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28 April 1969

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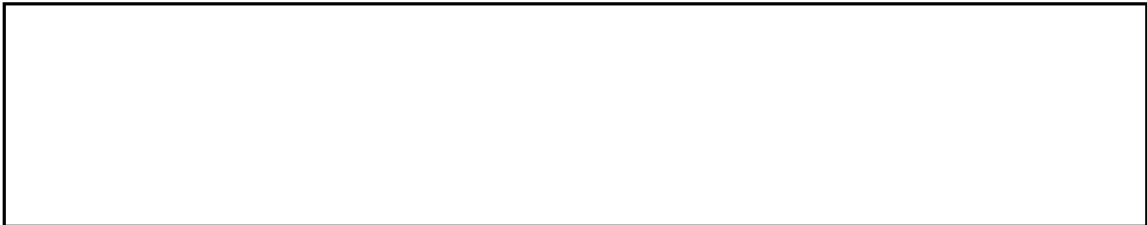
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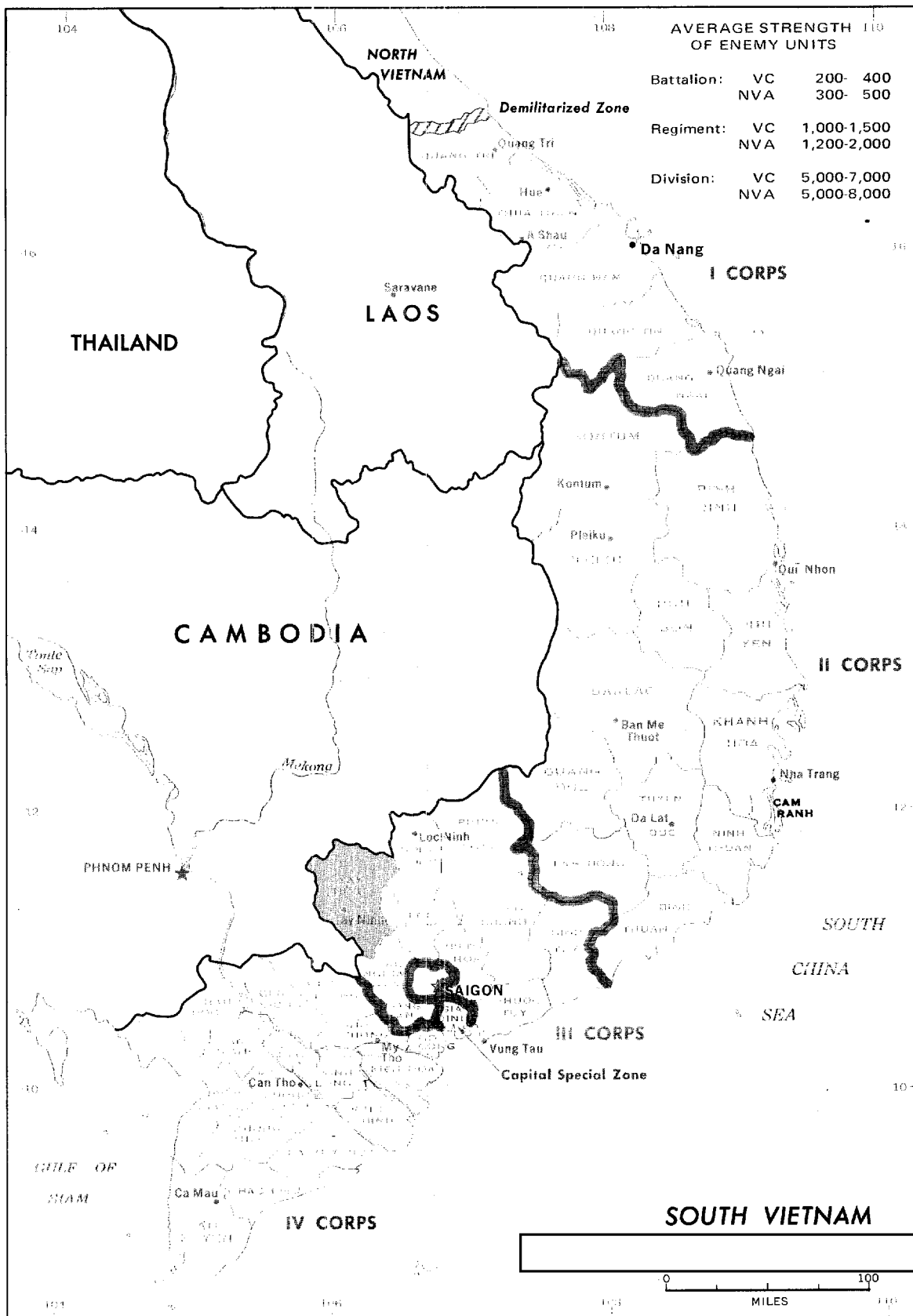


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South Vietnam: An upsurge of sharp fighting over the weekend cost the Communists heavy casualties.

Some 500 enemy troops were killed in a half dozen stiff encounters in the western III Corps and northern delta countryside. Two battles were triggered by strong Communist night infantry assaults against US field positions--one, located in Tay Ninh Province about a mile from the Cambodian border, was first struck by an intensive mortar attack, much of it from across the border.

There were also several unsuccessful sapper attacks in Saigon, apparently aimed at the city's electric power supply, and a number of terrorist incidents as well. More such violence in the capital city area is indicated by recently captured prisoners, documents, and the discovery of a large store of demolition equipment north of Saigon.

Meanwhile, a major fire at the Da Nang Air Base on 27 April has crippled allied operations there at least temporarily. According to preliminary estimates, ammunition and fuel losses are extensive. Air operations were suspended and personnel were evacuated from several portions of the base. So far, it does not appear that the fire was caused by enemy action.

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Alain Poher, Interim President of France
Political Party: Democratic Center



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Born	17 April 1909
Elected Mayor of Albon-sur-Seine	1945
Senator for Seine-et-Oise	1946-1948, 1962-1969
Secretary of the Navy (Gaillard Cabinet)	1957
Elected to European Parliament	1958
President of European Parliament	1966-1969
Elected President of Senate	October 1968

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[France: De Gaulle's resignation opens a period of intense political maneuvering and bargaining for the office he has vacated after almost 11 years.

No formal candidacies have been announced, but a Gaullist and a centrist are likely to be the prime contenders for the presidency. Senate President Alain Poher, who will serve as interim president until new elections are held, is almost certain to be a candidate. Centrists and some leftists were already coalescing around his candidacy last week, probably recognizing that his role as interim president would put him in the spotlight during the crucial campaign period. The other prime contender doubtless will be former prime minister Georges Pompidou, who is certain to be the choice of most Gaullists. Other possible candidates are Independent Republican leader Valery Giscard d'Estaing and leftist leader Francois Mitterrand. The Communist Party has no candidate at this point but its leaders have already publicly declared that they are seeking an alliance of all the parties of the left.

Elections must take place not sooner than 20 and not later than 35 days from today. During this interim period, no basic domestic or foreign policy changes are likely. Although Poher is an anti-Gaullist centrist, the administration remains in the hands of the Gaullists. At this juncture neither Prime Minister Couve de Murville nor any of his cabinet has resigned, and Poher does not have the power under the constitution to remove them without their consent. Moreover, Poher will probably focus most of his attention on the campaign rather than on policy decisions.

The public has reacted calmly to the defeat of the referendum and De Gaulle's subsequent resignation. Although a few isolated outbreaks of violence have occurred, neither government supporters nor opposition forces have tried to provoke major civil]

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[disorders. In any event, government security forces have elaborate contingency plans to control any outburst.

Slightly over 80 percent of the electorate voted and, of these, almost 53 percent voted "no." Returns are not yet in from the overseas territories but Interior Minister Marcellin announced that these votes could not affect the outcome. Of the 18 referenda and plebiscites which have been held in France since 1793, only one other failed to gain a positive vote.

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Jordan: Additional fedayeen pressures on King Husayn have increased the chances of a major clash between the terrorists and the regime.

Prime Minister Rifai, in a meeting on 23 April with Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) chairman Yasir Arafat, tentatively agreed to allow Egyptian-based personnel of the Palestine Liberation Army (PLA), the military arm of the PLO, to enter Jordan. Rifai stated, however, that the transfer must have the agreement of the King, who returned from London yesterday.

The fedayeen in Jordan already constitute almost a state within a state, and the presence of additional units of armed Palestinians would further jeopardize the King's position. In view of Husayn's long-time refusal to allow PLA units to be stationed in Jordan, it is doubtful that he would now agree. The King is also under pressure to allow the transfer of the fedayeen's propaganda office from Cairo to Amman and possibly even to allow their broadcasts from Amman.

Various fedayeen organizations have prepared for an all-out confrontation with the government following a joint fedayeen communiqué on 15 April repudiating Husayn's six-point peace plan. Within Jordan, the Palestine National Liberation Movement, Fatah, remains on alert status and there are some signs that fedayeen supporters are approaching public security and army personnel with the request that they remain neutral in any future clash.

US officials in Amman estimate that the King will attempt to enforce stronger controls over the fedayeen, but will avoid an all-out clash. Any efforts to limit fedayeen operations, however, will almost certainly meet with resistance. [REDACTED]

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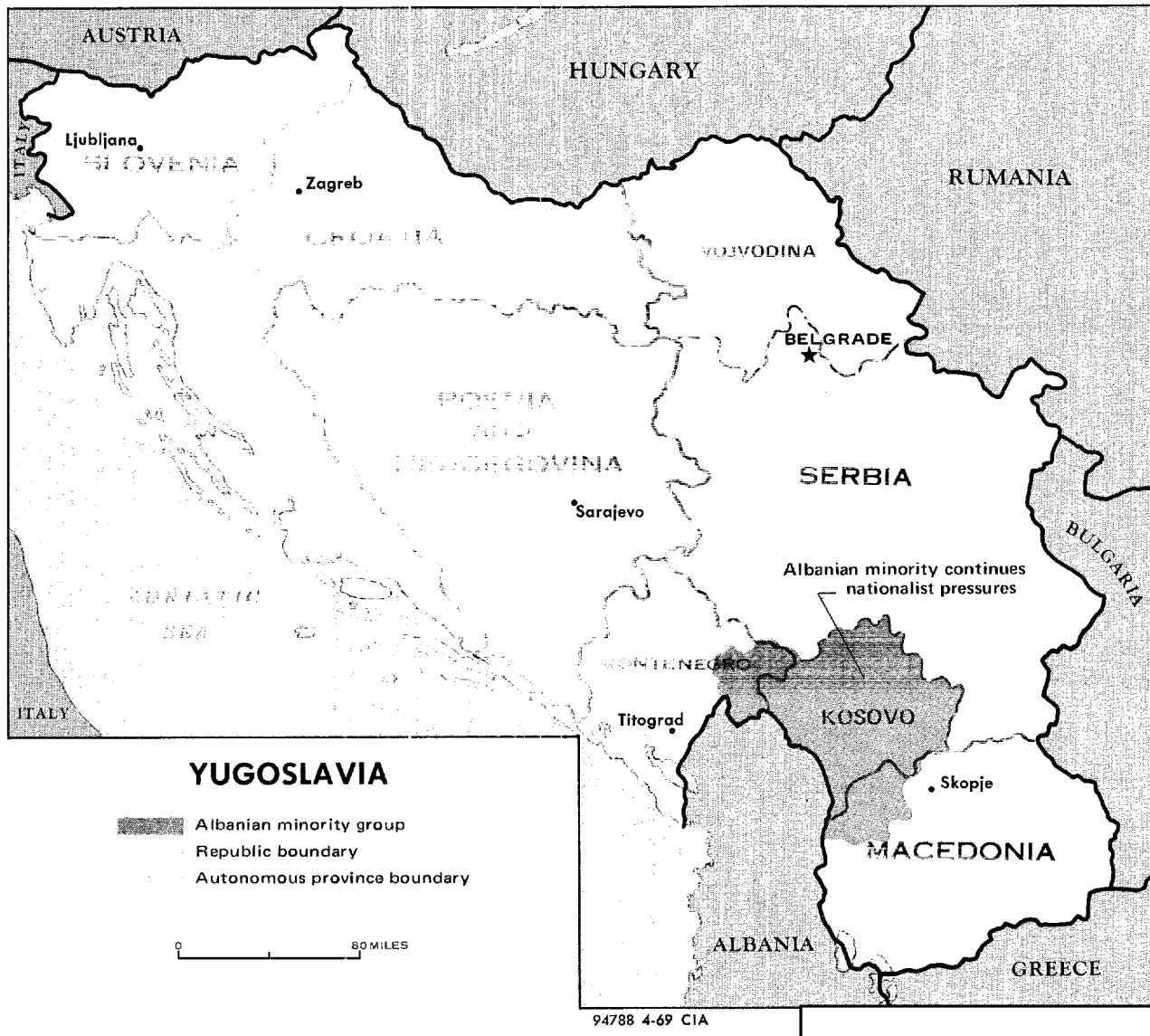
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Yugoslavia: Continuing nationalist pressures and widespread unemployment in the Yugoslav autonomous province of Kosovo plague Belgrade in its efforts to respond effectively to the demands of the Albanian minority there.

Riots erupted in Kosovo and in parts of Macedonia in late 1968, reflecting the seriousness of the Albanians' grievances. Since then, Serb-Albanian rivalry for political control of the province continues to undermine efforts to solve the area's problems. Belgrade nevertheless appears determined to make good its promise to improve conditions, and Tito himself reiterated his support for this goal at the ninth party congress last month.

The exodus of Serbian professional experts and skilled laborers has particularly hampered Belgrade. Kosovo, with Yugoslavia's highest unemployment rate and widespread illiteracy, can ill afford to lose the few capable personnel it has.

In weeding out those responsible for last year's riots, Belgrade itself has added to the unrest. Numerous intellectuals and workers have been brought to trial, and scores of Albanians have been sentenced to jail for terms ranging from a few months to seven years. Numerous other students, workers, and teachers have been expelled from the party and have lost their jobs.

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[Bolivia: President Rene Barrientos was killed yesterday in a helicopter crash; there is no evidence of sabotage.

Vice President Luis Adolfo Siles Salinas has been sworn in as president and the constitutional succession has been "guaranteed" by the armed forces.

The armed forces remain the key to political power in Bolivia. They probably will back Siles for the moment but could oust him should he attempt to assert his independence. Armed Forces Commander in Chief Alfredo Ovando is on his way to Bolivia from the US. Ovando had been considered the probable winner in the presidential election scheduled for July 1970. He may now decide, however, to move before the election.

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Chile: Two prospective presidential candidates for the election next year plan to travel to the Soviet Union and to Communist China; one plans to go on to North Korea and North Vietnam.

Pro-Castro Socialist Senator Salvador Allende leaves soon for Moscow, Peking, North Korea, and North Vietnam. Allende, who is president of the Senate, wants to get "first-hand" knowledge of the Vietnam situation. Allende has in the past run strongly for president with the support of the Communist and Socialist parties. He would again be a formidable candidate if he could add other leftist support next year.

Radomiro Tomic, former ambassador to the US and presidential hopeful in President Frei's Christian Democratic Party, also hopes to visit the Soviet Union and Communist China early next month during a planned trip to Europe. Tomic may believe that by so doing he can increase his appeal to leftists outside the Christian Democratic Party, whose support he has said is a necessity for his presidential campaign.

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NOTE

USSR - Eastern Europe: The communiqué issued at the end of the four-day CEMA summit on 26 April indicates that a few unspecified decisions were made, and that major disagreement on the subject of economic unity continues. The eight member countries agreed, however, on the need to establish an investment bank and to seek to improve the operation of the existing Bank for Economic Cooperation as a means of bolstering trade and financial relations among CEMA members. The communiqué admitted, nevertheless, that "the session raised many problems concerning deepening relations between the national economies," indicating that divergent views among members on the desirability of economic integration still persist. [REDACTED]

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