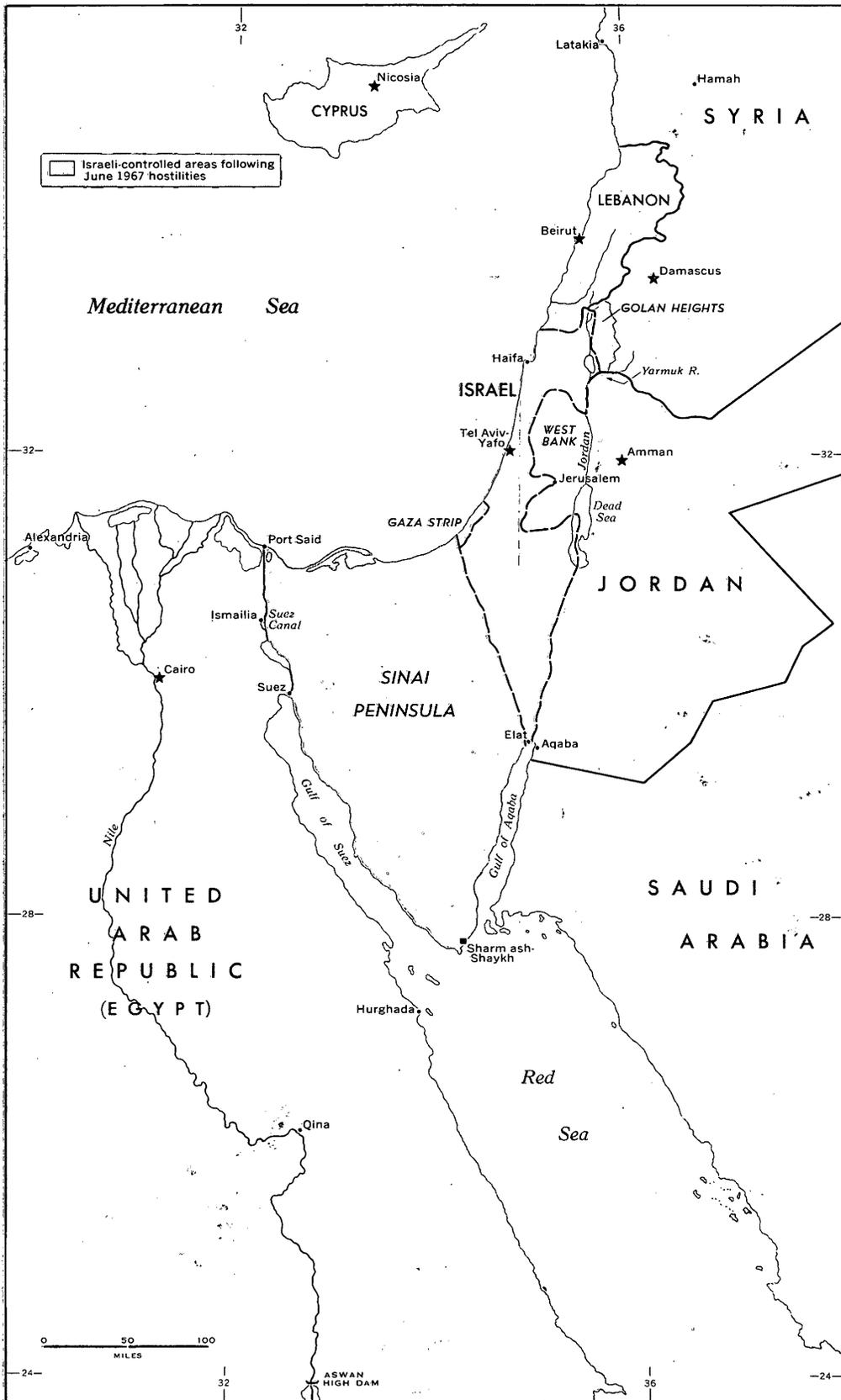




The President's Daily Brief



~~Top Secret~~ 50X1
21
3 February 1969
(Morning)



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I. MAJOR PROBLEMS

MIDDLE EAST

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Herve Alphand, former French ambassador to the US and now top careerist in the Foreign Ministry, told the US Embassy in Paris Friday that the Quai is developing specific proposals for tabling at the projected four power meeting at the UN. Alphand claimed the Quai has prepared a paper, not yet approved by Debre and De Gaulle, which is

much more precise than the Soviet plan about ways to bring the Arabs and the Israelis together. It provides for guarantees of frontiers, freedom of passage through the Suez and the Gulf of Aqaba, and small rectifications of frontiers "in both directions."

Alphand said he hoped the UK and US would also come to the table armed with specific proposals.

EUROPE

The political adviser in the French Defense Ministry has scotched recent press speculation that France is interested in increasing its military ties with NATO. He told an embassy officer that the speculation was probably based on conversation with the "limited number of the French military" who are not in sympathy with De Gaulle's policies. He also said the articles had exaggerated the extent of French interest in participating more extensively in NATO exercises, although he thought a limited increase in this area might be possible.

The adviser, who earlier had hinted strongly at a French desire for some form of nuclear cooperation with the US, did not mention this topic on this occasion.

SOVIET AFFAIRS

There is nothing of significance to report.

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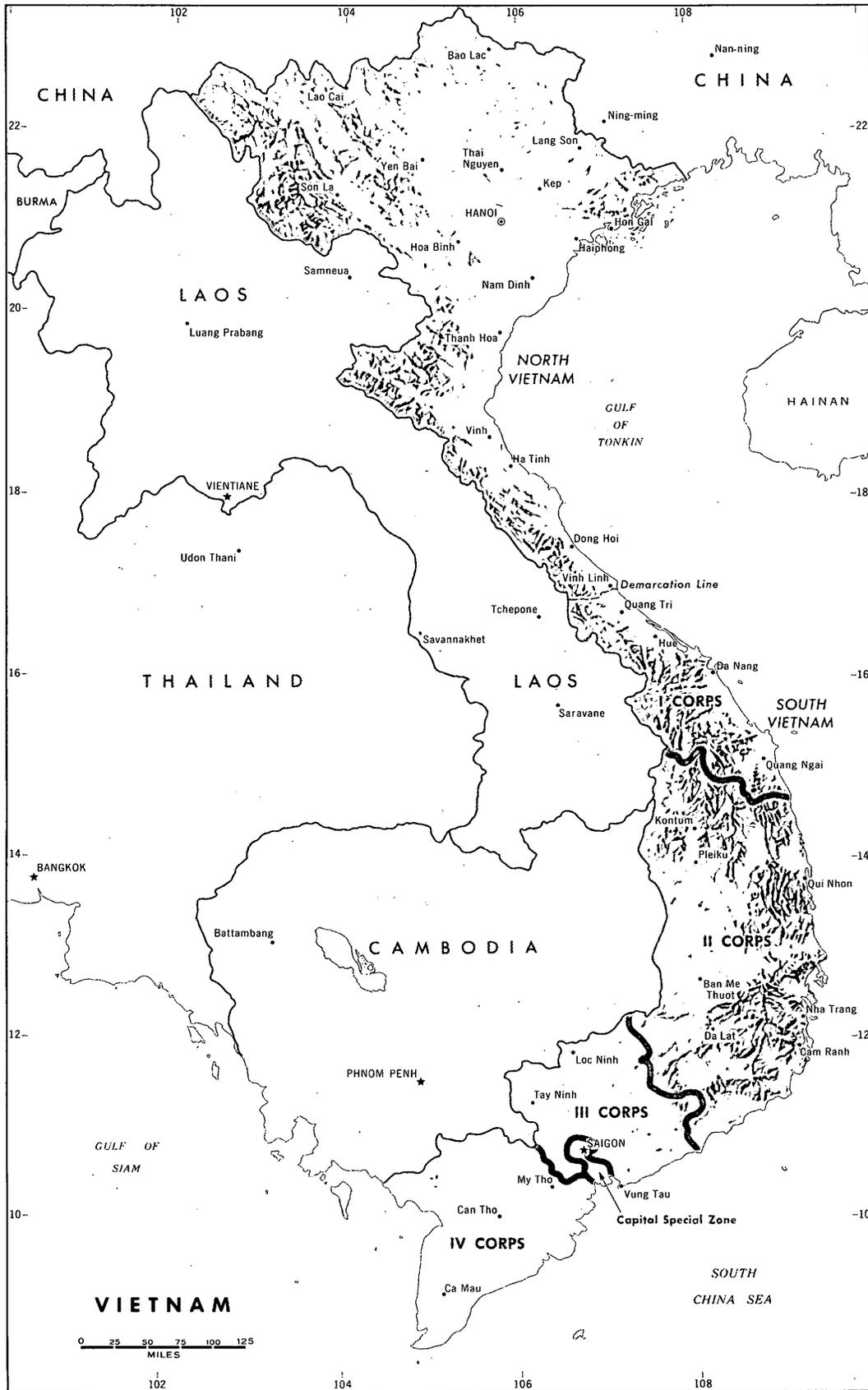
VIETNAM

Because of widespread speculation about special nuances in the North Vietnamese presentation in Paris last Thursday, we reviewed previous Communist statements to see what, if anything, was new in Xuan Thuy's language. We found almost nothing. The most striking point, as reported earlier, was his repeated insistence that political issues must be clarified before military matters can be resolved. The Communists used almost the same language last July, however.

There was nothing new in Xuan Thuy's statement that the DRV's four points and the Front's five points should be the "basis" for a political settlement. The Communists have long hedged their positions with this phrasing. Thuy's lip service to the principle of "self-determination" was somewhat more explicit than in the past, but this, too, has been a recurring theme in the talks. Usually it takes the form of a demand that the US respect the military provisions of the Geneva agreements so that conditions for "self-determination" will be created.

Thuy rendered the third of Hanoi's four points into a demand for "self-determination" in which the Liberation Front's "existence" is acknowledged. This is almost the same formula the Communists put forward last July, when they seemed to drop the demand in point three that a settlement must be "in accordance" with the Front's political program. Although the older, more restrictive language

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is still used frequently, we have long assumed that the Communists have abandoned this totally unacceptable demand. Even their current line calling for a "peace cabinet" in Saigon is a step down from the Front's program, which calls for overthrow and dismantling of the present government.

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In the provinces surrounding Saigon, first line Communist units are continuing to edge closer to key allied target areas.

II. OTHER IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS

JAPAN

Ten Japanese students invaded the US Embassy in Tokyo yesterday afternoon in what was clearly an attention-getting stunt. They broke several windows and hung banners containing anti-US slogans from the chancery roof before being evicted by the Japanese police. No offices in the embassy were entered, and there were no US injuries.

VENEZUELA

President-elect Caldera told Ambassador Bernbaum last Thursday that he fully supports Venezuela's claim to the Essequibo region of Guyana. He said that his government

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would not resort to military force but that it could not repudiate those Guyanese and Venezuelans who were trying to foment rebellion in Essequibo. He also told the ambassador that the large-scale economic projects now under way in eastern Venezuela need to expand into the disputed region.

All of this confirms our belief that neither Caldera nor any other Venezuelan politician is willing or able to de-fuse the dispute with Guyana.

PAKISTAN

More turmoil is in prospect in Pakistan. Leftist leaders and dissident students have already turned down President Ayub's offer to open up a dialogue and have demanded that troops be withdrawn from the major cities. Ayub's speech on Saturday in fact did not live up to its advance billing. He did note that the 1962 constitution could be amended, but we doubt that he is ready to meet the key demands of the opposition that the indirect election system, which virtually assures his re-election early next year, be abolished and that parliamentary government be restored.

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