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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

*Memorandum*



THE SITUATION IN VIETNAM

Information as of 1600  
6 October 1966

NSA review completed

State Department review completed

25X1

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25X1

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6 October 1966

HIGHLIGHTS

The major North Vietnamese communications complex which has been emerging since May in and around the Demilitarized Zone now appears to be fairly well established. This complex--the largest formed to date for the war in South Vietnam--is capable of directing and supporting multidivisional forces in the northern part of South Vietnam.

I. The Military Situation in South Vietnam:  
US Marines captured a strategic hilltop overlooking key infiltration routes on 5 October in an area just south of the DMZ (Para. 1). South Vietnamese forces, operating in conjunction with US Marines south of the DMZ, have reported heavy contact with a large enemy force (Para. 2). Allied troops participating in Operation IRVING in coastal Binh Dinh Province continue to tighten their encirclement of enemy forces (Paras. 3-4). One battalion of Australian soldiers began Operation CANBERRA, a search-and-destroy operation in Phuoc Tuy Province (Para. 5).

II. Political Developments in South Vietnam:  
In sessions on 5 October, the constituent assembly reviewed the work of its three subcommittees (Paras. 1-2). Meanwhile political maneuvering within the assembly continues with no significant power blocs yet evident, although some of the well-known deputies are considering teaming up for the forthcoming election of assembly officers (Para. 3). Continued Viet Cong infiltration, harassment, and terrorism may seriously threaten the Vietnamese textile industry, the largest private employer in the Saigon area (Para. 4). A recent assessment by US Consulate officials concludes that the "struggle" movement in the Hue area could resume its antigovernment activities should its former leaders return (Para. 5).

III. North Vietnamese Military Developments:  
The major North Vietnamese communications complex which has been emerging since May in and around the DMZ is discussed (Paras. 1-4).

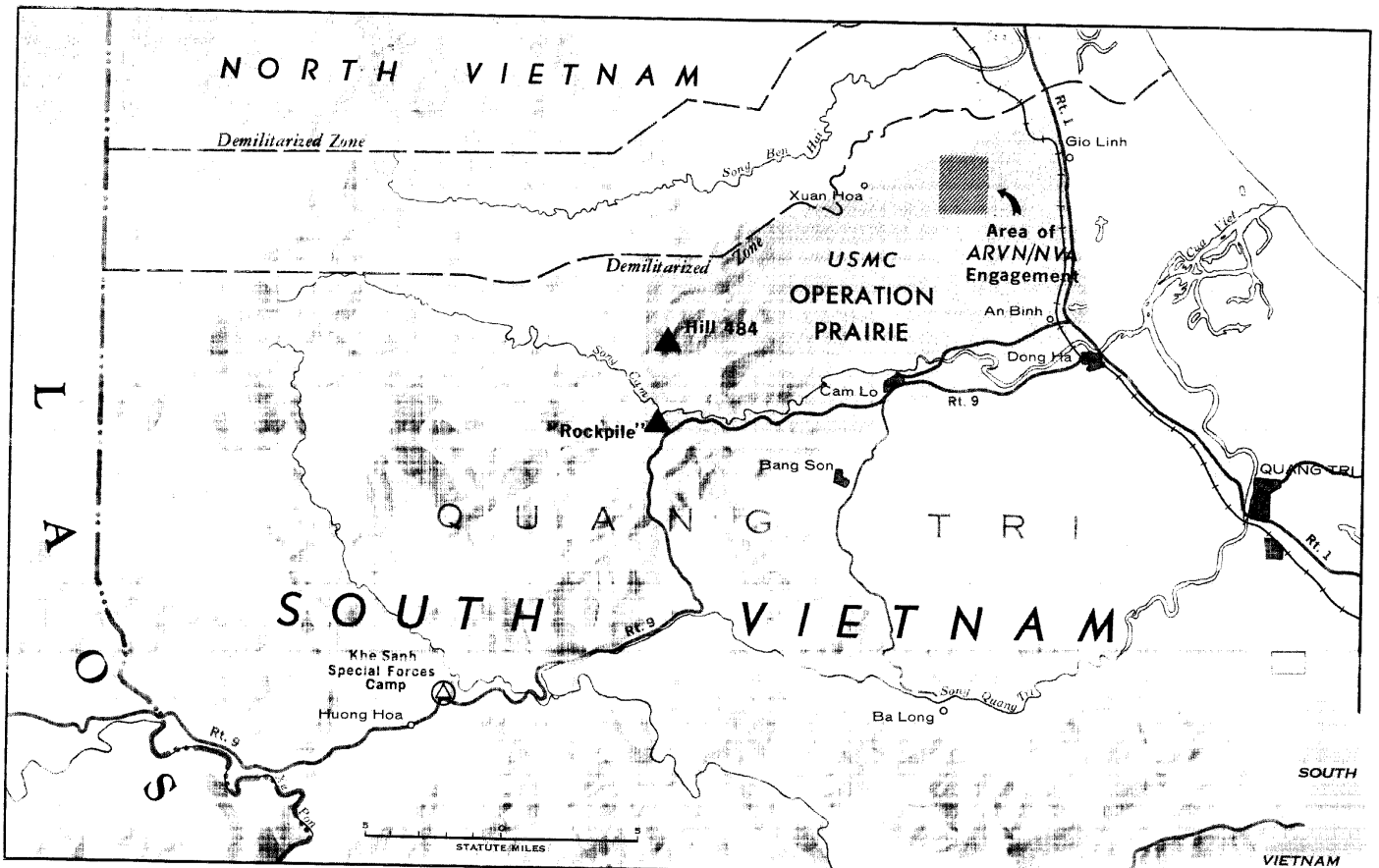
IV. Other Communist Military Developments:  
There is nothing of significance to report.

V. Communist Political Developments: North Vietnam is making a concerted effort to prevent the Vietnam question from being brought before the current session of the UN General Assembly (Paras. 1-3). The Liberation Front office in Warsaw has been staffed (Para. 4).

6 October 1966

ii

25X1



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25X1

I. THE MILITARY SITUATION IN SOUTH VIETNAM

1. A US Marine company, part of the six-battalion Operation PRAIRIE, charged through heavy machine gun and grenade barrages late on 5 October to capture a strategic hill overlooking key Communist infiltration routes just south of the DMZ. Hill 484--so named because of its height in meters--was the last hill along a four-mile ridge the marines have been clearing for 15 days. Three Americans were killed and 16 wounded during the final two-hour assault yesterday. Ten Communist bodies and five weapons were found in the captured bunkers atop the hill.

2. Elsewhere in Quang Tri Province, South Vietnamese forces reported heavy contact with an estimated three-battalion enemy force on 5 and 6 October in an area about ten miles northwest of Dong Ha, just south of the DMZ. These forces, participating in the six-battalion South Vietnamese Operation LAM SON 318, are operating in conjunction with US Marine Operation PRAIRIE. US tactical air strikes, artillery, and naval gun fire missions have supported the friendly forces. A US Marine reaction force is also ready to assist, if needed. Initial reports show friendly casualties as 26 killed (one US) and 194 wounded (five US). Known enemy losses include 21 killed and one captured.

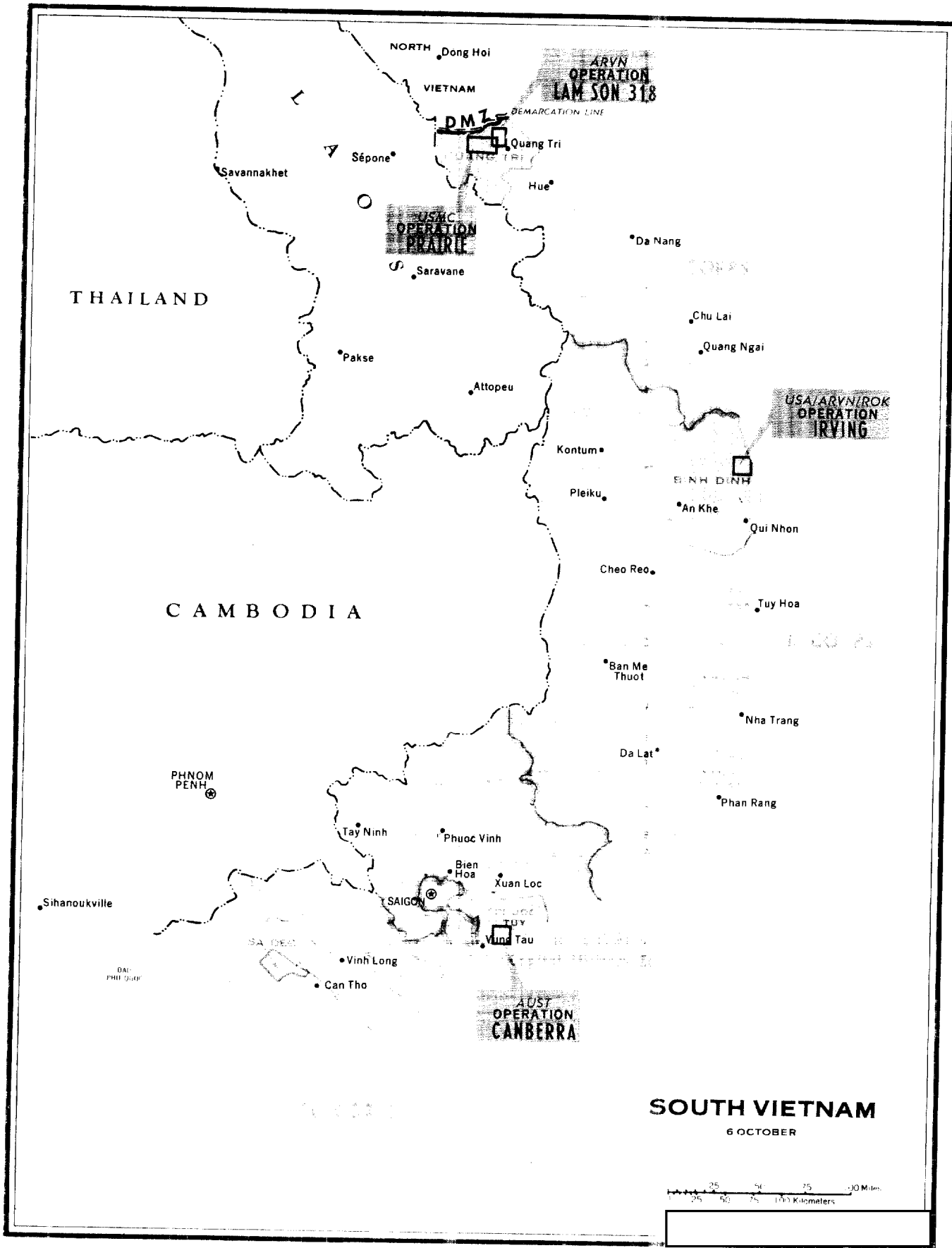
Activity in Binh Dinh Province

3. South Vietnamese troops fighting alongside American paratroopers reported that 66 Viet Cong guerrillas surrendered en masse on 6 October rather than face almost certain death. The VC surrendered to allied forces conducting Operation IRVING near the coast in central Binh Dinh Province. The three-sided allied drive continues with the South Vietnamese on the west, helicopter-borne US 1st Air Cavalry Division units pressing down from the north, and troops of the North Korean "Tiger" Division pushing up from the South.

6 October 1966

I-1

25X1



25X1

4. Elements of the 12th North Vietnamese Army (NVA) Regiment have been identified as part of the enemy force engaged in this area of Binh Dinh Province. This regiment is subordinate to the combined NVA/Viet Cong 610th Division which operates throughout this province.

5. One battalion of Australian soldiers began Operation CANBERRA early on 6 October. This search-and-destroy operation is being conducted in an area of Phuoc Tuy Province, about 30 miles southeast of Saigon. A 450-man Viet Cong battalion is reported to be in the area.

6 October 1966

I-2

25X1



II. POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN SOUTH VIETNAM

1. In morning and afternoon sessions on 5 October, the constituent assembly reviewed the work of its three subcommittees to date. The credentials subcommittee reported that it had found the cases of 94 of the 117 assembly deputies in order thus far, with 23 cases left to consider. Earlier reporting indicated that there were 23 contested seats, and it may be that the committee has left the controversial and more time-consuming cases until last. After the committee for flood relief reported that it had raised 264,000 piasters (\$2,245) thus far, the assembly voted to regularize the status of the committee, and endorsed its activities. The assembly also decided during the morning session to redraft its messages to the United Nations, to allied nations, and to the soldiers and people of South Vietnam.

2. During the afternoon session, the work of the rules committee was the major subject of discussion, with the assembly finally instructing the rules committee to draft the procedural rules in entirety before submitting them for assembly discussion. The deputies also requested the acting assembly chairman to take up with the government the matter of obtaining better facilities for the assembly. The assembly was to reconvene on the morning of 6 October, but no reports on this session have yet been received.

3. With the constituent assembly off to a slower start than was anticipated, the election of assembly officers is not now expected until the week of 17 October at the earliest. Meanwhile, political maneuvering among the delegates continues with no significant alliances yet evident. There is evidence, however, that some of the well known deputies--and major contenders for the top assembly posts--are now beginning to assess their respective positions, and to work toward a compromise which would result in a combined slate of two or more of the top contenders. In particular, Dr. Phan Quang Dan recently indicated that he was considering

6 October 1966

II-1

25X1

giving up his aspirations for the chairmanship and running for assistant chairman or secretary general on a slate headed by either former chief of state Phan Khac Suu or Saigon businessman La Thanh Nghe. Earlier, Nghe had stated that he was working on the idea of a combined slate with Dan as secretary general and perhaps influential southerner Tran Van Van as a candidate for chairman of the important constitution drafting subcommittee.

Saigon Area Textile Industry Continues to be Viet Cong Target

4. Continued Viet Cong infiltration, harassment, and terrorism may seriously threaten the Vietnamese textile industry, the largest private employer in the Saigon area. On 3 October, the Chinese manager of a medium-sized fishnet factory was assassinated, the sixth terrorist attack directed at the textile industry during the past year. The Viet Cong had also attempted to infiltrate the workers in this factory last summer, and similar attempts have been made at the two largest textile factories in the capital area. Management personnel at these two factories continue to express concern over the effects of Viet Cong infiltration and harassment. Owing to the large number of Chinese involved in the industry, Chinese community leaders in Cholon have pointed to governmental unconcern for the welfare of the Chinese as the main reason for the continuing lack of security in the industry.

Current Assessment of the "Struggle Movement" in I Corps

5. Despite the failure of its recent antielection campaign, the "struggle" organization in the Hue area is intact and continues to operate, according to a recent assessment prepared by US Consulate officials. At present, the organization is operationally very weak, largely due to the absence of most of its former leaders. The assessment concludes that should Tri Quang and other leaders, such as several of the Hue University professors, return, the struggle movement could well resume its activities. Other

6 October 1966

II-2

25X1

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have, however, indicated considerable activity by progovernment officials in identifying lower ranking members of the "struggle" movement. Presumably the information which has been developed on the organization would be put into quick use should agitation resume.

6 October 1966

II-3

III. NORTH VIETNAMESE MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS

1. The major North Vietnamese communications complex which has been emerging since May in and around the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) now appears to be fairly well established, according to a current NSA assessment. The description of this complex given below provides some idea of the magnitude of the Communist effort in this area as well as the extent of the threat it poses to Allied forces in northern South Vietnam.

2. The DMZ complex is controlled by three major elements--the High Command at Hanoi, the headquarters of North Vietnam's Military Region IV, and a "Front" formation which appeared in July. The "Front," which appears to be modeled on the classic North Vietnamese tactical headquarters, controls at least two North Vietnamese divisions--the 324 B and the 341st. The latter is still believed to be located north of the Demilitarized Zone. These units have an estimated total strength of more than 15,000 men. Aside from these two divisions, there are a number of other unidentified entities which are subordinate to one of the three controlling headquarters mentioned above. It has not yet been possible to determine the size of these units but they are believed to number at least two regiments.

3. Communist elements in the DMZ area also appear to have logistic support functions. This is suggested by certain distinctive communications characteristics, including communications links from the DMZ to the major Communist staging area near Tchepone in Laos. Other military functions which may be included in this complex include antiaircraft artillery and liaison with at least two other Viet Cong/NVA "Fronts" located farther south in South Vietnam.

6 October 1966

III-1

4. The picture that emerges from this complex is that of a major North Vietnamese headquarters--easily the largest formed to date for the war in South Vietnam--which is capable of directing and supporting multidivisional forces in the northern part of South Vietnam.

6 October 1966

III-2

IV. OTHER COMMUNIST MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS

1. There is nothing of significance to report.

6 October 1966

IV-1

V. COMMUNIST POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

1. North Vietnam is making an effort to prevent the Vietnam question from being brought before the current session of the UN General Assembly. On 6 October the party daily Nhan Dan, in a lengthy commentary on Secretary General Thant's three-point proposal for settling the war, insisted that the UN, since it is controlled by "US imperialism," had no right whatsoever to interfere in the Vietnam issue. While agreeing with point one of Thant's proposal--calling for a cessation of the bombings--the commentary criticized points two and three--reduction of military operations and negotiations by all interested parties--claiming that they made no distinction between the "US aggressors" and the Vietnamese victims of that aggression," and ignored that the NFLSV is the "sole, genuine representative of the South Vietnamese people." The article called upon all "impartial" UN members to condemn the US and to demand that the Vietnamese Communist terms for a settlement of the war be accepted by the US.

2. The Nhan Dan article appears to be a direct rejection of a recent effort by a group of neutralist members of the UN to develop a plan to permit the General Assembly to record support for Thant's proposal, possibly with the concurrence of the Vietnamese.

25X1

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25X1

6 October 1966

V-1

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25X1

NFLSV Mission in Poland Staffed

4. The NFLSV has staffed its permanent mission in Poland, according to a 5 October Warsaw broadcast. The office, which was established in November 1965 is accredited to the All Poland Committee of the National Unity Front and is the 11th staffed Front mission abroad. Offices in Bulgaria and Rumania, also agreed to last year, have yet to be staffed.

6 October 1966

V-2



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