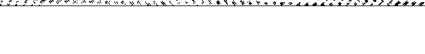


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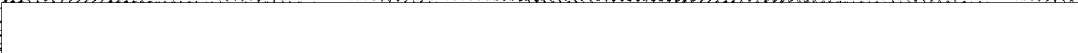
Memorandum



THE SITUATION IN VIETNAM

Information as of 1600
13 September 1965

PREPARED FOR THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL
FURTHER DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION
CONTAINED HEREIN IS NOT AUTHORIZED



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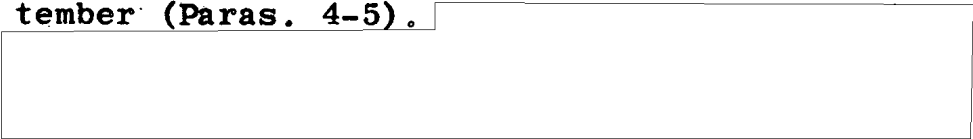
HIGHLIGHTS



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In South Vietnam, the military initiative remains in the hands of the ARVN and US forces. SAM activity continues in the DRV, although it is not clear whether any more missiles have been fired.

I. The Military Situation in South Vietnam: ARVN ground units, reinforced by one USMC battalion, are apparently continuing a large-scale search-and-destroy operation in Quang Nam Province; 126 Viet Cong have been killed thus far, as against friendly casualties of 30 killed (3 US), 98 wounded (4 US), and one missing (Para. 1). Heavy casualties are believed to have been sustained by the Viet Cong as the result of a coordinated air-ground operation conducted by government forces in Chuong Thien Province during 10-11 September (Para. 2). Battalion-strength elements of the 327th US Infantry Regiment and the 23rd ARVN Division scored favorable results in two search-and-destroy operations conducted in Binh Dinh and Binh Thuan provinces, respectively, on 11 September (Paras. 4-5).



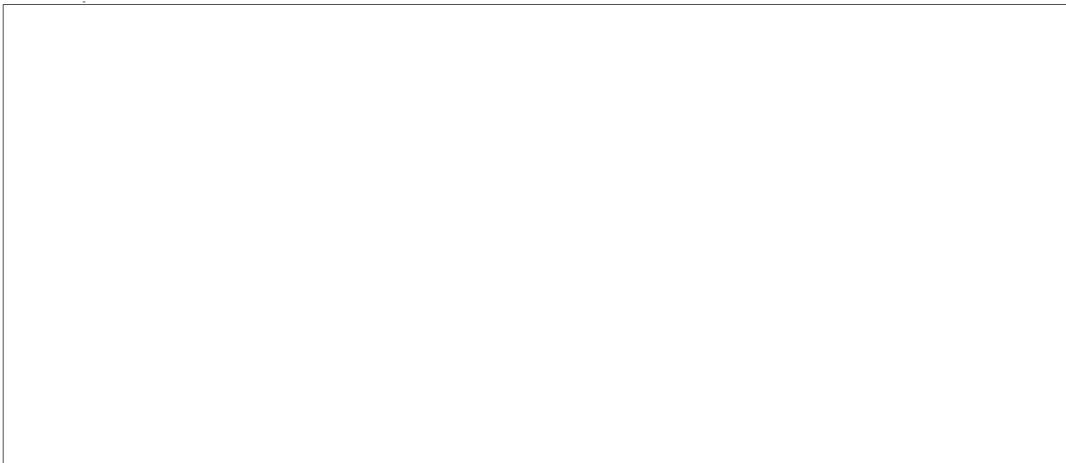
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II. Political Developments in South Vietnam:
US authorities fear that a recent move by the GVN against dissident armed montagnard units may cause further trouble in the highlands area (Para. 1). Three advisers, including two Americans, have been ordered out of the highlands by the GVN which is suspicious of the close relations the advisers have with the tribal people.



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IV. Other Communist Military Developments:
Nothing of significance to report.

V. Communist Political Developments



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SOUTH VIETNAM

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I. MILITARY SITUATION IN SOUTH VIETNAM

1. The government's multibattalion search-and-destroy operation initiated on 5 September in northern coastal Quang Nam Province, 30 miles south of Da Nang, is apparently continuing, with Viet Cong losses currently listed at 126 killed. Cumulative ARVN casualties to date stand at 27 killed, 94 wounded, and one missing. The USMC battalion committed to the operation on 10 September lost three killed, including the battalion commander, and four wounded yesterday from a mine explosion and a booby-trapped 155-mm. projectile.

2. Government forces have favorably terminated a large-scale coordinated air-ground operation conducted against three Viet Cong Main Force battalions in the Mekong Delta Province of Chuong Thien during 10-11 September. An estimated 146 Viet Cong were reported killed by US Army helicopter crews, while heavy tactical air strikes by USAF, US Navy, and VNAF fighter bombers reportedly destroyed 273 structures, damaged 117, and destroyed five sampans. ARVN ground units, while unable to confirm any Communist casualties, did verify destruction or damage to 264 enemy installations. At one point in the operation, a civilian passenger boat mistaken for a Viet Cong craft was accidentally strafed by an Army helicopter, resulting in 15 civilians killed and five wounded.

3. "Operation HIGHLAND" by the 1st Brigade/-101st US Airborne Division to secure lateral Route 19 from Qui Nhon to An Khe in Binh Dinh Province continues according to plan. Viet Cong losses thus far have been placed at 48 killed, 24 wounded, 49 captured, and 278 suspects detained, as against American casualties of three killed and 22 wounded.

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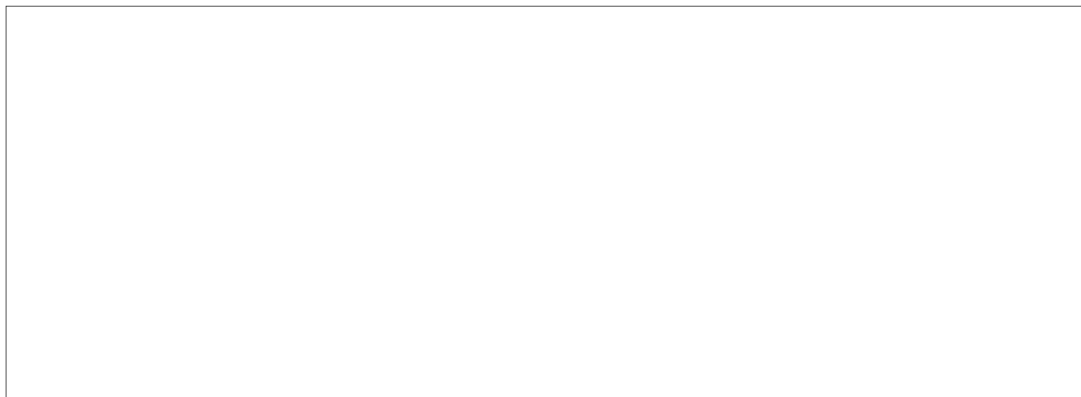
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4. The US 1st Battalion/327th Infantry, conducted a one-day search-and-destroy operation on 11 September near Route 19 in Binh Dinh Province. Nine Viet Cong were killed, 14 wounded, and two captured; six US infantrymen were wounded.

5. Battalion-strength elements of the 23rd ARVN Division killed 20 Viet Cong in a large-scale ground sweep conducted in Binh Thuan Province on 11 September. Four government soldiers were killed and 15 wounded.



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7. MACV's military report for 11 September shows 93 Communist-initiated incidents, seven of which occurred during the 24-hour reporting period. In Long Khanh Province, an unknown number of Viet Cong launched coordinated attacks against a village and two New Life Hamlets, while simultaneously shelling the provincial capital of Xuan Loc with 35 rounds of mortar fire. Combined friendly losses were placed at 15 killed, two wounded, seven missing, and 26 weapons captured.



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In central coastal Binh Dinh Province, Communist guerrillas attacked two Popular Forces platoons guarding a bridge near National Route 1, killing eight defenders, wounding six, and capturing 10 weapons. In addition, one civilian was killed and 10 kidnaped.

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II. POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN SOUTH VIETNAM

1. On 12-13 September government forces moved suddenly against dissident FULRO elements in Darlac Province. The government operation undertaken by GVN marine units, apparently was carried out with little bloodshed and netted two groups of mountain tribesmen totaling about 600 men. US authorities in Saigon are worried that this precipitate action may lead to a rebellious outbreak among other montagnard groups, similar to that which occurred last September.

2. According to the press, two Americans--a member of the US Embassy staff and a US Special Forces soldier--and an Australian Army captain, have been ordered out of the highlands by the GVN. The Australian and the US personnel had been training montagnard CIDG units. The GVN has been sensitive over the training mission among the mountain tribesmen, reflecting the traditional dislike between the Vietnamese majority and the minority groups.

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IV. OTHER COMMUNIST MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS

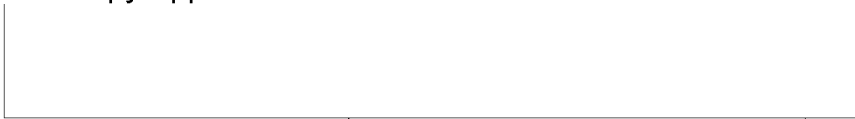
1. There is nothing of significance to report.

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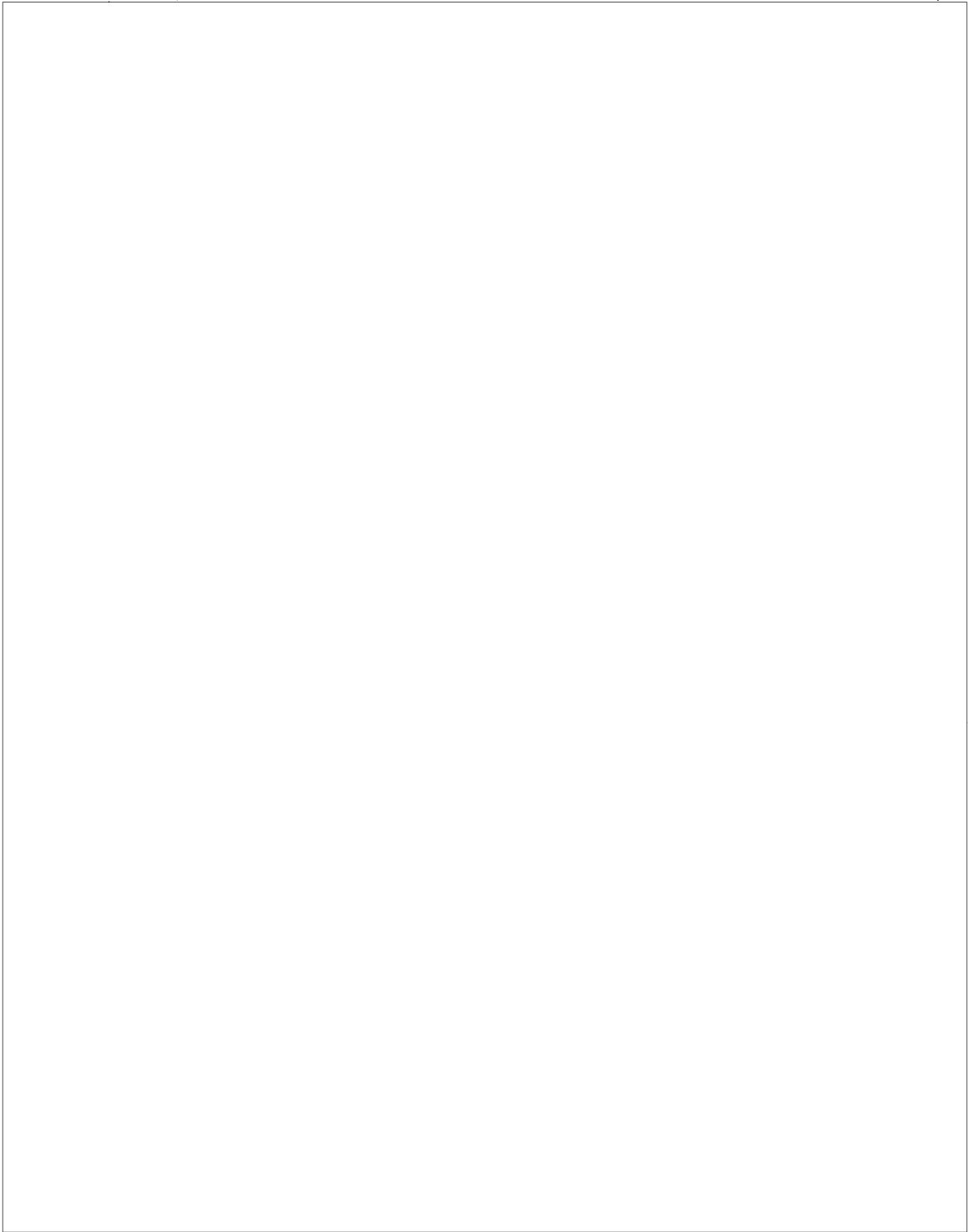
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V. COMMUNIST POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS



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5. The recent attempts in DRV propaganda to strike a balance between Moscow and Peking were further reflected in the treatment accorded the India-Pakistan war in an article in Hanoi's Nhan Dan broadcast on 11 September. The article pointed out that the issue of selfdetermination in Kashmir had touched off the conflict and that "inappropriate" action by the Indian Government in this regard had been largely responsible for aggravating the situation. The article scored the Indian unwillingness to settle the issue peacefully, but failed to condemn New Delhi as the aggressor or to side with Pakistan as have the Chinese. Rather, it accused the US, Great Britain, and the UN of being the true violators of the right of the people of Kashmir and called for a "peaceful" settlement of the conflict in a fashion similar to that expressed by the Soviets.

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