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DIRECTORATE OF
INTELLIGENCE

Developments in Indochina

State Dept. review completed

Top Secret

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[REDACTED]

DEVELOPMENTS IN INDOCHINA

(Information as of 1500)

SOUTH VIETNAM

Sharp fighting continues throughout the countryside as both government and Communist forces maneuver to improve their territorial holdings. Most fighting since the cease-fire went into effect on 28 January has resulted from South Vietnamese efforts to roll back enemy gains made just prior to the cease-fire.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

Peking has strongly endorsed the Vietnam cease-fire agreement and called for peaceful consultations to resolve any problems on the political future of South Vietnam.

LAOS

Communist pressure has increased against Bouam Long.

[REDACTED]

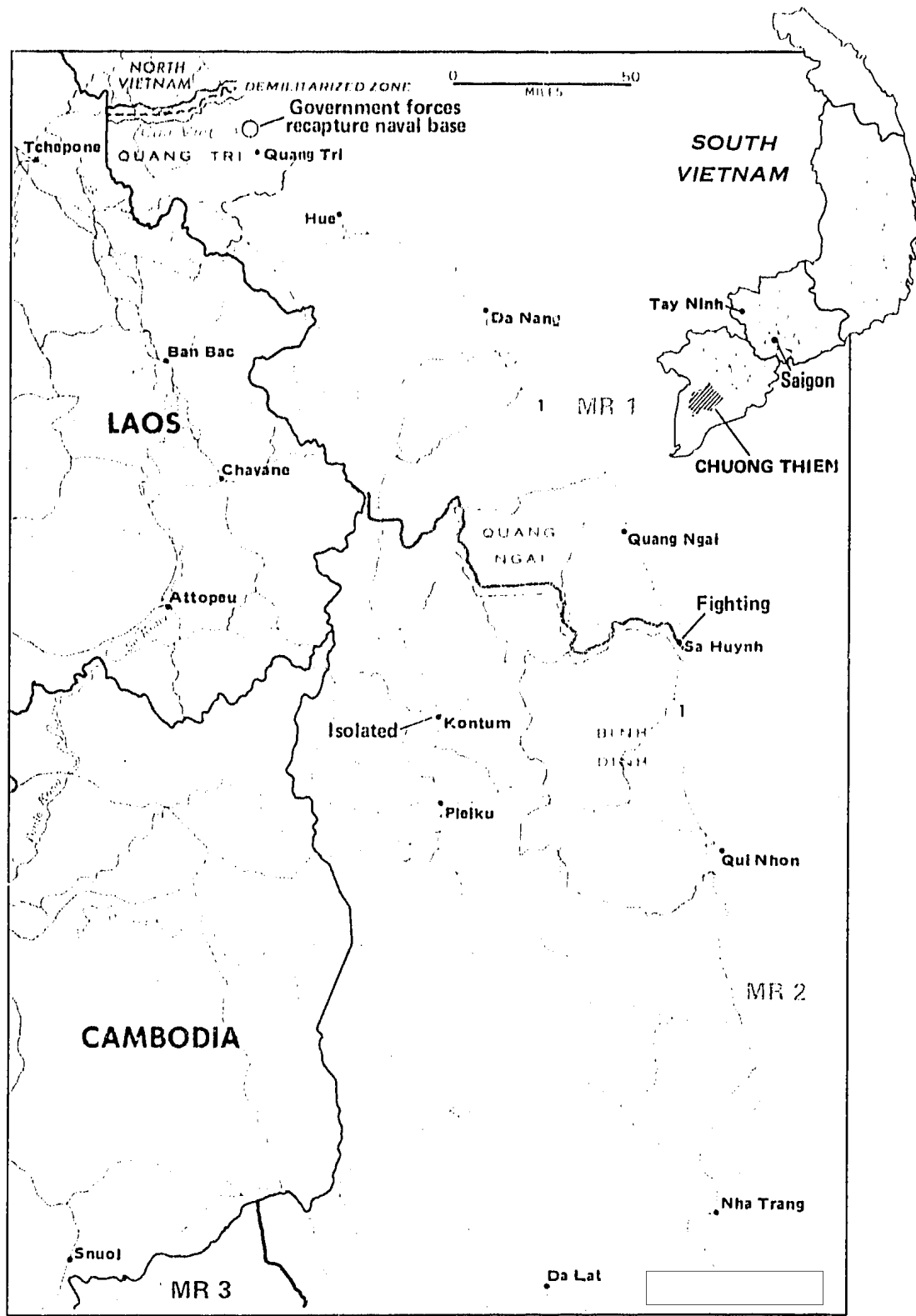
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CAMBODIA

Communist activity is confined to small attacks on scattered government outposts, and President Lon Nol has announced a suspension of offensive activity. Sihanouk has told Western journalists that Khmer insurgents will continue fighting.

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SOUTH VIETNAM

Sharp fighting continues throughout the countryside as both government and Communist forces maneuver to improve their territorial holdings. Most fighting since the cease-fire went into effect on 28 January has resulted from South Vietnamese efforts to roll back enemy gains made just prior to the cease-fire.

Some of the heaviest fighting centers on the provincial capital of Tay Ninh, where Communist forces apparently control portions of the city as well as stretches of the major roads linking it with Saigon. Government defenders, apparently with the help of fresh reinforcements and substantial South Vietnamese air and artillery support, have recaptured several hamlets near the city that were lost on Saturday. The province chief told US Embassy officers that he is confident the rest of the city will be cleared within a day or so.

Government forces in the Saigon area have made some progress retaking hamlets and villages which had been in Communist hands. In addition, the main highway connecting the capital with the populous delta region has been reopened. In Chuong Thien Province, all five district capitals remain in government hands, although portions of two district towns were apparently overrun earlier in the weekend.

In the northern half of the country, fighting was heaviest along coastal Route 1, notably in Binh Dinh and Quang Ngai provinces. Several district capitals were shelled, and Communist and government forces are still battling for control of Sa Huynh. In the central highlands, some street fighting was reported in Da Lat, and Viet Cong flags were observed in Pleiku City. Kontum City remains isolated and several provincial and district centers are cut off by Communist road blocks. On the government side,

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[Redacted]

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South Vietnamese Marines apparently recaptured a strategically located navy base at the mouth of the Cua Viet River in Quang Tri Province just prior to the cease-fire hour, despite a heavy North Vietnamese artillery barrage.

Much of the current fighting on the part of the South Vietnamese appears aimed at countering Communist local forces who seized key road junctions and bridges that could be used to stop movement between government-held areas. [Redacted]

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[Redacted] South Vietnamese forces had been ordered to reclaim such areas, even if the resultant fighting continued beyond the cease-fire deadline. [Redacted]

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[Redacted]

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[Redacted] Neither the Communists nor government forces have embarked on an all-out military effort, however. The Viet Cong's Liberation Radio claims that the Communist troops have been ordered to "avoid regrettable incidents," while South Vietnamese provincial officials have indicated that their efforts are limited to restoring government control as it existed immediately prior to the cease-fire. [Redacted]

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[Redacted]

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INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

Peking has strongly endorsed the Vietnam cease-fire agreement and urged its conscientious implementation to bring peace to Vietnam and "relax tension in Asia and in the world." This first authoritative comment, contained in a 28 January *People's Daily* editorial and a subsequent statement by Foreign Minister Chi Peng-fei, praised the agreement as a victory for the Vietnamese people and voiced Peking's traditional support for the concept of eventual unification. The statements stopped well short of any direct endorsement of a continuation of hostilities once US forces are withdrawn. Peking stressed that tremendous efforts are required by all parties concerned to fulfill the points of the agreement and claimed that they must be carried out in a step-by-step manner through peaceful means. Specifically, the Chinese urged peaceful consultations among the three South Vietnamese political forces (i.e., the Viet Cong, the Saigon regime, and the neutralists) to ensure the political future of the South. In this latter context, Peking acknowledged its adherence to the cease-fire agreement by dropping the claim that the PRG is the government of South Vietnam, referring to it merely as the "true representative" of the South Vietnamese people.

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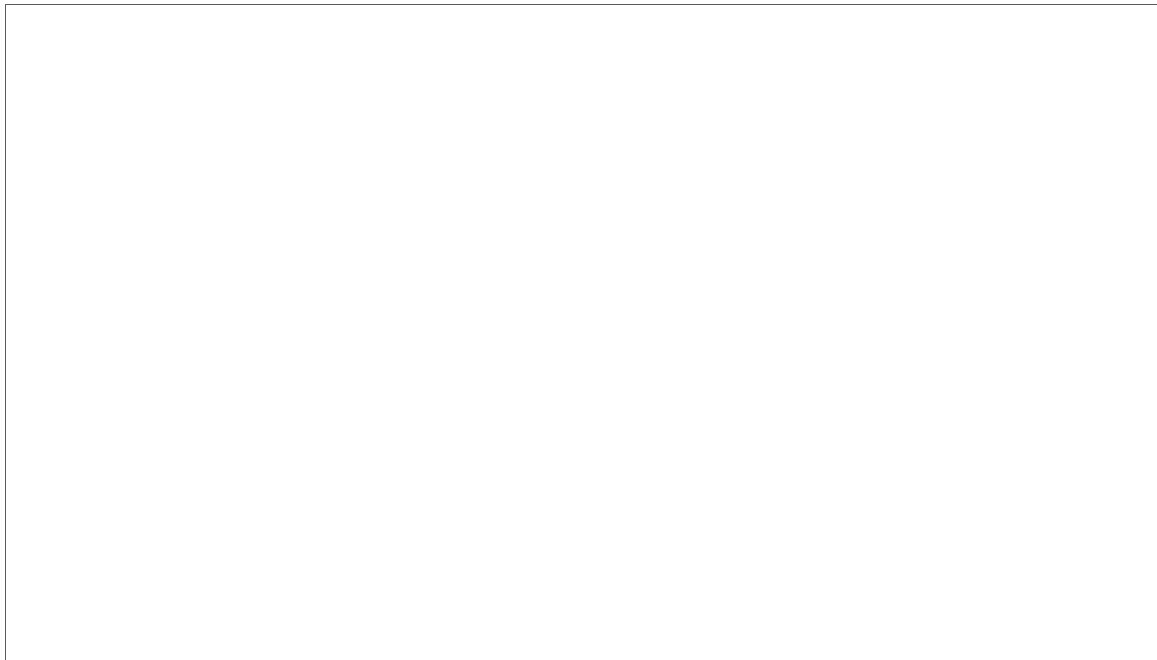
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LAOS

The Communists are again increasing pressure against Bouam Long, the government fortress north of the Plaine des Jarres. The heaviest enemy shellings in several days forced government irregulars to abandon one outpost south of the base on 26 January. The Vietnamese attempted no major ground assaults this weekend, but increasingly heavy enemy movement on trails near Bouam Long suggests that the Communists may be attempting to concentrate their forces for an attack.



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CAMBODIA

Communist military activity throughout most of the country is at its lowest level in several weeks. In the Phnom Penh area, the Communists are continuing to carry out small attacks by fire against scattered government positions, resulting in few casualties. On the government side, President Lon Nol has announced that Cambodian government forces will suspend all offensive activity on 29 January.

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A Bellicose Sihanouk

In his first public comments since the announcement of the Vietnam cease-fire agreement, Sihanouk on 27 January reaffirmed to Western journalists in Peking that Khmer insurgent forces in Cambodia will go on fighting. He stated that there was no possibility for stopping the Cambodian conflict unless the US abandons Lon Nol. The deposed prince again ruled out any negotiations with the Lon Nol government, and repeated that his government-in-exile would never participate in an international conference. He added that he would be willing to hold bilateral peace talks with the US in either Paris or Ottawa.

As for the Paris agreement, Sihanouk called it "a victory" for his Vietnamese Communist allies. He then indicated that he believed the agreement would eventually break down and fighting would resume in Vietnam. He said it was "inconceivable" that Saigon and the Viet Cong could reconcile their political differences by peaceful means.

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