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DIRECTORATE OF
INTELLIGENCE

MEMORANDUM

The Situation in Vietnam

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5 December 1967

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WARNING

This document contains classified information affecting the national security of the United States within the meaning of the espionage laws, US Code Title 18, Sections 793, 794, and 798.



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Information as of 1600
5 December 1967

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HIGHLIGHTS

No significant large-scale engagements have been reported in South Vietnam, but there are signs the Communists plan to intensify their winter-spring campaign in III Corps and in the western Demilitarized Zone.

I. The Military Situation in South Vietnam:

No significant fighting was reported on 5 December (Para. 1). Communist forces continue to prepare for offensive activities in the northern half of South Vietnam's III Corps (Paras. 2-6). North Vietnamese forces may plan attacks in the Khe Sanh area of Quang Tri Province (Paras. 7-10).

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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.

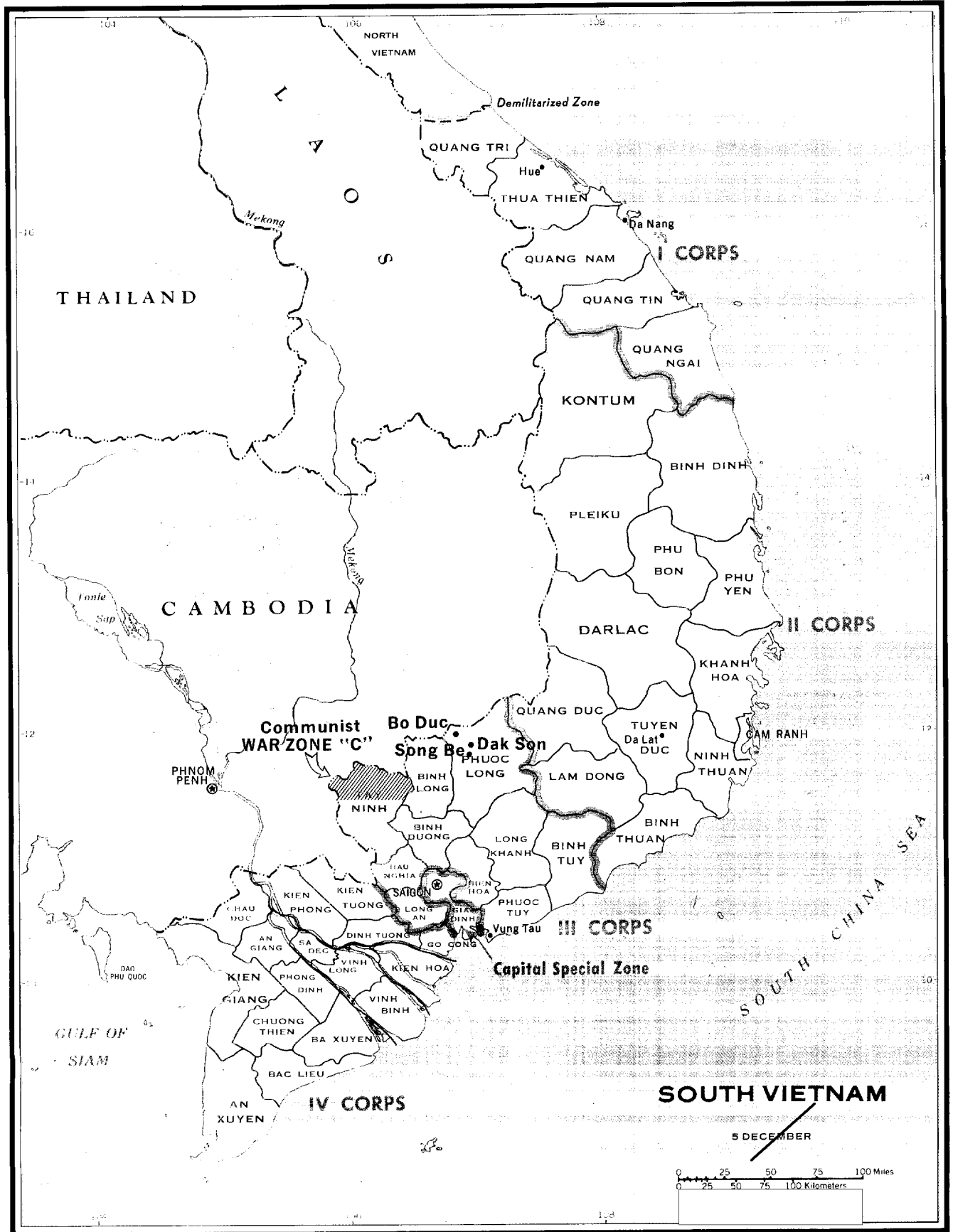
V. Communist Political Developments: There is nothing of significance to report.

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I. THE MILITARY SITUATION IN SOUTH VIETNAM

1. No significant large-scale engagements were reported on 5 December, but there are indications that the Communists plan to intensify their winter-spring campaign on several fronts.

Enemy Activity in Northern III Corps

2. Enemy forces, including elements of three Communist divisions, continue to maneuver in northern III Corps. The 2nd and 3rd battalions of the 272nd Regiment and at least one battalion of the 271st Regiment--subordinate to the Viet Cong 9th Division--have recently been involved in a series of attacks northwest of Song Be. At the same time, other elements of the three battalions may be trying to set up another large-scale attack in northern Binh Long or Phuoc Long.

3. The recent enemy activity in this area has been concentrated just south of the Cambodian border and has involved several attacks on the Bo Duc district capital and a nearby Special Forces camp. On 4 December, the Communists directed five mortar barrages, 123 82-mm. rounds, at allied positions in the Bo Duc area.

4. Early on 5 December, an estimated battalion-size enemy force attacked the "New Life Hamlet" of Dak Son just to the northeast of Song Be. Allied casualties were five killed and 16 wounded. Damage to the montagnard village was heavy.

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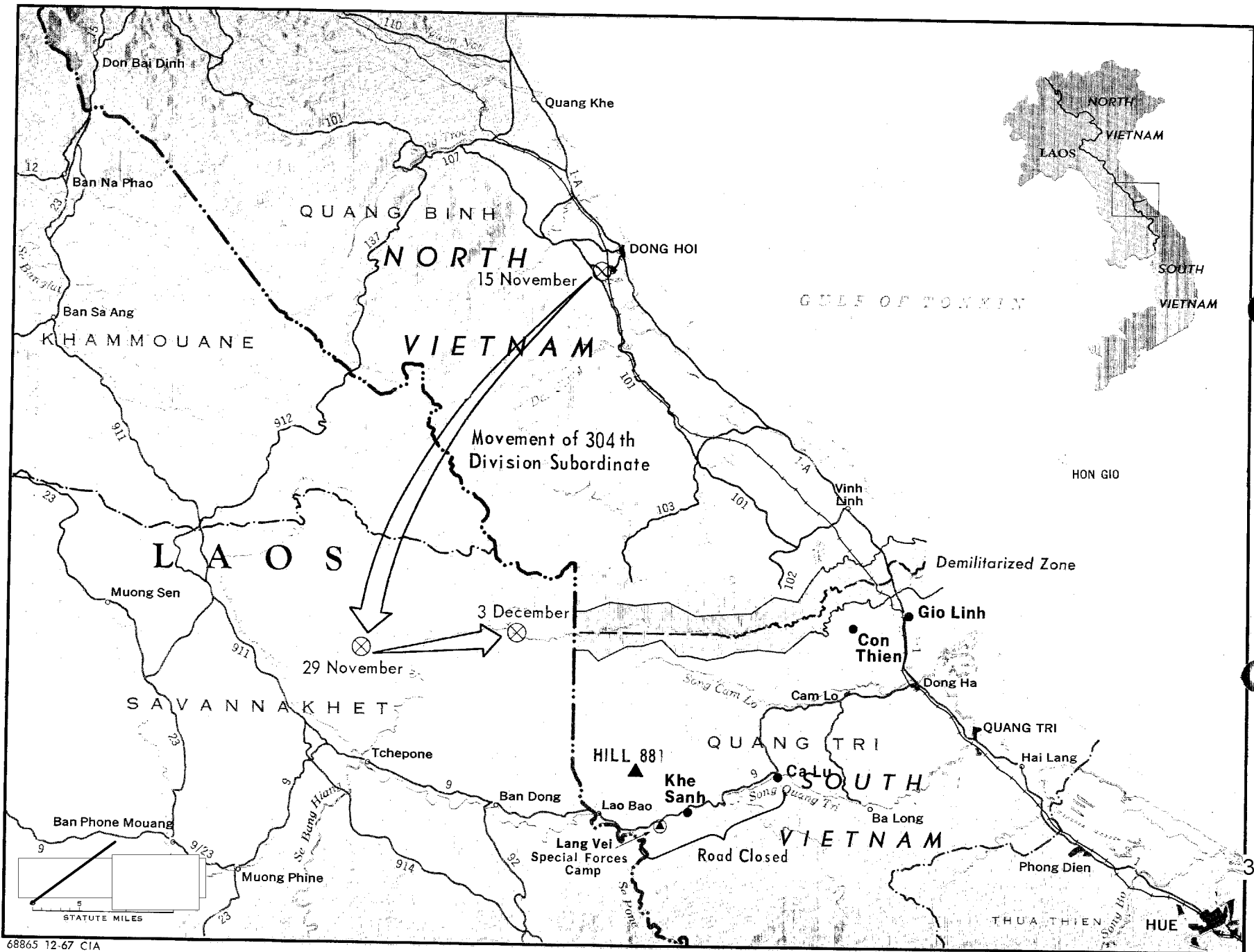
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Possible Threat to Khe Sanh

7. Several recent developments suggest that the North Vietnamese may be planning to move again into the Khe Sanh - Hill 881 area of western Quang Tri Province.

8. On 29 November, the US Special Forces camp just west of Khe Sanh at Lang Vei was hit by 10-15 rounds of heavy mortar or recoilless rifle fire. On 1 December, about 9 miles northwest of Khe Sanh near Hill 881, a US reconnaissance patrol came under heavy automatic-weapons fire from three different positions.

9. Other factors point to the western Quang Tri area as an enemy target. Route 9--the only access road into Khe Sanh and Lang Vei--is now closed to vehicular traffic. The road is muddy and five bridges are out. US military officers estimate that the road will not be reopened until the current monsoon season tapers off in January. This restricts allied resupply and reinforcement in the Khe Sanh area to airlifts, weather permitting.

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10. The last major fighting in western Quang Tri occurred in late April and early May when US troops forced newly infiltrated elements of the North Vietnamese 325th Division off high ground-- hills 881 and 861--overlooking Khe Sanh. At present, it is unclear whether the North Vietnamese intend to make another effort of that magnitude. The position of Khe Sanh, in a mountainous region some 40 miles from the coast, makes it a probable Communist objective, however. Attacks here would have the added advantage of diverting allied forces from Con Thien and other positions just below the eastern Demilitarized Zone.

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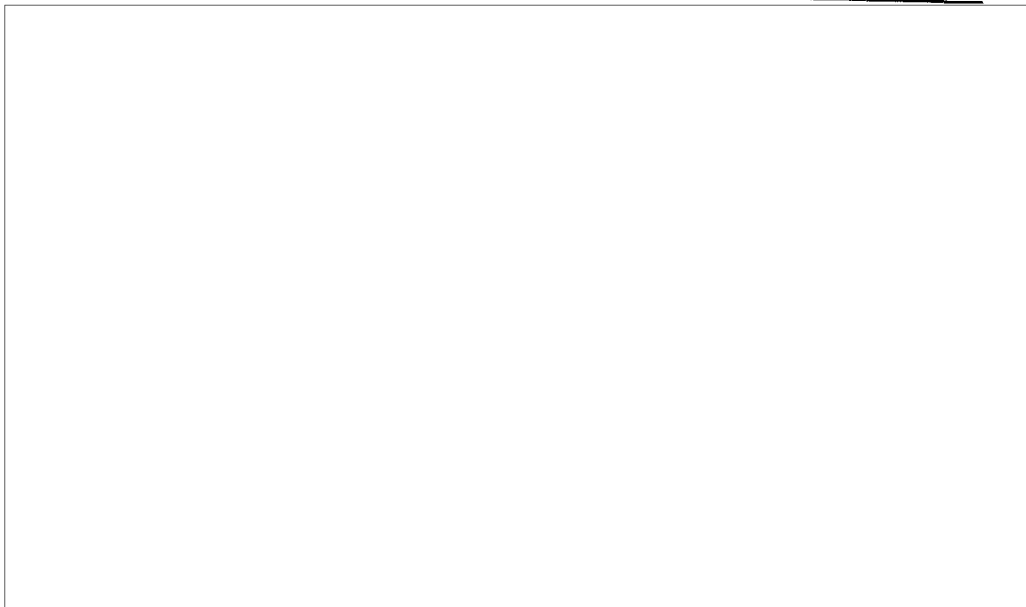
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II. POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN SOUTH VIETNAM



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