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ACTION EA 15

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CINCPAC

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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

SUBJ: STRIKES AND STRIKE THREATS

REF: SAIGON 14161

1. PANAM AND AIR AMERICA REMAIN ON STRIKE. LABOR MINISTRY CONCILIATOR REPORTS THAT NEGOTIATIONS IN BOTH INSTANCES HAVE BEEN ACERBATED BY MANAGEMENT INSISTENCE ON FIRING STRIKE LEADERS. NEXT NEGOTIATION ON PANAM STRIKE WILL NOT BE HELD TILL DEC. 29, AND IN MEANTIME PANAM IS REPLACING STRIKERS NOT ONLY WITH MANAGEMENT PERSONNEL BUT ALSO (OVER VIGOROUS UNION PROTESTS) WITH AMERICAN MILITARY PERSONNEL.

2. AS FOR THREATENED ELECTRICITY STRIKE, CONCILIATION SESSION

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PAGE 2 RUMJIR 14190 ~~C O N F I D E N T I A L~~
IS SCHEDULED AT LABOR MINISTRY ON MORNING OF DEC. 26. DECISION ON WHETHER TO WALK OUT WILL NOT BE MADE BEFORE THEN, CVT LEADERS SAY. CEE MANAGEMENT SOURCES SAY STRIKE IS A DISTINCT POSSIBILITY, SINCE CEE IMPLEMENTATION OF A COMMITMENT FOR A 13TH MONTH BONUS DEPENDS ON OUTCOME OF CEE NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE GVN OVER SALE OF THE FRENCH COMPANY'S PROPERTY, WHICH ARE NOT YET CONCLUDED.

3. CVT UNION AT THREE BGI BEER AND SOFT DRINK PLANTS IN SAIGON WENT ON STRIKE DEC. 23 IN SUPPORT OF DEMANDS FOR A WAGE INCREASE.

4. LABOR MINISTER PHO BA LONG EXPLAINS FLURRY OF STRIKE ACTIVITY AS CAUSED BY INTERNAL UNION POLITICS, SAIGON CVT COUNCIL SECRETARY VO VAN TAI, LONG BELIEVES, WANTS TO STRENGTHEN HIS OWN POSITION DURING THE ABSENCE IN EUROPE OF CVT PRESIDENT TRAN QUOC BUU, WITH WHOM TAI HAS BEEN AT ODDS.

5. CVT SOURCES NOT PARTICULARLY FRIENDLY WITH TAI POOH-POOH THIS EXPLANATION, AND SAY THAT THE STRIKES AND STRIKE THREATS ARE BASED ON PERFECTLY NORMAL TRADE UNION ISSUES. THE CEE DISPUTE, FOR EXAMPLE, STEMS FROM THE SEEMING INABILITY TO IMPLEMENT A FRINGE BENEFIT ALREADY PROMISED. THE PANAM STRIKE IS BASICALLY A STRIKE FOR UNION RECOGNITION -- THE WAGE DEMAND

PAGE 3 RUMJIR 14190 ~~C O N F I D E N T I A L~~
IS SAID TO BE PERIPHERAL. THE AIR AMERICA LABOR CONFLICT, STEMS IN LARGE PART FROM MANAGEMENT'S EFFORT TO LIVE UNDER THE CEILINGS OF THE U.S. FORCES' WAGE SCHEDULE. THE BGI STRIKE, FURTHER, CENTERS ON ECONOMIC ISSUES -- A SUBSTANTIAL WAGE INCREASE, AS WELL AS A 13TH MONTH BONUS.

6. COMMENT: WHETHER CREATED BY DESIGN OR NOT, THE CONVERGENCE OF LABOR DISPUTES CAN BE TROUBLESOME. WHATEVER HIS SECRET MOTIVATIONS, TAI HAS SHOWN EVERY INDICATION IN HIS CONVERSATIONS WITH EMBASSY LABOR OFFICERS OF WANTING TO SETTLE THE DISPUTES AS SOON AS POSSIBLE -- HE HAS EXPRESSED

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SPECIAL CONCERN THAT THE NEXT CONCILIATION SESSION WITH PANAM MANAGEMENT WILL NOT BE UNTIL DEC. 29. WE SHARE THIS CONCERN. WE WILL TALK WITH LABOR MINISTER, AND IF HE AGREES, WE WILL INFORMALLY ENCOURAGE SOME KIND OF EARLIER MEETING BETWEEN PANAM AND KEY UNION LEADERS.

7. PANAM MANAGER EXPLAINS THAT GIS ARE USED ONLY FOR MILITARY AND R&R FLIGHTS, AND THAT THIS ARRANGEMENT HAS BEEN APPROVED BY MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND TRANSPORT. IF TRUE, SUCH USE COULD BE JUSTIFIED FOR MILITARY FLIGHTS AS IN CASE OF PORT STRIKE IN DECEMBER 1966. IN ANY EVENT WE WILL LOOK

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FURTHER INTO USE OF MILITARY PERSONNEL AND POSSIBLE RAMIFICATIONS.

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