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DIRECTORATE OF
INTELLIGENCE

MEMORANDUM

The Situation in Vietnam

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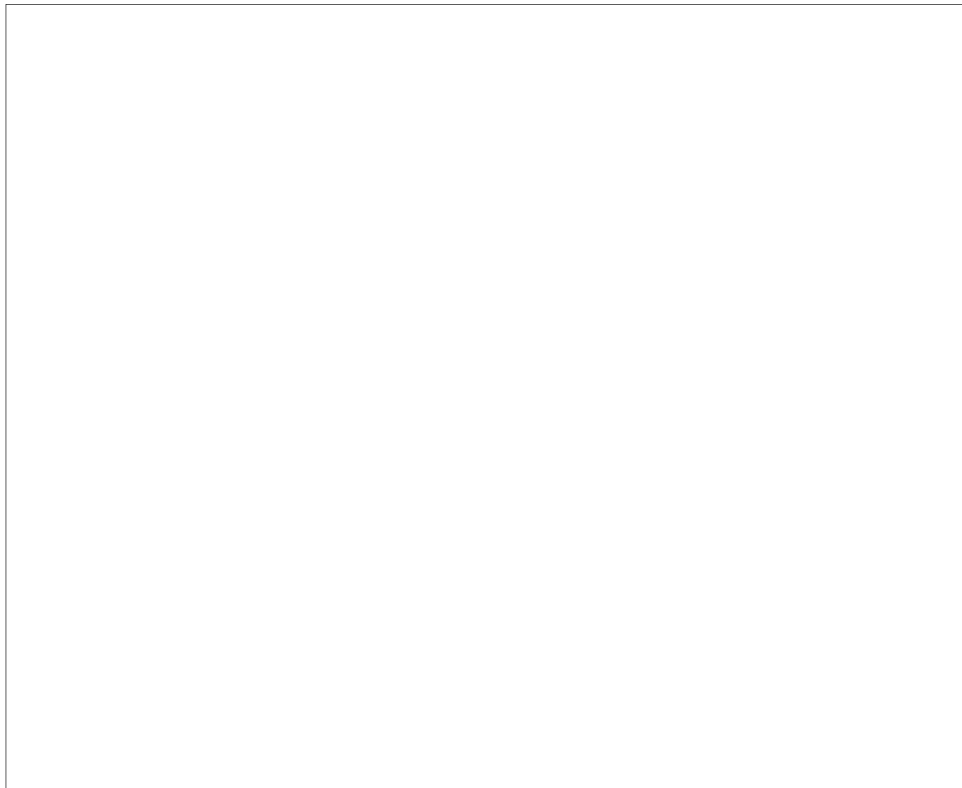
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WARNING

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
29 November 1967

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HIGHLIGHTS

North Vietnamese units seem to be preparing new attacks in the Dak To area. Communist forces are active in northwestern III Corps and seem bent on dominating this area.

I. The Military Situation in South Vietnam: Enemy forces launched two attacks in northwestern III Corps during the night of 28-29 November (Paras. 1-4). Intercepted enemy communications in the Dak To area indicate that the North Vietnamese may be planning another attack (Paras. 5-8). The enemy wishes to dominate the Binh Long - Phuoc Long Province area (Paras. 9-11). The Weekly Review of South Vietnam Battle Statistics (Para. 12).

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III. Military Developments in North Vietnam: Two more of North Vietnam's MIGs moved to China on 29 November, but, despite these evacuations, Hanoi's air force continues to offer resistance to US strikes (Paras. 1-3).

IV. Other Communist Military Developments: There is nothing of significance to report.

V. Communist Political Developments: A Liberation Front spokesman has again stated that a cessation of the bombing of North Vietnam would not necessarily affect the situation in the South (Paras. 1-3).

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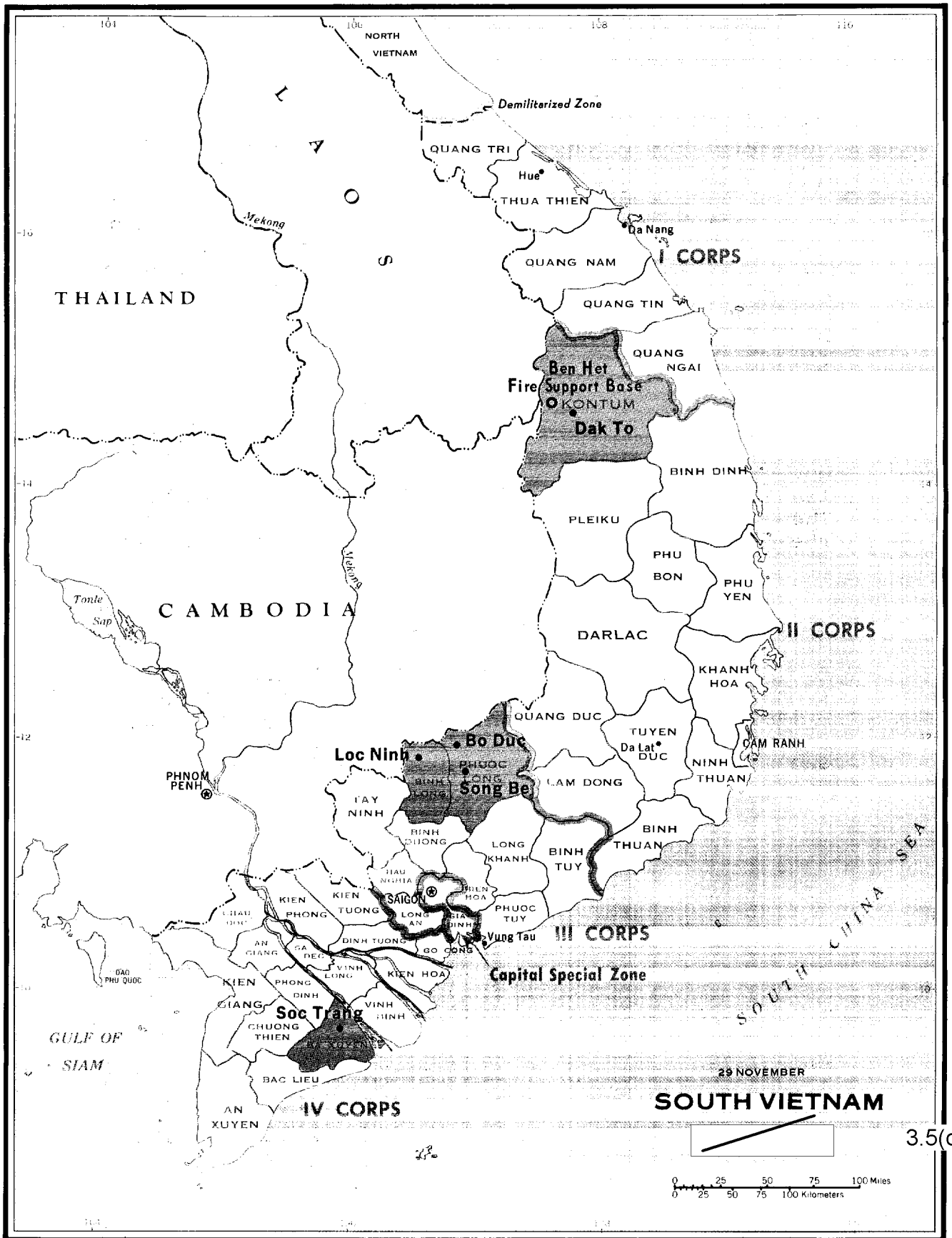
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3.5(c)I. MILITARY SITUATION IN SOUTH VIETNAM

1. A battalion-size force launched a heavy mortar barrage and ground assault on the Bo Duc district headquarters located 18 miles northeast of Loc Ninh and some 85 miles north of Saigon along the Cambodian border. The attack, during the night of 28-29 November, was timed to coincide with mortar and heavy machine-gun fire on a nearby US Special Forces Camp at Bu Dop.

2. The ground attack, possibly by elements of the Viet Cong 272nd Regiment, penetrated but did not overrun the Bo Duc district compound. During the five-hour battle, approximately 200 South Vietnamese defenders and ten US advisers were forced to withdraw. They then called in air strikes on enemy troops in the southern half of the compound and by morning had regained control of the entire compound.

3. Early reports list 15 South Vietnamese killed as against 100 enemy killed.

4. In another action, South Vietnamese Army troops claim 36 Viet Cong were killed in a battle 84 miles southwest of Saigon late on 28 November. The troops were searching for enemy forces which had shelled the Soc Trang Airfield on 27 November.

The Central Highlands

5. North Vietnamese forces may be planning a new attack in the Dak To area.

6. Although the headquarters of the North Vietnamese 1st Division and probably some of its subordinate units have pulled back across the Cambodian border, intercepted messages disclose that enemy forces are continuing to conduct reconnaissance patrols near US positions west of Dak To. Increasingly detailed enemy intelligence reports have been intercepted during the past three days. These include information on the number of troops, artillery, and supplies at various US positions.

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7. The North Vietnamese appear to be particularly interested in the US artillery fire support base at Ben Het and a nearby hilltop supply base. These positions are some 12 miles west of Dak To and about 7 miles east of the point where the Laotian, Cambodian, and South Vietnamese borders join.

8. The North Vietnamese may hope additional attacks west of Dak To will tie down and hold US battalions in the highlands for a longer time. This region, like the Demilitarized Zone area, is a battleground favorable to the Communists, because it is near sanctuaries across the border and has easy access to main supply routes. By maintaining forces active in these areas, the Communists may hope to relieve allied pressure on other North Vietnamese and Viet Cong units deployed near coastal population centers.

A "Third Front" in III Corps?

9. The North Vietnamese are trying to establish a main force enclave in the Binh Long - Phuoc Long Province area along the Cambodian border north of Saigon. The heavy attacks in the Loc Ninh - Song Be area earlier this month and the recent attack on the Bo Duc District headquarters in northern Phuoc Long tend to confirm previous indications in captured documents that the Communists hope to dominate this region.

10. Communications intelligence also suggests that the North Vietnamese have established a major "front" command group in this area, similar to the DMZ Front and the B-3 Front in the central highlands. The technical features of a new radio net, located by communications intelligence in the northern Binh Long - Cambodian border area in August, are similar to those exhibited by the B-3 Front when it first appeared in July 1965. Three of the radio stations on the net have been tentatively identified as the Viet Cong 5th and 9th divisions and the North Vietnamese 7th Division.

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11. [Redacted] the recent step-up in enemy activity in northwestern III Corps area resulted from a directive from COSVN, the over-all Communist headquarters in South Vietnam. The directive allegedly indicated that the Communists intend to dominate northern Binh Long and Phuoc Long provinces with a view toward eventual negotiations. [Redacted]

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[Redacted] the Communists hope to turn this area into a secure terminus for infiltration and supply routes from Cambodia and Laos.

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Weekly Review of South Vietnam Battle Statistics

12. The week of 19-25 November compared with the week of 12-18 November:

I. Casualties

	<u>VC/NVA</u>		<u>US</u>	
	<u>12-18 Nov</u>	<u>19-25 Nov</u>	<u>12-18 Nov</u>	<u>19-25 Nov</u>
Killed	1,287	1,826	225	212
Wounded	-----	-----	1,251	1,241
Missing/ Captured	-----	-----	-----	-----
TOTALS	1,287	1,826	1,476	1,453

	<u>GVN</u>		<u>FREE WORLD</u>	
	<u>12-18 Nov</u>	<u>19-25 Nov</u>	<u>12-18 Nov</u>	<u>19-25 Nov</u>
Killed	269	216	10	8
Wounded	632	664	20	18
Missing/ Captured	74	25	--	--
TOTALS	975	905	30	26

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II. Viet Cong Incidents

	<u>12-18 Nov</u>	<u>19-25 Nov</u>
Attacks	53	56
Battalion or Larger	2	0
Small Unit.	51	56
Harassment	332	415
Terrorism	27	39
Sabotage	45	64
Propaganda	8	17
Antiaircraft	<u>259</u>	<u>194</u>
 TOTALS	 724	 785

III. Weapons Captured

	<u>VC/NVA</u>		<u>GVN</u>	
	<u>12-18 Nov</u>	<u>19-25 Nov</u>	<u>12-18 Nov</u>	<u>19-25 Nov</u>
Individual	449	Not	233	178
Crew-Served	61	Reported	4	7
 TOTALS	 <u>510</u>		 <u>237</u>	 <u>185</u>

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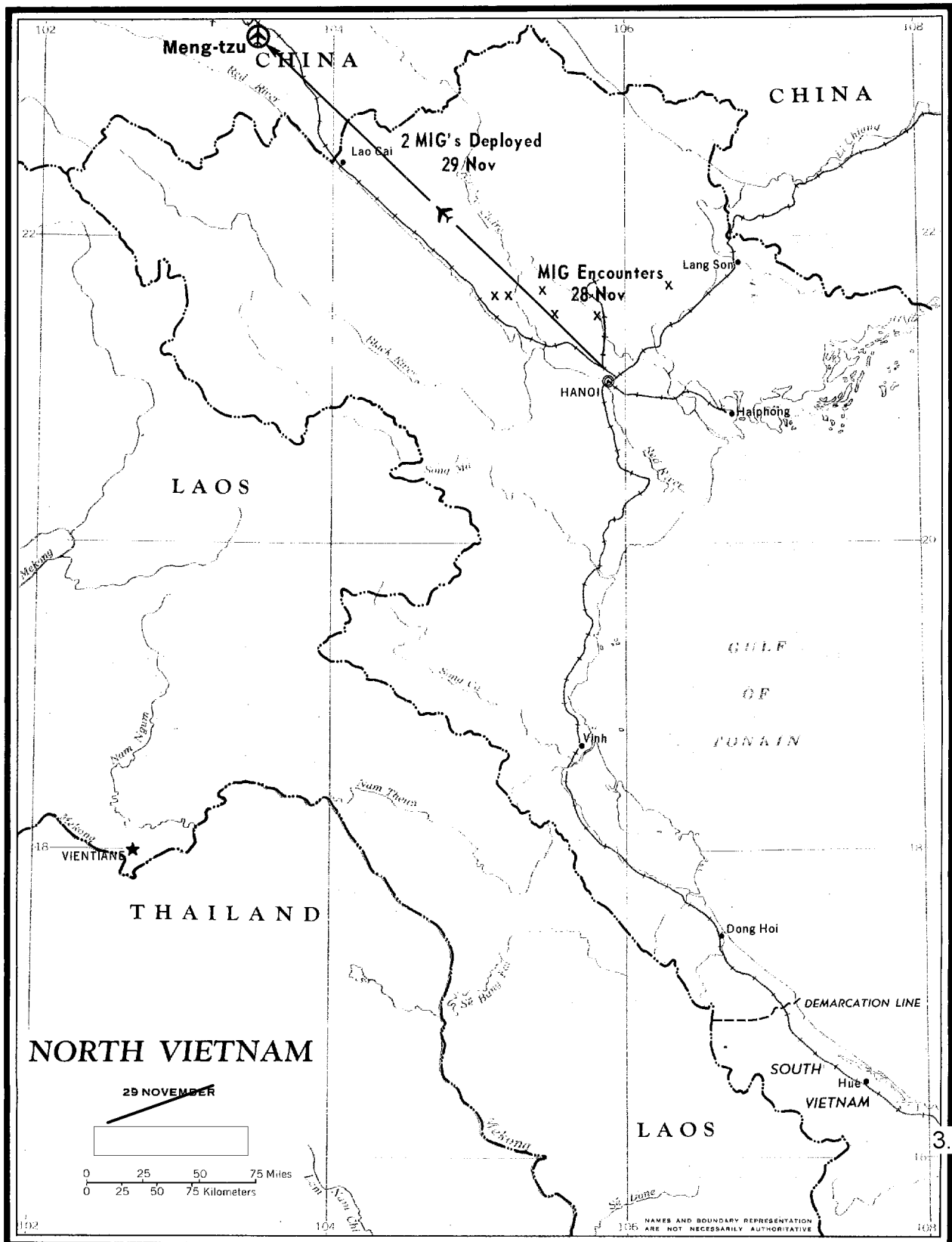
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3.5(c)III. MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS IN NORTH VIETNAM

1. Intercepted communications on 29 November showed two North Vietnamese aircraft, possibly MIG-17s, flying from the Hanoi area to Meng-tzu Airfield in China. Prior to their departure, North Vietnam was estimated to have four MIG-21s and eight MIG-15/17s remaining in the country.

2. Despite the limited number of MIGs left, they continue to offer determined resistance to US aircraft. On 28 November returning US pilots reported six encounters, three of which involved the exchange of missile fire. No aircraft are known to have been lost by either side.

3. The aggressive behavior of Hanoi's fighters in recent weeks may have been prompted in part by repeated attacks in the capital area. There is no evidence to indicate that the North Vietnamese are employing any radically new tactics or weapons. The fighter pilots still flying combat missions are probably the most skilled and experienced the North Vietnamese have. Intercepted communications indicate that, despite numerous raids on North Vietnam's airfields, Communist ground controllers are directing MIGs in air engagements with increasing assurance and sophistication.

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IV. OTHER COMMUNIST MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS

1. There is nothing of significance to report.

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3.5(c)V. COMMUNIST POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

1. Viet Cong spokesmen continue to stress that a US cessation of the bombings of North Vietnam would not necessarily affect the situation in South Vietnam.

2. Dang Trinh Thi, head of the Liberation Front delegation to the recent Soviet anniversary celebrations, took this line [redacted]

[redacted] Dang outlined the standard Communist view that a peaceful settlement of the war could best be brought about through acceptance of Hanoi's Four Points and the Front's new political program. When asked about the Front's reaction to a cessation of the bombings of the North, he replied that Hanoi would make its own decision on how to react to such a move. The Front, however, would continue to fight regardless of what North Vietnam might choose to do, even if it decides to negotiate with the US.

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3. North Vietnamese officials, in an effort to show the independence of the Front, have also indicated that any action on their part following a bombing halt, including "talks" with the US, would not automatically include the war in the South. The US would have to deal directly with the Liberation Front on such matters.

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VI. OTHER MAJOR ASPECTS

1. An intercepted message of 24 November from the North Vietnamese trade office in Moscow to Hanoi indicates that three carloads of unidentified cargo have been held up at the Sino-Mongolian border since 20 September waiting for through shipment. The Moscow office asked Hanoi to intervene with the Chinese authorities to secure the necessary transit permission.

2. Since last spring the North Vietnamese have been taking title to at least some categories of Soviet shipments at the Sino-Soviet or the Sino-Mongolian border, and the Vietnamese have been responsible for arranging the onward movement of these items to Vietnam. The reason for the present hold-up is not specified in the message.

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