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DIRECTORATE OF  
INTELLIGENCE

# WEEKLY SUMMARY

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51

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C O N T E N T S

(Information as of noon EST, 4 January 1968)

Far East

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<p>Communist military forces violated the New Year's cease-fire with a record number of incidents and two major attacks. In Saigon, President Thieu and the cabinet are wrestling with budgetary and land reform problems. Hanoi this week strengthened its commitment to talk with the US in exchange for a bombing cessation.</p>	

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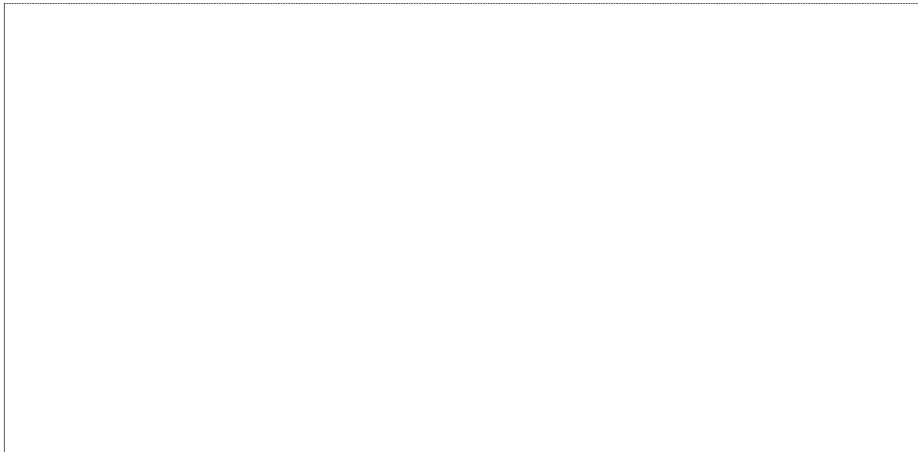
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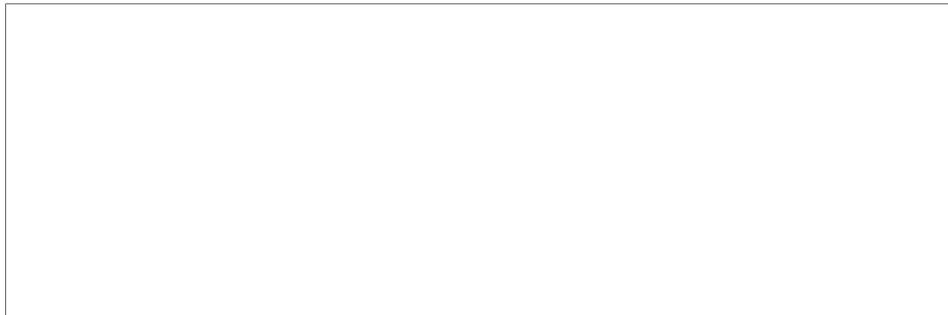
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FAR EAST

Hanoi has issued a less ambiguous statement of its position regarding talks following a cessation of bombing in an effort to stimulate greater international and domestic pressure for US concessions. Foreign Minister Trinh's statement that Hanoi "will hold talks" with the US after an unconditional halt in bombing and other "acts of war" against North Vietnam may have been timed to encourage efforts to extend the cease-fire during the lunar new year in late January. North Vietnam's terms for a negotiated settlement remain unchanged. Chinese displeasure over Hanoi's move to appear more flexible on negotiations was evident in Peking's silence on Trinh's statement.

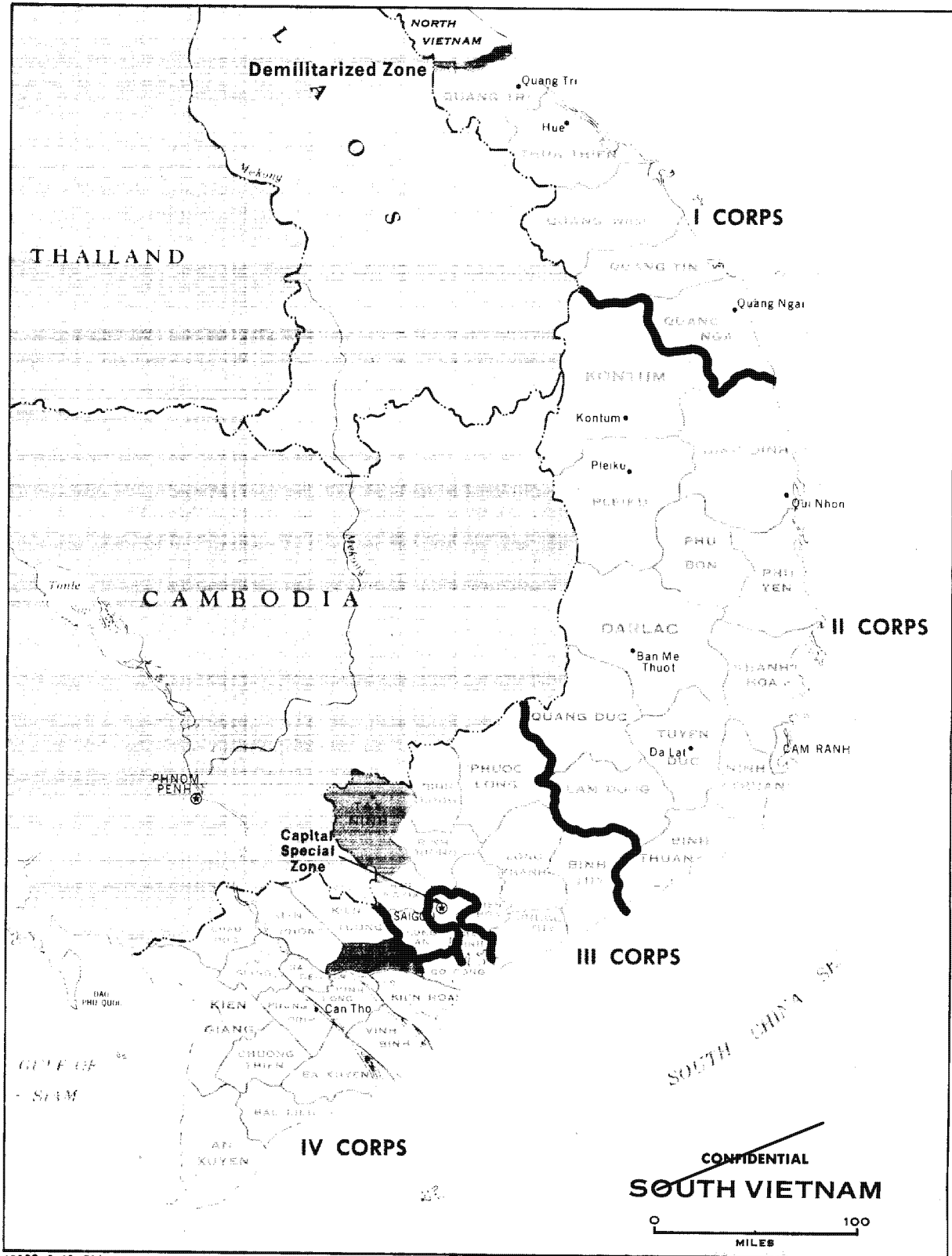


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## VIETNAM

The allied New Year's cease-fire was punctuated by a record 170 Communist-initiated incidents and two large-scale enemy attacks, resulting in heavy casualties on both sides. Most losses were suffered during a major Communist attack on a US artillery position in northern Tay Ninh Province.

The multibattalion enemy attack in Tay Ninh was launched on the night of 1-2 January, well before the end of either the Communist or allied cease-fire periods. Two regiments of the Viet Cong 9th Division--the 271st and 272nd--struck a newly constructed US artillery position just eight miles below the Cambodian border with mortar barrages followed by several unsuccessful attempts to overrun the site. More than 380 enemy troops were killed and American losses totaled 23 killed and 153 wounded.

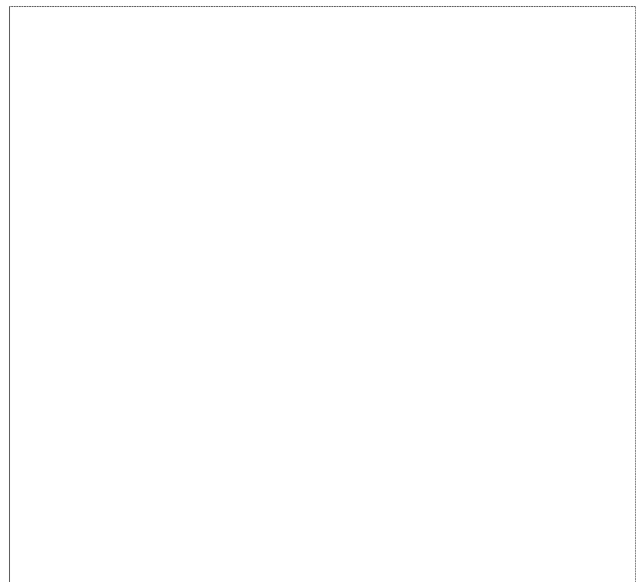
Both Communist units involved had suffered heavy losses last October, but have been sufficiently reinforced, probably with North Vietnamese infiltrators, to mount an attack of this scope. It is possible that the attack was also designed to divert allied attention from a current movement of men and supplies along nearby infiltration routes.

The second major enemy violation of the cease-fire occurred in southern Dinh Tuong Province in the Mekong Delta where elements of two Viet Cong battalions--

identified as the 261st and 263rd--shelled a South Vietnamese base camp. The intense enemy mortar and rocket bombardment was followed by ground assaults on the garrison. Before they were routed, the attackers lost 60 killed, reportedly including a battalion commander, while friendly losses in the action came to 19 killed and 48 wounded.

As in the Christmas cease-fire period a week earlier, Communist forces in both North and South Vietnam were observed taking advantage of the New Year's stand-down. Heavy truck traffic was noted above the Demilitarized Zone.

Since the end of the holiday respite and the resumption of major allied search-and-destroy operations in Communist-dominated territory, contact with the enemy has been sporadic.

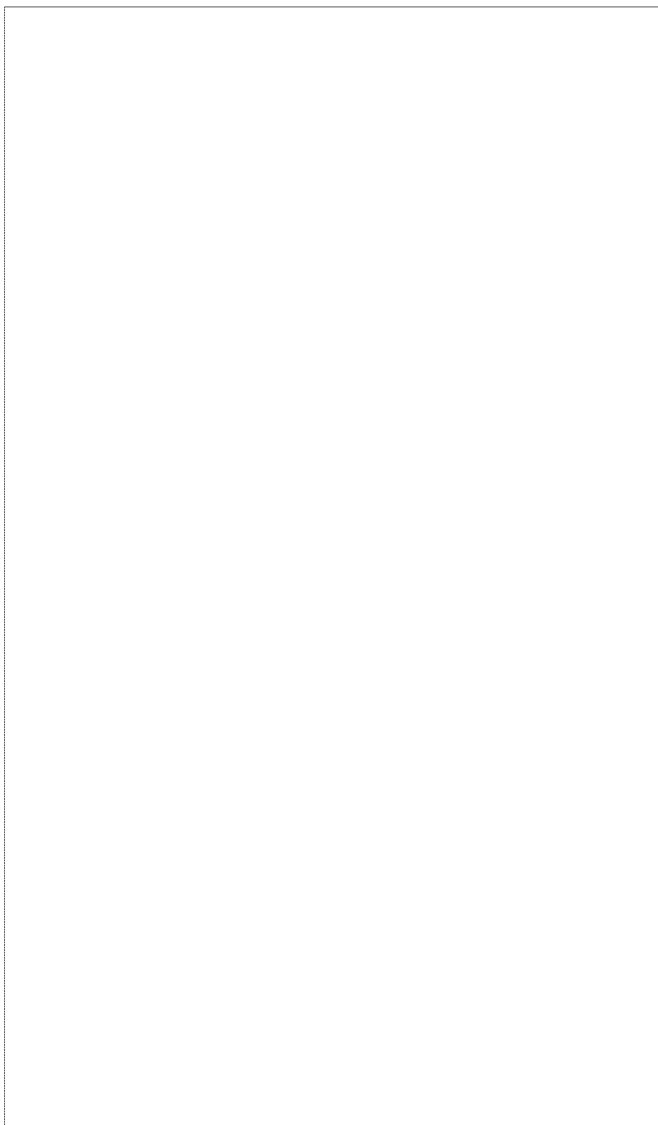


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bombing of North Vietnam, but shows no sign of modifying its hard-line terms for a negotiated settlement.

In a speech at a diplomats' reception last week, Foreign Minister Nguyen Duy Trinh declared that his government "will" hold talks with Washington "about questions concerned" if the US unconditionally terminates the bombing and all other "acts of war" against North Vietnam. Hanoi's previous position had been based on Trinh's statement of 28 January 1967 to the effect that there "could" be talks if the US took these actions.

This less ambiguous North Vietnamese position probably is designed to increase domestic and international pressure on the US for a bombing halt and an extension of the cease-fire during lunar new year later this month. An end to the attacks has long been a primary objective of the Hanoi regime, and the original offer a year ago was designed to achieve this without making any significant substantive concessions on a settlement of the war.

Hanoi on a Cessation  
Of Bombing

Hanoi has publicly committed itself to begin talks with the US in return for an end to the

The foreign minister avoided spelling out the timing or content of any talks, but indicated that the basis for solving the Vietnam problem remained Hanoi's four points and the political program of the Liberation Front.



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