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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

Memorandum



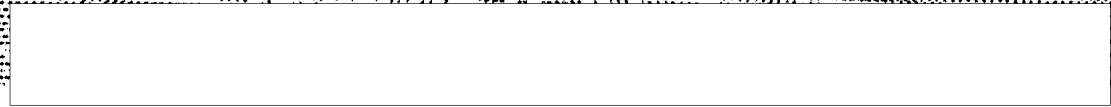
THE SITUATION IN VIETNAM

Information as of 0600
8 March 1965

PREPARED FOR THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL



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Office of Current Intelligence
8 March 1965

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

The Situation in Vietnam as of 0600 EST

Communist Political Developments

1. Hanoi has routinely protested to the ICC in Vietnam on 7 March the arrival of US Marines at Danang in South Vietnam as a violation of the Geneva accords. An editorial in the official North Vietnamese daily on 8 March used the Marines' arrival to lend credence to the contention that the US is systematically expanding the war, but did not call for any specific counter-action. Propaganda broadcasts from both Peiping and Moscow have condemned the arrival of the Marines, claiming that the US has now become an "open belligerent."

2. At a press conference in Peiping on 8 March, the Deputy Chief of the Communist National Front for the Liberation of South Vietnam rejected any negotiations "so long as there is one single shadow of US imperialism in Vietnam." Although the Vietnamese "welcome the good intentions of those seeking a peaceful settlement," the NFLSV representative stated, "we must achieve our aims."

Communist Military Developments

3. No significant Communist military developments in connection with the Vietnamese situation have been noted in the past 24 hours.

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5. Some details of a North Vietnamese order to retain in service trained military personnel were

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[redacted] to release only those who are weak, sick, physically disabled, or who suffer extreme family hardships, and [redacted]

[redacted] certain specialists--such as electricians and radarmen--are not to be demobilized under any circumstances.

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Viet Cong Military Activity

6. Viet Cong military activity remained intense during the weekend, with the bulk of reported incidents characterized primarily by mortar shellings of district towns, harassing fire actions against government troops, outposts, watchtowers, and hamlets, small-scale terrorism, mine detonations, and sabotage against lines of communication.

7. Fighting continued yesterday north and south of the joint US - South Vietnamese air base at Da Nang. According to press reports, 78 government soldiers were killed or wounded in two days of fighting, while the Viet Cong suffered an estimated 140 casualties. The guerrilla force south of Da Nang has been estimated at a thousand men armed with mortars and 57-mm. recoilless rifles.

8. Seventy-three government troops were killed, wounded, or missing as a result of the 6 March Viet Cong attack on Rung-La Post in Long Khanh Province. The attackers captured a significant number of weapons. No known losses were sustained by the insurgents.

9. According to late press reports, heavy fighting broke out in Binh Dinh Province 265 miles north-east of Saigon just before dawn Saigon time. A 400-man Viet Cong force attacked a Special Forces camp with mortars, recoilless rifles, and small arms. Heavy casualties were sustained on both sides.

Internal Developments in South Vietnam

10. Representatives of South Vietnam's Catholic, Buddhist, Cao Dai, and Hoa Hao religious groups appeared yesterday at a unity rally called by the Rev. Hoang Quynh, one of the country's militant Roman Catholic leaders. Father Quynh told newsmen that

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the purpose of the meeting was to seek friendship and unity based on anti-Communism among the various religious sects. Asked if any position was taken in regard to the current Saigon government, Quynh reportedly replied, "We are not opposed to the government but there is not much sympathy for it."

11. An armed clash between Buddhist and Catholic groups was reported to have occurred late Sunday on the outskirts of Saigon, marking the first outbreak of violence between the two groups since last fall. About 200 persons from nearby Buddhist hamlets reportedly insulted and harassed members of a Catholic refugee resettlement area at Phu Tho Hoa on the city's northern edge. At least 15 refugee structures were burned and 2 others pulled down.

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