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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

Memorandum



THE SITUATION IN VIETNAM

Information as of 1600
4 November 1965

PREPARED FOR THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL
FURTHER DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION
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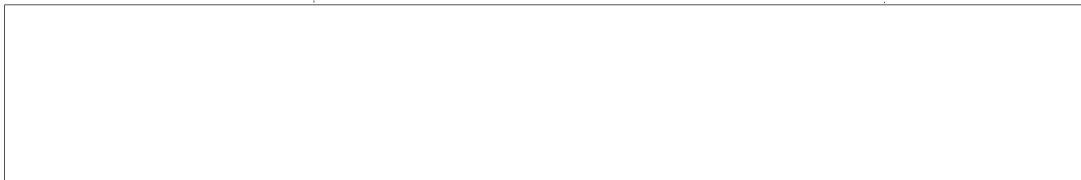
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HIGHLIGHTS

A platoon of the US 1st Cavalry Division, engaged in clearing operations near Plei Me, successfully ambushed a VC company enroute to Cambodia. In the ensuing battle, an estimated 93 Viet Cong were killed.

I. The Military Situation in South Vietnam:
Brigade-strength elements of the US 1st Cavalry Division (Air Mobile) are continuing to assist in clearing operations near Plei Me Special Forces camp in Pleiku Province; heavy fighting reportedly erupted late yesterday when one platoon of the 1st Cavalry ambushed an estimated Viet Cong company near the Cambodian border (Para. 1). Twelve USAF B-52 Stratofortresses yesterday launched the third attack in three days against a suspected Viet Cong base camp in Tay Ninh Province, 30 miles northwest of Saigon; poststrike ground exploitation of the target complex by three ARVN battalions has been initiated (Para. 2). Operation BLACK FERRET, a search-and-destroy ground sweep initiated on 3 November by one USMC battalion and 3 ARVN battalions just south of Chu Lai, continues according to plan (Para. 3). One of four USAF B-57 bombers providing close air support for a South Korean (ROK) Marine battalion on a search-and-destroy operation yesterday in Ninh Thuan Province accidentally dropped three bombs on an ROK field position; one Korean was killed and four were wounded (Para. 4). South Vietnamese forces have discovered a Viet Cong munitions factory 35 miles southeast of Saigon (Para. 6).

II. Political Developments in South Vietnam:
Nothing of significance to report.



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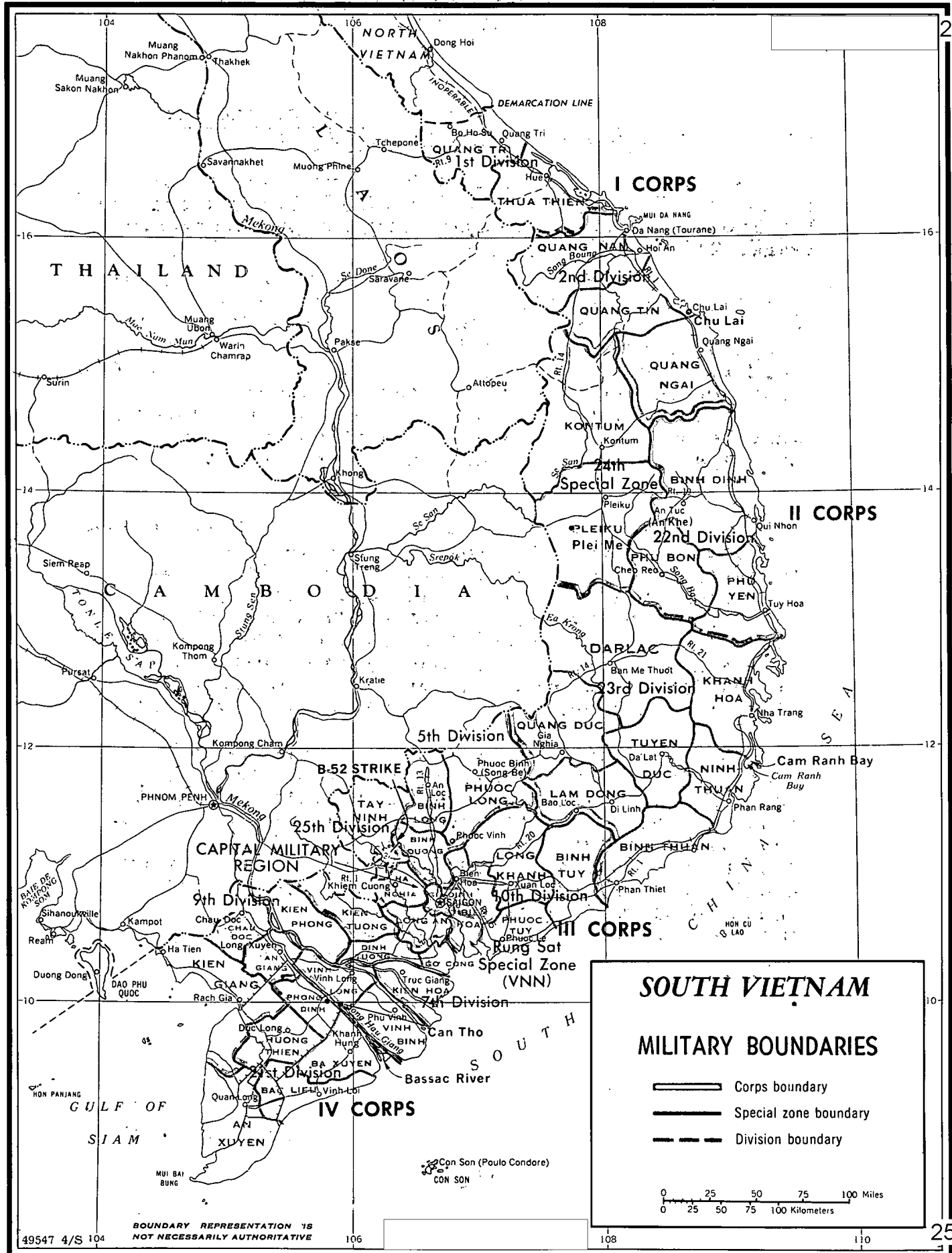


IV. Other Communist Military Developments:
Nothing of significance to report.

V. Communist Political Developments: Hanoi
propaganda attacks Tito's mediation efforts (Para. 1).
The Front continues to expand its European contacts.
(Para. 2).



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I. MILITARY SITUATION IN SOUTH VIETNAM

1. Brigade-strength elements of the US 1st Cavalry Division (Air Mobile) are continuing to assist in clearing operations near Plei Me Special Forces camp in Pleiku Province. Heavy fighting reportedly erupted late yesterday when one platoon of the 1st Cavalry ambushed an estimated Viet Cong company apparently en route toward the Cambodian border. The Viet Cong subsequently launched a seven-hour counterattack during which additional US reinforcements were rushed to the scene. Preliminary MACV reports place enemy losses at an estimated 93 killed, as against American casualties of 27 wounded.

2. Twelve Guam-based USAF B-52 Stratofortresses yesterday launched the third attack in three days against a Viet Cong base camp believed to contain communications, training, and supply/storage facilities in Tay Ninh Province, 30 miles northwest of Saigon. A scheduled six-hour ground exploitation of the target zone by three battalions of the 25th ARVN Division commenced immediately after the bomb run. Results are not yet available.

3. Operation BLACK FERRET, a search-and-destroy ground sweep initiated on 3 November by one USMC battalion and three ARVN battalions just south of Chu Lai, continues according to plan, with only light contact reported thus far with the Viet Cong. However, a US news correspondent--Miss Dickie Chapelle of the National Observer and the RKO-General radio network--was killed and six marines wounded late yesterday when a booby-trapped 81-mm. shell exploded during the course of a USMC patrol.

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4. One Republic of Korea (ROK) marine was killed and four wounded yesterday in Ninh Thuan Province when a USAF B-57 bomber accidentally dropped three 500-lb. bombs near their field position. The aircraft was one of four American B-57s flying close air support for an ROK Marine battalion on a search-and-destroy operation 20 miles southwest of Cam Ranh Bay. The inadvertent bomb release has been attributed to a mechanical malfunction when the bomb bay doors opened. A full investigation of the mishap has been initiated by US authorities.

5. MACV has confirmed earlier press reports of the shelling and sinking of a Viet Cong fishing junk by elements of a Vietnamese River Assault Group (RAG) on 2 November in Phong Dinh Province. (See 3 November Situation Report, Page I-1, Para. 3.) The incident, which occurred on the Bassac River some eight miles southeast of the provincial capital of Can Tho, resulted in three Viet Cong killed and in the seizure of 20 homemade mines, eight antitank mines, 267 homemade grenades, nine bangalore torpedoes, 21,800 rounds of 30-cal. ammunition, and 1,000 rounds of 7.62-mm. ammunition.

6. South Vietnamese troops have reported the discovery of an extensive Viet Cong munitions factory in the Mekong Delta, 35 miles southwest of Saigon. The government unit confiscated 200 homemade mines, six tons of TNT, one ton of casings, 1,000 pounds each of cylindrical water mines and fragmentation grenades, 110 lbs. of sulphur, 66 pounds of potassium nitrate, assorted tools, and a quantity of Chinese Communist "potato-masher" grenades.

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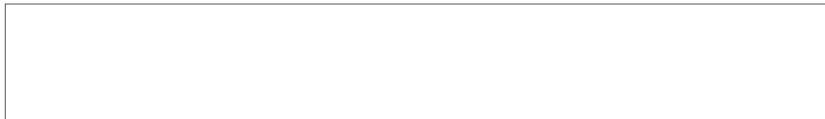


II. POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN SOUTH VIETNAM

1. There is nothing of significance to report.

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IV. OTHER COMMUNIST MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS

1. There is nothing of significance to report.

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V. COMMUNIST POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

1. For the first time in several months Hanoi has chosen to lash out at Tito for trying to arrange a negotiated settlement of the Vietnam war. In two separate broadcasts on 4 November, Hanoi Radio accused Tito of "willfully" serving US interests by his proposals. To support its attack, Hanoi quoted at length from a recent letter sent by Cambodia's Prince Sihanouk to Tito. Sihanouk, according to Hanoi, pointed out that Tito's suggestion that the US stop bombing North Vietnam was not enough to bring about a "solution to the Vietnam problem." Sihanouk is reported to have claimed that US forces must be withdrawn from South Vietnam, "first of all." It is not clear from the context whether he meant that a withdrawal must take place before any talks. Sihanouk also stated that the Liberation Front is the only "genuine and legal" representative of the South Vietnamese people and that any peace plan which gives a semblance of legality "to the aggression or the presence of the US in South Vietnam" will "surely fail ignominiously."

2. The South Vietnamese Liberation Front is continuing to expand its contacts with European Communists. Last week Poland agreed to the opening of a new Front office in Warsaw--leaving Rumania the only East European Communist country without an overseas Front representative. Moscow TASS announced on 3 November that 90 Liberation Front students had arrived for a year's training. A Reuters version of this announcement indicated that the students would study both Russian language and "technical subjects." Reuters also said some 50 Front students had come to the USSR last year. The Moscow announcement is believed to be the first public admission that Front students are being sent abroad for training.

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