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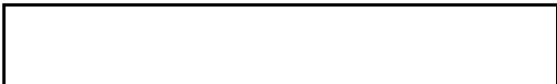


DIRECTORATE OF
INTELLIGENCE

MEMORANDUM

The Situation in Vietnam

Top Secret



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14 April 1967

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Information as of 1600
14 April 1967

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HIGHLIGHTS

The major land supply route between Da Nang and provinces to the north has been reopened.

I. The Military Situation in South Vietnam:

Highway One is open again between Da Nang and provinces to the north with the completion of an alternate bridge to replace the one destroyed by Viet Cong guerrillas earlier this week (Para. 1). South Vietnamese Operation DAN CHI 285B killed nearly 250 Viet Cong in a heavy battle on 13 April in southern Phong Dinh Province (Para. 2). Captured enemy messages provide further information about the organization and command structures of the NVA 324B Division (Paras. 3-6). A recently captured enemy document contains possible Viet Cong plans to attack a US base camp in Tay Ninh Province (Paras. 7-8). Documents captured in Tay Province revealed a major reorganization of units subordinate to COSVN (Paras. 9-16).

II. Political Developments in South Vietnam:

As the national elections draw nearer, internal power alignments within various religious and political groups are starting to show some strain (Paras. 1-3).

III. Military Developments in North Vietnam:

There is nothing of significance to report.

IV. Other Communist Military Developments:

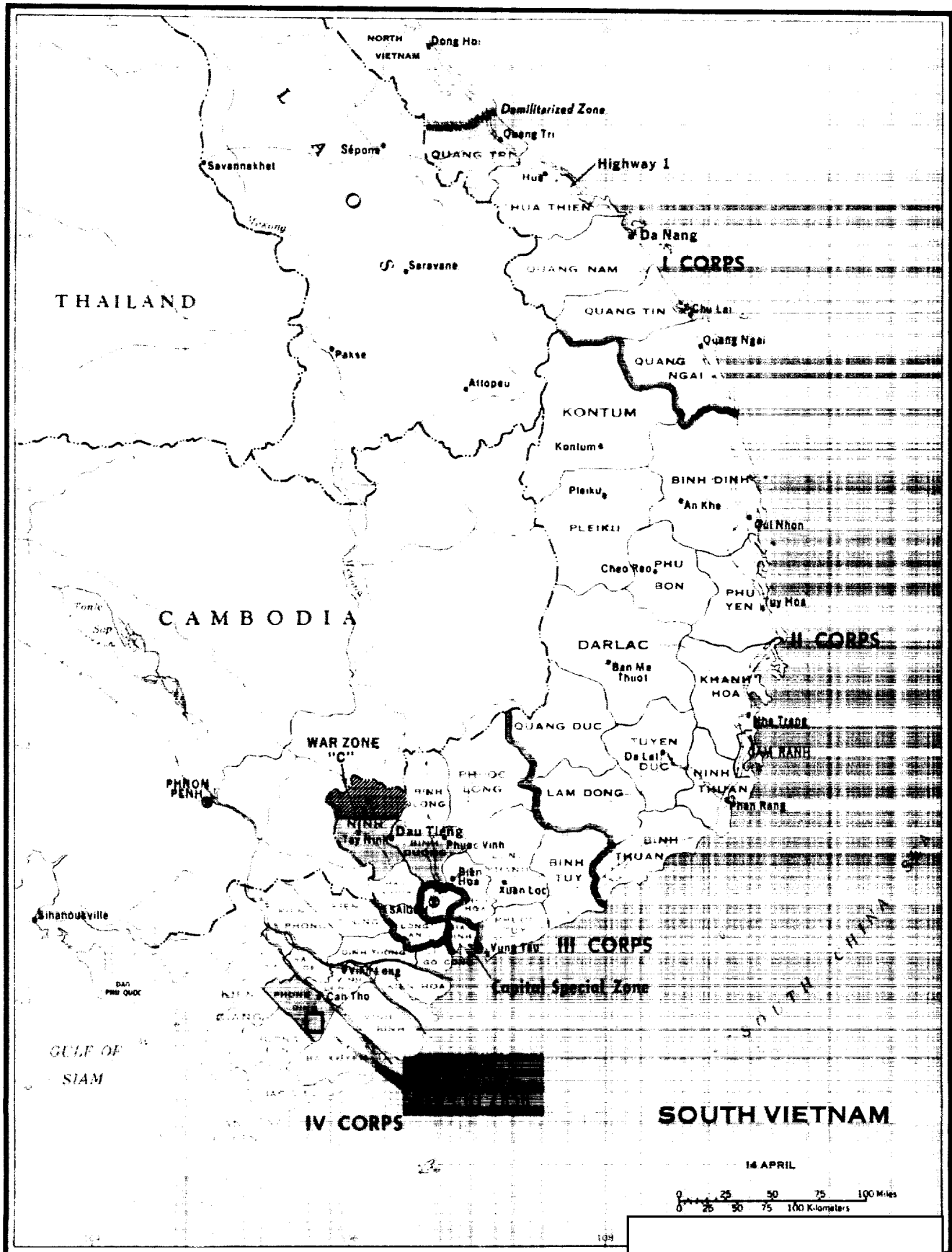
There is nothing of significance to report.

V. Communist Political Developments:

An article in the DRV press calls for "unity" among local officials (Paras. 1-2).

VI. Other Major Aspects:

The DRV postal service is apparently having some difficulties (Paras. 1-2).



I. THE MILITARY SITUATION IN SOUTH VIETNAM

1. Coastal Highway 1, the major land supply route to US Marine installations in Quang Tri Province, was reopened to traffic at 1530 today (Vietnam time) by the installation of a floating bridge. A large bridge on this highway some eight miles north of Da Nang was badly damaged by Viet Cong commandos on 13 April.

ARVN Success in the Delta

2. On 13 April, elements of the six-battalion ARVN Operation DAN CHI 285 B made heavy contact with Communist main force units some 80 miles south of Saigon in the Mekong Delta province of Phong Dinh. The action resulted in 243 enemy killed and 29 persons detained. ARVN casualties were 46 dead and 168 wounded. In addition, six US personnel were wounded, two helicopters were destroyed, and four others were damaged in this operation. US helicopters, artillery, and air strikes furnished support to the ARVN troops.

Further Information on NVA 324 B Division

3. A study of recently captured enemy tactical messages has provided further insight into the organizational and command structure of elements of the North Vietnamese 324 B Division in northern Quang Tri Province. Various other reports indicate that the Communists are planning a major "summer campaign" in this area and that the 324 B Division will play a major part. These captured communications cover the 22 February - 3 March period when the 4th Battalion, 812th Regiment, 324 B Division was in contact with allied units immediately south of the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ).

4. The 4th Battalion apparently is organized with three infantry companies; an engineer unit; 60-, 82-, and 120-mm. mortar units (possibly company

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sized); three reconnaissance teams; an antitank element equipped with B-40 rocket launchers; and other support groups. (The 5th and 6th battalions of the 812th, a possible artillery-related 72nd Battalion, and the Cam Lo (Viet Cong) District Unit were also noted in the captured communications texts.)

5. The 812th regimental headquarters appears to be divided into two sections, one at a forward command post and another at an unspecified "rear area." Message exchanges indicate that the forward regimental command post contains a fire direction center that controls additional 82- and 120-mm. mortar units.

6. These communications also contain various references to the "Front"--possibly the "DMZ Front" which is believed to be the over-all Communist operational headquarters in the southern DRV - DMZ - northern Quang Tri area. The "Front" appears to have issued directives to various elements of the 324 B Division.

Plans For Attack on US Installation

7. An enemy document recently captured in northeastern Tay Ninh Province reveals an extensive reconnaissance program targeted against a US base camp by elements of the Viet Cong 9th Division. The report, dated 16 February, contained detailed information on the allied forces, defenses, frequency and patterns of patrols, and other intelligence factors for the base camp of the 3rd Brigade of the US 4th Infantry Division at Dau Tieng in northwestern Binh Duong Province.

8. An estimate of US reaction in the event of a Viet Cong mortar attack against this camp is also included in the report. This estimate is based on reactions to earlier mortar attacks conducted by the Viet Cong 272nd Regiment against similar American installations. Although forces of Operation JUNCTION CITY, now reduced to 11 battalions, are operating north of Dau Tieng, this base camp still remains a lucrative target for Communist forces in the area.

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Reorganization of Units and Command Structure in
COSVN Base Area

9. Two Communist documents captured during Operation JUNCTION CITY have revealed that a major reorganization of units and command structure occurred in December 1966 in the base area of the Central Office for South Vietnam (COSVN) in Tay Ninh Province. The reorganization, designed to increase protection of the base, was probably prompted by Operation ATTLEBORO, conducted in the War Zone C area of Tay Ninh in November.

10. The first document, issued on 16 December by the headquarters of the Liberation Army, ordered the reorganization of the Viet Cong 70th Security Guard Regiment--responsible for protecting COSVN headquarters--and established a new command committee in the base area specifically for the conduct of countersweep operations.

11. All agencies and units subordinate to the headquarters of the 70th Regiment, according to the document, were ordered deactivated and the regiment's 1st Battalion placed under the direct military and political control of the COSVN Military Staff. The 1st Battalion was redesignated as Group 70. Two of its companies were transferred to the control of sections subordinate to the Military Staff--the 3rd company to the signal section and the 6th company to the engineer section.

12. The document does not give any indication of the disposition of the 70th Regiment's remaining two battalions. They may be retained as supporting units to the new Group 70 or as independent battalions to provide additional protection as necessary for COSVN. The resubordination of the two combat support companies of the 1st Battalion appears to be a move toward concentrating all maneuver elements into one unit for the prosecution of the new countersweep plan.

13. In connection with this plan, the document ordered the establishment of a command committee,

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designated the Minh Chau District Headquarters, to direct all countersweep operations in the base area. The entire base area was divided into eight sectors, each with its own command committee. Although it has a new designation, the Minh Chau District probably encompasses the same area as the Viet Cong's former district of Duong Minh Chau, which covered War Zone C and roughly corresponded to the GVN's Phu Khuong District.

14. The second document--issued on the following day by the Military Staff--outlined in detail the duties of the sector command committees. Each committee, composed of commanders of various agencies and installations operating in the base area, is responsible in general for the planning and conduct of countersweep operations--under the direction of the Minh Chau District headquarters and in coordination with main force units in the sectors--to protect the COSVN base area. Specific duties include terrain reconnaissance, proper positioning of all subordinate units, supervision of equipment in each unit, establishment of air defense observation posts and guard posts, control of traffic in and out of the sectors, control of mess and billeting facilities, collection of intelligence on allied positions, and support of main force units by providing guides, performing medical evacuation, and supplying equipment when possible.

15. The sector command committee's control extends to all units operating in the sector, with the exception of main force units. For the proper maintenance of security, however, these main force units are subject to the sector's traffic control apparatus when bivouacking and traveling to and from the sector. Sector personnel were ordered to remain in their sectors to "fight the enemy aggressively," and were specifically directed never to abandon their sectors or run away. They may, however, move about within the sector in order to "resist the enemy, protect themselves, and ensure the performance of special duties."

16. The establishment of the district and sector command committees apparently does not call

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for additional manpower or indicate a buildup of Communist forces in the COSVN base area. It appears, rather, to be simply a means of gaining closer control of units in the area in order to direct their activities toward the specific mission of countering allied incursions into the base area. In view of the noncombat, defensive nature of many of the command committees' duties and the reference to "moving about within the sector," it appears that the emphasis in countersweep operations was intended to be more one of passive resistance than of aggressive action by local force and guerrilla units. During Operation JUNCTION CITY, Communist military activity--other than that of main force units--has thus far indicated that the reorientation may indeed have occurred in this manner. Local force and guerrilla units have in general avoided contact with allied forces, but have offered resistance when cornered; it may be assumed that they have provided support to the main force units that have initiated action against the allies.

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II. POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN SOUTH VIETNAM

1. The proximity of national elections has precipitated some internal strains within various religious and political organizations. The lay branch of the Hoa Hao religious sect, for example, is currently involved in a conflict over two contenders for the chairmanship of their central executive committee. Although factionalism and internal rivalry within the Hoa Hao is not unusual, the present struggle is complicated by a desire of each of the contenders to solicit support for, and be supported by, the military candidate for the presidency.

2. The delta-based Hoa Hao could deliver--if united--a sizable bloc of votes in the election. Presently, both contenders for the chairmanship of the lay branch are claiming the support of the government in an effort to gain control of the committee and reap the benefits should the military candidate be elected.

3. Concern with the fall elections is also compounding the problems of the minority Greater People's Bloc (GPB)--mostly Revolutionary Dai Viet Party members from central Vietnam--in the Constituent Assembly.

[redacted] the bloc's leader has been losing his influence over the grouping, partially because he has spent too much time in the pre-election campaign of Ha Thuc Ky, the Revolutionary Dai Viet Party's presidential candidate. The GPB leader reportedly believes that this erosion of influence is not too vital since, in coming months, preoccupation both with the presidential election and with possible candidates for the legislative elections will continue to dominate assembly interests.

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III. MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS IN NORTH VIETNAM

1. There is nothing of significance to report.

IV. OTHER COMMUNIST MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS

1. There is nothing of significance to report.

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V. COMMUNIST POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

1. Under the headline "unity is the basis of all strength," the North Vietnamese party daily Nhan Dan in an editorial broadcast domestically on 4 April called upon the DRV populace to pull together and eliminate differences in order to bring the "revolutionary cause" to complete success. The editorial pointed out that while many local officials had pursued their duties with a sense of "unity," there were some who had not. Nhan Dan specifically singled out "key leading cadre" at the local level for lack of imagination and initiative in solving their problems, as well for being overbearing in their leadership. The editorial characterized these faults as "sometimes serious and lasting." It pointed out that these cadre, by developing a sense of collective responsibility and relying on the efforts of the group, would overcome weak points and come to share the same views on the "struggle objectives" which are approved after democratic discussion.

2. Criticism of local officials is not unprecedented in North Vietnamese media although this open call for "unity" is unusual. The article strongly implies that local cadre members by their arbitrary attitude may have made it difficult for the regime to get its decisions implemented by scattered local officials without considerable debate and changes. At the same time, there is no indication that the regime is meeting any serious resistance to its program or that the difficulties that have cropped up have in any way affected the prosecution of the war effort.

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VI. OTHER MAJOR ASPECTS

1. Transport difficulties may have forced North Vietnam to curtail postal service to outlying areas of the country. [redacted]

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[redacted] as of mid-March, no mail was being accepted for the two provinces in the extreme south or for the town of Lao Cai on the northwest border with China. In addition, a weight limit of ten kilograms (22 pounds) was in force for mail to other provinces distant from Hanoi.

2. These restrictions suggest that although the North Vietnamese are able to maintain essential transport movements in the face of air attacks, the effort required is taxing, and goods of secondary importance cannot always be accommodated. [redacted]

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[redacted] It may be that parcel post services to areas farthest from Hanoi have at least been temporarily stopped or curtailed because [redacted]

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[redacted] regular means of deliveries such as railroads have no capacity to spare.

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