



CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

Memorandum



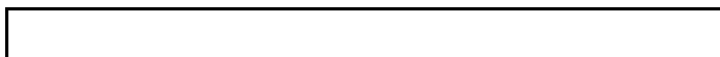
THE SITUATION IN VIETNAM

Information as of 1600
16 August 1966

ARMY review(s) completed.

State Dept. review completed

PREPARED FOR THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL
FURTHER DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION
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HIGHLIGHTS

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] North Vietnamese MIGs engaged US planes in the southern part of the country.

I. The Military Situation in South Vietnam: Operation DECK HOUSE III began in the coastal provinces of Phuoc Tuy and Binh Tuy today in coordination with Operation TOLEDO in an effort to flush out the reported 4,450 Viet Cong in the area (Para. 1). The command post of the US 1st Infantry Division 25 miles north of Saigon was hit by Viet Cong mortar and small-arms fire yesterday, killing five Americans (Para. 2). A total of 195 Communists were killed in an eight-hour battle in the coastal flatlands of Quang Tin and Quang Nam provinces (Para. 3). An advance contingent of Philippine troops arrived in South Vietnam today (Para. 6).

II. Political Developments in South Vietnam:

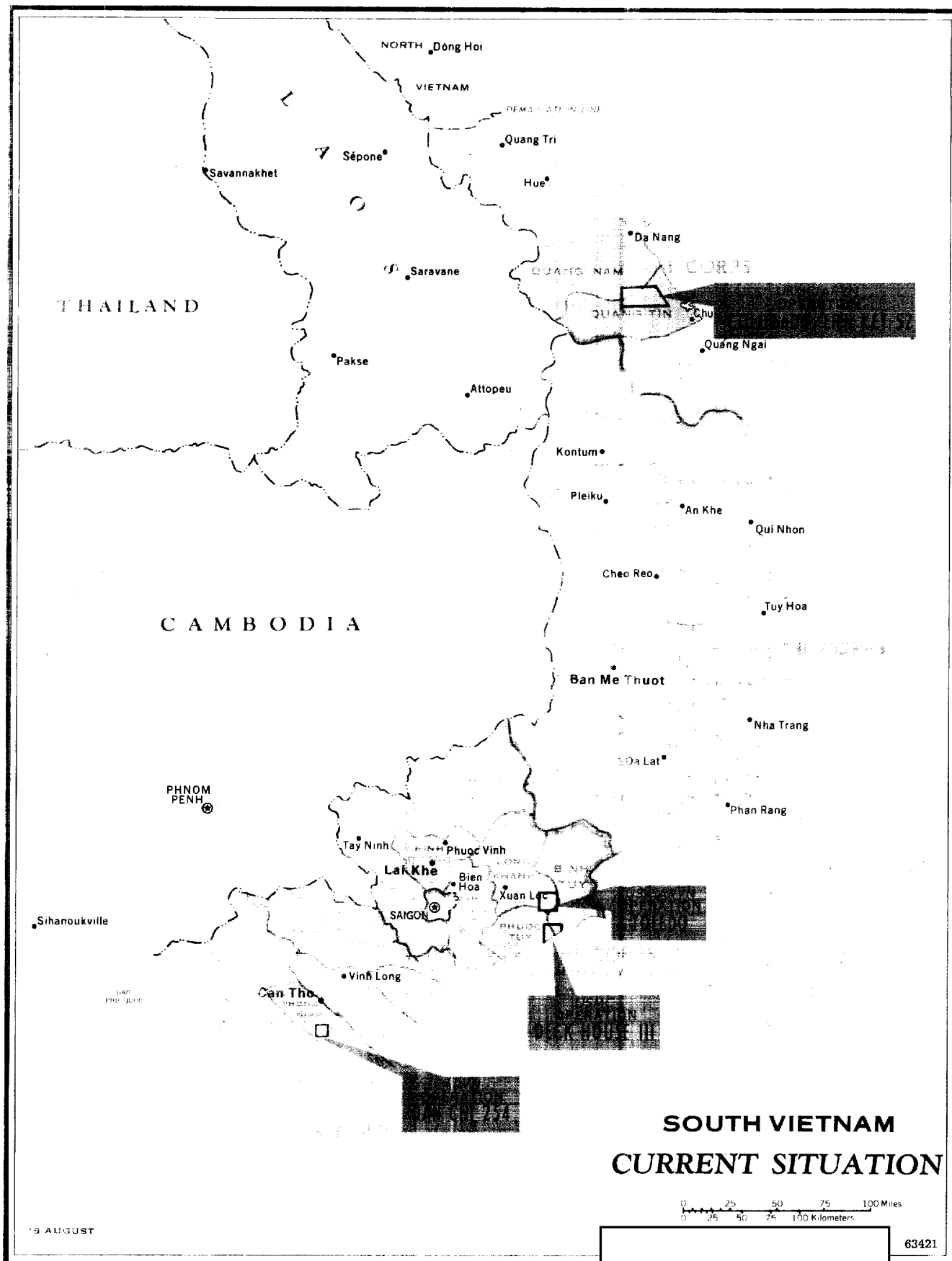
[REDACTED]

Strike at Caltex installations averted (Para. 5).

III. Military Developments in North Vietnam: MIG engagement in vicinity of Thanh Hao results in no planes lost (Para. 1). US plane losses in August (Para. 2).

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

[REDACTED]



I. THE MILITARY SITUATION IN SOUTH VIETNAM

1. The Seventh Fleet Special Landing Force (SLF) consisting of one reinforced battalion of US Marines began search-and-destroy Operation DECK HOUSE III in Phuoc Tuy and Binh Tuy provinces today. This operation is being coordinated with the US - South Vietnamese Operation TOLEDO and is acting as a blocking force to the south. Operation TOLEDO, a multibattalion search-and-destroy operation, began on 9 August in the southern portions of Long Khanh and Binh Tuy provinces and has encountered only light contact with the 4,450 Viet Cong troops reportedly operating in the area.

2. Viet Cong guerrillas attacked the forward command post of the US 1st Infantry Division near Lai Khe, 25 miles north of Saigon in Binh Duong Province, with approximately 82 rounds of 81-mm. mortar fire and small-arms fire on 15 August. US troops retaliated by hitting the Viet Cong positions with small-arms, mortar, and artillery fire. A reaction force was later dispatched to search for the Viet Cong; however, no results have been reported. A total of five Americans were killed and 33 wounded in the two-hour attack.

3. As a result of an eight-hour engagement between South Vietnamese Marines and a Communist force of undetermined size on 13 August, 195 enemy troops were killed and five captured in Operation COLORADO/LIEN KET 52, in the coastal flatlands of Quang Tin and Quang Nam provinces. Friendly casualties included 30 South Vietnamese killed, 94 wounded, and one American adviser wounded. The South Vietnamese forces participating in this search-and-destroy operation were withdrawn yesterday, ending LIEN KET 52. Cumulative South Vietnamese casualties were 50 killed and 203 wounded.

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4. Four South Vietnamese Army battalions conducting search-and-destroy Operation DAN CHI 254 in an area about 20 miles southeast of Can Tho in the delta province of Vinh Long reported 18 Viet Cong killed yesterday. South Vietnamese casualties in this one-day operation were one killed and two wounded.

Communist Infiltration Total

5. MACV's latest report on infiltration once again shows a rise. The total number of infiltrators in the confirmed, probable, and possible categories for 1966 now stands at 39,655.

First Philippine Troops Arrive

6. An advance contingent of 100 Philippine civic action troops arrived in Saigon today. The contingent, made up of medical, engineering, and logistics personnel, will act as an advance party for the main body of 2,000 men who are scheduled to arrive in South Vietnam by 11 September.

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5. The threatened strike of workers at the Caltex installations in Saigon was averted through intense negotiations between government, labor, and company officials. The only sanctions to be imposed are warning letters and short suspensions without pay for some of the troublemakers. The embassy view is that the current settlement is only a short-term stopgap effort and that a longer term labor peace will come about only through more fundamental changes in Caltex labor policy.

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III. MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS IN NORTH VIETNAM

1. Four A4E Skyhawks from the USS Oriskany were attacked by two MIG-17 Frescoes on 16 August but no planes were lost on either side. The Skyhawks were attacking a train approximately 18 miles north of Thanh Hoa when jumped by the North Vietnamese fighters. The MIGs made only one pass firing 37-mm. cannons before they were out-turned by the Skyhawks which then departed for the carrier. The incident is unusual in that it is only the third time North Vietnamese fighters have attempted to engage US aircraft this far south. It is the second time that DRV fighter aircraft have tangled with US planes this month.

2. The US has lost 23 planes to all types of North Vietnamese air defense fire during the first 15 days of August. These losses are almost identical with those of previous two-week periods since the air war over North Vietnam was stepped up with the Hanoi/Haiphong attacks of 29/30 June 1966. For example, 21 US planes were lost in combat during June when 3,429 attack sorties were flown against the DRV. In July, when the number of sorties rose to 4,370 and US aircraft attacked more heavily defended targets, 42 planes were lost. The number of losses so far in August appears more closely related to an increasing attack sortie rate over more hazardous areas than to a significant improvement in North Vietnamese air defense capabilities.

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IV. OTHER COMMUNIST MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS

1. There is nothing of significance to report.

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