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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
 Directorate of Intelligence
 8 April 1972

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

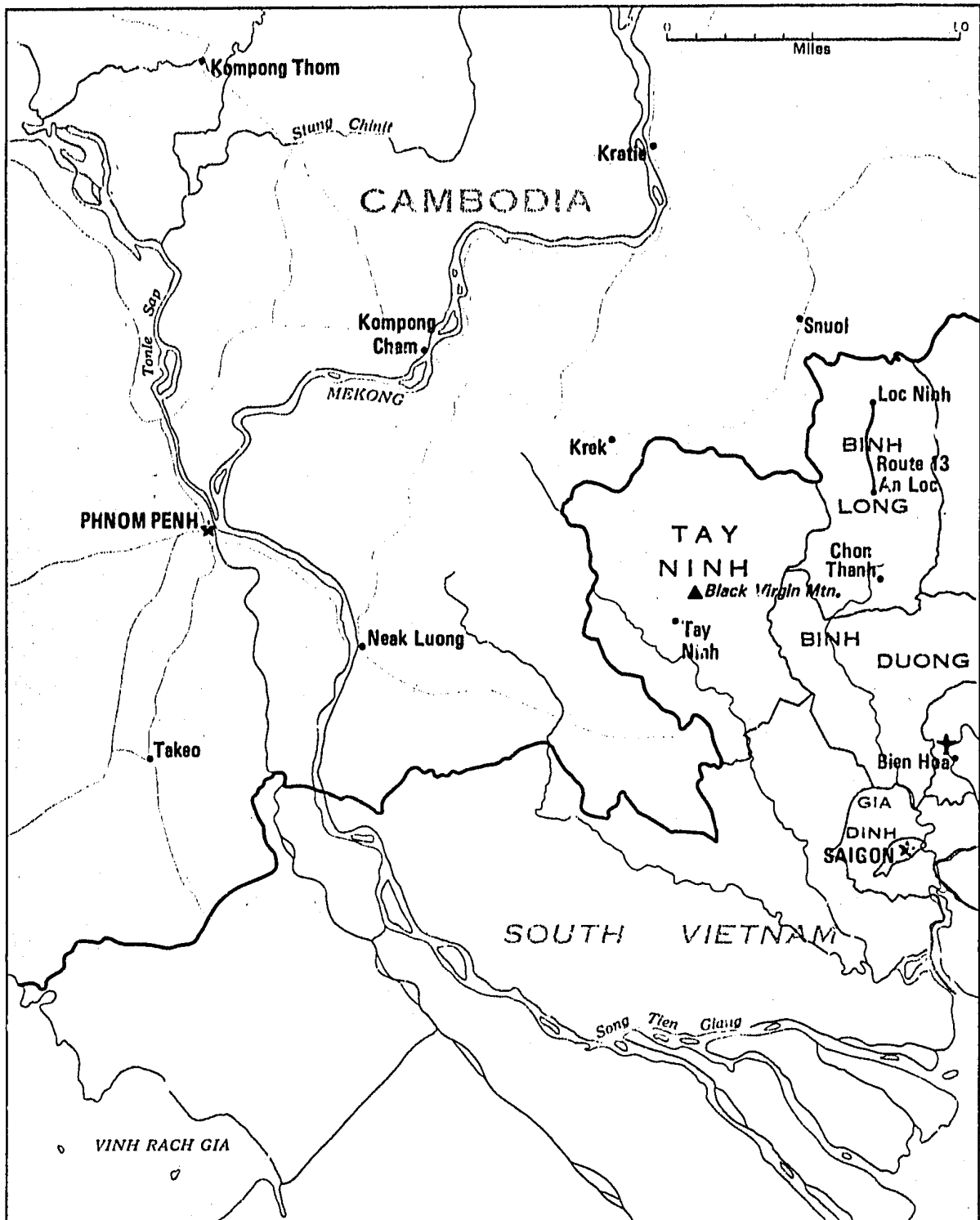
The Situation in South Vietnam
 (As of 1500 EST)

1. Communist forces are attempting to isolate the provincial capital of An Loc in Binh Long Province. As enemy tanks reportedly moved down Route 13 from Loc Ninh, Communist forces were pressuring a South Vietnamese position at Chon Thanh, a district town some 15 miles south of An Loc. According to a press report, the district chief said outposts in the area were being evacuated and the troops concentrated in the district capital.

2. [redacted] the current enemy offensive in Military Region (MR) 3 will continue at least until 15 April with targets in most of the western and central provinces, including the air base at Bien Hoa city. In addition, shellings, abductions and increased terrorism will be employed for maximum political effect. Meanwhile, the Communists have been moving captured South Vietnamese tanks, armored personnel carriers, and 105-mm. howitzers, which were abandoned during the earlier fighting in Binh Long, northward toward Snuol across the border in Cambodia.

3. The government has reacted quickly to strengthen defenses north of Saigon. [redacted] the 21st ARVN Division from the Mekong Delta, originally scheduled for transfer to northern South Vietnam, will now be deployed in northwestern MR-3. The move was ordered by President Thieu on the recommendation of the MR-3 commander, who believes that the communists are planning additional attacks in Tay Ninh and Binh Duong Provinces along the Saigon River toward

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the capital. Additionally, territorial forces from Gia Dinh, the province surrounding Saigon, are being reasigned to positions in the northern and western parts of the province. Police checkpoints are being reinforced and anti-sapper reaction teams have been organized. The Gia Dinh Province chief said he has been ordered to prevent the shelling of Saigon, and he has taken steps to patrol possible launching sites in his jurisdiction.

4. Elsewhere in MR-3, the Communists are attacking the radio relay station atop Black Virgin Mountain just northeast of Tay Ninh city. South Vietnamese reinforcements have been helilifted to the scene.

5. Communist local force and sapper units are placing increased emphasis on disrupting South Vietnamese forces and supplies by interdicting key highways in many parts of the country. A number of bridges have been destroyed in the southern part of South Vietnam and ambushes of convoys headed for battle zones have been stepped up.

Military Regions 1 and 2

6. The hiatus in military action in the northern half of South Vietnam is allowing both sides to prepare for future fighting. Enemy forces are continuing to reposition and resupply, while the South Vietnamese are bolstering their defenses and regrouping for counterattacks.

Soviet Comment Still Low-Keyed

7. The Soviets are sticking to a gingerly approach in their official commentary on the fighting in Vietnam. What little Moscow has said has been discreet and it has yet to issue a serious, authoritative statement.

8. TASS today carried a low-key, carefully edited report on Secretary Laird's press conference on 7 April. The dispatch routinely criticized US actions against North Vietnam and claimed that the Secretary was trying to justify them. Interestingly, Tass avoided any mention of Secretary Laird's pointed remarks concerning the Soviet role in the conflict. The only noteworthy comment in the Soviet press today was a low-level article in Pravda which criticized "the Pentagon" for increasing its "agres-sion in Vietnam.

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