



CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

Memorandum



THE SITUATION IN VIETNAM

Information as of 1600
10 October 1966

State Department review
completed

NSA review completed

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HIGHLIGHTS

The Viet Cong have sustained unusually heavy casualties in the fighting in northeastern Binh Dinh Province. In the last four weeks allied forces in this area have killed nearly 1,700 Communists.

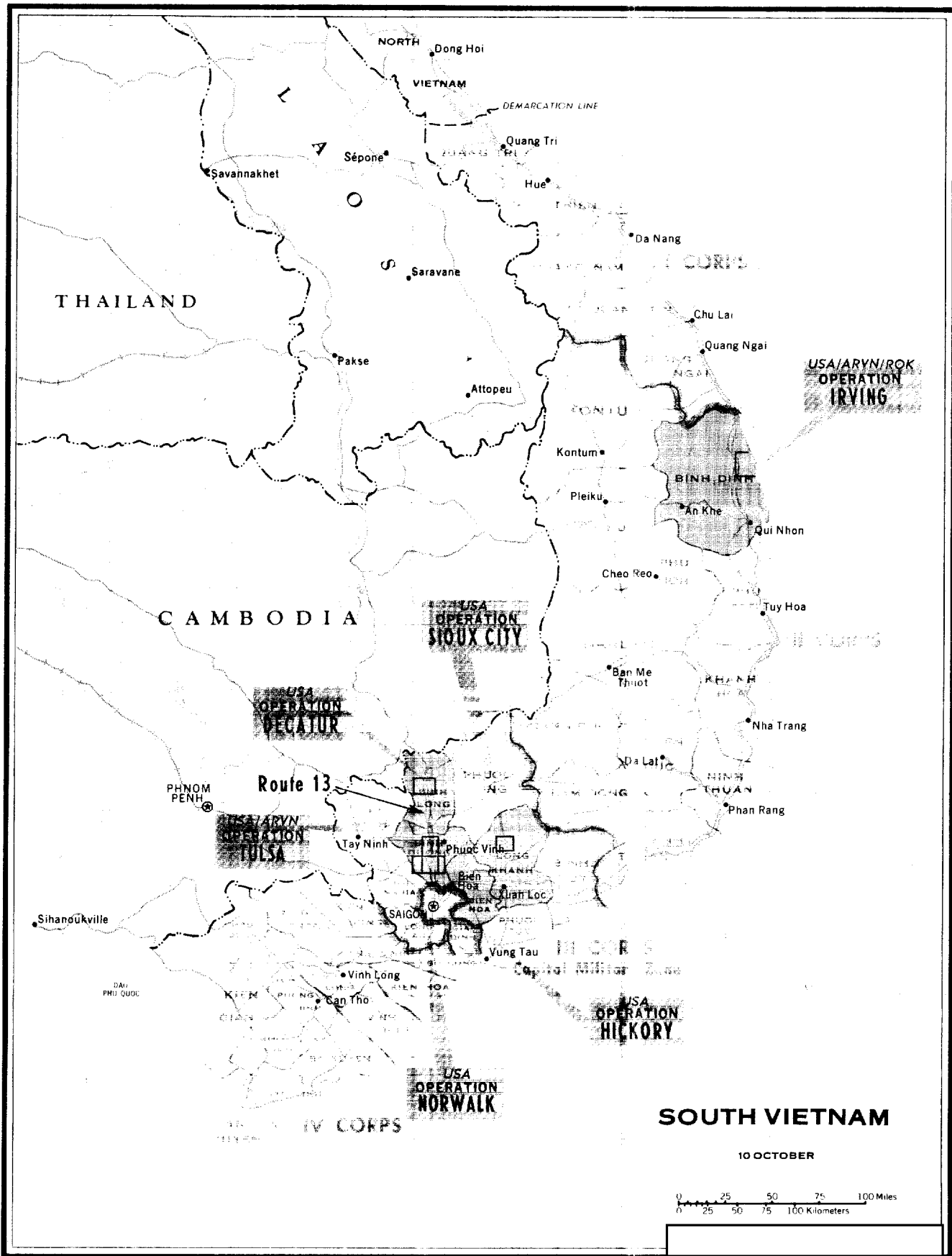
I. The Military Situation in South Vietnam:
Ten allied battalions have begun a route-clearing operation along Route 13 north of Saigon (Para. 1). Four US operations conducted in III Corps have ended with only minor results reported (Para. 3). Communist losses in Binh Dinh Province have been extremely high since 8 September; allied forces now report nearly 1,700 Communists killed (Paras. 4-6).

II. Political Developments in South Vietnam:
US Embassy analysis of the constituent assembly as a political forum for the evolution of future political parties (Paras. 1-3).

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: There is nothing of significance to report.



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I. THE MILITARY SITUATION IN SOUTH VIETNAM

1. Five battalions of the US 1st Infantry Division and five South Vietnamese Army battalions began a road-clearing operation north of Saigon on 8 October. This operation, named TULSA, will be conducted along Route 13 in Binh Duong Province. No contact with enemy units has been reported.

2. Operation HICKORY, a reconnaissance and search-and-destroy operation employing one squadron of the US 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment began on 6 October in Bien Hoa Province about 25 miles east of Saigon. A company-size Viet Cong force is believed to be operating in the area.

3. Four operations conducted by US forces in the III Corps area have ended without significant results. Operations NORWALK, DECATUR, SIOUX CITY, and BATON ROUGE resulted in 70 Communist soldiers killed. Twenty Americans were reported killed and 100 wounded.

Communist Losses in Binh Dinh Province

4. Allied forces, conducting several coordinated operations in the central, coastal province of Binh Dinh, have killed nearly 1,700 Communists since 8 September. Enemy forces in the area include elements of the 610th NVA/Viet Cong Division and local Viet Cong military and paramilitary forces.

5. The 7th and 8th Battalions of the 12th NVA Regiment, a subordinate of the 610th Division, have been severely reduced in strength. These two battalions have been engaged by allied forces participating in Operation IRVING, which began on 1 October. The 7th Battalion, estimated to number 450 men prior to the successful allied operations, now is estimated to total 250 men. The 8th Battalion, originally numbering 480 men, is now estimated at approximately 200. Nearly 700 of the 2,400-man 12th Regiment are reported either killed or captured in the recent action.

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6. Although the 610th Division has currently lost its capability to conduct multiregimental operations, it retains a capability to attack allied units in northeastern Binh Dinh Province in up to reinforced regimental strength.

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II. POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN SOUTH VIETNAM

1. According to a US Embassy analysis, the new constituent assembly provides Vietnamese politicians with a stable political forum which should encourage the evolution of new and permanent political parties and alliances. The alliances formed in this assembly could have an important influence on any future legislative assembly and presidential elections. The embassy indicates that the most prominent grouping of deputies in the present assembly is based on regional alignments--the traditional identity of the Vietnamese with the region (north, central, or south Vietnam) in which they were born or raised. The 44 southerners in the assembly, for example, have the potential for becoming an influential group, although at the present time they are not organized or united.

2. The second major influential force in the assembly is religious affiliation. The Catholics are well represented with approximately 35 seats. According to the embassy analysis, an alliance between the Catholics and the southerners could emerge as the most powerful. Several politicians are reported to have considered an alliance of all the religions into a political entity.

3. Government intentions toward the formation of a political party have not been specifically outlined, although there is some evidence of a government bloc of deputies in the assembly, composed of military personnel, civil servants, and some deputies of Montagnard and Khmer ethnic origin. The embassy feels that if a government bloc does form more cohesively, it may become the nucleus of a national party in collaboration with the military leaders in the government.

4. There have been no reports since 8 October on the status of the possible crisis in Premier Ky's cabinet.

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