-pound thrust engine is under development.

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The Indian space scientists have told a parliamentary committee that current plans call for the establishment of a propellant fuel complex in southern India and that a pilot plant for storable liquid propellants has been established.



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Although these items and facilities are required for programs solely related to space, they can also provide the technological base for weapons delivery systems.



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CUBA

The countdown for the Cuban Communist Party's first congress, probably to be held in December, has officially begun, with Fidel Castro clearly running the show.

In a communiqué released in Havana on April 16, the party's Political Bureau announced the composition of the 15-member preparatory committee for the congress.

Castro himself will chair the powerful committee, and his heir designate, his brother Raul, will serve as his deputy. The other members of the Political Bureau are also included, as are all but one member of the party's Secretariat. Three of those appointed to the committee are former members of the pro-Moscow, pre-Castro communist party and 12 are linked to Castro's old July 26 Movement.

The roster is a clear indication that Castro intends to exert personal control over all aspects of the congress as a guarantee that this major political event will not be used to erode his power. The manner in which the communiqué was made public also leaves no doubt as to who will be in total control of both the preparatory activities and the congress itself. It was released under Castro's signature on behalf of the Political Bureau. Although the party's Central Committee is theoretically the highest decision-making body in Cuba and therefore should have been the releasing authority, it appears to have had no role in determining any of the matters discussed.



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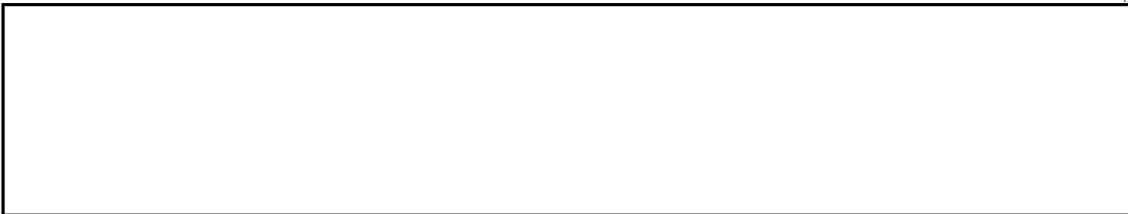
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ETHIOPIA

In recent weeks, the war in Eritrea Province between government forces and the locally popular rebels has for the most part been limited to sporadic skirmishes.

Most of the clashes have occurred in the central part of the province near Asmara and other large cities, where the security forces are actively patrolling the surrounding countryside. The rebels have ambushed some government convoys in western Eritrea near the Sudanese border, but otherwise are generally lying low. They probably are capable of launching a larger scale offensive operation, although any such effort would probably be limited in scope and of short duration.



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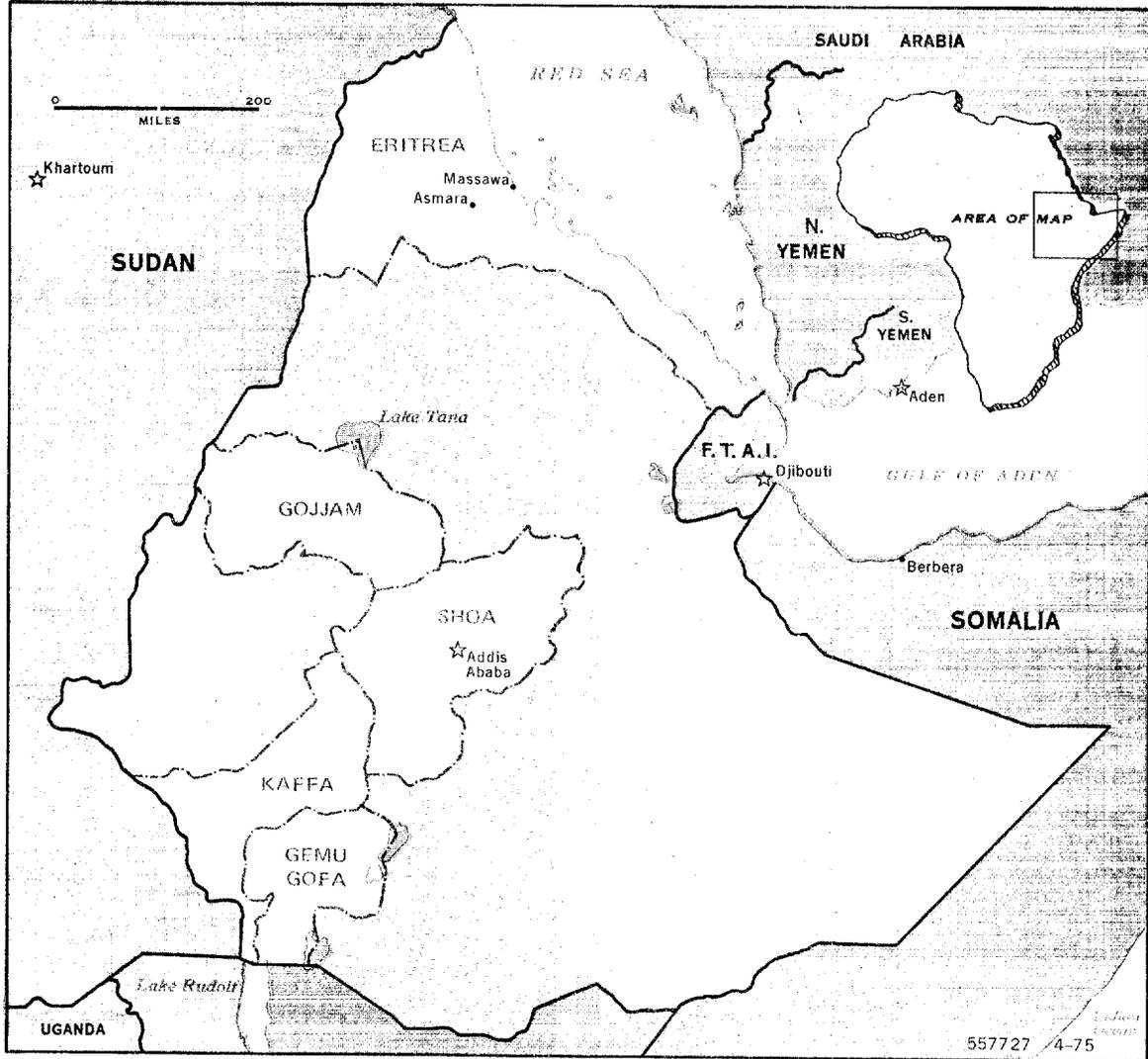
Sudanese President Numayri's efforts for a cease-fire and direct negotiations between the rebels and the government remain stalled. Ambassador Hummel, after a meeting on April 15 with key members of the ruling military council, reported that the Ethiopians clearly feel no urgency to begin negotiations.

Meanwhile, much smaller groups of armed dissidents led by conservative opponents of the ruling military council remain active in several other provinces. Insurgents in Gojjam Province, led by a former member of parliament, have had several engagements with security forces [redacted]. Fighting has also occurred in two separate areas of Shoa Province between security forces and armed bands affiliated with two landowning brothers.

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In southern Ethiopia, Bodi tribesmen from Gemu Gofa Province have invaded Kaffa Province in an attempt to reclaim land allegedly stolen by members of Ethiopia's

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dominant Amhara tribe. [redacted]

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FOR THE RECORD

Ethiopia: In an apparent effort to diversify Addis Ababa's sources of military equipment and reduce dependence on the US, a high-level Ethiopian delegation recently visited Belgrade and discussed purchases of Yugoslav materiel. The shipment to Ethiopia by air of an estimated 200 tons of Yugoslav small arms ammunition and aerial bombs scheduled to arrive this week may be the first indication of the delegation's success. Equipment for remodeling a Yugoslav-built ammunition factory in Addis Ababa may also be included in the air shipment. The Ethiopians are said to be interested in purchasing patrol boats as well.

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