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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

Memorandum



THE SITUATION IN VIETNAM

Information as of 1600
20 July 1965

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HIGHLIGHTS

Viet Cong guerrillas on 20 July launched an attack on a South Vietnamese Special Forces camp in Phuoc Long Province, inflicting heavy casualties on defending government units. MACV has increased its estimate of the number of Viet Cong soldiers from 48,500 to 53,000. On 19 July the Viet Cong clandestine radio again warned the Saigon populace to avoid places frequented by US troops and Vietnamese Government officials. Following this warning, South Vietnamese security forces on 20 July discovered a Claymore-type fragmentation mine planted near the entrance of Saigon's main stadium.

I. The Military Situation in South Vietnam: Communist guerrillas, employing mortar, recoilless rifle, and small-arms fire, launched a major attack on the evening of 19-20 July against a South Vietnamese Special Forces camp at Bu Dop, in Phuoc Long Province, inflicting heavy casualties on defending government units (Para. 1). Press speculation that Viet Cong terrorists tried to assassinate outgoing US Ambassador Taylor with a bomb at Saigon's main stadium has been largely discounted by MACV (Para. 2). A regimental-strength ARVN search-and-destroy operation against a Communist main force battalion in Thua Thien Province has achieved initially favorable results (Para. 3). The government's multi-battalion road clearing operation along lateral Route 19 in Binh Dinh and Pleiku provinces entered its fifth day today without contact with the Viet Cong (Para. 4). Clearing operations are also continuing unopposed along Highway 15, which connects Bien Hoa with the port of Vung Tau in Phuoc Tuy Province (Para. 5). Eight US Coast Guard patrol craft, with a total complement of 150 volunteers, arrived at Da Nang yesterday (Para. 6). MACV has increased its estimate of Viet Cong strength by 4,500 to 53,000 (Para. 9). MACV reports a sharp decline in Viet Cong--initiated activity during the

week 10-17 July, noting only one battalion-size action during the reporting period (Para. 10). Sabotage activity against lines of communication continued and was especially heavy in the III Corps zone (Para. 11). Combat casualties for both the government and the Viet Cong declined during the reporting period, a reflection of the sharp decline in the number of incidents; however, ARVN weapons losses increased while those of the Viet Cong declined (Paras. 12-14).

II. Political Developments in South Vietnam:
The Viet Cong's clandestine radio has again warned the Saigon populace to avoid places frequented by US, South Korean, Australian, and New Zealand civilians and military personnel, as well as by Vietnamese Government officials (Paras. 1-2).

III. Military Developments in North Vietnam:
USAF F-105 aircraft conducted large-scale leaflet drops over Hanoi and Haiphong. No resistance was encountered (Para. 1). Other US aircraft attacked barracks, an ammunition dump, and bridges and other transportation targets on 20 July (Para. 2).

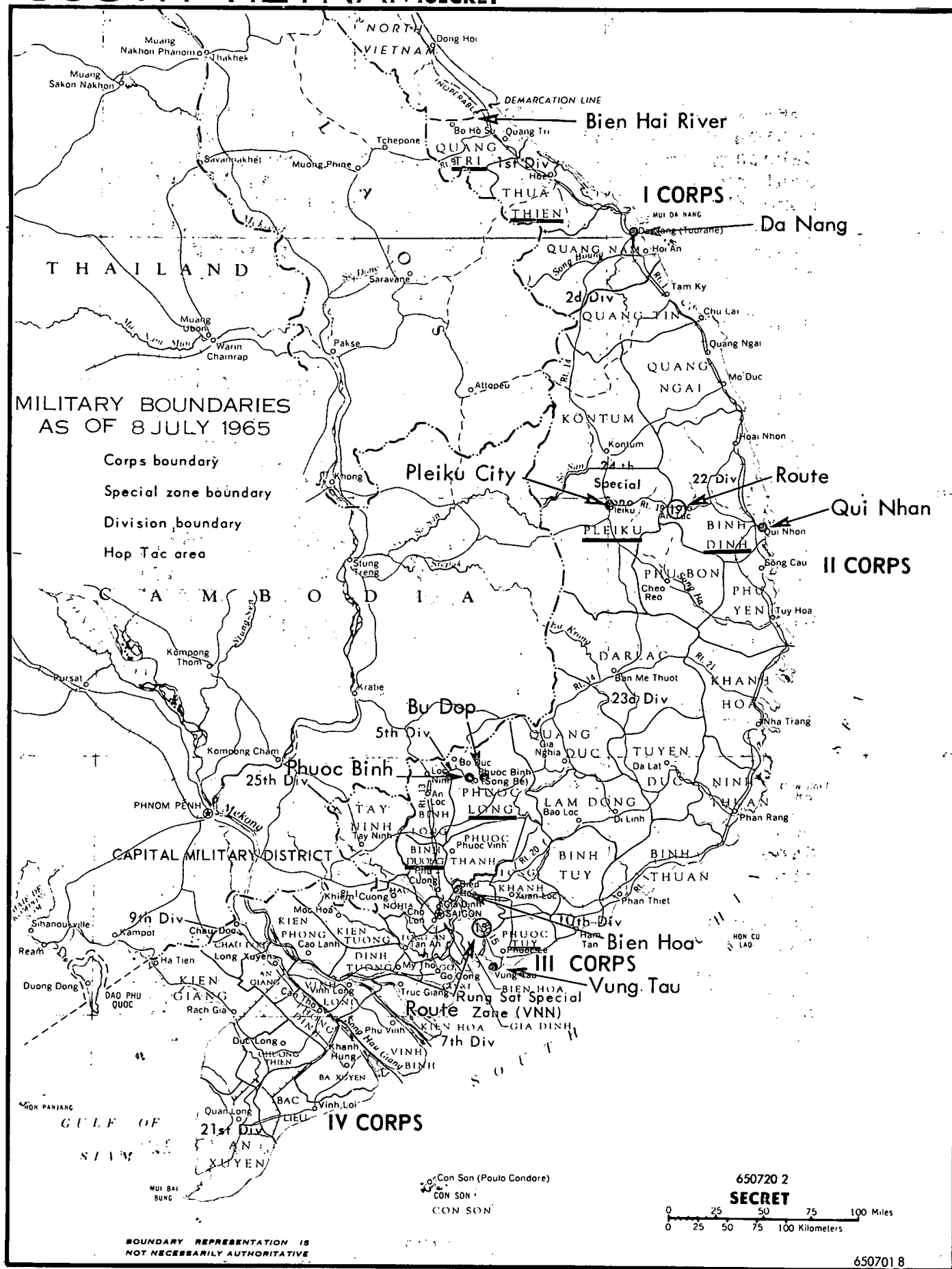
IV. Other Communist Military Developments:
Nothing significant to report.

V. Communist Political Developments: A Ghanaian delegation headed by the ambassador to the UK left London for Hanoi on 20 July to feel out the Vietnamese on negotiations (Para. 1). Hanoi on 19 July publicly reaffirmed its determination to press for a military victory (Para. 2). In Peiping the authoritative People's Daily published an editorial on 20 July reiterating the Chinese positions that US troops must be withdrawn from Vietnam before a settlement is possible and that the Communists are prepared to fight for however long is necessary to drive the US out of Vietnam (Para. 3).

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SOUTH VIETNAM

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I. THE MILITARY SITUATION IN SOUTH VIETNAM

1. Communist guerrillas, employing mortar, recoilless rifle, and small-arms fire, launched a heavy attack last night against a South Vietnamese Special Forces camp at Bu Dop, ten miles northeast of Phuoc Binh (Song Be) in Phuoc Long Province. There were six American advisers and 300 CIDG paramilitary personnel in the camp. The assault apparently lasted throughout the night, and interim reports list friendly casualties of 22 killed (two US), seven wounded (four US), and 60 missing. Enemy losses have been confirmed as 20 killed and two captured. Thirty-two tactical air strikes have been flown in support of the defenders. According to late reports, a contingent of 150 CIDG reinforcements had arrived to relieve the beleaguered garrison.

2. South Vietnamese security forces on 20 July discovered and defused a Claymore-type fragmentation mine apparently planted by Viet Cong terrorists near the entrance of Saigon's main stadium. According to MACV, the primary purpose of the attempted explosion probably was to disrupt and harass the "National Unity Day" rally in progress within the stadium rather than to assassinate outgoing American Ambassador Maxwell Taylor, who was in attendance. Four suspects, who are believed to have been recruited by the Viet Cong to plant and detonate the charge, have been arrested by local police.

3. A large-scale search-and-destroy operation initiated yesterday by an ARVN reinforced regiment against the 800th Viet Cong Main Force Battalion in northern Thua Thien Province has resulted in initial enemy losses of 33 killed, four captured, and 13 weapons seized. No government losses have been sustained thus far in the operation, which is continuing.

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4. The government's multibattalion road-clearing operation along lateral Route 19 in Binh Dinh and Pleiku provinces entered its fifth day today without contact with the Viet Cong. A third convoy, consisting of 128 two and one-half ton trucks, 33 dump trucks, and 18 ten-ton civilian trucks, arrived at the supply port of Qui Nhon from II Corps headquarters at Pleiku city yesterday without incident.

5. To the south, two Vietnamese Army battalions with armored and artillery support have also failed thus far to encounter any Viet Cong resistance in conducting a three-day clearing operation along Highway 15, which connects Bien Hoa with the port of Vung Tau in Phuoc Tuy Province. Major sections of the road were closed to civilian and military traffic after Communist saboteurs destroyed seven bridges and erected three roadblocks over the past week end.

6. Eight US Coast Guard patrol craft, with a total complement of 150 volunteers, arrived at Da Nang yesterday. The 82-foot cutters, each with a crew of two officers and ten enlisted men (in addition to maintenance personnel), will be employed in the northern portion of the South Vietnamese coastal surveillance area.

7. MACV's military report for 18 July shows 77 Viet Cong-initiated incidents, 11 of them occurring during the 24-hour reporting period. No significant new action was reported as the guerrilla pattern of small-scale terrorism, harassment, and sabotage continued to prevail throughout the countryside.

8. Pilot reports from combat air operations flown by US and Vietnamese aircraft against Viet Cong concentrations throughout the four corps tactical zones of South Vietnam on 18 July estimate a total of 16 guerrillas killed, 214 structures destroyed, 102 damaged, and 16 sampans destroyed.

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9. MACV has changed its order of battle holdings for the Viet Cong and now confirms the combat strength of the Viet Cong as 53,000 an increase of 4,500 over its previous holding of 48,500. Four new battalions have been accepted, raising the total to 72. The balance of the increase is accounted for by the revision of the strengths of previously confirmed units. A summary of the new MACV holdings is as follows:

	<u>Former Holdings</u>	<u>New Holdings</u>
Regiments	10	10
Battalions	68	72
Companies	188	192
Platoons	114	101

10. According to the USMACV Military Report for the period 10-17 July, Viet Cong activity decreased sharply to 480 incidents from the previous week's total of 650. Only one Viet Cong battalion-size action was reported during the period, an attack against ARVN units in northern Binh Duong Province in the III Corps tactical zone. The decline in the scale and intensity of Viet Cong activity was also reflected in the lowered number of casualties incurred by both sides. District towns continued to be attacked and harassed in I, II, and III Corps zones, while in the IV Corps, the main Viet Cong activities were low-level harassments of hamlets and small posts, with no attacks or ambushes being recorded for the reporting period.

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11. Much of the reported Viet Cong sabotage activity during the week was directed against land lines of communication. Routes into the central highlands area, with the exception of the recently reopened Route 19, (see Para. 5 above) apparently remained closed to traffic. Viet Cong operational activity in III Corps zone was largely concentrated along the lines of communication.

12. A statistical comparison of last week's guerrilla activity with that of the previous week follows:

<u>Time Period</u>	<u>Attacks</u>	<u>Terrorism</u>	<u>Sabotage</u>	<u>Propaganda</u>	<u>AA</u>	<u>Total Incidents</u>
3 - 10 July	20	389	118	32	91	650
10 - 17 July	5	332	92	27	24	480

13. ARVN casualties during the period 11-17 July totaled 734, (238 KIA, 342 WIA, and 154 MIA/captured), a decline from the previous week's total of 882 casualties (284 KIA, 436 WIA, and 162 MIA/captured). ARVN weapons losses increased to 408 from the 322 reported lost last week.

14. During 11-17 July, the Viet Cong sustained 447 known casualties (419 KIA and 28 captured), a sharp decline in comparison with the previous week's total of 913 casualties (741 KIA and 172 captured). Government forces captured 107 weapons (two crew-served), in contrast to the 195 weapons (one crew-served) seized last week.

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II. POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN SOUTH VIETNAM

1. Possibly foreshadowing stepped up terrorism against both US and foreign troops as well as Vietnamese officials, Viet Cong elements have again warned Vietnamese residents in the Saigon-Gia Dinh area to stay away from quarters, working areas, and entertainment spots used by American, South Korean, Australian, and New Zealand civilians and military personnel. In a communiqué broadcast over the Viet Cong's clandestine Liberation Radio on 19 July, Vietnamese were further instructed to avoid fellow military and civilian "traitors," including security agents, police, and others.

2. The broadcast also charged that both American officials and the Vietnamese Government were circulating fabricated reports accusing the Viet Cong of placing explosives in generally populated areas. The broadcast claimed that American "imperialists"--charging that these acts were the work of the National Liberation Front--were preparing to carry out terroristic acts against Vietnamese civilians.

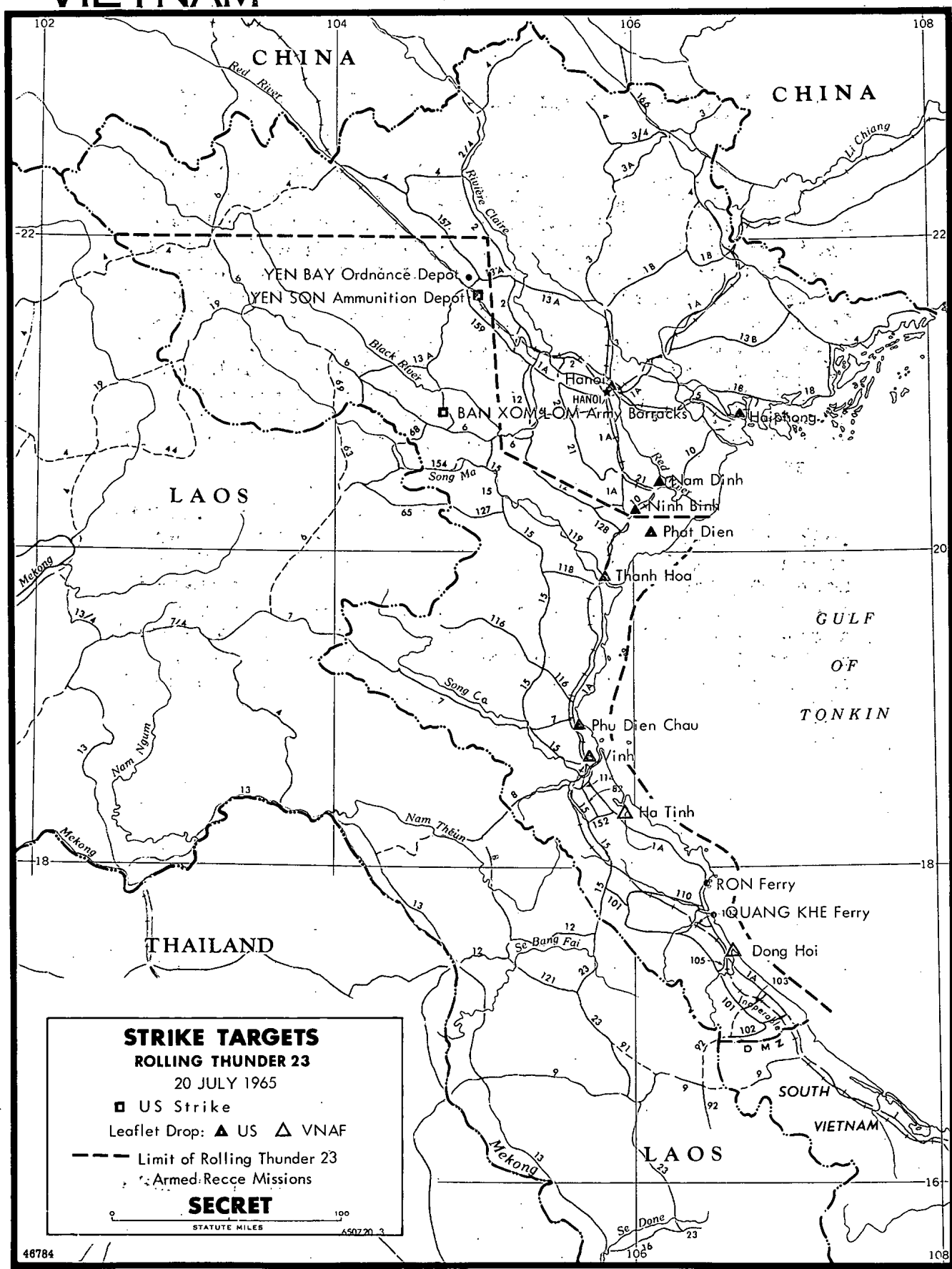
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NORTH VIETNAM

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III. MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS IN NORTH VIETNAM

1. On 20 July, USAF F-105s conducted a successful large-scale leaflet drop over eight locations in North Vietnam including Hanoi and Haiphong. All target areas were reportedly hit and all leaflet bombs were dropped except one which had a faulty release mechanism.

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2. Two primary targets--the Ban Xom Lom barracks and the Yen Son ammunition dump--were hit on 20 July with moderately successful results. USAF armed route reconnaissance aircraft struck the railroad yards at Yen Bay, the Ron highway bridge, and the Quang Khe ferry. Results ranged from moderately good to excellent according to pilot reports. USN aircraft, participating in separate armed route reconnaissance missions, hit several sampans and barges, a radar site, and a bridge. One RA5C Vigilante crashed while attempting to land on the carrier In-dependence. Both crewmen were killed.

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IV. OTHER COMMUNIST MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS

1. Nothing of significance to report.

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V. COMMUNIST POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

1. According to a British press report, the Ghanaian high commissioner to the UK Ambassador Kwesi Armah, left London on 20 July for Hanoi. Armah is reportedly heading a delegation of Ghanaian officials to feel out the North Vietnamese on negotiations--as planned by President Nkrumah in early July.

At the same time, the US Embassy in Accra has reported that Nkrumah himself has received an invitation from the DRV to visit Hanoi or to send a personal emissary in his place. The embassy further reports that Nkrumah has accepted the invitation and plans to leave for Hanoi late this week or early next week although he is still discussing the offer with his advisers and may change his mind.

It is not clear if Hanoi will regard the Armah mission as a response to its invitation. In view of Hanoi's treatment of the Davies mission, it is unlikely that the Armah delegation will be accepted if it is publicly connected with the Commonwealth Peace Mission.

2. North Vietnamese President Ho Chi Minh has used the anniversary of the signing of the Geneva accords to restate his country's determination to continue to press for a military victory in Vietnam. In a special appeal to the Vietnamese people issued on 19 July, Ho promised to "fight till final victory, even if we have to go on fighting another five years, ten years, 20 years, or even longer." Ho's appeal looks forward confidently to eventual victory and states that if the US wishes a peaceful solution it must implement the Geneva agreements, carry out the DRV's well-known "four points," and the five points of the National Liberation Front.

3. Peiping has reiterated its position that US troops must be withdrawn from Vietnam before a settlement is possible, and that the Communists

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are prepared to fight for however long is necessary to drive the US out of Vietnam. In an editorial on 20 July commemorating the 11th anniversary of the Geneva agreements on Indochina, the People's Daily asserted that the withdrawal of US troops from Vietnam is "the basic point and the most important prerequisite for the settlement of the Vietnam question." So long as US armed forces remain in South Vietnam, it declared, "there is no point" in talking about respecting sovereignty, restoring peace in Vietnam, or allowing the people of Vietnam to settle their own problems without foreign intervention. Emphasizing Peiping's determination to see the war continued until the US is driven out, the editorial warned that if the war cannot be completed in one year it will be carried on for ten years, and if it cannot be completed in this generation it will be carried on by the generations to come. While the editorial is the closest Peiping has come to making the withdrawal of US troops a prerequisite to negotiations, the Chinese are still being careful to avoid that rigid position.

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