



25X1

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

*Memorandum*



THE SITUATION IN VIETNAM

State Department review completed

NSA review completed

Information as of 1600  
19 October 1966

ARMY review(s) completed.

25X1

PREPARED FOR THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL  
FURTHER DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION  
CONTAINED HEREIN IS NOT AUTHORIZED



25X1

Approved For Release 2007/03/06 : CIA-RDP79T00826A001300010057-9

Approved For Release 2007/03/06 : CIA-RDP79T00826A001300010057-9

19 October 1966

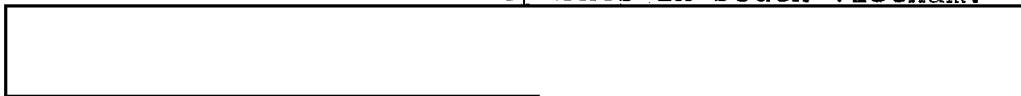
HIGHLIGHTS



25X1

I. The Military Situation in South Vietnam:  
South Vietnamese soldiers engaged a multibat-  
talion Viet Cong force in the Mekong Delta Prov-  
ince of Chuong Thien (Para. 1). A Communist  
trawler was discovered unloading supplies along  
the coast of Quang Tin Province and US Marines  
are en route to the scene (Para. 2). Viet Cong  
guerrillas attacked the base camp of the 173rd  
Airborne Brigade late yesterday with grenades  
and small-arms fire (Para. 3). South Vietnamese  
troops discovered a Communist arms cache that  
included a 75-mm. pack howitzer--the first field  
piece to be captured from the Communists (Para. 4).  
MACV has accepted the 20th North Vietnamese Army  
Regiment in South Vietnam (Paras. 5-6).

II. Political Developments in South Vietnam:



25X1

The first contingent  
of returning FULRO tribesmen was feted cere-  
moniously on 17 October (Para. 5-6).

III. Military Developments in North Vietnam:  
A new surface-to-air complex--closer to the DMZ  
than any site thus far detected--may be opera-  
tional, according to pilot information (Para. 1).  
Possible reasons for the low number of SAM fir-  
ings in the past two months are discussed (Paras. 2-4).



25X1

25X1

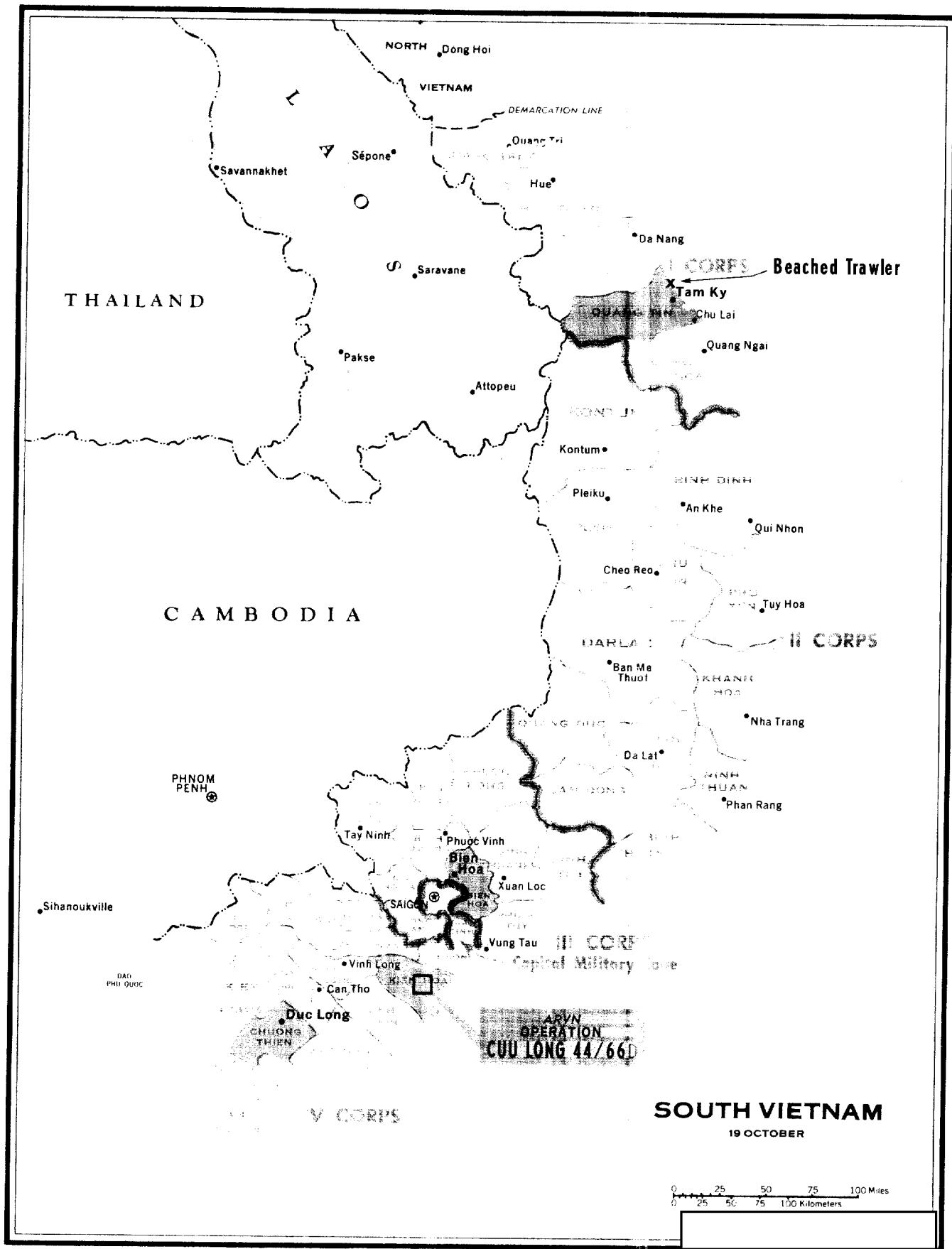
IV. Other Communist Military Developments:  
There is nothing of significance to report.

V. Communist Political Developments: There  
is nothing of significance to report.

19 October 1966

ii

25X1



25X1

I. THE MILITARY SITUATION IN SOUTH VIETNAM

1. Major fighting has broken out between South Vietnamese Army (ARVN) troops and Viet Cong guerrillas in the Mekong River delta region following a week of steadily mounting guerrilla harassment and sabotage in the rice-rich area. A regiment of the 21st ARVN Division encountered an estimated two-battalion Viet Cong force in an area about five miles east of Duc Long in Chuong Thien Province yesterday. During the ensuing nine-hour battle 29 ARVN soldiers were reported killed and 62 were wounded. There have been no reports of enemy losses.

2. A US Navy patrol boat sighted and exchanged fire with a large trawler that had been beached on the coast of Quang Tin Province about five miles north of Tan Ky today. Approximately 300 Vietnamese were observed unloading crates from the trawler. US aircraft made two napalm strikes on the ship, setting it afire. A US Marine company has been heli-lifted into the area but no reports have as yet been received from the marines.

3. Late on 18 October, the base area of the US 173rd Airborne Brigade near Bien Hoa in Bien Hoa Province was attacked by Viet Cong guerrillas using grenades and small-arms fire. Two claymore-type mines were also fired into the area during the 15-minute attack. American losses included two killed, 12 wounded, one helicopter destroyed, and one truck damaged. The US unit reacted with counterfire, but Communist casualties are unknown.

19 October 1966

I-1

First Field Piece Captured From Viet Cong

4. An ARVN search-and-destroy operation, CUU LONG 44/66D in Kien Hoa Province, uncovered a large cache of arms and ammunition on 17 October. Of particular significance was the capture of a 75-mm. pack howitzer (country of origin unspecified in preliminary reports) and ammunition for it. This is the first time that an artillery field piece has been captured from the Communists. Prior to this time, several artillery pieces have been reported destroyed as the result of air action, and quantities of artillery ammunition have been captured. In addition to the howitzer, four .50-cal. machine guns, including one configured as an anti-aircraft weapon, were seized. A total of ten tons of ammunition (75-mm., 7.62-mm., and recoilless rifle) was also captured.

Another North Vietnamese Regiment in South Vietnam

5. MACV has accepted the first North Vietnamese Army artillery regiment--the 84A--in South Vietnam. The 84A has a strength of 1,200 men and is presently in III Corps. It is the 20th North Vietnamese Army regiment confirmed to date in South Vietnam. The unit departed North Vietnam in late March of this year and was first encountered in the Darlac Province border area in early August. MACV believes that the 84A Regiment is unlikely to operate as a regimental-sized force, but probably will provide fire support and reinforcement elements to enemy forces in the III Corps area.

6. With the acceptance of this regiment and one other battalion of the 630th Division, total confirmed North Vietnamese Army strength in South Vietnam now stands at 48,900. Because of heavy infiltration during the past several months there are undoubtedly significantly more North Vietnamese in the South. However, there is at present insufficient information on many of the newly infiltrated units to include them in the order of battle. It is estimated that by the end of 1966, total North Vietnamese strength will be almost half of the estimated Communist main force strength in South Vietnam. The current main force figure is 114,014.

19 October 1966

I-2

25X1

II. POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN SOUTH VIETNAM

25X1

25X1



Dissident Montagnards Pledge Loyalty to GVN

5. The first phase of the return to government control of the FULRO forces, the dissident tribal autonomy movement, was completed on 17 October at Pleiku city in Pleiku Province. However, only 250 of the estimated 7,000 tribesmen returned from their base in Cambodia to attend the ceremony. The rest, including their leader, Y B'Ham Enoul, are reportedly waiting word of how the first delegation was received before committing themselves further to the GVN.

6. According to US Embassy observers who attended the ceremony, the Vietnamese Government speakers missed the opportunity to improve the tenuous GVN-FULRO relationship, as had been outlined in a previous agreement. The speakers failed to mention the "four points" or the "special" demands on which the rapprochement had originally hinged. According to one US official, FULRO's attitude toward the GVN has softened somewhat because

19 October 1966

II-2

25X1

of increased pressures from Viet Cong and North Vietnamese military forces operating in their base area.

19 October 1966

II-3



64254

10-66 CIA

25X1

III. MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS IN NORTH VIETNAM

1. A new surface-to-air missile complex-- closer to the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) than any site thus far detected--may be operational, according to information derived from a pilot report of 18 October. Two US Navy pilots reported sighting a probable SA-2 missile in flight, and back-plotting of the missile's track indicated that it had been fired from a battery within six to eight miles of the DMZ. If the new site is confirmed it will pose a significant threat to US air operations in this area--particularly the high-altitude bombing missions of the Guam-based B-52s.

North Vietnamese SAM Firings Have Declined

2. In recent weeks, North Vietnamese SAM activity has been at its lowest level since June 1966 when only 35 missiles are known to have been fired at US aircraft. A spectacular rise in DRV missile firings occurred in July and August 1966 when the combined monthly total of SA-2 launches--389--exceeded all the missiles fired since the system was established in July 1965. Now there appears to be an equally dramatic decline in missile firings, as only 115 shots were observed in September and only 17 to date in October.

3. The explanation for this decline probably lies in a combination of circumstances rather than in a command decision on the part of the DRV air defense authorities. During July and August 1966, the DRV SA-2 system had an unprecedented number of aircraft to fire at as US strike missions were directed for the first time at targets in the Hanoi-Haiphong area where most of North Vietnam's SAM sites are located. In September and October, however, the weight of US attack sorties has been shifted to targets south of the 20th parallel in an effort to counter the build-up of DRV forces in and around the DMZ. The North Vietnamese have been making strenuous

19 October 1966

III-1

efforts to relocate some SAM units in the southern portion of the country, but they do not have enough SA-2 battalions in this area to fire as many missiles as they did farther north in July and August.

4. Other factors that may have played a part in the decline of DRV missile firings in recent weeks include the possibility that with the continued poor performance of the SA-2 system--30 planes downed for 875 missiles fired--the North Vietnamese may have been convinced to limit their shots to those having a higher probability of success. It is also possible that US electronics countermeasures, the use of the Shrike missile, and an increasing number of conventional ordnance attacks against the SAM sites, may have made the DRV missilemen more cautious in their approach. There is no evidence to indicate that the decline in North Vietnamese SAM firings can be attributed to a lack of SA-2 missiles. While the number of missiles supplied by the Soviet Union remains unknown, it is unlikely that the North Vietnamese would have fired at the rate they did this summer if they had anticipated any shortage of missiles in the fall. On the contrary, the tenor of recent pronouncements from Moscow and Hanoi suggest that at least in the area of air defense the Russians intend to continue to support the DRV at a high level.

19 October 1966

III-2

***TOP SECRET***

***TOP SECRET***