

Top Secret

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DIRECTORATE OF
INTELLIGENCE

MEMORANDUM

The Situation in Vietnam

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HIGHLIGHTS

During the first 45 hours of the Tet cease-fire 47 major Communist-initiated incidents have been reported.

Soviet Premier Kosygin was unusually outspoken in voicing Moscow's desire for a political solution to the Vietnamese war in his 8-9 February remarks in London. Kosygin revealed no substantive change in Moscow's position on the war, however.

I. The Military Situation in South Vietnam:

A total of 47 major incidents have been reported during the first 45 hours of the Tet cease-fire period (Paras. 1-2). Five Americans were killed and 43 were wounded in an encounter in Binh Duong Province following an enemy attack on an American unit participating in Operation BIG SPRING (Para. 3).

II. Political Developments in South Vietnam: The Australian Government has decided to increase its non-military assistance to South Vietnam.

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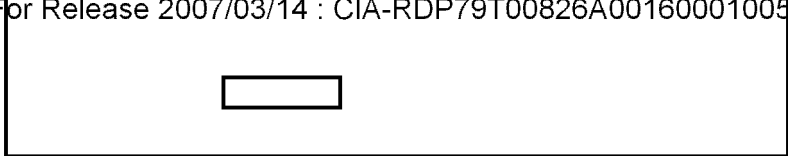
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III. Military Developments in North Vietnam: There is nothing of significance to report.

IV. Other Communist Military Developments: Chinese Communist engineers may be expanding their construction activities in northwestern North Vietnam (Paras. 1-2).

V. Communist Political Developments: Soviet Premier Kosygin comments in London on the Vietnamese War (Paras. 1-3).





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I. THE MILITARY SITUATION IN SOUTH VIETNAM

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1. During the first 45 hours of the lunar new year (Tet) cease-fire, 47 major and 87 minor Communist-initiated incidents have been reported. The majority of these incidents have involved mortar and small-arms harassing fire on US/ARVN/ROK outposts, patrols, and small-unit positions.

2. The pattern and the rate of these truce violations reported so far closely parallel those of the 1966 Christmas and New Year cease-fire periods. As expected, many incidents are occurring as friendly reconnaissance patrols encounter enemy forces in their bivouac areas.

3. Among the significant actions reported was an engagement early on 8 February between US forces participating in Operation BIG SPRING in Binh Duong Province and a Viet Cong force of undetermined size. The enemy attacked the American unit, using grenades and claymore mines. As a result of the ensuing battle, five Americans were killed and 43 were wounded. A total of 36 Viet Cong were killed and one was captured.

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II. POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN SOUTH VIETNAM

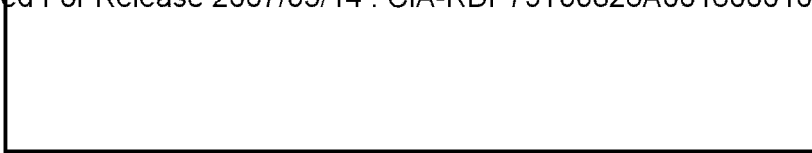
1. Australia's cabinet has decided to increase its nonmilitary assistance to South Vietnam for the current fiscal year by 70 percent above fiscal year 1966. The additional aid will be allocated to new programs such as water supply, medical teams, and provincial hospitals. It will also supply equipment for resettlement centers, and will provide increases in present programs such as road-building machinery and army civic action. Canberra is also encouraging greater voluntary assistance by nongovernmental bodies in Australia, and expects "large increases" from such sources.



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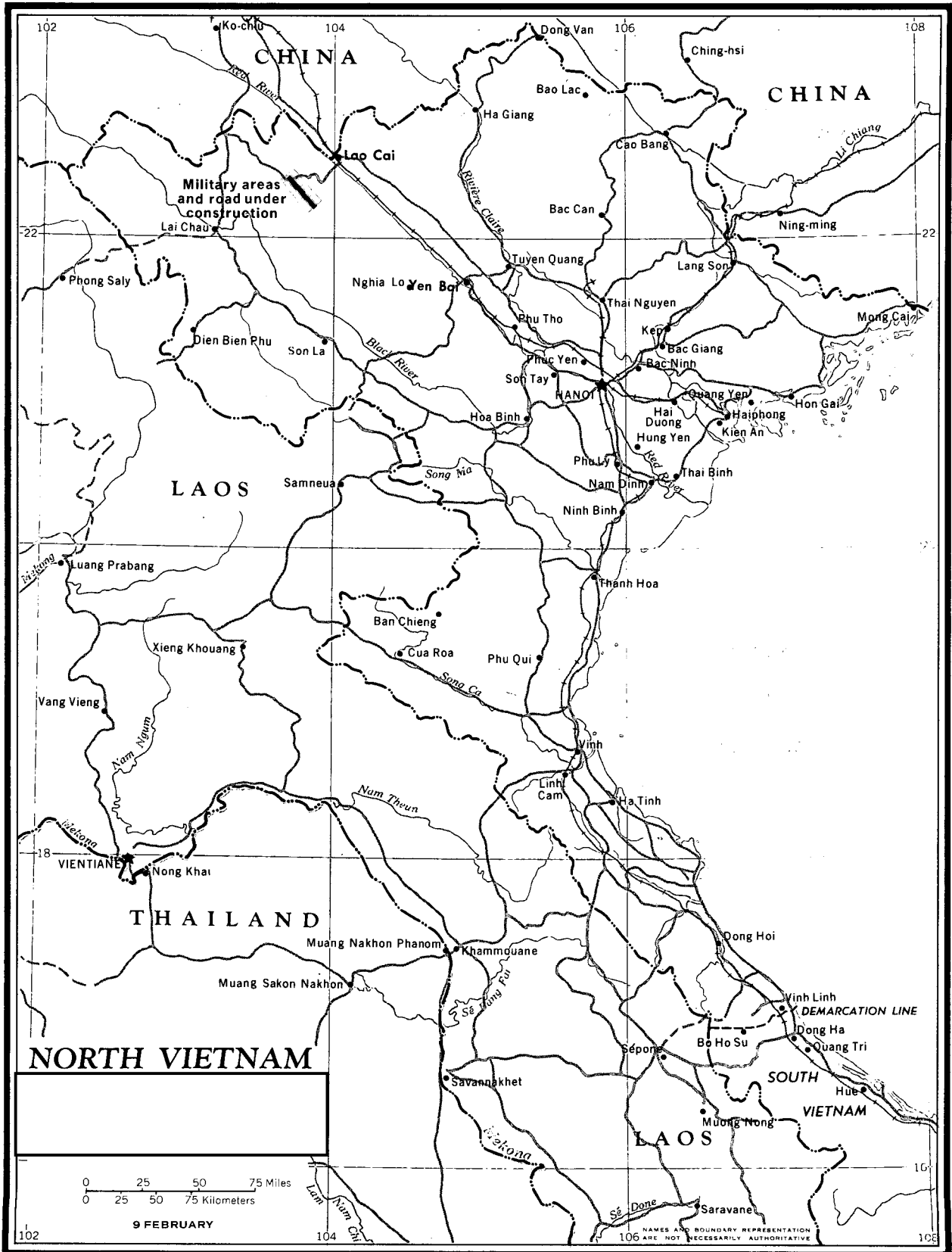
III. MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS IN NORTH VIETNAM

1. There is nothing of significance to report.

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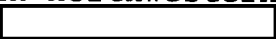
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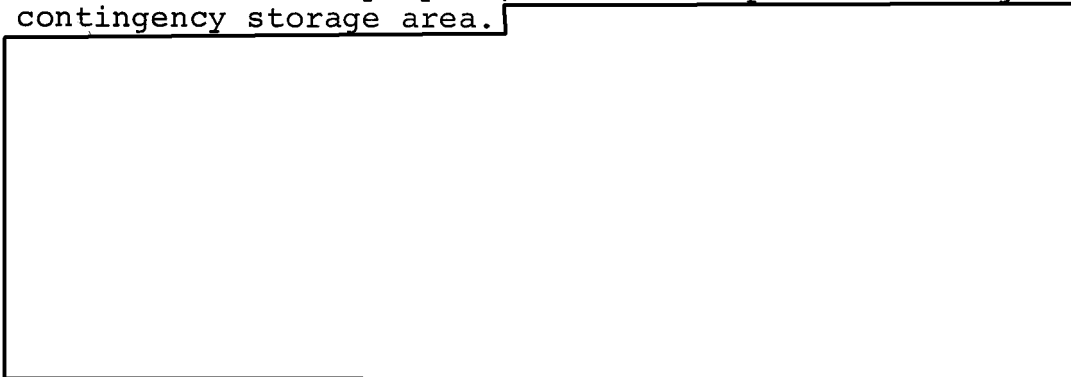
IV. OTHER COMMUNIST MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS

1. Chinese Communist engineers may be expanding their construction activities in northwestern North Vietnam. Overhead photography  which has just been interpreted, shows 19 military storage/construction camp areas with over 500 completed buildings dispersed along the 18-mile length of a new road under construction. Analysis of comparative photography reveals that all of this construction has been accomplished since September 1966.

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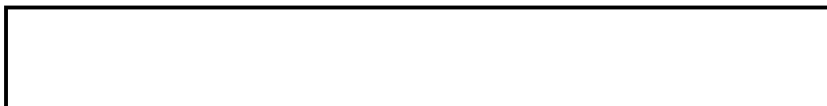
2. In the past, work camps directly associated with road construction projects have been identified in this area, but the number of buildings seen adjacent to this new road far exceeds the needs of road construction teams. Although a more detailed analysis of this complex will be necessary to determine its exact purpose, it could represent a large contingency storage area. 

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V. COMMUNIST POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

1. Soviet Premier Kosygin's comments in London on the Vietnamese war were clearly designed to move the US toward accepting Hanoi's hints that it is willing to talk with the US if the bombing of the North is ended. Although he was unusually outspoken in voicing Moscow's desire for a political solution to the conflict, Kosygin revealed no substantive change in Moscow's position on the war.

2. In line with previous Soviet commentary, Kosygin welcomed DRV Foreign Minister Trinh's recent statement that a cessation of American bombing could lead to "talks" between Washington and Hanoi. The Soviet premier said the Soviet Union saw it as a "constructive proposal" which could lead the two sides to the conference table and "enable the US to find a way out of the present impasse."

3. In a luncheon speech on 8 February, Kosygin stated that he thought Britain as well as the Soviet Union and other nations could make a contribution to the settlement of the war. However, when questioned at his press conference on 9 February as to whether Moscow would support a reconvening of the Geneva Conference, Kosygin would go no further than to refer back to his 8 February comment.

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