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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

Memorandum



THE SITUATION IN VIETNAM

Information as of 1600
23 June 1966

ARMY and DOS review(s) completed.

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HIGHLIGHTS

Government action against the Buddhist Institute slackened today after an early morning raid and the arrest of several hundred persons. Late reports indicate that nuns and monks arrested in the morning raids were being released, and that the police apparently intended to return the Institute to Chairman Tam Chau after they complete their search, possibly on the 24th.

I. The Military Situation in South Vietnam: Operation YORKTOWN, a search-and-destroy operation in Long Khanh Province, began today (Para. 1). Search-and-destroy Operation EHU began on 20 June in an area about 20 miles northwest of Saigon (Para. 2). Operation KANSAS ended yesterday with a total of 79 Communist troops killed as compared with eight Americans killed (Para. 3). South Vietnamese Operation LAM SON 283, the first big government victory following the civil unrest in the northern provinces, ended today in northernmost Quang Tri Province (Para. 4). A Viet Cong ammunition storage area was destroyed by US Marines in the abandoned US Special Forces Camp at Ashau in Thua Thien Province (Para. 5). A captured Viet Cong document outlines procedures to be followed during interrogation of enemy prisoners (Para. 6).

II. Political Developments in South Vietnam: After an early morning raid, government police continued their search of the Buddhist Institute today (Para. 1). Elsewhere in Saigon, US military police killed an unidentified terrorist; unknown assailants killed the publisher of a Chinese-language newspaper (Para. 2). Some 9,000 Vietnamese workers employed by US construction companies went on strike today in the Saigon area (Para. 3). Quang Tri city was reported returning to normal after government forces entered the city yesterday (Para. 4). Although Hue is now quiet on the surface, the government will probably have to implement various corrective actions before it can fully consolidate its authority there (Para. 5). According to an initial report, a young girl burned herself to death in Da Lat today (Para. 6).

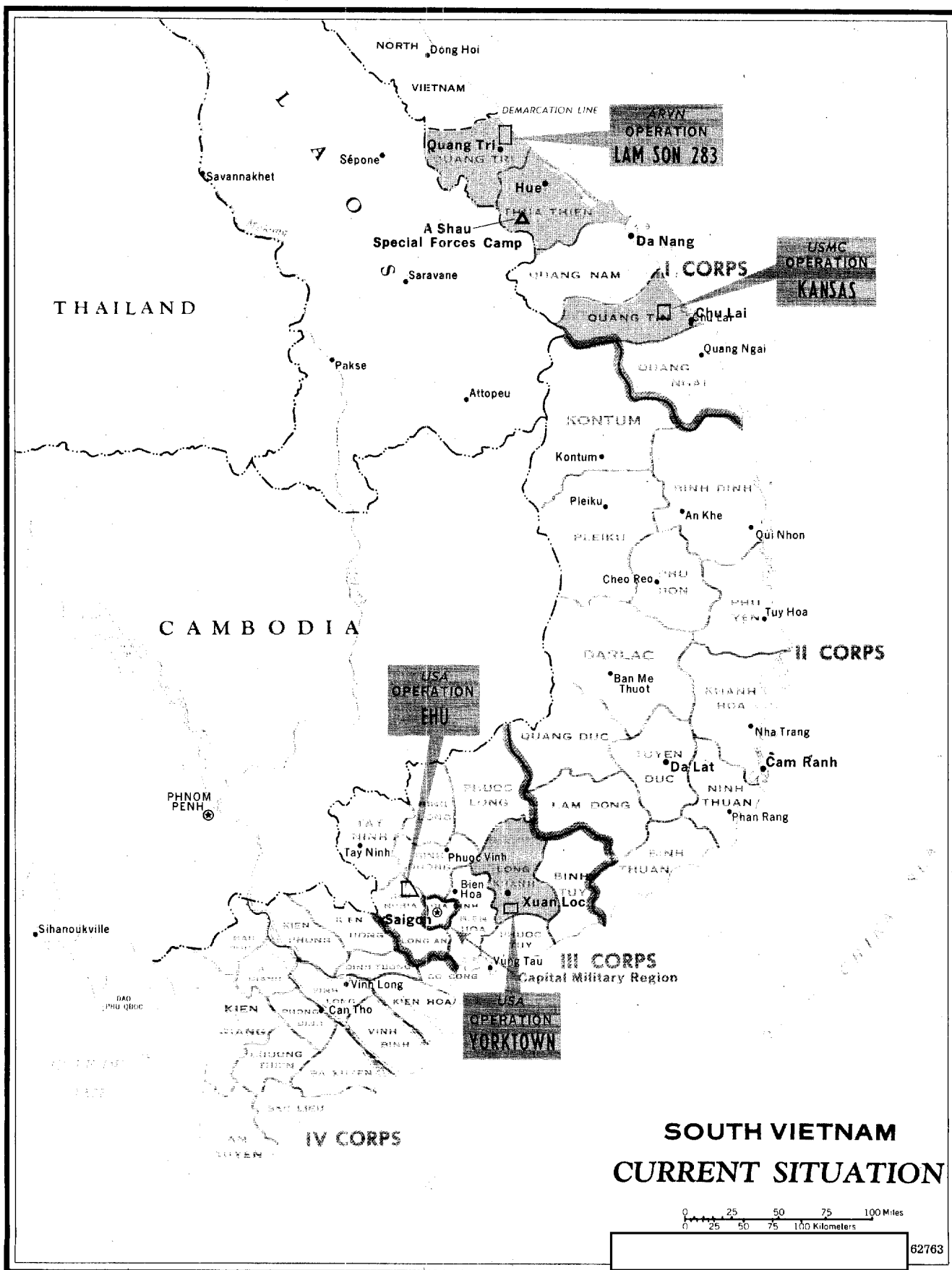
III. Military Developments in North Vietnam:
There is nothing of significance to report.

IV. Other Communist Military Developments:
There is nothing of significance to report.

V. Communist Political Developments: Hanoi has sharply attacked recent US statements about achieving a peaceful solution to the Vietnam war (Para. 1).

VI. Other Major Aspects: Hanoi has recently concluded a contract to purchase 20,000 kilometers of field wire from Japan--more than sufficient for one basic issue to all combat units now supported by North Vietnam (Paras. 1-3).

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I. THE MILITARY SITUATION IN SOUTH VIETNAM

1. Operation YORKTOWN, a search-and-destroy operation being conducted by units of the US 173rd Airborne Brigade began today in southern Long Khanh Province. In the general area where MACV now carries two Viet Cong regiments--the 274th and 275th--with a total of 3,850 troops.

2. One battalion of the US 25th Division began search-and-destroy Operation EHU on 20 June in an area about 20 miles northwest of Saigon. A total of 17 Americans have been wounded and five Viet Cong killed in the action thus far.

3. Week-long US Marine Operation KANSAS, conducted northwest of Chu Lai in Quang Tin Province, ended yesterday. The operation resulted in the loss of eight US killed and 20 wounded. A total of 79 Communist troops were killed, one captured, and 32 weapons seized.

4. South Vietnamese marine and army units conducting Operation LAM SON 283 in northernmost Quang Tri Province scored excellent results in the three-day operation which concluded today. During the operation, the GVN forces made contact with elements of the Viet Cong 808th Battalion and possibly the 814th. Reportedly more than 300 Communists were killed; friendly losses were set at 37 killed and 104 wounded. This GVN victory was the biggest and most impressive since the Buddhist-inspired civil strife, which broke out three months ago, seriously curtailed the war effort in the northern part of the country.

Viet Cong Ammunition Cache Destroyed

5. The press reports a company of US Marines today destroyed a large supply of ammunition stored at the abandoned US Special Forces Camp at Ashau, 60 miles west of Da Nang in Thua Thien Province. The marines flew in by helicopter and destroyed the cache in about an hour and a half and then withdrew. They met no enemy resistance.

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Viet Cong Prisoner Interrogation Instructions

6. An enemy document entitled "Guide for Investigation of Surrenderers and Prisoners of War" was captured in mid-May by elements of the US 25th Infantry Division. The document describes in detail the value of interrogations in determining both the immediate and long-range courses of action and the probability of obtaining the necessary information from the enemy. If valid, this document indicates that the Viet Cong may feel that courtesy and kindness, along with firmness when necessary, will produce the desired results. A US Marine enlisted man who recently escaped from the Viet Cong reported he was well treated and well fed although he had not been formally interrogated before he escaped.

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II. POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN SOUTH VIETNAM

Search of the Buddhist Institute Continues

1. Government police continued their search of the Buddhist Institute today following their raid earlier this morning. Thus far, police have discovered tear gas grenades, radio equipment, and knives within the compound. Between 100 and 300 persons, including the suspected killer of a policeman on 18 June, have been taken into custody. At present, the government is also holding some 45 Buddhists who were detained yesterday after an identification check of those who took advantage of a temporary relaxation of the police barricade around the Institute. According to late press reports, some 100 Buddhist monks and nuns were released this afternoon after their identities had been checked. Police apparently intend to return the Institute to Chairman Tam Chau when they complete their search, possibly tomorrow.

2. Elsewhere in Saigon today, US military police killed an unidentified Vietnamese dressed in a South Vietnamese Army uniform who was attempting to throw a hand grenade near a US military billet. Meanwhile, an unidentified gunman killed the publisher of a Chinese-language newspaper in the capital. The gunman and an accomplice escaped on a motorbike. Initially, police reportedly offered no motive for the slaying.

Construction Workers Strike in the Saigon Metropolitan Area

3. Approximately 9,000 Vietnamese workers employed by four US construction firms went on strike in the Saigon area today for an increase in wages in line with the recent pay raise awarded Vietnamese civil servants. An initial report from MACV states that construction work on aircraft runways and port facilities in Bien Hoa and Saigon are being affected. [redacted]

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[redacted] about 100 skilled Philippine workmen also employed by a US firm went on strike yesterday in Camh Ranh city. [redacted]

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[redacted] the strike there is unlikely to spread among Vietnamese workers, since they consider themselves well paid.

I Corps Developments

4. According to the US Embassy, Buddhist altars in Quang Tri city were moved back into private homes today following yesterday's entry into the city by National Police Director Loan and government forces. All other indications suggest that the situation there is returning to normal.

5. Although virtually all overt manifestations of the "struggle" movement have now been eliminated in Hue, US Consular officials have reported that many political, psychological, and administrative actions need to be taken there before government authority can be consolidated. Among other things, the government is planning to keep police field forces in the city for the next few months while local police are reorganized. Several persons already arrested may be tried and sentenced to death for their antigovernment activities. The government is also planning a show of force in Hue on 25 June by staging a military parade. Finally, most of the government's regional offices now located in Hue will probably be shifted to Da Nang in the near future.

Another Buddhist Self-Immolation Reported

6. According to a US AID report, a 19-year-old-girl burned herself to death early this morning at a pagoda in Da Lat. No further details are yet available.

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III. MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS IN NORTH 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. Hanoi radio on 22 June sharply attacked recent US efforts to achieve a peaceful solution in Vietnam. The broadcast cited comments made this month on this subject by UN Ambassador Goldberg, Secretary Rusk, and President Johnson, and claimed that all their talk was designed to cover up plans for further escalation of the war. President Johnson's 18 June speech was specifically interpreted as threatening a step-up in the air war against the North and additional increases in the strength of US forces in the South. The broadcast was relatively abusive in tone and pledged Vietnamese determination to "exterminate the US aggressors." It included a reference to the possibility of trying captured US pilots--a subject that Hanoi has recently emphasized in its propaganda.

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VI. OTHER MAJOR ASPECTS

1. On 15 June, North Vietnam concluded a contract with Japan for the purchase of 20,000 kilometers (km) of military field wire, to be delivered over an eight-month period beginning in July. Acquisition of this quantity of wire will permit a major restocking and expansion of North Vietnam's tactical communications inventory and facilitate the maintenance of communications security. It might also reflect an intention on North Vietnam's part to prepare for a long war. Based on current order of battle estimates, the quantity involved is more than sufficient to provide one basic issue of field wire to all combat units now supported by North Vietnam--including those in South Vietnam and Laos.

2. The requirements for field wire could have increased significantly in South Vietnam in the past year because of the expansion of regular Communist forces and because of the step-up in US/GVN "spoiling" operations, which may be costing the Communists greater losses of field wire. Attritional losses of field wire in South Vietnam, at current levels of operation, are already estimated to be in the order of 4,800 km annually. In addition, the buildup of forces in North Vietnam and an expanded training program may also have put unusual demands on the wire supply.

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