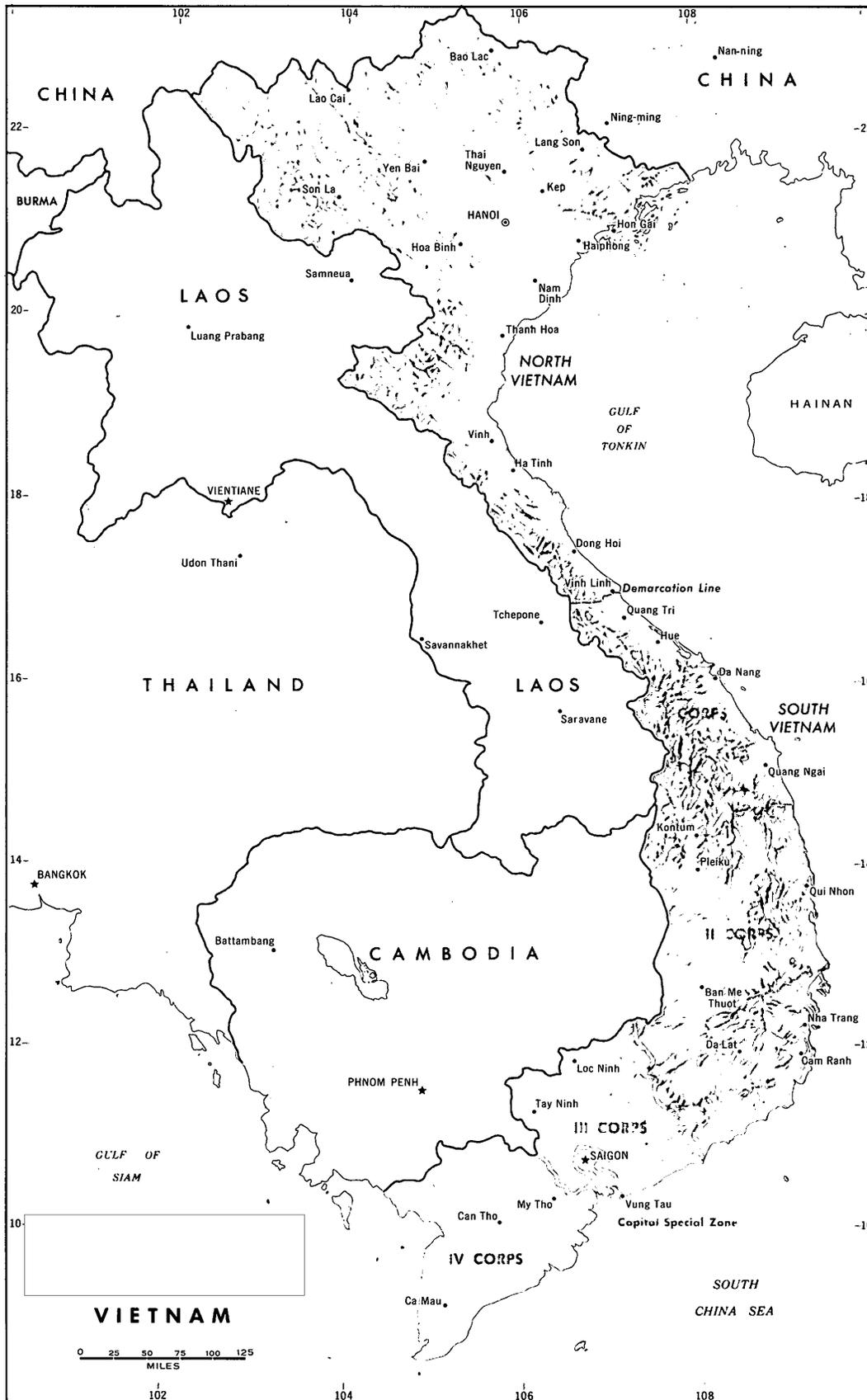




The President's Daily Brief



7 April 1969
(Morning)
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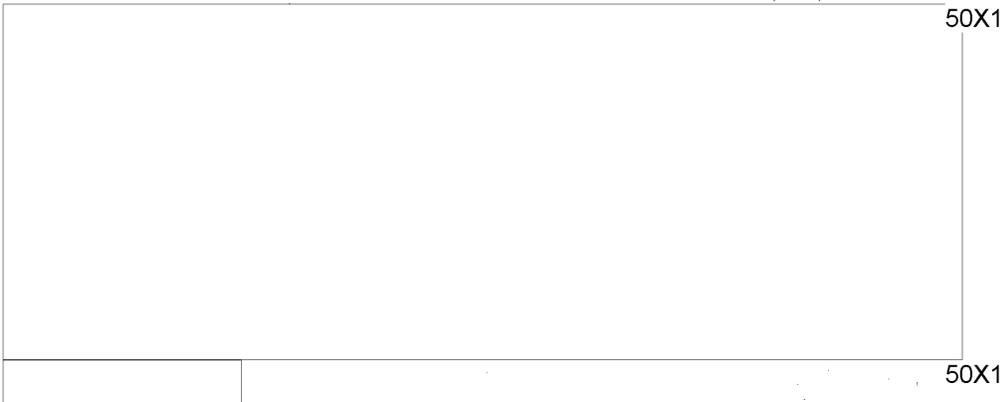
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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

I. MAJOR PROBLEMS

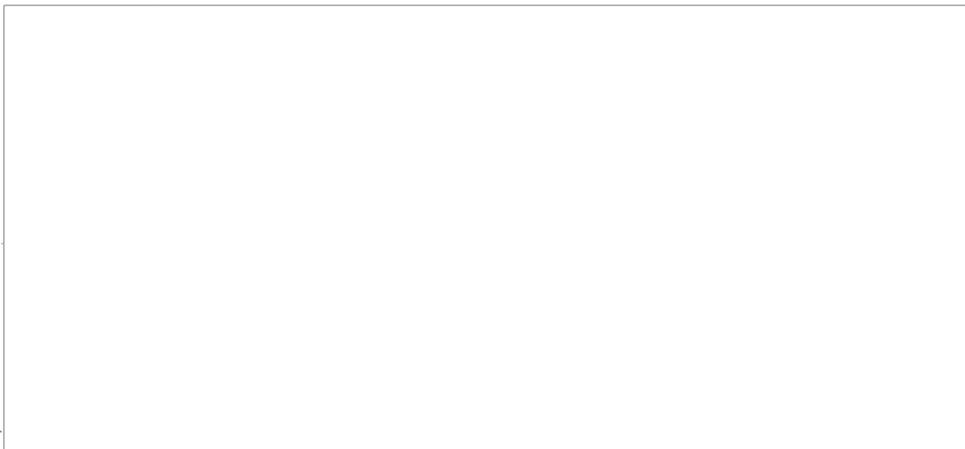
VIETNAM

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

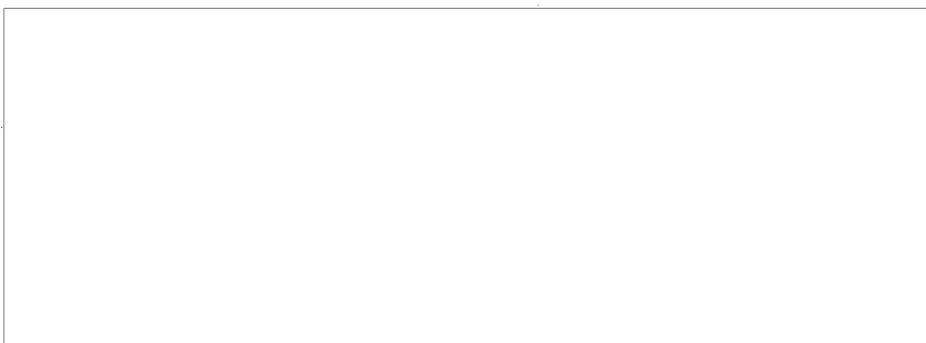


[redacted] the new director for Asian Af-50X1
fairs in the French Foreign Ministry told a US Embassy official that the Communists had informed the French that there was no point in holding private talks as long as the US insisted on dealing with military and political issues separately.

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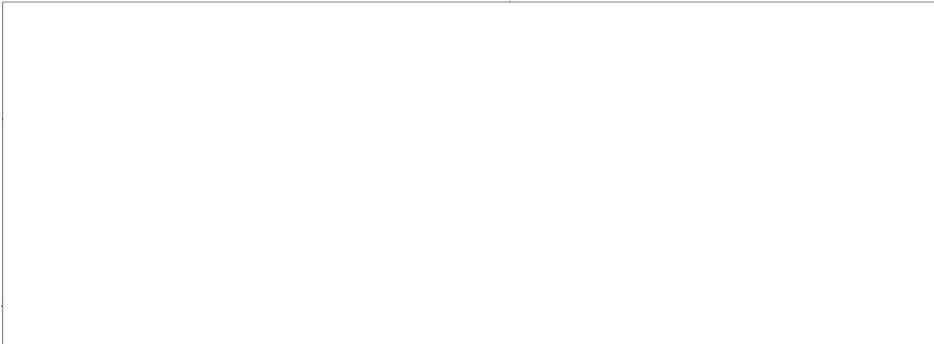
Saigon has voiced no objections to the prospect of a US declaration recognizing Cambodia's borders, although South Vietnamese leaders hardly seem enthusiastic. Thieu offered no comment when Ambassador Berger notified him of the pending US action. Foreign Minister Thanh asked whether the US would issue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

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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

MIDDLE EAST

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

II. OTHER IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS

COMMUNIST CHINA

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

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