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PAGE 1 OF 8 PAGES

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COUNTRY SOUTH VIETNAM

DOI

SUBJECT VIET CONG INVOLVEMENT IN CURRENT POLITICAL  
UNREST IN SOUTH VIETNAM: SITUATION APPRAISAL  
AS OF 9 MAY 1966

ACQ VIETNAM, SAIGON

FIELD NO.

SOURCE

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2. (SUMMARY. THE STRUGGLE MOVEMENT WHICH STARTED IN EARLY MARCH 1966 IN HUE AND DANANG, OSTENSIBLY IN RESPONSE TO THE REMOVAL OF GENERAL NGUYEN CHANH THI AS I CORPS COMMANDER, WAS QUICKLY TURNED INTO A MOVEMENT, DIRECTED FROM THE PAGODAS IN HUE AND CONTROLLED BY THICH TRI QUANG, TO OVERTURN THE GOVERNMENT OF VIETNAM. THE VIET CONG

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IN

PAGE 2 OF 9 PAGES

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(VC) ARE UNQUESTIONABLY INVOLVED IN MANY OF THE STRUGGLE GROUPS FORMED IN VARIOUS PARTS OF THE COUNTRY, BUT IT IS DIFFICULT TO ASSESS THE DEGREE OF VC CONTROL OVER ORGANIZATIONS PARTICIPATING IN THE STRUGGLE. IN DANANG, BECAUSE OF APPARENT HIGH-LEVEL VC PENETRATIONS, THE VC MAY NOW BE ABLE TO MANIPULATE THE MOVEMENT TO THEIR OWN ENDS, AND QUANG MAY NO LONGER BE ABLE TO CONTROL IT. TWO KNOWN COMMUNISTS WHO HAVE BEEN ACTIVE IN THE DANANG STRUGGLE MOVEMENT ALMOST FROM ITS INCEPTION ARE DANANG PEOPLE'S COUNCIL MEMBER HA XUAN KY, IDENTIFIED AS A PEOPLE'S REVOLUTIONARY PARTY (PRP) MEMBER, WHO IS CHAIRMAN OF THE PEOPLE'S FORCES TO STRUGGLE FOR REVOLUTION, DANANG, (PFSRD) EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE; AND POLITICAL ADVISOR TO THE PFSRD EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE TRAN DUY TAM, WHO WAS FORMERLY A MEDICAL ASSISTANT TO DANANG MAYOR DR. NGUYEN VAN MAN. KY AND TAM ARE IN CONTACT WITH CHE VIET TAN, SECRETARY OF THE PRP COMMITTEE FOR DANANG AND A MEMBER OF THE VC REGION V COMMITTEE. THEY ARE IN A POSITION TO CONSOLIDATE THEIR HOLD ON THE PFSRD BY FILLING IT WITH VC. HIGHER VC ECHELONS REPORTEDLY DIRECTED SUBORDINATE ORGANIZATIONS TO JOIN STRUGGLE ACTIVITIES BECAUSE OF THE IDENTITY OF VC INTERESTS WITH THOSE OF THE PFSRD. THE ASSAILANT WHO SHOT A VIETNAMESE NATIONALIST PARTY (VNQDD) MEMBER ON 2 MAY HAS BEEN TENTATIVELY IDENTIFIED AS KNOWN COMMUNIST NGUYEN HUU TRANH. THE VC HAVE REPORTEDLY SENT 50 PROPAGANDA

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CADRES INTO DANANG TO BE INFILTRATED INTO THE STRUGGLE MOVEMENT BY VC ALREADY IN PLACE, AND A VC CELL IN A DANANG LABOR ORGANIZATION WAS DIRECTED TO TRY TO WREST CONTROL OF THE DANANG SYNDICATE OF WORKERS UNIONS FROM ITS PRESENT LEADERS AND REPLACE THEM WITH PRP MEMBERS. OUTSIDE THE DANANG AREA, VC PENETRATION OF THE STRUGGLE MOVEMENT IN I CORPS REMAINS ESSENTIALLY CONCEALED, BUT DR. LE KHAC QUYEN, A LEADER OF THE HUE STRUGGLE, HAS BEEN IDENTIFIED BY SEVERAL PERSONS AS A COMMUNIST OR PRO-COMMUNIST. DETERMINATION OF VC INVOLVEMENT OUTSIDE I CORPS IS STILL MORE DIFFICULT TO DETERMINE, BUT VC AGITATORS PARTICIPATED IN DEMONSTRATIONS IN SAIGON, KONTUM, BAN ME THUOT, NHA TRANG, AND DALAT, AND IN NHA TRANG A STUDENT ARRESTED FOR STRUGGLE ACTIVITIES ADMITTED WORKING FOR THE VC UNDER THE DIRECTION OF THE SECRETARY OF THE NHA TRANG MUNICIPAL VC COMMITTEE. A CAPTURED VC QUI NHON COMMITTEE DOCUMENT OF 16 MARCH DIRECTED SUBORDINATE ORGANIZATIONS TO TRY TO PARTICIPATE IN THE LEADERSHIP OF DEMONSTRATIONS AND TO SELECT SUITABLE DEMONSTRATION LEADERS FOR DEVELOPMENT AS VC UNDERGROUND CADRES.)

3. VC INVOLVEMENT IN THE POLITICAL UNREST WHICH HAS PLAGUED SOUTH VIETNAM SINCE MARCH 1966 HAS BEEN WIDESPREAD AND VARIED. PROPAGANDA OVER THE VC LIBERATION RADIO HAS URGED PEOPLE TO JOIN IN THE STRUGGLE MOVEMENT AND OVERTHROW THE GOVERNMENT OF PRIME MINISTER NGUYEN CAO KY. THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT THE VC ARE INVOLVED WITH MANY OF THE ASSORTED STRUGGLE GROUPS WHICH HAVE BEEN FORMED IN VARIOUS PARTS OF THE COUNTRY,

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IN

PAGE 4 OF 9 PAGES

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BUT IT IS DIFFICULT TO ASSESS WHICH ORGANIZATIONS ARE UNDER VC CONTROL AND TO WHAT DEGREE. ALL OF THESE GROUPS ARE TARGETS FOR VC PENETRATIONS; SOME MAY ACTUALLY BE ORGANIZED AND CONTROLLED BY THE VC IN ACCORDANCE WITH PRP DIRECTIVES.

4. THE STRUGGLE MOVEMENT WHICH STARTED IN EARLY MARCH IN HUE AND DANANG, OSTENSIBLY IN RESPONSE TO THE REMOVAL OF LIEUTENANT GENERAL NGUYEN CHANH THI AS I CORPS COMMANDER, WAS QUICKLY TURNED INTO A MOVEMENT TO OVERTURN THE GOVERNMENT OF VIETNAM. THE STRUGGLE EFFORT WAS ORGANIZED AND DIRECTED FROM PAGODAS IN HUE, WITH ULTIMATE CONTROL IN THE HANDS OF THICH TRI QUANG. ALTHOUGH QUANG HAS BEEN ABLE TO DIRECT THE NATIONWIDE MOVEMENT EFFECTIVELY UP TO THIS TIME, THE SITUATION IN DANANG MAY HAVE REACHED A POINT WHERE, BECAUSE OF APPARENT HIGH-LEVEL VC PENETRATIONS, QUANG MAY NO LONGER BE ABLE TO CONTROL THE MOVEMENT, AND THE VC MAY NOW BE ABLE TO MANIPULATE THE DANANG MOVEMENT TO THEIR OWN ENDS. QUANG MAY BE AWARE OF THE COMMUNIST BACKGROUNDS AND CONNECTIONS OF SOME OF THE TOP LEADERSHIP OF THE PFSRD, BUT HE MAY STILL FEEL THAT THEY WILL RESPOND TO THIS DIRECTION. WHILE QUANG MAY HAVE MISCALCULATED HIS OWN STRENGTH, HE MAY ALSO BE SYMPATHETIC WITH THE OBJECTIVES OF VC PENETRATION AGENTS.

5. ON THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE PFSRD ARE AT LEAST TWO KNOWN COMMUNISTS WHO HAVE BEEN ACTIVE ALMOST FROM THE INCEPTION OF THE STRUGGLE MOVEMENT. ONE OF THESE IS HA XUAN KY, A LOCAL HIGH

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SCHOOL TEACHER, AN ELECTED MEMBER OF THE DANANG PEOPLE'S COUNCIL, AND CURRENTLY CHAIRMAN OF THE PSFRD EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE. KY HAS A PREVIOUS HISTORY OF COMMUNIST ACTIVITY AND HAS BEEN IDENTIFIED BY TWO RELIABLE SOURCES AS A PRP MEMBER. HE HAS BEEN IN CONTACT WITH CHE VIET TAN, WHO IS IDENTIFIED AS SECRETARY OF THE PRP COMMITTEE FOR DANANG AND A MEMBER OF THE VC REGION V COMMITTEE. ANOTHER IDENTIFIED PENETRATION OF THE PFSRD EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE IS TRAN DUY TAM, MORE COMMONLY CALLED DR. TAM. THIS MAN HAS BEEN IDENTIFIED AS THE POLITICAL ADVISOR TO THE PFSRD EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND AS SUCH HE WIELDS CONSIDERABLE INFLUENCE ON COMMITTEE ACTIONS. TAM HAS ALSO BEEN IN CONTACT WITH CHE VIET TAN, AND HE HAS INTERFERED IN LOCAL POLICE MATTERS BY PERSONALLY ORDERING RELEASE OF AN INDIVIDUAL DETAINED AS A VC CADRE. TAM PREVIOUSLY WORKED AS A MEDICAL ASSISTANT FOR DR. NGUYEN VAN MAN, MAYOR OF DANANG. ACCORDING TO ONE UNVERIFIED REPORT, TAM INTERCEDED WITH GENERAL THI TO HAVE DR. MAN APPOINTED AS MAYOR OF DANANG. THE FULL EXTENT OF THE INFLUENCE OF THESE TWO MEN ON THE COURSE OF THE STRUGGLE MOVEMENT IN THE INTEREST OF DIRECT ASSISTANCE TO THE VC IS YET TO BE DETERMINED. IT IS CLEAR THAT THEY ARE IN A POSITION TO CONSOLIDATE THEIR HOLD ON THE ORGANIZATION BY CAREFULLY SEEDING THE MOVEMENT WITH FELLOW COMMUNISTS TO THE EXTENT THAT IT WILL NO LONGER BE RESPONSIBLE TO ANY AUTHORITY BUT THEIRS. (HEADQUARTERS COMMENT. [REDACTED] WHICH REPORTED ON DISSIDENT GROUPS INVOLVED

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IN

PAGE 6 OF 9 PAGES

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IN ANTI-GOVERNMENT ACTIVITIES IN DANANG FROM 11 MARCH TO 10 APRIL, LISTED KY AS CHAIRMAN OF THE "PEOPLE'S STRUGGLE COMMITTEE FOR DANANG," RATHER THAN THE PFSRD, WHICH WAS SHOWN IN THAT REPORT AS "THE POPULAR FORCES TO STRUGGLE FOR REVOLUTION," LED BY BUDDHIST BONZE THICH TRI HUU AS CHAIRMAN OF ITS EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE. TAM WAS NOT LISTED AS A MEMBER OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF EITHER ORGANIZATION IN THAT REPORT.)

6. THERE HAS ALREADY BEEN SOME INFILTRATION OF PRP CADRES INTO THE LOWER LEVELS OF THE STRUGGLE MOVEMENT. A PARTICULARLY OUTSTANDING INSTANCE IS PENETRATION OF THE SO-CALLED "SECURITY SERVICE" OF THE STRUGGLE ORGANIZATION, WHICH IS COMPOSED LARGELY OF LOCAL HOODLUM ELEMENTS. THE ASSAILANT IN THE 2 MAY SHOOTING OF A VNQDD MEMBER HAS BEEN TENTATIVELY IDENTIFIED AS NGUYEN HUU TRANH, A KNOWN COMMUNIST AND AN AGENT OF DR. MAN. IN ADDITION TO HIS CONNECTION WITH THE VC, THANH HAS AN OLDER BROTHER IN THE DANANG GARRISON COMMAND WHO IS KNOWN TO HAVE A FEMALE VC LIAISON CADRE-COURIER LIVING IN HIS HOUSE. A FAIRLY RELIABLE REPORT INDICATES THAT THE VC HAVE SENT INTO DANANG A GROUP OF 50 TRAINED POLITICAL AND PROPAGANDA CADRES TO BE INFILTRATED INTO THE STRUGGLE MOVEMENT BY VC ALREADY IN PLACE.

7. ATTEMPTS BY VC TO PENETRATE AND MANIPULATE THE STRUGGLE MOVEMENT HAVE BEEN CONTINUOUS SINCE ITS INCEPTION, AND IT IS POSSIBLE

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THAT THE VC ANTICIPATED THE OCCURRENCE OF LARGE-SCALE CIVIL DISTURBANCES BEFORE THIS REMOVAL. IN LATE FEBRUARY, A SENIOR PRP OFFICIAL, POSSIBLY CHE VIET TAN, ISSUED INSTRUCTIONS TO A STUDENT FRONT ORGANIZATION, PROBABLY THE LIBERATION STUDENT AND PUPIL ASSOCIATION, TO ORGANIZE STUDENT AND YOUTH GROUPS IN DANANG, AS WELL AS TAM KY, HOI AN, HUE, AND QUANG TRI BY THE MIDDLE OF MARCH. ALTHOUGH THERE IS NO INDICATION OF THE MISSION OF THESE ORGANIZATIONS, IT PROBABLY WAS TO CAUSE AS MUCH TURMOIL AS POSSIBLE IN ANY DISTURBANCE AS WELL AS TO DISSEMINATE VC PROPAGANDA. IT IS POSSIBLE THAT THESE WERE TO BE DECOY ORGANIZATIONS WHICH COULD DO CONTROLLED AGITATION AND PROPAGANDA WORK, AND IF THEY WERE ELIMINATED THIS WOULD NOT ENDANGER THE PRINCIPAL COVERT APPARATUS. IN ADDITION, THERE HAVE BEEN SEVERAL REPORTS OF HIGHER VC ORGANIZATIONS IN THE DANANG AREA PASSING INSTRUCTIONS TO SUBORDINATE ORGANIZATIONS TO JOIN WITH STRUGGLE GROUP ACTIVITIES BECAUSE OF AN IDENTITY OF INTERESTS BETWEEN THE VC AND THE PFSRD. ONE ELEMENT OF PARTICULAR INTEREST TO THE VC AS A PENETRATION TARGET IS THE DANANG LABOR MOVEMENT. NATIONAL FRONT FOR THE LIBERATION OF SOUTH VIETNAM DANANG COUNCIL CHAIRMAN HA KY NGO DIRECTED THAT A SECRET CELL IN AN UNIDENTIFIED LABOR ORGANIZATION, POSSIBLY THE DANANG SYNDICATE OF DRIVERS AND MECHANICS, WHICH IS SUPPOSED TO BE HIGHLY INFILTRATED BY VC, TO

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IN

PAGE 7 OF 8 PAGES

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START AGITATING TO WREST CONTROL FROM THE PRESENT LEADERS OF THE DANANG SYNDICATE OF WORKERS UNIONS, WHOSE PLACES WOULD THEN BE FILLED BY PRP MEMBERS.

8. THE EXTENT OF VC PENETRATION IN I CORPS OUTSIDE THE DANANG AREA REMAINS ESSENTIALLY CONCEALED. IN HUE THERE MAY BE SOME PENETRATION AT THE TOP OF THE MOVEMENT IN THE PERSON OF DR. LE KHAC QUYEN, WHO HAS BEEN IDENTIFIED BY SEVERAL PERSONS AS A COMMUNIST, OR AT LEAST VERY PRO-COMMUNIST. THERE ARE PROBABLY VC PENETRATIONS AMONG THE MEMBERS OF THE HIGHLY ACTIVE HUE UNIVERSITY STUDENT BODY, BUT THERE IS NO CLEAR LINK TO VC ORGANIZATIONS, AND THE STUDENT LEADERS RETAIN CONTROL OF THEIR FOLLOWERS. STUDENTS FROM THIS UNIVERSITY APPARENTLY PROVIDED CADRES WHO WENT TO OTHER PARTS OF I CORPS, AND PERHAPS BEYOND, TO ORGANIZE A STRUGGLE MOVEMENT AMONG STUDENTS AND OTHER GROUPS.

9. IT IS MORE DIFFICULT TO DETERMINE THE EXTENT OF VC INVOLVEMENT IN THE STRUGGLE MOVEMENT AS IT SPREAD FROM I CORPS TO OTHER AREAS OF THE COUNTRY. THE VC ISSUED INSTRUCTIONS TO THEIR MUNICIPAL COMMITTEES TO EXPLOIT THE SITUATION. VC AGITATORS PARTICIPATED IN DEMONSTRATIONS ORGANIZED AND DIRECTED BY BUDDHISTS IN SAIGON, KONTUM, BAN ME THUOT, NHA TRANG, DALAT, AND OTHER CITIES. A CAPTURED DOCUMENT DATED 16 MARCH FROM THE VC COMMITTEE FOR QUI NHON TO SUBORDINATE SECTIONS REVEALS THE TACTICS THAT THE VC WERE USING .

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THE DOCUMENT REQUESTED THAT THE SUBORDINATE SECTIONS:  
"REPORT URGENTLY EVENTS AMONG STUDENTS AND BUDDHISTS FOR PLANNING PURPOSES, AND LISTEN TO THE RADIO FOR FURTHER INSTRUCTIONS. PREPARE MATERIALS FOR USE, INCLUDING FLAGS, SLOGANS, LEAFLETS, EXPLOSIVES, AND GRENADES. DURING DEMONSTRATIONS URGE PEOPLE TO PARTICIPATE. ATTEMPT TO PARTICIPATE IN LEADERSHIP OF DEMONSTRATIONS AND WIN A NUMBER OF LEADERS SO THAT VC SLOGANS WILL BE USED. AT NIGHT SPREAD PROPAGANDA AND MOUNT MILITARY ACTIONS AGAINST AMERICANS. SELECT DEMONSTRATION LEADERS WITH POSITIVE, ADVANCED, AND ENERGETIC ACTIONS FOR DEVELOPMENT AS UNDERGROUND CADRES." SIMILAR INSTRUCTIONS PROBABLY WERE ISSUED IN ALL PARTS OF THE COUNTRY.

10. POSSIBLY THE MOST CLEAR-CUT EXAMPLE OF VC INVOLVEMENT IN THE STRUGGLE MOVEMENT OUTSIDE I CORPS IS THE CASE OF NGUYEN THI PHUNG, WHO WAS ACTIVE IN THE STUDENT STRUGGLE MOVEMENT IN NHA TRANG. MISS PHUNG WAS ARRESTED ON 23 APRIL AND ADMITTED WORKING FOR THE VC UNDER THE DIRECTION OF HUYNH TUONG, SECRETARY OF THE NHA TRANG VC MUNICIPAL COMMITTEE. SHE APPEARED TO BE A RECENT VC RECRUIT, INDICATING THAT THE VC MOVED QUICKLY TO PENETRATE STUDENT GROUPS.

11. FIELD DISSEM. STATE USMACV USAID JUSPAO NAVFORV  
USARV 7TH AIR FORCE CINCPAC ARPAC PACAF PACFLT.

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