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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

*Memorandum*



THE SITUATION IN VIETNAM

Information as of 1600  
22 July 1965

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### HIGHLIGHTS

Peiping warned again today in an editorial of its concern over the US military build-up in South Vietnam. The editorial reiterated that the DRV now has the "right" to come to the aid of the Viet Cong, but did not suggest that direct Chinese Communist involvement is necessary at present. In the meantime, the Viet Cong kept up the military pressure in South Vietnam. US forces near Bien Hoa Air Base were shelled again--for the fourth consecutive night. Heavy fighting was also reported between a small government patrol and the Communists some 80 miles northeast of Saigon.

#### I. The Military Situation in South Vietnam:

For the fourth consecutive night, elements of the 2nd Brigade, 1st US Infantry Division, came under Viet Cong mortar and small-arms harassing fire at Bien Hoa Air Base (Para. 1). No damage assessment is yet available from yesterday's saturation bombing raid by 31 Guam-based B-52s against a Viet Cong stronghold in Binh Duong Province (Para. 2). No further contact has been reported between Viet Cong forces and defending government paramilitary troops at the Vietnamese Special Forces camp of Bu Dop in Phuoc Long Province (Para. 3). Heavy fighting was reported today between a small government patrol and an unknown number of Viet Cong 80 miles northeast of Saigon, near the Cambodian border (Para. 4). A large-scale ARVN search-and-destroy operation conducted yesterday in Quang Tin Province has yielded favorable results (Para. 5). National Highway 20 between Saigon and Dalat has reportedly been opened to civilian and military traffic for the first time in more than six weeks; meanwhile, Communist saboteurs continue to interdict Route 15, from Bien Hoa to Vung Tau (Para. 6).

#### II. Political Developments in South Vietnam:

Buddhist monk Tri Quang is reported to be trying once again to organize a Buddhist political party that

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would, at least initially, be under the authority of monks themselves (Paras. 1-2). US advisers in 27 of the 44 provinces in South Vietnam reported pacification and rural reconstruction proceeding at an unsatisfactory pace in June, according to the monthly provincial developments survey issued by the US Embassy in Saigon (Paras. 3-4).

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V. Communist Political Developments: Another People's Daily article today was devoted to underscoring Chinese Communist concern over the US military build-up in Vietnam. The article again asserted that this build-up gives the DRV the "right" to support the Viet Cong. It did not suggest, however, that Chinese Communist involvement was required at this time (Para. 1). DRV Minister of Defense Giap has published a long analysis of the situation in Vietnam. He concludes that "the defeat of the US air attacks on the DRV is of "paramount" importance, but that the "last and decisive factor" will be the outcome of the fighting in South Vietnam (Paras. 2-4).

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## I. THE MILITARY SITUATION IN SOUTH VIETNAM

1. For the fourth consecutive night, elements of the 2nd Brigade, 1st US Infantry Division, came under Viet Cong mortar and small-arms harassing fire at Bien Hoa Air Base. The shelling, which lasted for approximately one hour, wounded two Americans. US artillery batteries returned the fire but results were not determined.

2. No damage assessment is yet available from yesterday's saturation bombing raid by 31 Guam-based USAF B-52s against a Viet Cong stronghold in Binh Duong Province, 30 miles north-northwest of Saigon. More than 500 tons of 750-lb. general purpose bombs were expended on the target area, and all aircraft were recovered safely at Guam.

3. No further contact has been reported between Viet Cong forces and defending government paramilitary troops at the Vietnamese Special Forces camp of Bu Dop in Phuoc Long Province. Government losses currently stand at 54 killed (two US), 36 wounded (four US), and 60 missing. A body count showed that 150 Viet Cong had been killed, two were captured, and 33 weapons seized. It has been revealed that among the 33 weapons were six Chicom-manufactured copies of the Soviet 7.62-mm. SKS assault rifle. One of the rifles was apparently found in its original cosmoline wrapper and another had not yet been fired.

4. Heavy fighting was reported early today 80 miles northeast of Saigon near the Cambodian border, where a small patrol of Vietnamese rangers and irregulars, accompanied by US advisers, engaged a Viet Cong force of undetermined strength. Six US Army helicopters and two USAF jet fighters provided close air support for government units in the three-hour battle, which reportedly resulted in "light" friendly casualties and unknown enemy casualties.

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5. Twenty-six Viet Cong were killed and 15 captured yesterday as the result of a search-and-destroy operation conducted by battalion-strength ARVN elements in Quang Tin Province, 350 miles northeast of Saigon. Government casualties were described as "light."

6. According to unconfirmed press reports, National Highway 20 leading from Saigon to the mountain town of Dalat, 175 miles northeast of Saigon, was opened to civilian and military traffic today for the first time in more than six weeks. Viet Cong interdiction of Route 20 had virtually cut off Saigon's supply of fresh vegetables and had forced rice rationing in Dalat. Meanwhile, Highway 15, from Bien Hoa to the port of Vung Tau, was cut again yesterday by the destruction of another bridge by Communist saboteurs.

7. The Commander, US Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (COMUSMACV) has announced the redesignation of the US Army Support Command, Vietnam. Renamed US Army, Vietnam, the new command will be responsible for all army-component command functions in Vietnam. All US Army units in Vietnam will be assigned to the new command. The command will be subordinate to the Commander in Chief, US Army Pacific (CINCUSARPAC) in Hawaii for component matters and to COMUSMACV for operational command.

8. General William C. Westmoreland, COMUSMACV, will command the newly designated organization in addition to his present command. The commander of the former support command, Brigadier General John Norton, has been named deputy commander.

9. MACV's military report for 20 July shows 58 Viet Cong - initiated incidents, 15 of them occurring during the 24-hour reporting period. Sixty- and 81-mm. mortar fire was placed on the capital of Go Cong Province, on Dong Xoai district town in Phuoc Long Province, on the beleaguered CIDG paramilitary camp at Duc Co in Pleiku Province, and on New Life Hamlets, outposts, and watch-towers in Thua Thien, Kien Phong, and Phong Dinh

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provinces. In Bien Hoa Province, Communist guerrillas infiltrated and harassed a New Life Hamlet, resulting in friendly losses of 15 wounded, three missing, and five weapons captured. Elsewhere, the prevailing theme of enemy activity continued to focus on small-scale terrorism, harassing fire actions, mine detonations, and sabotage against major land lines of communication.

10. Combat air operations were flown by American and Vietnamese aircraft against Viet Cong targets throughout the four corps tactical zones of South Vietnam on 20 July, with pilots reporting an estimated total of 128 guerrillas killed, 67 structures destroyed and 37 damaged, and six sampans destroyed.

11. On 21 July, a USAF F-104 fighter on an in-country strike in South Vietnam crashed while making an emergency landing at Chu Lai Air Base. The aircraft stalled just prior to touchdown and exploded, killing the pilot.

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## II. POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN SOUTH VIETNAM

1. [redacted] Buddhist monk Thich Tri Quang [redacted] met over the week end with about 20 Buddhist laymen to begin organizing a Buddhist political party. Quang reportedly indicated that, for the present, the party's existence would be kept secret, and that members would not directly seek office. They would, instead, seek to influence sympathizers in office or eligible for office. Control of the party would be vested temporarily in the monks themselves, but ultimately would be transferred to laymen.

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2. [redacted] Tri Quang may be laying the groundwork for more direct political activity. He has long toyed with the idea of a lay Buddhist political party, but has not previously been willing to have the clergy, or sangha, participate even provisionally as acknowledged party leaders. That such a party could become Quang's own vehicle is suggested by [redacted] other Buddhist monks, including institute chairman Tam Chau, approved the idea. Neither they nor their lay political followers, however, took part in the organizational meeting.

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3. The US Embassy in Saigon has forwarded its report for June on provincial developments in South Vietnam. This report is a synthesis and analysis of replies submitted by a number of MACV and USOM advisers in the field to eight specific embassy questions. These questions are asked each month to gain some insight into the war's effect on the populace and the economy in South Vietnam. The questions involve changes in the people's attitude toward the government, the willingness of the populace to continue the war, the degree of freedom of movement over main routes of communication in each province, the impact of Viet Cong activities on movements of goods and produce, and the progress of rural reconstruction and pacification.

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4. Twenty-seven of the 44 provinces reported pacification and rural reconstruction progressing unsatisfactorily. Several of the provinces indicated that the intensification of Viet Cong activity had resulted in a shrinkage of the area in which such activities could be carried on. Only six provinces reported that movement was possible over the main roads at night; 22 said movement was generally possible during the day. A deterioration in morale was reported from six provinces--a sharp contrast to April when no deterioration was reported by any province. Only seven provinces reported an improvement in morale, compared to 13 in May.

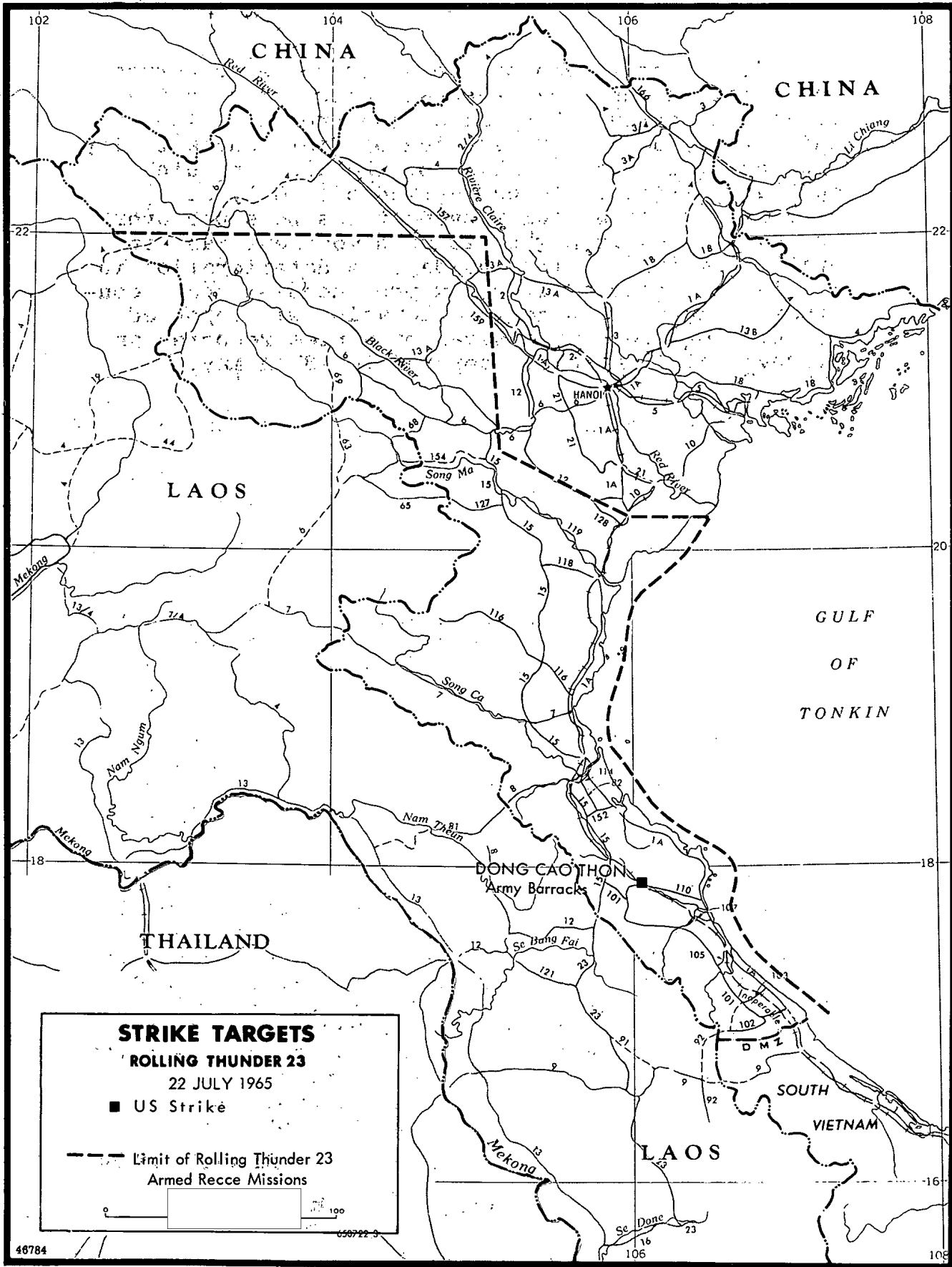
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# NORTH VIETNAM

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III. MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS IN NORTH VIETNAM

1. Tropical storm Gilda forced cancellation of most USN carrier-borne operations on 22 July. One armed reconnaissance mission was launched from the Independence but results have not been received. Eight USAF aircraft restructed the Dong Cao Thon barracks, damaging 20 buildings. USAF aircraft also conducted armed reconnaissance missions, but no results have been received.

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## V. COMMUNIST POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

1. Peiping has again indicated its concern over the US military build-up in Vietnam and asserted that this gives Hanoi the right to support the Viet Cong. Responding to President Johnson's press conference of 13 July, the People's Daily "Observer" declared on 22 July that the US was accelerating its preparations to escalate the war in Vietnam into a Korean-type war. Observer repeated Peiping's pledge to support the Vietnamese people in all circumstances and "at whatever sacrifice" until the US is driven out of Vietnam. However, the article avoided any suggestion that direct Chinese involvement in Vietnam is required at this time and reiterated confidence in ultimate Vietnamese victory over the US.

2. Vo Nguyen Giap, North Vietnamese defense minister and commander in chief of the armed forces, in an analysis of the Vietnam war contained in the July issue of the party's theoretical journal, declared that the US attempts to "curb the determination" of the Vietnamese Communists to continue the war by aerial attacks on the north is but "a crazy illusion." According to Giap's analysis, in the present situation "the defeat of US air attacks on North Vietnam is of paramount importance," but "the last and decisive factor" in the outcome of the war will be the struggle in South Vietnam.

3. Regarding the commitment of US combat troops to the battle in the south, Giap asserted that US troops "are even worse than puppet troops" because they are not used to the terrain and climate and have less experience in coping with guerrilla warfare. He warned that the US may "step by step turn the special war into a local war in South Vietnam" or even expand the war to North Vietnam.

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4. Giap warned that the North Vietnamese "need to make every preparation" in case the US does attack North Vietnam with ground forces, and he implied that the "whole Socialist camp" would come to Hanoi's aid if this actually occurred. His present emphasis on the necessity of DRV preparations for a much larger role in the war contrasts sharply with his analysis of the situation published last year in July. At that time, Giap emphasized the need for the "liberation forces" in the South to rely on their own people and on "subjective internal conditions" to win victory.

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