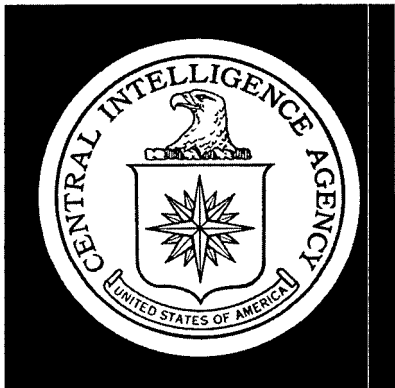


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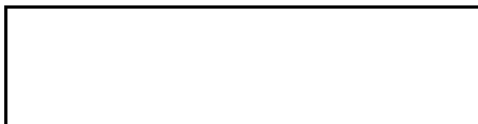
DIRECTORATE OF
INTELLIGENCE

MEMORANDUM

The Situation in Vietnam

State Department review completed

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22 November 1966

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Information as of 1600
22 November 1966

[Redacted]

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HIGHLIGHTS

[Redacted]

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I. The Military Situation in South Vietnam:
Scattered contact between US and Communist forces was reported on 22 November on three fronts: near the DMZ in Quang Tri Province, in the central highlands of Pleiku Province, and in the jungled area of War Zone "C" in Tay Ninh Province (Paras. 1-4).

II. Political Developments in South Vietnam:
Premier Ky appears to have calmed regional tensions following the compromise cabinet reshuffle, but there are still some lingering resentments (Paras. 1-3).

III. North Vietnamese Military Developments:

[Redacted]

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[Redacted] US Navy aircraft successfully struck a SAM support facility near Haiphong on 22 November (Para. 6).

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

V. Communist Political Developments: Chinese Foreign Minister Chen Yi reiterated Peking's hard line on Vietnam negotiations in a conversation with the French ambassador on 16 November (Paras. 1-2). Politburo member Le Duc Tho will head the North Vietnamese delegation to the Hungarian party congress (Para. 3).

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VI. Other Major Aspects: There are continuing indications that bad weather and war-related disruptions are contributing to a below-average rice harvest in North Vietnam (Paras. 1-3).

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I. THE MILITARY SITUATION IN SOUTH VIETNAM

1. Scattered contact with Communist forces was reported on three fronts in South Vietnam on 22 November.

2. American troops of the ten-battalion Operation PAUL REVERE IV pursued regulars of the 1st North Vietnamese Army Division (formerly the 630th) toward the Cambodian border after several clashes. Air strikes and artillery fire were directed at the enemy's withdrawal routes west of Pleiku city. A total of 303 Communist troops have been reported killed since 20 November, bringing the total to over 700 killed since this phase of the operation began on 17 October. In comparison, 90 Americans have been killed and 364 wounded.

3. Operation ATTLEBORO--reduced to 13 US battalions--continued to sweep War Zone "C," the Communist stronghold in Tay Ninh Province. Seven Americans were wounded when a command post of the US 25th Infantry Division was hit by 20 mortar shells on 22 November. Other scattered skirmishes on 22 November increased the enemy death toll to nearly 1,100 compared to American losses of 108 killed and 390 wounded since 14 October.

4. Near the DMZ in northernmost Quang Tri Province, a US Marine company encountered an estimated 100-man Communist force on 22 November. US aircraft struck the enemy positions with bombs and napalm. Two Marines were killed and four wounded, while enemy losses were 25 killed. Five enemy weapons were captured. Eleven-week-old Operation PRAIRIE has resulted in 1,268 Communist soldiers killed compared to American casualties of 175 killed and 814 wounded.

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II. POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN SOUTH VIETNAM

1. In the opinion of the US Embassy, regional antagonisms raised during the recent cabinet crisis have subsided for the time being. The appointment of southerners to the posts vacated during the crisis is at least a partial concession to southern interests. The new ministers are, however, neither men of proven ability or prestige. Responsible persons in the government and in business view the appointments to the reorganized Economy Ministry as weak. The embassy fears that it may be difficult to make and implement necessary decisions with weakened and divided economic machinery.

2. Although regional political wrangling in the government appears to have quieted down, some antagonisms remain which have regional ramifications. One of these is the continuing attempt by Au Truong Thanh, the former southern economy minister, publicly to enhance his stature by having pamphlets favorable to his position circulated around Saigon. The government has reacted by attempting to discredit Thanh in at least one GVN-controlled newspaper. Since the Ministry of Information rigidly censors the news media, only those articles favoring the government have been allowed to appear. The anti-Thanh articles strongly reflect the work of police director Loan and, possibly, Minister of Information Nguyen Bao Tri.

3. Another possible source of trouble is the increasing desire of Premier Ky's colleagues to have favored individuals assigned to key GVN embassies despite advice to the contrary from Minister of Foreign Affairs Tran Van Do. This trend reflects civilian-military regional animosities, and is liable to be a significant irritant in the future.

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North Vietnamese SAM Facilities Struck

6. Improved flying weather in the northern portion of the DRV on 22 November enabled US Navy aircraft to attack a major missile support facility and two SAM sites near Haiphong. The storage and maintenance center for the Soviet-supplied SA-2 missiles was bombed by ten A-4 attack planes. Early pilot reports estimated that 75 percent of the facility was destroyed. Two large fires and several secondary explosions were observed. No damage assessment was available on the two SAM sites attacked because of smoke and dust which obscured the target.

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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. Chinese Foreign Minister Chen Yi reiterated Peking's hard line on Vietnam negotiations in a conversation with the French ambassador on 16 November. According to a senior French Foreign Office official, who reported Chen's comments to US officials on 18 November, the Chinese foreign minister insisted that the US must withdraw its forces from Vietnam and "recognize the rights of the NLF" before negotiations. Chen declared that China does not consider a Geneva-type conference as an appropriate forum for discussing ways to end the conflict. Peking does not advocate settling the Vietnam problem "by five or six world powers" but believes it "must be solved by participation of all nations, big and small alike." Chen added that Peking would advise the North Vietnamese not to agree to negotiations on the basis of a US guarantee to withdraw its troops because the US could not be trusted.

2. The preconditions to negotiations posed by Chen reflect Peking's standard hard line, as does his opposition to a Geneva-type conference. The Chinese have previously insisted that only the Vietnamese can settle the Vietnam problem and have never before referred to a solution "by all nations." If this wording is not an incorrect transmission of Chen's comments by the French, it almost certainly reflects a Chinese attempt to make their opposition to any negotiated settlement more palatable to world opinion by dressing it in a more attractive wrapper. Peking has previously used the same technique in calling for "all nations" to agree to destruction of nuclear weapons.

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Hanoi Dispatches Third High-Level Delegation to Eastern Europe

3. Hanoi radio announced on 21 November that politburo member Le Duc Tho will head the Vietnamese delegation to the Hungarian party congress. This is the third high-level North Vietnamese delegation to Eastern Europe this fall. Hoang Van Hoan attended the Albanian party congress and Nguyen Duy Trinh was sent to Bulgaria. Hanoi's current interest in European Communist affairs is in marked contrast to the economy-minded attitude it displayed several years ago when one DRV delegation attended four Eastern European party congresses that were held at about the same time.

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V-2

VI. OTHER MAJOR ASPECTS

1. There have been a number of indications in recent weeks that disruptions of the war and bad weather were contributing to a below-average harvest of the late rice crop in North Vietnam. The late rice crop accounts for almost two thirds of the annual rice output.

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[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] The latest indication of a poor harvest came in a 19 November Hanoi broadcast which reported that the late rice crop had been 40 percent harvested and that it was "fairly good over vast areas." This phrase is a standard euphemism which has previously denoted a disappointing crop.

3. Total rice output for 1966 will probably be less than the estimated 4.5 million tons for 1965, which was an average year. With a smaller late rice crop than last year, rice supplies over the next four to five months will probably tighten. A major food crisis is not likely, however. Any rice shortage could be made up with such other foods as corn or by increasing food imports.

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