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• PRIORITY

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C-O-N-F-I-D-E-N-T-I-A-L 152344Z CITE [REDACTED] 1.5(e)
DIST 15 MAY 1966 3.4(b)(1)

COUNTRY SOUTH VIETNAM
DOI 15 MAY 1966
SUBJECT SITUATION REPORT AS OF 2000 HOURS LOCAL TIME

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Case # NLJ 93-68
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ACQ VIETNAM, SAIGON (15 MAY 1966) FIELD NO.
SOURCE THIS IS A SOUTH VIETNAM SITUATION REPORT PREPARED AS
OF 2000 HOURS LOCAL TIME ON 15 MAY [REDACTED] 1.5(e)
[REDACTED] 3.4(b)(1)

1. ON THE EVENING OF 15 MAY 1966 DANANG CITY APPEARED TO
BE HELD BY GOVERNMENT OF VIETNAM (GVN) FORCES. THE CURFEW, WHICH
IS FROM 2000 HOURS TO 0500, WAS BEING EFFECTIVELY ENFORCED IN DANANG
BY MARINES, AND THE CITY WAS QUIET. THE GVN MOVE TO BRING DANANG
BACK UNDER ITS AUTHORITY WAS EXECUTED WITH DISPATCH AND, ON THE WHOLE,
EFFICIENTLY. THERE IS LITTLE DOUBT THAT THE STRUGGLE FORCES WERE TAKEN
BY SURPRISE, AND ON THE EVENING OF 14 MAY THE ADVANTAGE LAY WITH THE GVN,
WHEREAS IN THE MORNING IT LAY WITH THE STRUGGLERS. AFTER INITIAL GAINS
IN ESTABLISHING THEMSELVES IN KEY TARGETS, GVN MARINES PULLED BACK AND
CONSOLIDATED POSITIONS.

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2. AT 1800 HOURS OPERATIONS BEGAN IN DANANG WHICH SEEMED DESIGNED TO CAPTURE TINH HOI PAGODA, THE NEW STRUGGLE HEADQUARTERS AND REPORTEDLY THE PRESENT LOCATION OF DANANG MAYOR NGUYEN VAN MAN AND DANANG POLICE CHIEF LUU VAN NGO. OTHER ACTIVITIES DURING THE DAY SEEMED DESIGNED TO INTIMIDATE DIEHARD STRUGGLERS AND IMPRESS THOSE WHO HAD BEEN FORCED INTO THE STRUGGLE MOVEMENT WITH THE POWER OF THE GVN. TROOPS ROVED THE CITY, FLUSHING OUT STRUGGLE ADHERENTS BUT NEVER PUSHING THEIR FIREPOWER ADVANTAGE TO THE MAXIMUM. PLANES FLEW OVER THE CITY CONTINUOUSLY IN A CONSIDERABLE SHOW OF STRENGTH.

3. PRIME MINISTER NGUYEN CAO KY AND DIRECTOR GENERAL OF NATIONAL POLICE LOAN WERE AT THE DANANG AIR BASE DIRECTING THE MOVES OF GOVERNMENT FORCES AND APPARENTLY ATTEMPTING TO HANDLE THE SITUATION SO THAT IT WILL RESULT IN A MINIMUM OF DEATHS AND OTHER INCIDENTS THAT COULD CAUSE ADVERSE REACTION FROM THE PEOPLE, WHILE STILL FIRMLY REASSERTING THE AUTHORITY OF THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT.

4. THE PEOPLE OF DANANG GENERALLY DO NOT SEEM GREATLY DISTURBED BY THE PRESENCE OF THE MARINES. THERE APPEARS TO BE NO OVERT HOSTILITY TOWARD AMERICANS. THE CIVILIAN POPULACE IS GOING ABOUT ITS BUSINESS, EXCEPT THAT YOUNG PEOPLE ARE CLUSTERED AROUND VARIOUS PAGODAS, APPARENTLY AS MUCH OUT OF CURIOSITY AS ANYTHING ELSE. GVN TROOP MORALE APPEARS HIGH.

5. THERE HAS BEEN A REPORT THAT 1000 "SUICIDE YOUTH" ARE IN DANANG ARMED WITH KNIVES AND GRENADES. AT 1900 THE POWER WENT OFF IN THE SECTION OF THE CITY WHERE MOST OF THE ACTIVITY TOOK PLACE DURING THE DAY--THE AREA

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OF THE RADIO STATIONS AND THE BUDDHIST SCHOOL. STRUGGLERS WILL PROBABLY TRY TO REGROUP AND, IF NOTHING ELSE, HARASS GVN TROOPS. SHOULD THE STRUGGLERS ACCEPT DEFEAT IN DANANG, THEY WILL PROBABLY CARRY ON IN HUE.

6. ALTHOUGH THE SITUATION IN HUE SEEMS QUIET FOR THE MOMENT, THE PRESENCE OF A MILITARY POWER BASE AMONG UNITS OF THE FIRST DIVISION AND THE LEADERSHIP QUALITIES OF THICH TRI QUANG GIVE THE STRUGGLE FORMIDABLE POTENTIAL FOR CONTINUING.

7. IN HOI AN, COLONEL DAM QUANG YEU IS DEEPLY COMMITTED TO THE STRUGGLE AND CONSTITUTES A THREAT TO CENTRAL AUTHORITY SECOND ONLY TO THOSE IN HUE. AS OF 1800 ON 14 MAY HE WAS ATTEMPTING TO COERCE BUI QUANG SAN, S-2 OF RCC IN QUANG NAM, TO SIGN A STATEMENT TO BE USED IN LOUDSPEAKER BROADCASTS IN HOI AN SAYING SAN IS AGAINST THE GVN. YEU ALSO CONTINUES TO USE THE THEME THAT GENERAL WALT AND AMBASSADOR PORTER ARE FOR THE STRUGGLERS. HOWEVER, YEU HAS HIS HANDS FULL, AND CURRENT REPORTING INDICATES THAT ONE COMPANY OF THE 39TH RANGER BATTALION WHICH HOLDS HOI AN AIRPORT IS PRO-GVN. AT LEAST THREE OF THE TOTAL OF FIFTEEN M113 ARMORED PERSONNEL CARRIERS WOULD COOPERATE WITH GOVERNMENT FORCES.

8. AT THE MOMENT, THE ELEMENT OF SURPRISE SEEMS TO HAVE REDUCED THE STRUGGLERS' POTENTIAL TO REACT QUICKLY. HOWEVER, MUCH REMAINS TO BE DONE BEFORE THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT CAN FEEL SAFE IN DANANG OR I CORPS,

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AND THE MANNER IN WHICH IT USES THE TIME OBTAINED BY SURPRISE
WILL DETERMINE THE SUCCESS OR FAILURE OF THIS MOVE TO REASSERT
GOVERNMENT CONTROL BY FORCE OF ARMS.

9. FIELD DISSEM. STATE USMACV USAID JUSPAO NAVFORV
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