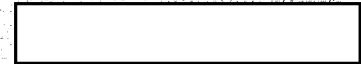


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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

Memorandum



THE SITUATION IN VIETNAM

Information as of 1600
24 June 1966

PREPARED FOR THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL
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24 June 1966

HIGHLIGHTS

Two US operations in the central part of South Vietnam have reported heavy contact with enemy forces on 24 June. In Saigon, the Ky government is firming up plans for a major cabinet reshuffle.

I. The Military Situation in South Vietnam:

Units of the US 1st Air Cavalry Division participating in Operation NATHAN HALE in coastal Phu Yen Province are reported in heavy contact with an estimated two companies of enemy troops (Para. 1). Operation PAUL REVERE continues in Pleiku Province, where one battalion of the US 25th Infantry Division is reported to be in heavy contact with an estimated Viet Cong battalion (Para. 2). Border surveillance Operation BEAUREGARD began in western Kontum Province on 24 June (Para. 3). The three-day search-and-destroy Operation EHU ended yesterday 20 miles northwest of Saigon (Para. 4). A large number of North Korean assault rifles copied from Russian models were among the arms found in the Communist trawler captured off Vinh Binh Province on 20 June (Para. 5).

II. Political Developments in South Vietnam:

The restoration of government authority in Hue, Da Nang, and Saigon continued on 24 June (Paras. 1-3). Thich Tam Chau, the chairman of the Buddhist Institute, strongly condemned the entry of the police into the Institute compound (Para. 4). Premier Ky is planning some major cabinet changes (Para. 5).



IV. Other Communist Military Developments:

There is nothing of significance to report.

V. Communist Political Developments:

There is nothing of significance to report.

I. THE MILITARY SITUATION IN SOUTH VIETNAM

1. Search-and-destroy Operation NATHAN HALE continues in an area northwest of Tuy Hoa in coastal Phu Yen Province. One battalion of the US 1st Air Cavalry Division was reported to be in heavy contact with an estimated two companies of Communist troops this morning. There have been no reports of casualties.

2. Operation PAUL REVERE, a seven-week-old search-and-destroy operation in Pleiku Province, is continuing with one battalion of the US 25th Infantry Division currently reported to be in heavy contact with an estimated Viet Cong battalion. No results of this action are yet available.

3. In a continuation of the allied border surveillance campaign in the high plateau region, two battalions of the US 101st Airborne Division today launched Operation BEAUREGARD in western Kontum Province. Participating units are scheduled to use combat reconnaissance-in-force and saturation patrolling techniques along the Cambodian - Laotian - South Vietnamese border in an effort to block and destroy suspected Communist infiltration, supply, and withdrawal routes. No significant enemy contact has thus far been reported.

4. The three-day US Operation EHU, a search-and-destroy operation conducted in an area about 20 miles northwest of Saigon, ended yesterday. A total of 21 Americans were wounded and eight Viet Cong were killed. Several Communist weapons and documents were captured, and six trenches and one tunnel were destroyed.

North Korean Rifles Found in Captured Communist Trawler

5. Examination of a portion of the arms taken from the Communist trawler, which was seized off Vinh Binh Province on 20 June, has revealed a large number of assault rifles of North Korean manufacture. These rifles are copies of the Soviet AK-47 model of assault rifle, one of the 7.62-mm. family of weapons. These are the first North Korean weapons to be found in the IV Corps area.

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II. POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN SOUTH VIETNAM

1. Steps to consolidate government control over the last vestiges of dissidence continued on 24 June in Saigon, Hue, and Da Nang. Government security forces cordoned off Tri Quang's two pagodas in Hue and removed coffins containing the remains of two nuns who had burned themselves in protest against the Ky-Thieu regime.

2. Arrests of "struggle" movement leaders continue. Two of the rebel leaders have issued apologetic statements today over radio Hue on the "advice" of Colonel Loan. On 23 June, eighteen bonzes in Da Nang who displayed banners inviting the government to throw them in jail were promptly obliged. They are reportedly being held at the National Police headquarters.

3. Of the estimated 500 persons arrested in Saigon on 22 and 23 June during the police sweep of the Buddhist Institute, 30 to 40 of them, classed as hoodlums, are still being detained. Some of the draft-age youths picked up in the sweep are being inducted into the armed forces.

4. In a communiqué issued on 24 June, Institute Chairman Thich Tam Chau strongly condemned the government's entry of the Institute. He declared the Institute compound to be an "open area" for which the government now is entirely responsible, including the "incinerated heart" of the late Thich Quang Duc, the first monk to commit self-immolation during the Buddhist protest against the Diem regime.

5. Premier Ky disclosed to Ambassador Lodge today that he is planning to "reshuffle" the government, referring to certain cabinet changes which had been discussed among Directorate members prior to its expansion. It appears that three more supra-ministries will be added to six that now exist. Ky is still apparently attempting to take over personally the task of administering the foreign affairs portfolio. He apparently would like to designate Tran Van Do, now foreign affairs minister, a civilian vice prime minister.

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