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17 October 1966

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN

CURRENT INTELLIGENCE
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STATE review(s) completed.

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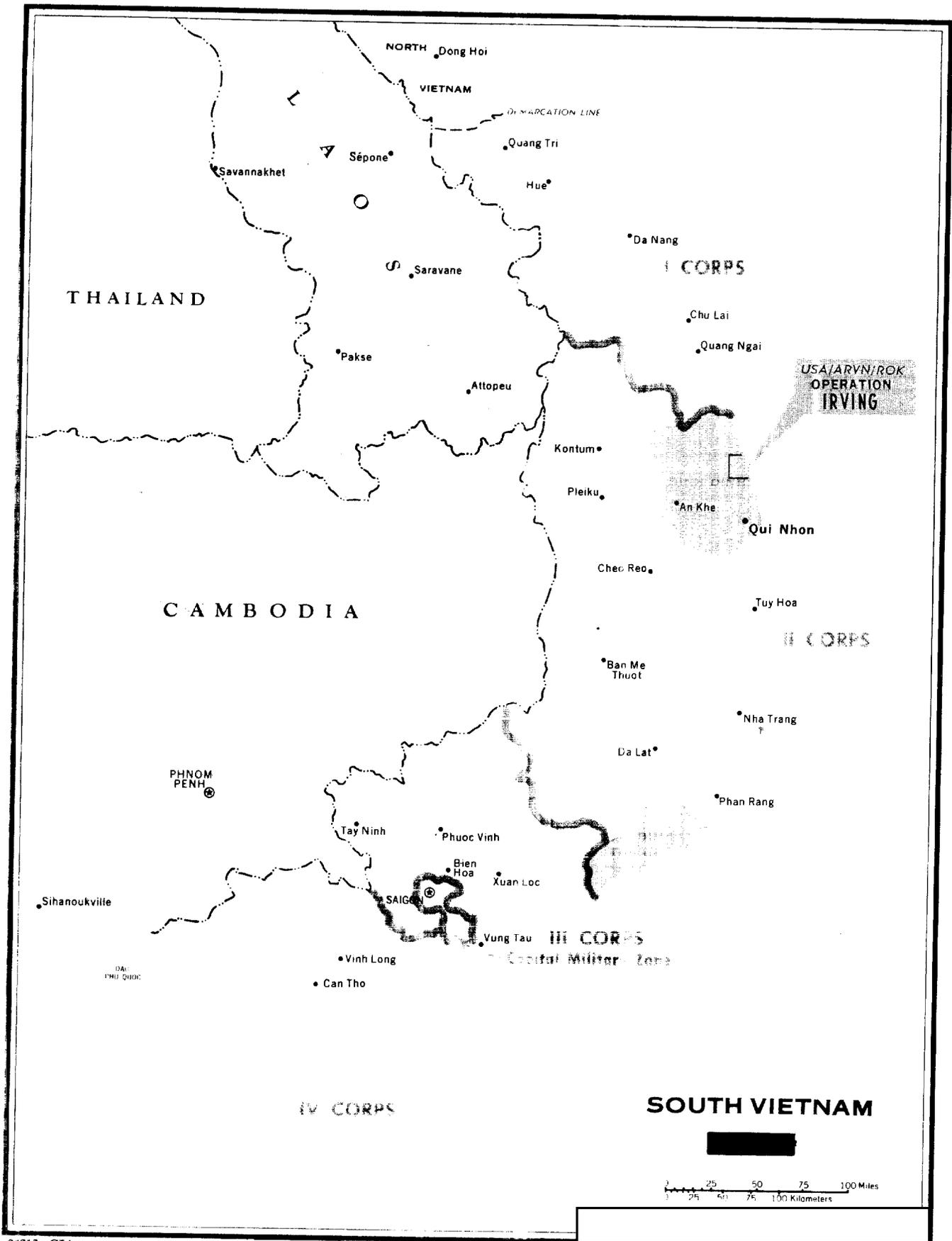
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*Vietnam: (Information as of 4:30 AM EDT)

Political Developments in South Vietnam: The Buddhist Institute has called for a National Buddhist Congress to be convoked on 21 October.

The Congress should bring together about 100 Buddhist leaders from all parts of the country. Reportedly at the suggestion of the militant leader Thich Tri Quang, the Institute Council has also decided to dissolve itself sometime prior to the convocation of the Congress. The more moderate chairman of the Institute, Thich Tam Chau, agreed to the dissolution of the council partially as an act of good faith, as well as a way to undercut any challenge to the validity of the Congress which may be raised by militant elements led by Tri Quang.

The Congress may repair some of the damage to Buddhist unity caused by the militant Buddhists' campaign against the Ky government this past spring.

The Military Situation in South Vietnam: US combat forces participated in 10 of the 31 allied battalion-sized or larger search-and-destroy operations conducted in South Vietnam during the weekend.

The most significant enemy contact occurred on 15 October when US 1st Air Cavalry Division elements in Operation IRVING engaged a Communist force of undetermined strength about 40 miles northwest of Qui Nhon, the capital of Binh Dinh Province. Thirty enemy troops were killed in the five-hour battle, in contrast to US casualties of four killed and 13 wounded.

On the Communist side, an estimated Viet Cong company inflicted heavy losses on elements of the 30th

ARVN Ranger Battalion conducting a local security operation in the Capital Special Zone, 10 miles southwest of Saigon, during 14-15 October. Forty-two government soldiers were killed (1 US), 37 wounded (4 US), 30 missing, and 50 weapons captured; enemy casualties are unknown.

In addition, on 15 October, an estimated reinforced Viet Cong battalion launched a major attack against a government district headquarters in Binh Thuan Province, about 100 miles east-northeast of Saigon, killing 30 Vietnamese paramilitary defenders and wounding 22 others. Enemy losses totaled 17 killed and four captured. [REDACTED]

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USSR - Eastern Europe: The Soviet Union seems determined to dramatize further Communist China's isolation within the socialist camp by convoking a meeting of East European party leaders in Moscow.

Western press sources in Moscow have reported that party leaders from all East European countries except Albania, Yugoslavia, and possibly Rumania, will arrive there on 17 October. According to the press, the party chiefs are scheduled to hold discussions on China, visit the Soviet scientific research town of Novosibirsk, and journey to the space launch center of Baikonur in Central Asia.

At the proposed meeting the Soviets will probably emphasize a theme contained in recent speeches by Premier Kosygin and party secretary Brezhnev, and echoed by Polish party leader Gomulka. The theme is that a united front in Europe has kept potential aggressors at bay while the splitting activity of the Chinese in the East is responsible for imperialism intervening with relative impunity in Vietnam.

The assembled leaders will probably issue a joint statement to the effect that the Chinese are the chief obstacle to joint, effective aid to the Vietnamese. If Rumanian party boss Ceaucescu does participate in the talks, he is not likely to support a statement condemning Peking, in line with Rumania's neutral posture on the Sino-Soviet dispute.

The proposed meeting is in line with Moscow's policy throughout the summer and fall of encouraging interparty contacts at the highest levels. Moscow now apparently feels that the Chinese have so isolated themselves that it can rally the East European leaders to place on Peking the onus of the failure of joint effort to assist North Vietnam. [REDACTED]

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NATO: The tripartite reappraisal of Alliance strategy, forces, and costs scheduled to begin in Bonn on 20 October is shaping up as a major test of Atlantic unity.

Ambassador McGhee anticipates the Germans will stick to their long-standing position that Soviet capabilities rather than intentions are the critical factors, and that the Allies must continue, therefore, to provide sufficient forces for a credible forward strategy.

Although the Germans would now accept some withdrawal of support forces provided there was no reduction in combat capability, McGhee believes Bonn would still condition any general thin-out of forces in Central Europe on progress toward German reunification. The foreign exchange costs of maintaining US and UK forces in Germany should in the future be considered a multi-lateral problem.

By contrast with this hold-the-line position of the Germans, British officials are implying that they look to the trilateral talks to provide a theoretical justification for a withdrawal of their forces to the extent that their foreign exchange costs are not covered. The offer the Germans made on offsets last week was far below the British demand.

25X1 [redacted] caution that the tripartite talks are occurring at a time when the political situation in Bonn is fragile, the Alliance in disarray, and European suspicion of the extent of the US commitment high. Foreign Minister Schroeder told McGhee late last week he feared

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that if the US failed to give Bonn some "relief" on the offset question, there would be a wave of ill feeling against the US which would endanger its whole position in Europe.

The European leader Jean Monnet, who was in Bonn last week, has also told McGhee he is alarmed at the "eclipse" in German confidence in the US. He hoped the trilateral talks might help restore the situation, but also urged the need for some new progress toward European unity--particularly some movement on the question of the UK's admission to the Common Market.

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UK - Rhodesia: British officials are pessimistic about the chances of a negotiated settlement with Rhodesia and are studying moves in the United Nations for selective mandatory economic sanctions.

According to Commonwealth Office officials, London's "final offer" before taking the issue to the United Nations includes a new demand for a reserved right to put British troops in Rhodesia before and after independence. If the offer is rejected, London may make a final public appeal directly to the Rhodesian people before going to the UN.

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NOTES

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Laos: General Kouprasith, the most able member of the rightist General Staff, although anxious to unite the neutralists with the Lao armed forces, wants neutralist officers to postpone their plan to unseat their commander, General Kong Le, until Premier Souvanna returns on 1 November. Souvanna, who is presently in the US, told General Staff officers before leaving Laos that despite Kong Le's weaknesses, he should continue as the neutralist commander.

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Brazil: A military inquiry commission investigating Communism has recommended more than 900 persons for prosecution under Brazil's security laws. Among those cited in the commission's report are former presidents Goulart and Kubitschek and long-time Communist Party leader Luiz Carlos Prestes. The report, a culmination of two years of investigation that began after the 1964 revolution, names many individuals who are in exile and who have already lost their political rights. In the past, President Castello Branco has taken action against only a few of those charged by investigation teams, but this time he may use the commission's recommendations as a basis for barring additional opposition candidates from the 15 November congressional elections.

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