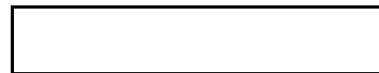


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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

*Memorandum*



THE SITUATION IN VIETNAM

Information as of 1600  
23 September 1966

State Department  
review completed

PREPARED FOR THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL  
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HIGHLIGHTS

North Vietnam has rejected an ICC request that Hanoi allow the ICC to reinstitute patrol activities in the northeastern sector of the Demilitarized Zone. The North Vietnamese statement asserted that only the US and the Saigon government had sabotaged the status of the DMZ. Hanoi has also rejected the US peace proposal made at the United Nations yesterday by Ambassador Goldberg.

I. The Military Situation in South Vietnam:

South Vietnamese Army troops have successfully repulsed a two-battalion enemy attack in coastal Binh Dinh Province (Para. 1). US soldiers participating in Operation THAYER in Binh Dinh Province reported light casualties in two attacks by Communist forces. (Paras. 2-3). South Korean forces ended Operation SU BOK in Binh Dinh Province and began Operation DEUL KUK HWA in the same general area (Paras. 4-5). US Operation HUNTSVILLE ended yesterday in Binh Duong Province (Para. 6). A group of 10 North Vietnamese prisoners have provided some interesting, and in some cases consistent, answers to a series of questions on supply shortages, morale, and when the war might end (Paras. 7-12). The weekly review of South Vietnam battle statistics (Para. 13).

II. Political Developments in South Vietnam:

The military Directorate members espoused a hands-off policy toward the constituent assembly proceedings (Paras. 1-2). As an interesting aside to the assembly elections, the eight provinces with the lowest voter turnout per total population were all in the delta below Saigon (Paras. 3-4).

III. North Vietnamese Military Developments:

There is nothing of significance to report.

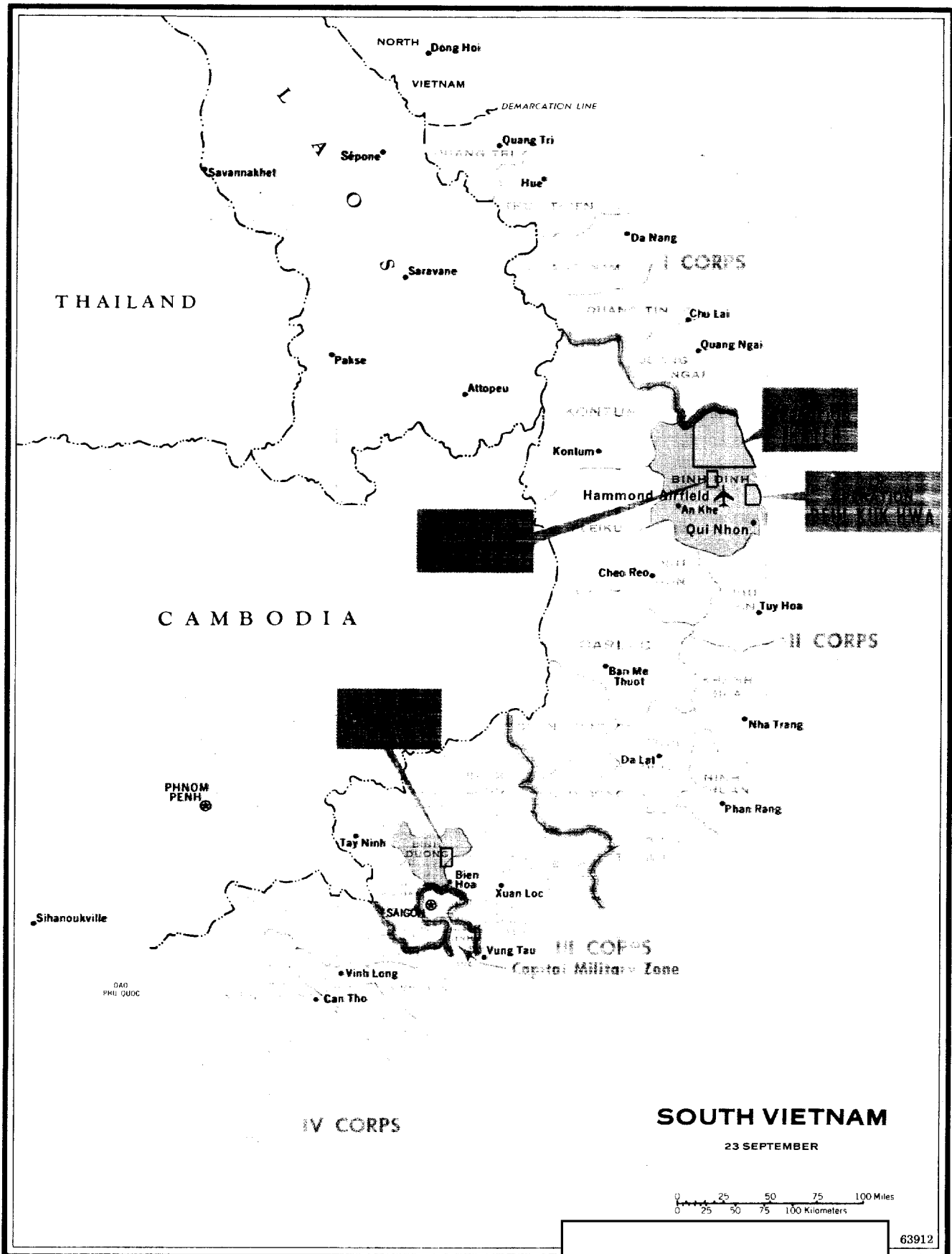
IV. Other Communist Military Developments:

There is nothing of significance to report.

V. Communist Political Developments: North Vietnam has rejected the ICC request that Hanoi allow the ICC to reinstitute patrol activities in the northeastern sector of the Demilitarized Zone (Paras. 1-4). Hanoi has also rejected as "hypocritical" the US peace proposals made yesterday at the United Nations by US Ambassador Goldberg (Para. 5).

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I. THE MILITARY SITUATION IN SOUTH VIETNAM

1. Elements of the South Vietnamese 22nd Division reported driving back successive waves of attacks early on 23 September by an estimated two-battalion Viet Cong force 30 miles northwest of Qui Nhon in coastal Binh Dinh Province. The South Vietnamese force, participating in Operation BINH PHU 27, was supported by US Air Force C-47 "Dragon Ships" and armored personnel carriers with heavy machine guns. A US 1st Air Cavalry unit has been deployed in an attempt to block the enemy escape. Initial casualty reports show friendly losses as six killed and 30 wounded. Communist losses are reported as 137 killed and 47 weapons captured.

Operation THAYER

2. Elements of the US 1st Air Cavalry Division participating in multibattalion search-and-destroy Operation THAYER engaged an estimated company-size enemy force on 22 September in an area about 30 miles north of Qui Nhon in coastal Binh Dinh Province. The enemy unit employed automatic weapons and mortars in probing US defenses prior to the engagement. American losses during the two and a half hour battle totaled eight killed and eight wounded. Communist losses are unknown.

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3. One American was killed and 25 injured when Hammond Airfield, located about 23 miles northwest of coastal Qui Nhon, was attacked by an enemy force early on 23 September. An estimated 20 to 30 rounds of 60-mm. mortar fire landed on the airfield which is being used in support of Operation THAYER. Reaction forces, supported by flareship aircraft were unable to locate the enemy force. Fifteen helicopters were damaged; only two, however, sustained major damage and all are repairable.

#### South Korean Operations

4. A two-battalion security and rice harvest protection operation conducted by the South Korean Capital Division in an area along the coast of Binh Dinh Province ended on 22 September. Operation SU BOK, which began on 26 March, resulted in 299 Communists killed, 33 captured, 132 suspects detained, and 220 weapons captured. South Korean casualties totaled 23 killed and 84 wounded.

5. Four battalions of the South Korean Capital Division began a new search-and-destroy operation named DEUL KUK HWA on 22 September about 15 miles north of Qui Nhon in the same general area as Operation SU BOK. Six Communist battalions with a combined strength of 2,100 men are reported to be in the area. No contact with the enemy has been reported.

6. Operation HUNTSVILLE, a search-and-destroy operation conducted by the 3rd Brigade of the US 1st Infantry Division, ended on 22 September. This operation, which began on 20 September, resulted in eight Viet Cong killed, seven captured, and 53 suspects detained. Five Americans were wounded in the sweep which took place 12 to 15 miles northeast of Saigon in Binh Duong Province.

#### Prisoner Interrogations

7. A group of 10 North Vietnamese prisoners, consisting of four captured naval officers and six

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soldiers captured in South Vietnam, have provided some interesting and in some cases consistent answers to a series of questions. The questions concerned VC/NVA shortages in critical supplies, the morale of Communist forces, and the reasons for VC/NVA avoidance of large-scale engagements with US forces.

8. Concerning shortages of ammunition, medical supplies or food, the naval officers stated that they had heard of no shortages, while the personnel captured in South Vietnam indicated that there was a lack of food and medical supplies. There was, however, no indication that the shortage was sufficient to affect seriously the VC/NVA operational capabilities.

9. The prisoners captured in South Vietnam stated that air interdiction had reduced the quantity of supplies, particularly food, being brought into South Vietnam. Air strikes also reportedly increased the time it took troops to infiltrate by two months, according to one source. In response to a question as to why VC and North Vietnamese forces avoided large-scale combat, those personnel captured in South Vietnam indicated that their tactics were to engage only units smaller or equal to their own in size. They were also warned to avoid bringing on air strikes.

10. All six of the prisoners captured in South Vietnam voiced the opinion that the VC could not win the war and that they probably would not survive the fighting. When asked if they felt like "hunted animals" facing certain death, the prisoners captured in South Vietnam avoided the term "hunted animals" but stated their belief that they would die in the South.

11. The question of how to induce wholesale surrender of VC/NVA forces drew a variety of responses ranging from destroying of the Central Office for South Vietnam to convincing the troops in South Vietnam that the North Vietnamese Government had surrendered. The most realistic answers

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included assuring that VC/NVA forces understood the Chieu Hoi program so that they would not be afraid to turn themselves in to the South Vietnamese Government. Another prisoner suggested increasing antiguerrilla efforts since it was the guerrilla forces that made it difficult for soldiers to turn themselves in. Still another answer was to appeal for the surrender of an encircled enemy unit before launching an attack.

12. The most interesting question asked was "when will the North Vietnamese Army end the war of liberation?" The general opinion of all the prisoners was that the war would last for a very long time.

#### Weekly Review of South Vietnam Battle Statistics

13. The week of 11-17 September compared with the week of 4-10 September:

#### I. Viet Cong Incidents

<u>Time Period</u>	<u>At-tacks</u>	<u>Regimental size</u>	<u>Battalion size</u>
4-10 Sept	27	0	0
11-17 Sept	26	0	2

<u>Time Period</u>	<u>Company size</u>	<u>Harassment</u>	<u>Terrorism</u>
4-10 Sept	1	360	32
11-17 Sept	3	600	50

<u>Time Period</u>	<u>Sabo-tage</u>	<u>Propa-ganda</u>	<u>Anti-Aircraft</u>	<u>Total Incidents</u>
4-10 Sept	21	29	98	567
11-17 Sept	40	42	192	950

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II. Casualties

	<u>VC/NVA</u>		<u>GVN</u>	
	<u>4-10 Sept</u>	<u>11-17 Sept</u>	<u>4-10 Sept</u>	<u>11-17 Sept</u>
Killed	1,187	722	174	172
Wounded	-----	---	488	424
Missing/ Captured	<u>228</u>	<u>111</u>	<u>34</u>	<u>53</u>
TOTALS	1,415	833	696	649

	<u>US</u>		<u>FREE WORLD</u>	
	<u>4-10 Sept</u>	<u>11-17 Sept</u>	<u>4-10 Sept</u>	<u>11-17 Sept</u>
Killed	71	96	3	3
Wounded	450	583	17	18
Missing/ Captured	<u>8</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
TOTALS	529	684	20	21

III. Weapons Captured

	<u>VC/NVA</u>		<u>GVN</u>	
	<u>4-10 Sept</u>	<u>11-17 Sept</u>	<u>4-10 Sept</u>	<u>11-17 Sept</u>
Individual	367	Not	105	184
Crew-Served	<u>30</u>	Reported	<u>4</u>	<u>7</u>
TOTALS	397		109	191

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## II. POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN SOUTH VIETNAM

1. At a meeting of the military members of the Directorate on 22 September, it was agreed that the Directorate should "dictate" neither the manner in which the constituent assembly proceeds with its work nor its decisions. The members did not discuss the possibility of implementing Article 20 of the assembly founding decree which grants them the power to revise the constitution. It was previously reported that some of the assembly members are considering waging a battle to annul Article 20 soon after the assembly convenes on 27 September. The responsibility of fielding items brought to the attention of the Directorate by the assembly was assigned to Secretary General Pham Xuan Chieu and Minister of Information General Nguyen Bao Tri.

2. In the opinion of a high-ranking South Vietnamese military officer, the postelection euphoria is exaggerated and will have no lasting effect on the general populace. Although the success of the voter turnout has had a favorable effect on high-ranking government officials and some politicians, the officer termed it "ridiculous," to expect that the average military or civilian government functionary will move out of his lethargic and corrupt ways. He concluded that the great problem of South Vietnam is that most people "do not care."

### Other Postelection Developments

3. According to the US Embassy, an early government estimate that election irregularities were relatively insignificant and few in number has not changed. US officials have no reason to doubt the government's estimate.

4. Voting statistics revealed that the eight provinces with the smallest actual voter turnout in comparison to their total population were all in

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the delta below Saigon. The total vote for each of the eight provinces was below 20 percent of the total population; one registered as low as 11 percent. The low vote probably reflects the degree to which the rural populace has been cut off by Viet Cong "irregulars" as well as southern peasant apathy toward national issues. In any event, the low turnout underscores the delicate security situation that has prevailed in the delta for several years, but which has taken a back seat, publicly, to enemy developments in the highlands and the northern provinces.

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III. NORTH VIETNAMESE MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS

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. North Vietnam on 23 September turned aside an ICC request that Hanoi allow the ICC to reinstitute the patrol activities of ICC Mobile Team 76 in the north-eastern sector of the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ). In an official letter to the ICC, the North Vietnamese Liaison Mission stated that the ICC's appeal to both North and South Vietnam asking respect for the DMZ and for cooperation with Team 76 "does not correspond with objective reality in the Zone; therefore, it is not conducive to appropriate settlement of the present situation in the Zone."

2. The North Vietnamese statement asserted that the "facts" show that only one side--"that of the United States and the Saigon puppet administration"--has "sabotaged" the status of the DMZ and hindered all normal activities of the ICC.

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4. The North Vietnamese position

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is consistent with the past North Vietnamese position that its hands are clean and that the ICC should condemn the US and GVN. Hanoi has consistently rejected any efforts at de-escalation of the war which even obliquely imply that North Vietnam, as well as the US/GVN, has been guilty of any transgressions of the 1954 Geneva agreements.

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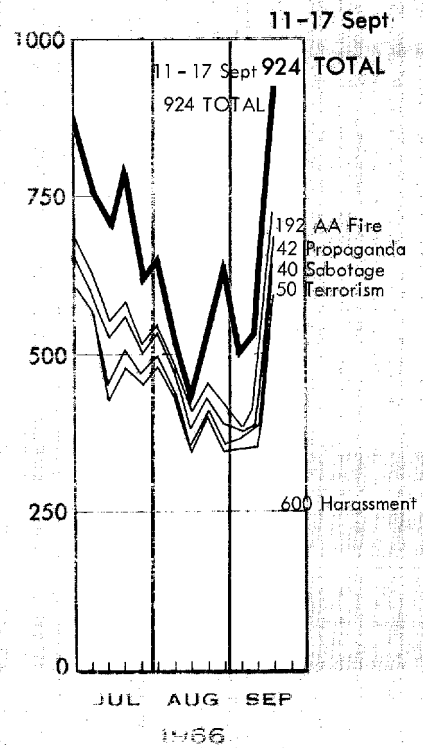
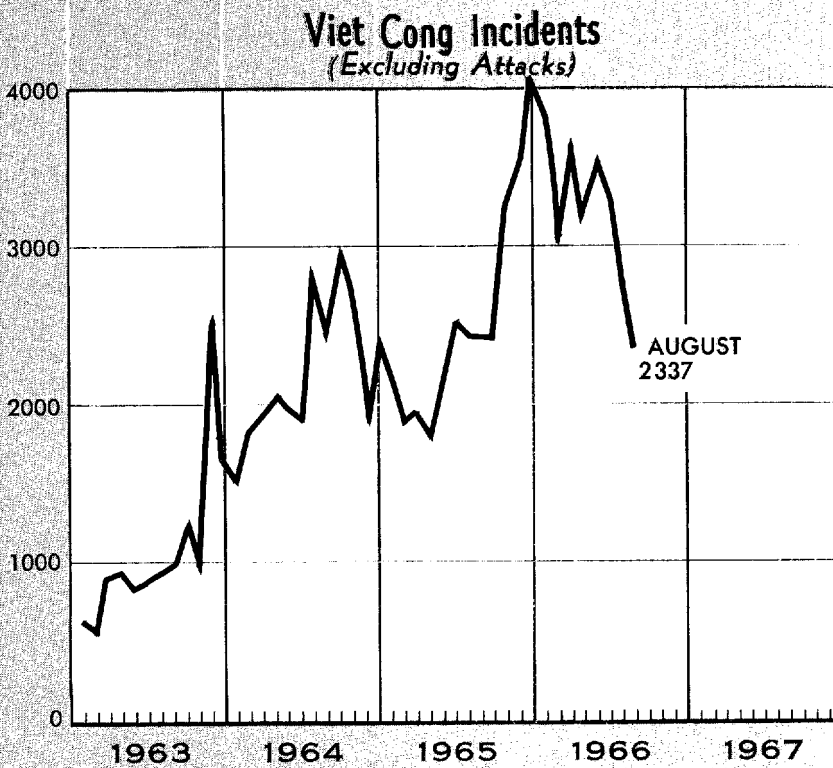
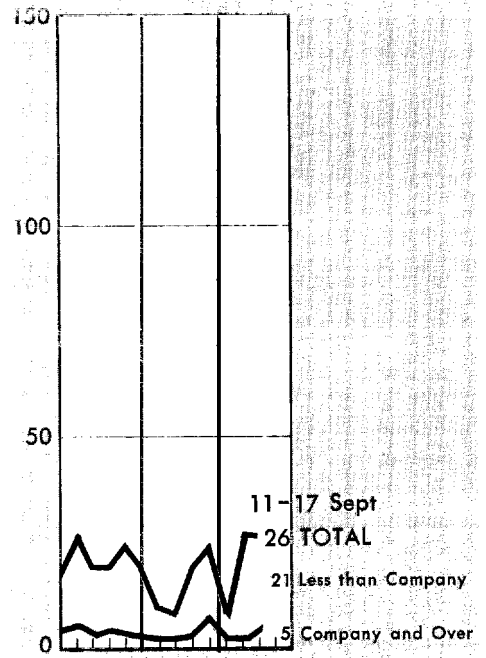
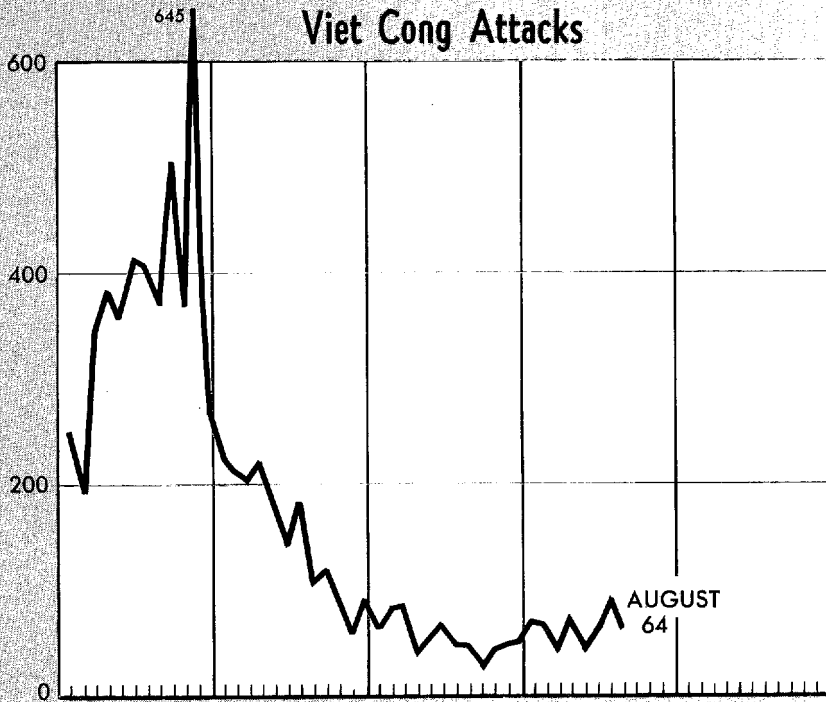
Hanoi Rejects US Peace Proposal

5. North Vietnam has rejected as "hypocritical" the US peace proposal made by Ambassador Goldberg at the UN on 22 September. In a 23 September VNA broadcast, Hanoi employed well-worn propaganda themes in claiming that such US peace talk was designed "to cover up the US scheme to expand and prolong its aggression in South Vietnam." The broadcast also condemned Goldberg's proposals as an attempt "to get the UN to interfere in the Vietnam issue" and reiterated Hanoi's long-standing opposition to any UN action on the question of the Vietnam war.

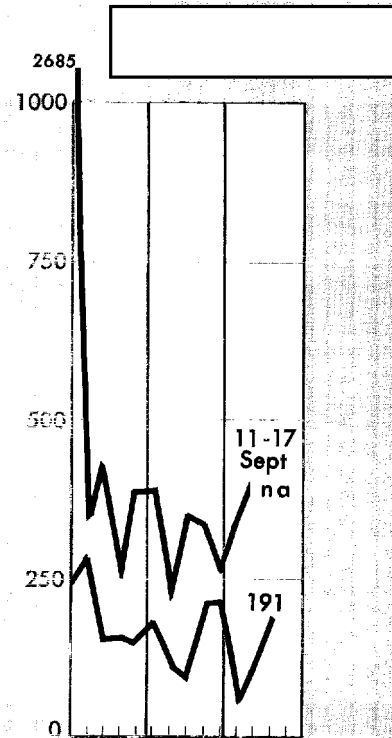
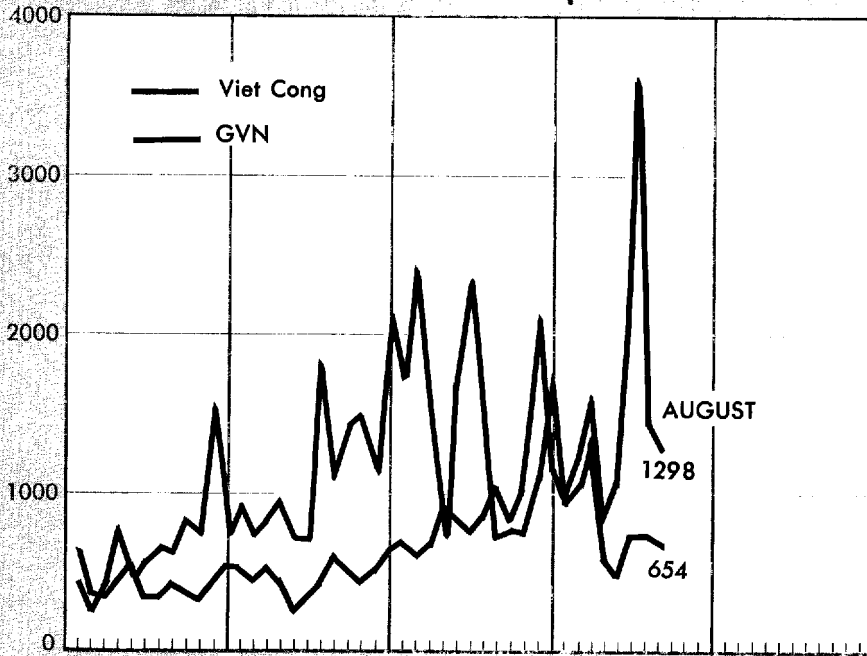
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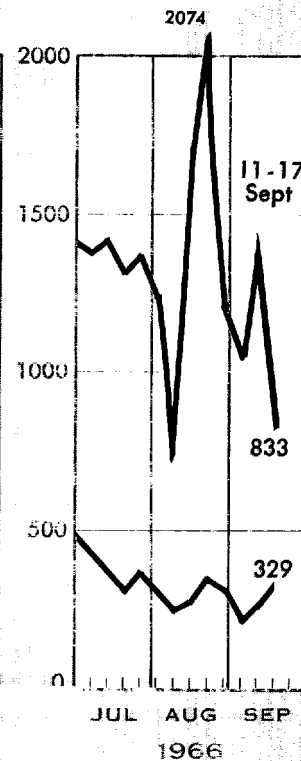
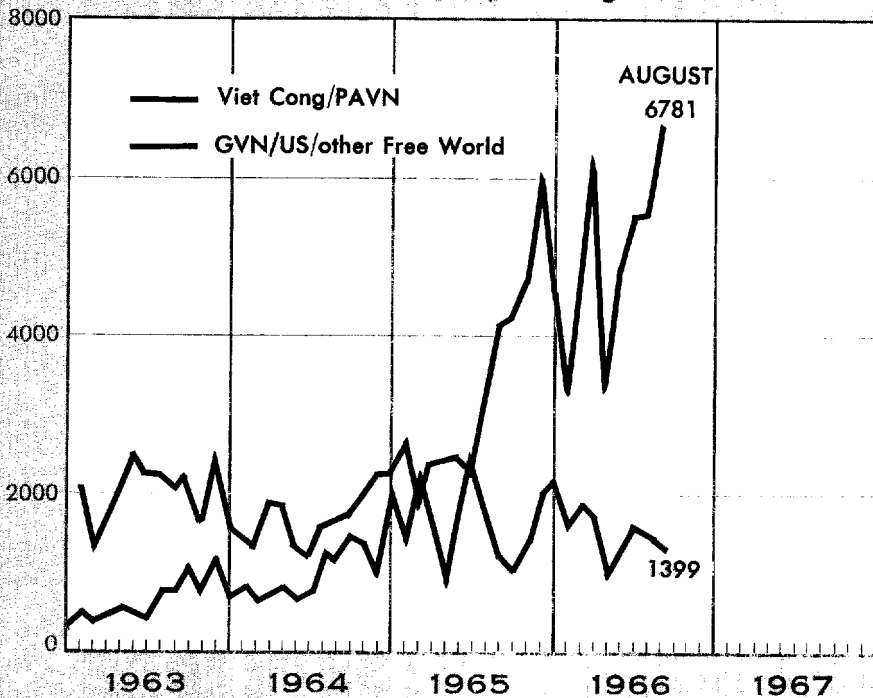


### Weapons Losses



### Personnel Losses

(Excluding Wounded)



US Casualties to Date: Killed 5080 Wounded 28723 Captured 74 Missing 308

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