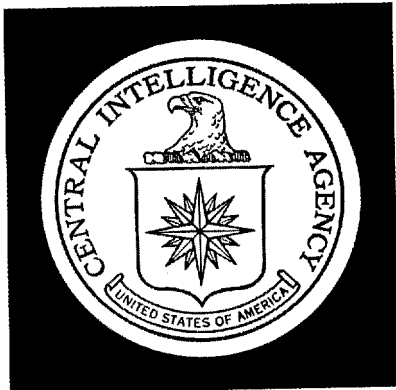


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*Cyprus: The situation remains delicate and potentially dangerous, but Athens' agreement to the latest proposals worked out in Ankara by presidential envoy Vance could be a major step toward solving the current crisis.

Vance went to Nicosia from Athens to get Cyprus President Makarios' approval of the agreement as it now stands. Reports from Nicosia, however, suggest that Makarios may be a stumbling block.

Cypriot Foreign Minister Kyprianou, anticipating the draft, told the US ambassador that the government of Cyprus could never accept a solution which left on Cyprus the Greek and Turkish military contingents authorized by the London-Zurich agreements. He also ruled out any thought of disbanding the Cypriot National Guard. The ambassador concluded that it would be a major task to get the Cypriots to agree to the proposals being discussed in Athens and Ankara.

NATO Secretary General Brosio will go to Ankara today to get clarification of minor points that still distress the Greeks, after which he will return to Brussels. Execution of the agreement, once it is approved by Makarios, would follow an appeal by UN Secretary General Thant. A Cypriot request for a new emergency session of the Security Council has been postponed pending the outcome of Vance's current talks in Nicosia.

In Turkey, military preparedness continues at a high level with some troops and assault equipment remaining on ships at the port of Mersin. Although optimistic that a diplomatic solution may be found, the press continues to reflect Turkish determination and warns that war could result if the current negotiations break down. Contrary to earlier information, the Turkish armed forces are now reported to be solidly behind the Demirel government and to want to avoid war with Greece.

The populace in Greece supports Athens' policy in the diplomatic struggle with the Turks, and believes US efforts will avert a war. Both Greek nationalist and leftists charge, however, that US actions favor Turkey.

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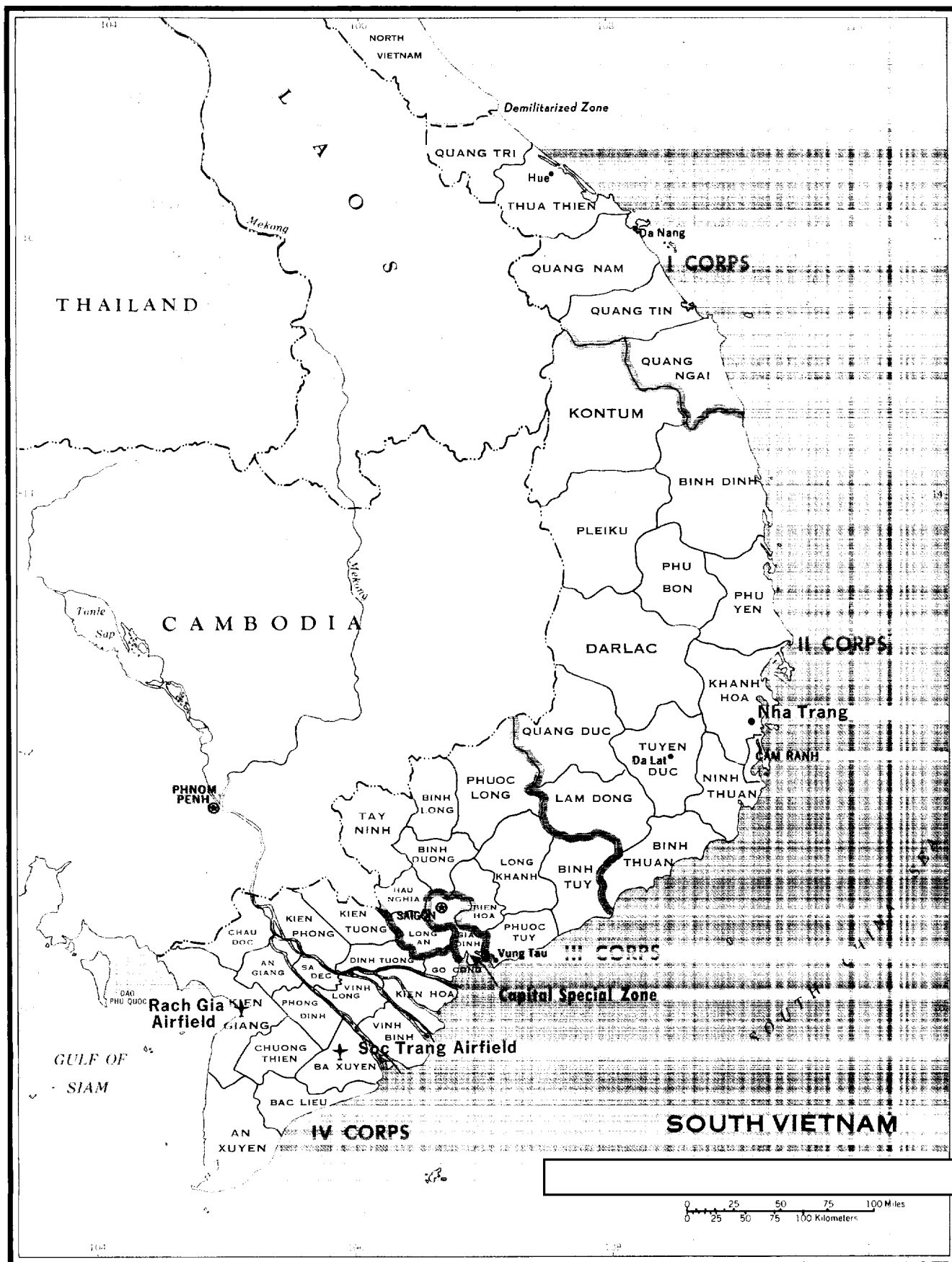
The Soviet Union is still publicly urging restraint on all parties, but at the same time is trying to isolate the strongly anti-Communist Greek junta while improving its position with Ankara. Soviet Ambassador Smirnov told newsmen in Ankara on Monday that Moscow favors withdrawal of all illegal forces from Cyprus. Nicosia views this as clear support for the Turks. During the critical 1963-64 period, Moscow generally criticized the Turkish position while favoring Makarios. In the current crisis Moscow appears to be trying to protect its improved relationship with Turkey, while maintaining general support for Makarios.

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*South Vietnam: Only small-scale engagements between allied and Communist forces have been reported in the past several days.

One of these limited enemy actions included mortar attacks on two US - South Vietnamese airbases in the delta on 28 November. During the period 25-26 November, the Communists leveled 14 mortar attacks on allied positions in the delta provinces; they also shelled two Special Forces camps, the US base at Nha Trang and several US positions in the central highlands.

According to late information, a South Vietnamese outpost and district headquarters at Bu Dop in Phuoc Long Province in northern III corps were attacked today. US and South Vietnamese forces supported by tactical air strikes repulsed the attack after several hours. Enemy losses were 31 killed, while the South Vietnamese lost 15 killed and 62 wounded. No US losses were reported.

Police Director Loan, who submitted his resignation late last week, said on 27 November that he had agreed to stay at his post for at least two or three more months. This change apparently was prompted by Vice President Ky, who reportedly told Loan that his resignation could not be accepted because it would complicate the organization of the government. Ky promised to review Loan's request in a few months.

Loan's reason for resigning, in addition to a stomach ailment, was his conviction that he would be at odds with important personalities and embarrass the new government.

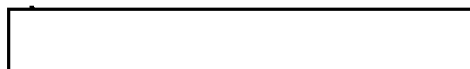


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Cambodia: Prince Sihanouk is voicing alarm that the war in South Vietnam may soon be extended into Cambodia.

Sihanouk told a press conference in Phnom Penh on 26 November that the recent spate of US press reports on Vietnamese Communist activities in Cambodia are a form of pressure on the US government to extend the war. He praised President Johnson for exercising restraint but went on to warn the Cambodian people to be prepared for a "struggle to the death against the Americans." Sihanouk reiterated that any US move across the border would force Cambodia to fight alongside the Viet Cong and the North Vietnamese.

Sihanouk also issued standard denials that there are permanent Communist facilities located on Cambodian territory, although he acknowledged that Communist units pass through isolated border areas. Sihanouk also admitted that Cambodia had made a "verbal agreement" to sell rice and other nonmilitary goods to the Viet Cong.

Sihanouk's statements over the past week indicate that he intends to continue to portray Cambodia as the innocent victim of circumstances beyond its control. He has underlined this position by pointed references to the inability of the allied forces to control the South Vietnamese side of the border. At the same time, he has sought to demonstrate his good faith by renewing a standing request for an expanded International Control Commission role with permanent sites in border areas.

There have been recurring reports that leading Cambodian civilian and military leaders are urging Sihanouk to follow a more "neutral" course but thus far no indications that he intends to bring increased pressure to bear on the Vietnamese Communists to limit their presence in Cambodia. [REDACTED]

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Laos: There are new signs that junior officers are dissatisfied with the military leadership in Vientiane.

A number of colonels in the Royal Armed Forces have been circulating a petition calling for the creation of two new posts in the cabinet. These would be filled by military men, and ostensibly designed to increase coordination between military and civilian elements in the government. The military leadership has been pushing for a greater voice in cabinet affairs for some time.

The real purpose of the petition, however, may be to pave the way for a shake-up in the top leadership of the armed forces. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] the colonels behind the petition are suggesting that the new posts be filled by Commander-in-Chief Ouan and Chief of Staff Kouprasith. The colonels are apparently arguing that with Ouan and Kouprasith kicked upstairs, de facto control of the armed forces will fall to General Phasouk, a vigorous and popular regional commander in southern Laos.

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The petition has received support from a substantial number of junior officers who have been disgruntled over [REDACTED] Ouan and Kouprasith and the way they have been prosecuting the war against the Pathet Lao. Prime Minister Souvanna probably will oppose additions to the cabinet and it is not clear how far the colonels will press their case.

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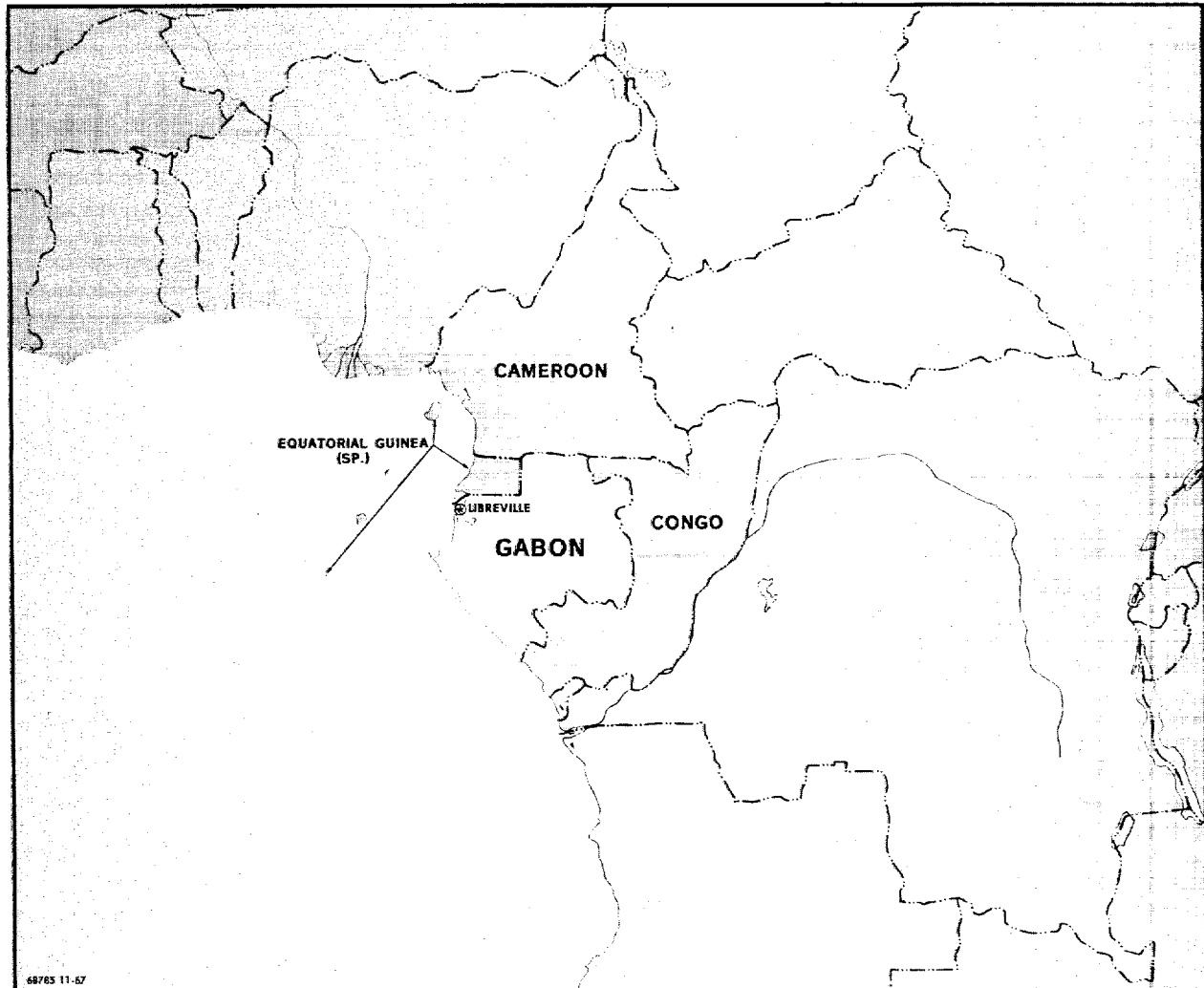
At a minimum, the petition will probably revive quiescent political infighting in Vientiane. [REDACTED]

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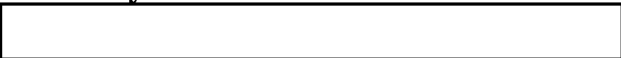
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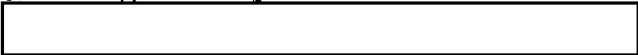
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Malaysia: Although leftist-fanned racial strife has subsided in Penang, the government has been forced to declare limited martial law in areas of the mainland opposite the island. Police spokesmen state that total casualties thus far number 17 dead and 196 injured, mostly Chinese. Large numbers of Labor Party members in Penang and other northwestern states have been arrested, and further repressive measures against this heavily Communist-infiltrated party appear likely. 

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Gabon: The transfer of power to Albert Bongo following the death yesterday of President Mba will probably be orderly. Bongo has been groomed for the presidency by the French ever since Mba fell seriously ill in August 1966. There is some uneasiness in French and Gabonese circles, however, because Bongo lacks Mba's stature and tribal power base. In any event, Paris will probably take whatever steps are necessary to keep a pro-French regime in power in its mineral-rich ex-colony. 

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