



The President's Daily Brief

April 30, 1975

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

April 30, 1975

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SOUTH VIETNAM

The flag of the Viet Cong's Provisional Revolutionary Government was hoisted over the presidential palace at 12:15 today Saigon time, marking the end of over 30 years of war in Vietnam.

North Vietnamese troops and tanks entered the heart of Saigon less than two hours after President Duong Van Minh announced the unconditional surrender of his government. Minh asked that Viet Cong representatives meet him to arrange an orderly transfer of power, stating that "I am waiting to hand over full administrative power to you." At last report, Minh was seen leaving the palace accompanied by communist troops.

President Minh's brief address to the nation over Saigon radio was followed by an order from the South Vietnamese joint general staff telling all members of the armed forces to observe the President's order and "be ready to make contacts with PRG forces to carry out a bloodless cease-fire." South Vietnamese troops were pulled out of defensive positions in and around the city and marched to central points to turn in their weapons.

Immediately after the US evacuation was completed in the morning, the US embassy and consular office were looted by South Vietnamese mobs. Following the occupation of the city by North Vietnamese troops, order has largely been restored. Sporadic shooting was reported in parts of Saigon during the day, but there are no indications of any significant resistance from government forces.

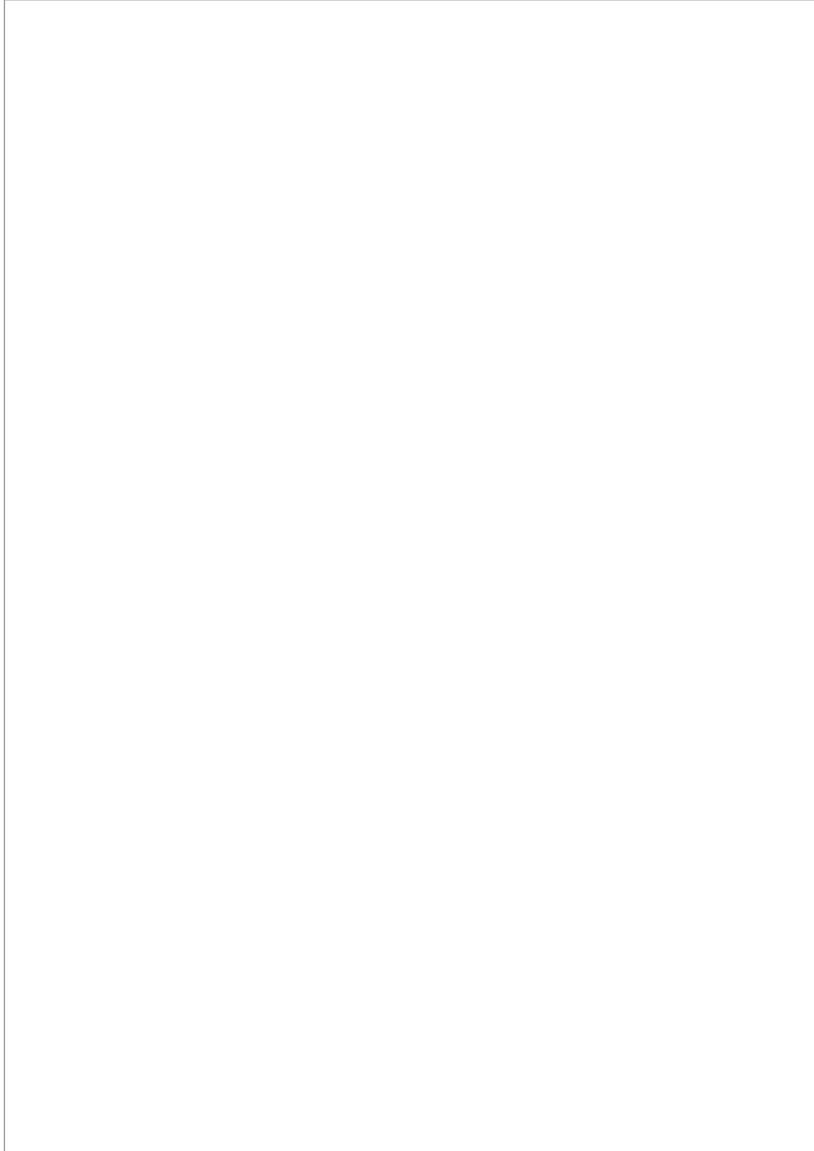
There is no news from the southern delta. As of this morning, South Vietnamese units in that area were still intact.



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EGYPT-ISRAEL



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PORTUGAL

Socialist Party leader Mario Soares appears to have taken a first step in a post-election challenge to the Communist Party and the ruling Armed Forces Movement. In an interview with a Lisbon newspaper on Monday, Soares described the results of last week's election as an "immense defeat" for the Communists.

Soares derided the Communists for obtaining such a small vote after a well-financed and concerted election effort and implied that the Communists had exploited key positions in the government and the media to advance their campaign. The Socialist leader indirectly criticized the Armed Forces Movement by warning against efforts to develop a brand of socialism that would isolate the country internationally and offer no immediate prospects of improved living standards.

Soares called for municipal elections to replace local leftist officials who assumed their posts after the coup a year ago. The Movement has ignored appeals from the moderate parties that these officials be selected through free elections.

Soares' criticisms are a departure from the conciliatory stand he adopted immediately after the election. At that time he publicly stated that the Socialists would not seek government changes and would continue to support a platform that would guarantee military control of the government. His shift in tactics may be a reaction to efforts by both the Movement and the Communists to portray the moderates' election victory as a success for the parties of the left and an endorsement of the Movement's policies.

Soares may also have been influenced by the runner-up Popular Democratic Party, which has criticized statements by the Communists and the media aimed at playing down or distorting election results. The Popular Democrats maintain that Portuguese voters made a clear choice for a democratic form of socialism.

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The Socialists face a difficult task in trying to capitalize on their election victory. They want to press their advantage sufficiently to obtain some concrete results from their strong showing. In an effort to reduce communist and radical influence in the government, they are likely to make common cause with moderate officers in the Armed Forces Movement. At the same time, the Socialists want to avoid the appearance of pushing too hard, fearing that they would thereby alienate the still dominant radical officers.

* * *

Soviet reporting and commentary on the Portuguese election so far have been candid about the poor showing of the Communists, raising the possibility that Moscow is not altogether displeased with the outcome of the election. The Soviets may calculate that the relative lack of electoral support for the Portuguese Communist Party will make it more amenable to Soviet influence. The Soviets also may see the election results as evidence of the local party's wisdom in associating itself closely with the Armed Forces Movement, which remains the locus of power in Portugal.

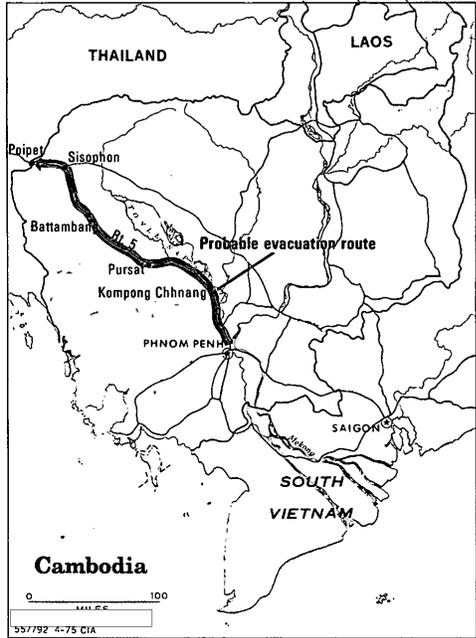
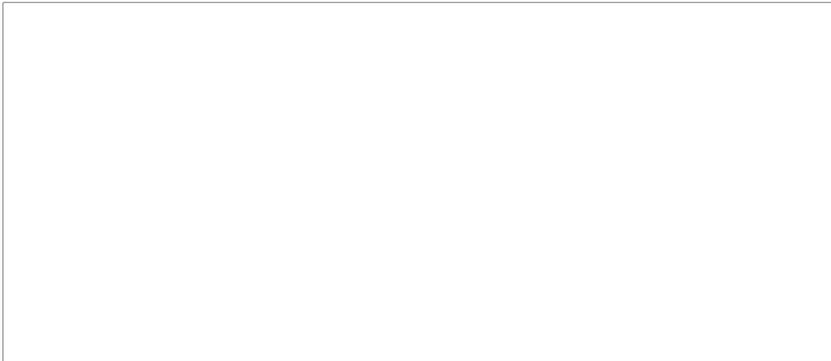
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NOTES

The new authorities in Cambodia plan to deport those foreigners now confined in the French embassy compound in Phnom Penh--over 600 at last count--by way of the town of Poipet on the Thai border.

[redacted] the foreigners will be sent out by road in increments beginning on April 30; the total evacuation could take 15 to 20 days. The French have arranged with the Thai government and the Red Cross for medical treatment and onward transportation for the evacuees once they cross the border. Upon the completion of the evacuation, the French plan to close their mission in Phnom Penh. Paris has already expressed its willingness, however, to establish ties with the new regime in Phnom Penh and will presumably try to reopen its embassy as soon as possible.

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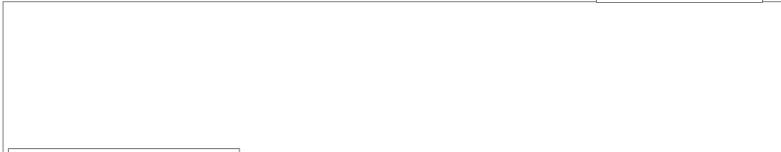
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Polish Communist Party leader Gierek is moving rapidly to launch a sweeping reorganization of party and government bureaucracies.

Gierek is evidently convinced that the success of his plans for economic development--on which his tenure rests--depends on a major structural reform that will tighten central control at the expense of the powerful regional administrations. 

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