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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

*Memorandum*



THE SITUATION IN VIETNAM

Information as of 0600  
22 FEBRUARY 1965

PREPARED FOR THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL  
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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY  
Office of Current Intelligence  
22 February 1965

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

The Situation in Vietnam as  
of 0300 EST

Political Developments in South Vietnam

1. General Khanh, to all appearances, has now bowed to a decree issued Sunday replacing him as armed forces commander by Major General Tran Van (Little) Minh. Khanh had tried to fight his ouster at the hands of the Armed Forces Council, but was unable to round up any military support. His desperate efforts yesterday took him on a C-47 flight from his command post at Vung Tau to Nha Trang, and finally to Dalat where his plane landed almost out of fuel. A reported move on Saigon airport yesterday by a pro-Khanh tank column never materialized.

2. This morning in Dalat, Khanh conferred with representatives of the Armed Forces Council and agreed to accept the Council's decision. Present plans call for him to remain in Dalat until reassigned, probably to a post abroad.

3. Khanh may have some lingering hopes of possibly salvaging his position by blaming the US for his downfall. Yesterday, he told a MACV senior adviser that there was widespread belief that the US sponsored the shortlived coup of 19-20 February with the objective of deposing Khanh. He argued that his relief from command would confirm these beliefs, and he warned of repercussions among the military.

4. The status of the Quat government has not been affected by the upheavals of the past few days. The events, however, may leave serious scars among the military, and possibly lead to further dissensions in the future. The appointment of "Little"




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Minh as commander-in-chief of the armed forces is on a temporary basis, reportedly as a compromise figure that all members of the Armed Forces Council could support. Minh, a competent staff officer in his mid-forties, has generally remained aloof from political activity. He remains concurrently Chief of Staff of the Joint Staff.

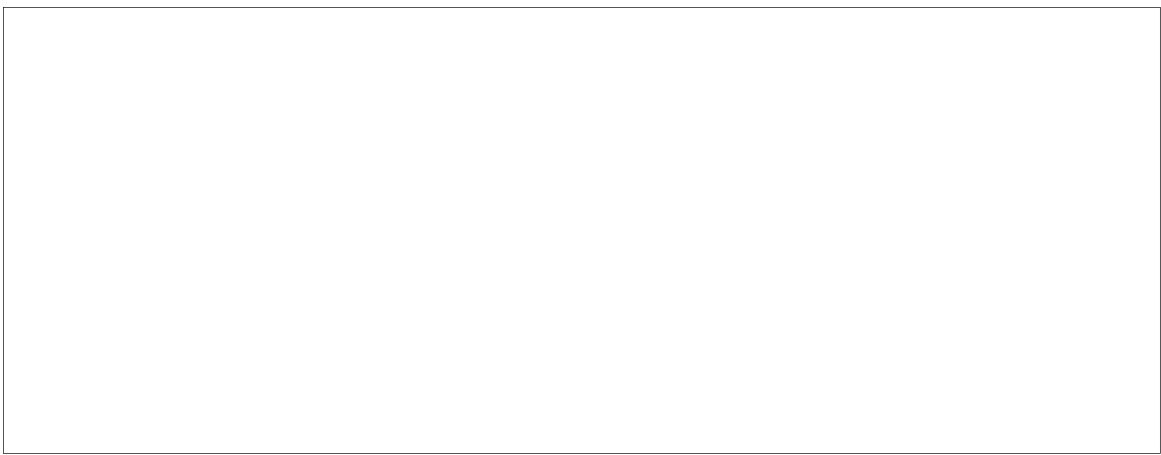
Viet Cong Military Activity

5. The Viet Cong continue to mount an aggressive campaign of smallscale actions throughout the country. The number of daily incidents has shown a slow rise and has reached a relatively high level. Much of the Viet Cong activity consists of mortar harassing fire on government posts, district towns, New Life Hamlets and villages. Sabotage against government communications lines also continues. During the period 15-21 February, cumulative sabotage acts left main highway 1 impassable to traffic in II Corps area. Acts of railroad sabotage declined somewhat during this period, but the line from Da Nang to Nha Trang was closed as a result of Viet Cong actions.

6. A close inspection of the Communist supply ship sunk off Phu Yen Province  on 21 February reveals that the vessel was new, well designed, and expertly constructed. The ship was a coastal freighter, trawler type, with a cargo capacity of 30 tons for ocean voyages and with additional deck loading possible for coastal shipping.

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Communist Military Developments



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[Redacted]

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9. Preliminary analysis of aerial photography of 19 February indicates that there is no significant change in the Chinese air order of battle at Mengtzu and Kunming. Sixty MIG 15-17s were identified at Mengtzu whereas 65 were observed there on 14 February.

Communist Political Developments

10. [Redacted]

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Kosygin's trip to Hanoi will result in the Soviets giving "defensive" aid to North Vietnam in the form of fighter planes, SAMs and radar equipment.

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[Redacted]

A press service report from Moscow dated 21 February quoted "diplomatic sources" as stating that shipment of SAMs and jet fighters was under way.

[Redacted]

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11. A Western press report from Moscow quotes the commander of the Soviet rocket forces, Marshal Krylov, as stating in the Soviet trade union newspaper that if the US seeks to "carry out criminal schemes" against "countries of the socialist camp," the "war will immediately be transferred to the territory of the aggressor." Krylov's article, which did not mention Vietnam, represents standard rhetoric in this kind of propaganda.

12. No major propaganda pronouncements on the Vietnamese situation have been issued during the past 24 hours by Peiping, Hanoi or Moscow.

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