

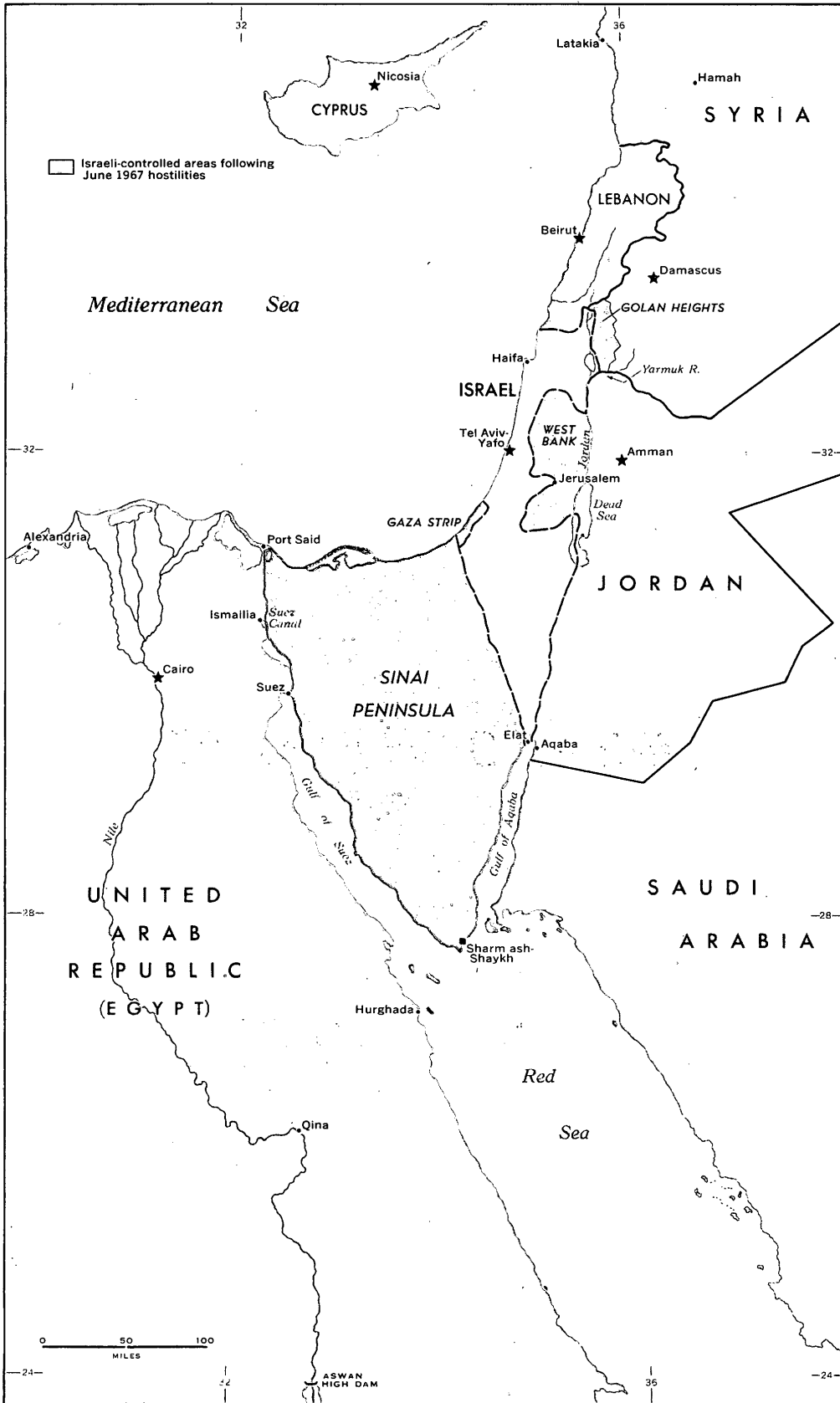
The President's Daily Brief

1 April 1969

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TOP SECRET

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**LATE NOTES FOR THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF OF
1 APRIL 1969**

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2 April 1969

LATE NOTES FOR THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF OF
1 APRIL 1969

I. MAJOR PROBLEMS

VIETNAM

There was no significant enemy activity in Vietnam during the daylight hours today.

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SOVIET AFFAIRS

The Czechoslovak party leadership issued a statement following yesterday's meeting of the Central Committee presidium. The statement was highly critical of those Czech citizens, especially party members, who took part in last weekend's anti-Soviet demonstrations. Progressive presidium member Josef Smrkovsky was singled out by name "for certain utterances at variance" with the party resolution of last November. The communications media were also criticized, including the party daily Rude Pravo. Politika, a weekly magazine, was "suspended temporarily because of grave political errors." (FBIS 16, 2 Apr)

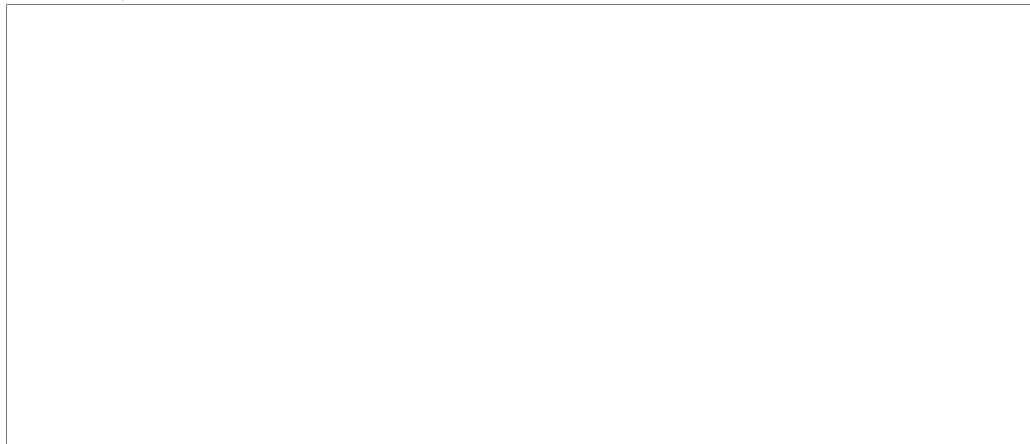
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There is nothing significant to report on the Middle East or Europe.

II. OTHER IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS

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DOMINICAN REPUBLIC



FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

I. MAJOR PROBLEMS

MIDDLE EAST

Although the Israelis have carefully avoided an outright rejection in advance of the four-power talks, their displeasure with the talks is becoming ever clearer [redacted]

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[redacted] Tel Aviv's latest rhetorical salvo was fired Monday by Foreign Minister Eban, who told Ambassador Barbour that Israel was growing nervous at an Iraqi buildup in Jordan. When pinned down by the ambassador, he said it was an increase in Iraqi artillery which really exercised the Israelis, and he intimated Jordanian civilians might be shelled if a duel with the new artillery broke out.

We have seen no signs of an Iraqi buildup. In fact, about 3,000 troops were sent home recently to fight the Kurds. This brought Iraqi troop totals in Jordan down to something under 20,000. There are several thousand more Iraqis just across the border in Syria.

* * *

Recent statements by Minister of Defense Moshe Dayan that he is not "comfortable" in the ruling Labor Party could signal the beginning of domestic political turmoil in Israel. Dayan said--for the first time publicly--that he has not yet made up his mind whether to leave the party but will make that decision well before the fall elections.

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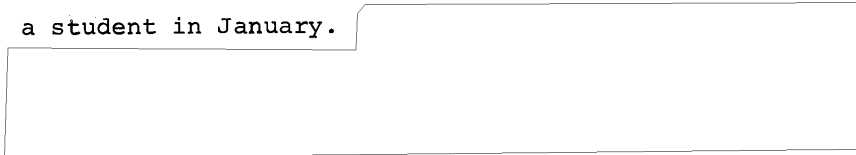
Dayan wants to be prime minister but has no independent political machinery outside the party. His departure from the party would probably result in the breakup of the national coalition, perhaps even causing damaging break-offs from the Labor Party itself.

EUROPE

Embassy Paris believes the French will continue, and even intensify, their efforts to lure London and Bonn into discussing alternatives to a supranational European Community. Even if they fail, they will place themselves on record as being willing to seek solutions to the current impasse and will be in a better position to resist further pressures for UK entry into the Common Market. The embassy believes that De Gaulle at 78 realizes his successors are unlikely to continue his ultranationalist policies. Therefore, he figures he must contrive major and lasting changes before time runs out. While he does not want to leave or scuttle the Community, an irrational move by an old man in a hurry is always possible.

SOVIET AFFAIRS

The new wave of anti-Soviet demonstrations brought Soviet Defense Minister Grechko and First Deputy Foreign Minister Semyenov to Prague yesterday. Tensions in the city are at their highest pitch since the immolation of a student in January.



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The violence against Soviet installations, equipment, and personnel during the night of 28-29 March was more widespread than originally reported. Burning of Soviet buildings and cars or attacks on Soviet troops occurred in nine cities, and lesser incidents apparently took place elsewhere.

The Czechoslovak authorities are clearly concerned. The leaderships of the federal, Czech, and Slovak governments met yesterday in an unusual joint session to decide on what to do next. One thing they will have to do is mute the anti-Soviet tone of Czech media reporting the rioting.

VIETNAM

There is nothing significant to report.

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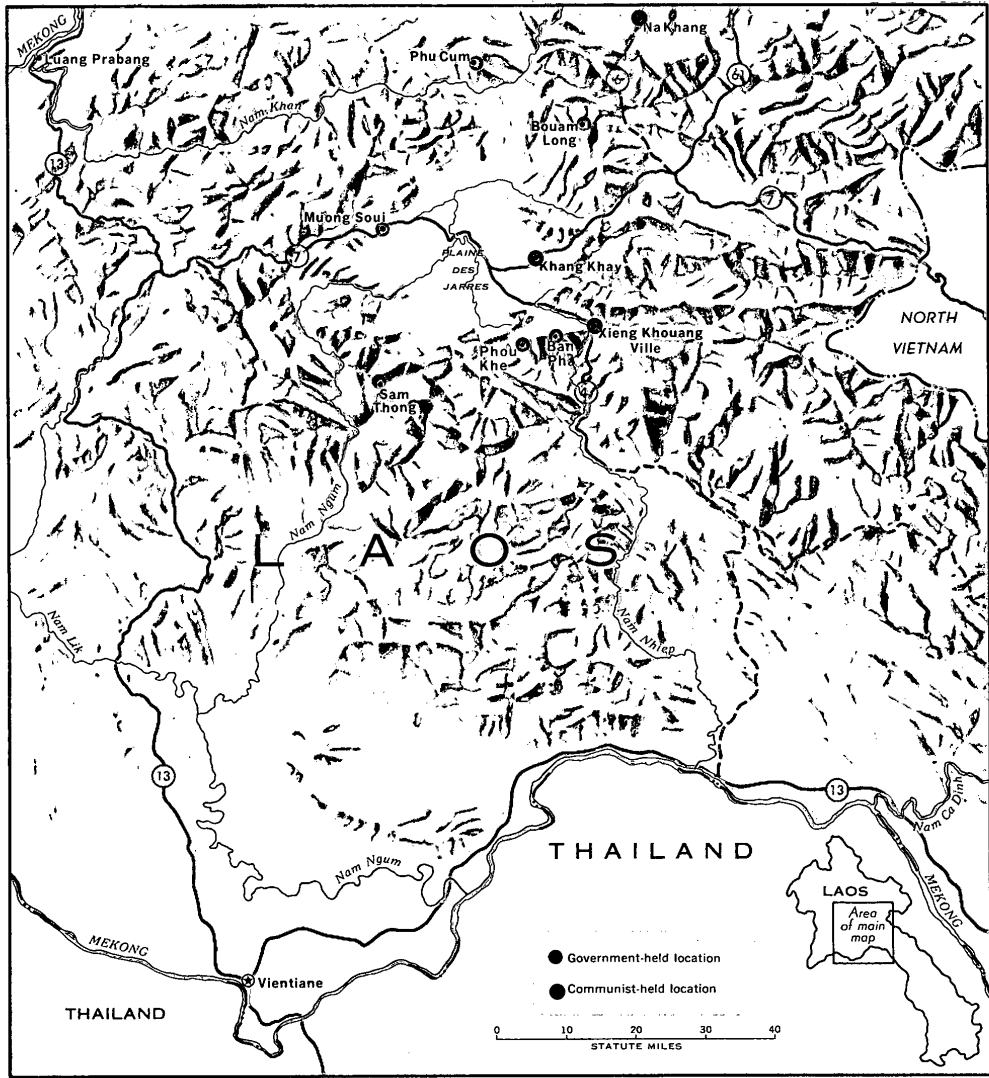
II. OTHER IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS

COMMUNIST CHINA

The long-postponed party congress--the first in 13 years--opened today in Peking. The agenda includes discussion of a "political report" by Mao's heir, Lin Piao, adoption of a new party constitution, and election of a new central committee. The congress will attempt to project an appearance of normality following the excesses of the Cultural Revolution. We expect, however, that the policy and personnel issues dividing the top leadership will persist.

SOVIET UNION - PAKISTAN

Pravda today carried the first Soviet analysis in any detail of the recent developments in Pakistan. Ayub's behavior is put in a generally favorable light. Criticism of the opposition is especially strong for unnamed extremist "pro-Peking" and "pro-American" elements. In general, the article leaves the impression that Moscow is relatively satisfied with the interim regime, and the fact that the extremists are unnamed probably means that the Soviets want to avoid alienating any political figures prematurely.



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LAOS

The situation remains serious. In the face of recent Communist gains, government troops have launched a limited counteroffensive in the northeast.

The operation, designed to forestall a major Communist push south of the Plaine des Jarres that Lao military leaders still believe is imminent, has so far resulted in the capture of two strategic positions near Route 4, an important Communist supply route east of the Plaine. One of the positions is Ban Pha, a government base that had fallen to the enemy in February, and the other is located on Phou Khe mountain, from which the guerrillas will be able to place artillery fire on Route 4. The enemy offered little resistance to the assaults.

Other government ground actions have not fared as well, although harassing attacks along Route 7 have probably caused the enemy to divert troops to protect the road. The ground offensive is being conducted in conjunction with an aerial campaign of unprecedented scope against Communist positions near the Plaine des Jarres. Although it is still too early to assess the results of these actions, the recent movement of a North Vietnamese battalion out of the Plaine area suggests the attacks may be achieving their tactical purpose.

If the offensive continues to go well, it may also do much to repair the shattered morale of government troops.

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The danger is that the Communists might feel that the government and the US, rather than themselves, have taken action to upset the political-military balance in the northeast, and may react sharply to the threat to their rear areas. The loss of additional important positions could set in motion a chain of circumstances that would result in the collapse of the government presence in Sam Neua and Xieng Khouang Provinces. The Meo guerrillas, who have borne the brunt of the fighting over the past seven years, have virtually reached the end of their rope.

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