

NSC BRIEFING

6 April 1954

MILITARY SITUATION THROUGHOUT INDOCHINA

- I. Whatever outcome at Dien Bien Phu, Tonkin delta is key area.
- II. Viet Minh strength at all time high; 20,000 regulars - 55,000 auxiliaries
 - A. Daily routine of ambushing French, cutting Haiphong - Hanoi route.
 - B. Viet Minh not yet exerted full capabilities.
 - C. Nine regular battalions along Hanoi-Haiphong route
- III. French mobile reserves in delta about 45 in November, now depleted to 17.
 - A. Navarre afraid to pull out last two paratroop battalions; may do so after arrival of two battalions from North Africa.

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IV. In South Vietnam, French Union regulars total 37 battalions.

A. Viet Minh has only 10 understrength regular battalions.

B. French tied down guarding roads and key installations.

V. In Central Vietnam, French have 19 battalions in Operation Atlante

A. Have cleared fairly large strip of coast but not seriously engaged Viet Minh.

B Operation has recently slowed.

VI. Viet Minh decision to attack Dien Bien Phu ended for time being main threat to Laos.

A. Total French Union forces in Laos are 40 battalions.

B. Viet Minh force still largely intact; enemy regulars in all Laos total 10 battalions.

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VII Incursion of northern Cambodia last week marks first move of organized Viet Minh group across that country's borders .

- A. Estimated at two battalions, force is too small to present real threat; Viet Minh motive probably to make political capital, prior Geneva.
- B. But Viet Minh has long had about 1000 regulars and 6500 auxiliaries operating as guerrillas.
- C. Total French Union strength 15 battalions.
- D. French on 2 April ordered back to Cambodia two French Union battalions of Cambodian recruits that had been moved to southern Laos.

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