

~~SECRET~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

COPY NO. 21
OCI NO. 2479
15 January 1954

CURRENT INTELLIGENCE WEEKLY



DOCUMENT NO. 8
NO CHANGE IN CLASS.
 DECLASSIFIED
CLASS. CHANGED TO: TS S 0989
NEXT REVIEW DATE: _____
AUTH: HR 301
DATE: 12/27/79 REVIEWER:

(b)(3)

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

OFFICE OF CURRENT INTELLIGENCE

~~SECRET~~

~~U. S. OFFICIALS ONLY~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~SECRET~~

15 Jan 54

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

SUMMARY OF CONTENTS

THE SOVIET WORLD Page 4

FRENCH BRACE FOR HEAVY VIET MINH ATTACK IN WESTERN
TONKIN Page 5

The French are uncertain of their ability to hold Dien Bien Phu, their strongpoint in western Tonkin. They believe that the Viet Minh will be ready to attack by 15 January but may merely contain the troops at Dien Bien Phu and move south into Laos.

THE NEW BALANCE OF SINO-SOVIET INFLUENCE IN NORTH
KOREA Page 8

The strengthening of China's position in North Korea, an area which was formerly Moscow's exclusive preserve, could create a basis for possible Sino-Soviet friction, but Moscow and Peiping appear to be developing a coordinated program of support and control.

PROSPECTS FOR THE JORDAN RIVER DEVELOPMENT PLAN Page 11

Israel and the Arab states remain as opposed to the Unified Plan for the development of the Jordan River basin as when it was presented to them in December.

MANEUVERING WITHIN THE TOP SOVIET LEADERSHIP Page 14

Besides assuming public supremacy in the agricultural sphere, Soviet party first secretary N. S. Khrushchev has apparently increased his influence over top personnel appointments. His continuing rise could seriously disrupt the present collective leadership.

UNSATISFACTORY FOOD SITUATION IN EASTERN EUROPE
THREATENS NEW ECONOMIC POLICY Page 16

Two consecutive years of poor harvests in Eastern Europe are posing serious difficulties for the Satellites' "new economic policy."

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

15 Jan 54

**FRENCH BRACE FOR HEAVY VIET MINH ATTACK
IN WESTERN TONKIN**

The French are uncertain of their ability to hold Dien Bien Phu, their strongpoint in western Tonkin, which is faced with one of the largest concentrations of troops the Viet Minh has assembled in seven years of the war in Indochina. They believe that the Viet Minh will be ready to attack by 15 January, but may merely contain the French at Dien Bien Phu and move south into Laos (see map, page 7).

[redacted] Dien Bien Phu's garrison of 12 battalions plus supporting artillery is encircled by 18 battalions of the 308th and 316th Divisions and the 148th Independent Regiment. Advance elements of the nine battalions of the 312th Division have been moving westward and six battalions were expected at Dien Bien Phu by 12 January. Four battalions of light artillery from the 351st Artillery Division are also approaching and can probably be in position by 15 January.

The French can reinforce their outpost only at the expense of other areas, particularly the critical Tonkin delta, where the mobile reserve has already been reduced from some 40 to 19 battalions.

[redacted]

The French, however, who originally hoped to inflict a costly defeat on the enemy, have shown considerable apprehension as the numerical superiority of the Viet Minh has increased to about two to one.

Dien Bien Phu is supplied wholly by air, and transport flights now number from 70 to 100 daily. The French have been concerned over reports that the Viet Minh now has 37mm antiaircraft guns, but thus far these reports have not been confirmed. However, there are believed to be four enemy antiaircraft companies, equipped with 12.7mm machineguns, in the Dien Bien Phu area, and the Viet Minh during the past two years has been increasingly effective with these weapons against low-flying transport and fighter aircraft. An additional factor is the imminent arrival of the "crachin," the annual period of approximately two months of fog and drizzle which will hamper flights from the Tonkin delta.

The Viet Minh, unwilling to accept the heavy casualties among its best divisions which a determined attack on Dien Bien Phu would involve, may attempt merely to contain the garrison there while sending the bulk of its forces southward against

~~SECRET~~(b)(1)
(b)(3)(b)(1)
(b)(3)

~~SECRET~~

the royal capital of Luang Prabang or the French military post at Xieng Khouang, both in northern Laos. Enemy reconnaissance and stockpiling of rice to the west and southwest of Dien Bien Phu point to the possibility that at least one Viet Minh division may move south.

The Viet Minh is stronger logistically than during last spring's invasion of Laos and would also be aided in a penetration of that country by a new supply route from Ban Leng, China, southward to Laichau, which is expected to be usable by light vehicles by the end of January.

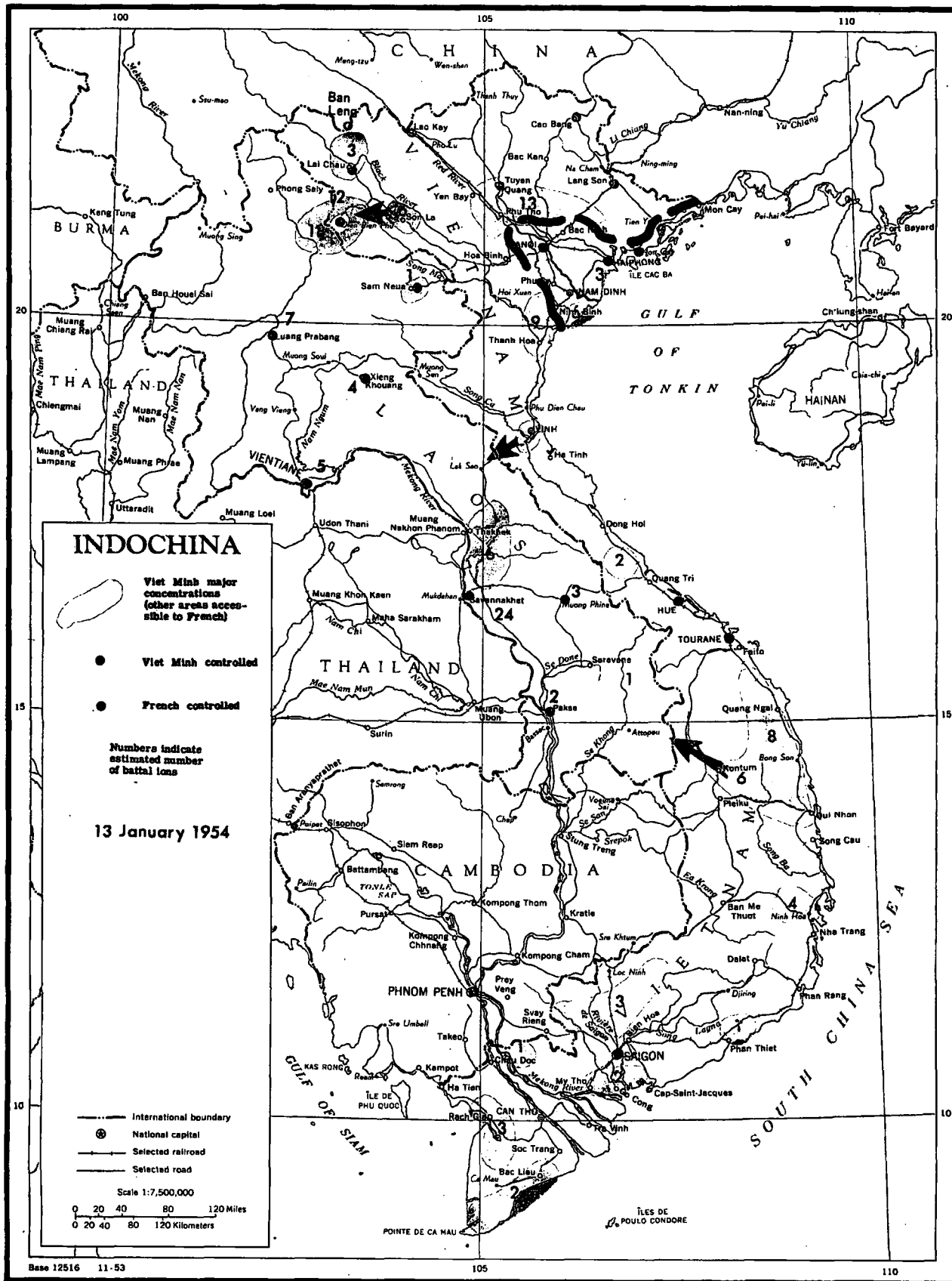
In central Laos, meanwhile, the French have struck back at the Viet Minh force of less than six battalions which reached the Mekong River in late December. They claim to have inflicted heavy casualties by ground and air attack on the enemy troops now located some 20 miles northeast of Savannakhet.

The French have a preponderance of strength in this area and the Viet Minh, even with perhaps three additional battalions reportedly moving westward from Vinh, is not likely to attempt a serious attack against the reinforced French positions. More likely are attempts to continue the blocking of French lines of communications along the Mekong, or a move north toward the Paksane-Vientiane area, possibly in conjunction with an invasion into northern Laos by the main Viet Minh force now in western Tonkin.

Combined with any of these moves, the Viet Minh could attempt diversionary action in southern Laos, as suggested by an unconfirmed report of 11 January that six enemy battalions were moving in the direction of Attopeu from the Annam coast.

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~



~~SECRET~~

40113