

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

*Memorandum*



THE SITUATION IN VIETNAM

Information as of 1600  
13 April 1966

PREPARED FOR THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL  
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State Dept. review completed

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ARMY review(s) completed.

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HIGHLIGHTS

The National Political Congress is slated to vote tomorrow on the nature of institutions to create an eventual civilian government. The Buddhists, in a reversal of their original position, have accepted an invitation to attend the session. Another PAVN regiment has been confirmed, bringing total accepted PAVN strength in South Vietnam to 20,130. Another US aircraft has been downed by a SAM near Vinh in southern North Vietnam.

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I. The Military Situation in South Vietnam:  
MACV has provided more details on yesterday's Viet Cong attack on Saigon's Tan Son Nhut Air Base (Paras. 1-2). VC terrorists early today threw grenades at two Saigon police stations (Para. 3). Confirmation of another PAVN regiment brings total confirmed PAVN strength in South Vietnam to 20,130 (Paras. 4-5). Operation BUN KAE V by three ROK battalions in Binh Dinh Province has been terminated favorably (Para. 7). A CIDG Special Forces patrol took moderate casualties yesterday in an engagement with an estimated company of PAVN troops in southwestern Pleiku Province (Para. 8). Weekly reviews of South Vietnam transportation routes and battle statistics: (Paras. 9-10).

II. Political Developments in South Vietnam: The Buddhists have decided to attend tomorrow's session of the National Political Congress, which is to vote on the institutions to create an eventual civilian government (Paras. 1-3).

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Premier

Ky reportedly concedes that the constitutional convention will have to be an elected one, and considers the main current issue the question of who will oversee the elections (Paras. 6-7). Demonstrations also occurred in Hue and Da Nang, but Saigon

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was relatively quiet (Paras. 8-10).

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III. Military Developments in North Vietnam: North Vietnamese SAMs have shot down six US aircraft in the southern area of North Vietnam since 25 February (Para. 1).

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IV. Other Communist Military Developments: There is nothing of significance to report.

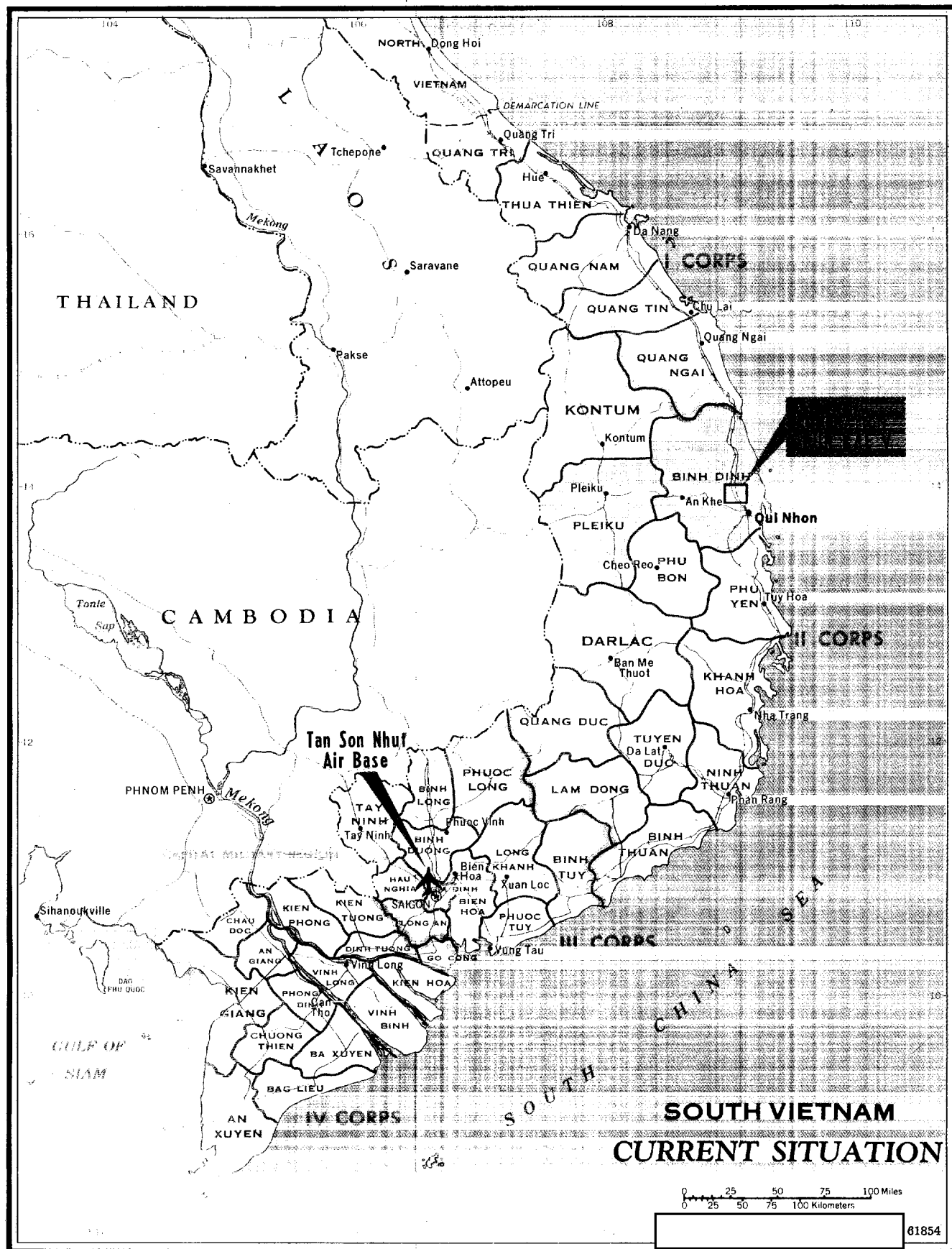
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V. Communist Political Developments: There is nothing of significance to report.

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I. THE MILITARY SITUATION IN SOUTH VIETNAM

1. MACV now reports on the basis of more complete information that yesterday's Viet Cong attack on Saigon's Tan Son Nhut Air Base lasted approximately 10 to 15 minutes, with an estimated 90 rounds of 82-mm. mortar and 75-mm. recoilless rifle fire fired at runways, storage areas, aircraft, and vehicles. Revised friendly casualties have been placed at nine killed (7 US, 2 Vietnamese civilians) and 120 wounded (106 US, 14 ARVN). Four aircraft and 19 vehicles were destroyed, and 59 aircraft, 26 buildings, and the tactical air control radar system damaged. A large ESSO storage tank containing about 420,000 gallons of aviation fuel was set ablaze. Approximately 12 hits were scored on runways and seven on the main taxiway; this damage was minor, however, and has been repaired. The airfield was reopened for normal military operations at 11:00 p.m. EST last night.

2. J-2 MACV believes that the ESSO POL storage tanks and a variety of fixed wing aircraft and helicopters were the chief targets of the attack. In reaction/pursuit operations, the 35th ARVN Ranger Battalion discovered a large amount of mortar packing material about 2.5 nautical miles southwest of the airfield. The attacking force may have been from the 6th Battalion/165-A Viet Cong Regiment which was last reported (on 28 March) to be in this area.

3. Unconfirmed press reports state that Viet Cong terrorists early today exploded grenades outside two Vietnamese police stations in Saigon, wounding three policemen and six civilians.

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4. MACV has confirmed the presence in the I Corps area of the 6th PAVN Regiment. It was activated during October 1965 in Quang Tri Province and has three subordinate battalions--the 800th (VC), the 806th (PAVN), and an unidentified battalion. Pending identification of the third battalion, the new unit is accepted with a strength of 1,000 men (two battalions plus support and HQ companies). The 806th Battalion apparently arrived in South Vietnam in February. MACV has also accepted as confirmed the 812th PAVN Battalion with a strength of 500.

5. Confirmed PAVN units in South Vietnam now amount to 11 regiments and five battalions, with a total strength of 20,130. Acceptance of other PAVN regiments reported but not yet confirmed would put total PAVN strength in South Vietnam well over 30,000 troops. The increased mixing of North and South Vietnamese personnel in Communist units will make it increasingly difficult in the future to measure PAVN strength in South Vietnam accurately.

6. A Communist soldier captured on 1 April in Pleiku Province claimed he was a member of the 271st PAVN Regiment, which had helped build a road from Laos to Cambodia prior to the regiment's deployment into South Vietnam. The road referred to by the prisoner may be the newly discovered route from Siem Pang in Cambodia to the area south of Attapeu in Laos, and then southeast into Kontum Province in South Vietnam. This is the first report of the 271st NVA Regiment in South Vietnam. There now may be as many as 7,000 to 10,000 PAVN troops in the Laotian panhandle engaged in either road construction, maintenance, or security activities. This is the first report that a unit of this type has been sent from the Laotian panhandle into South Vietnam.

#### GVN-Allied Operations

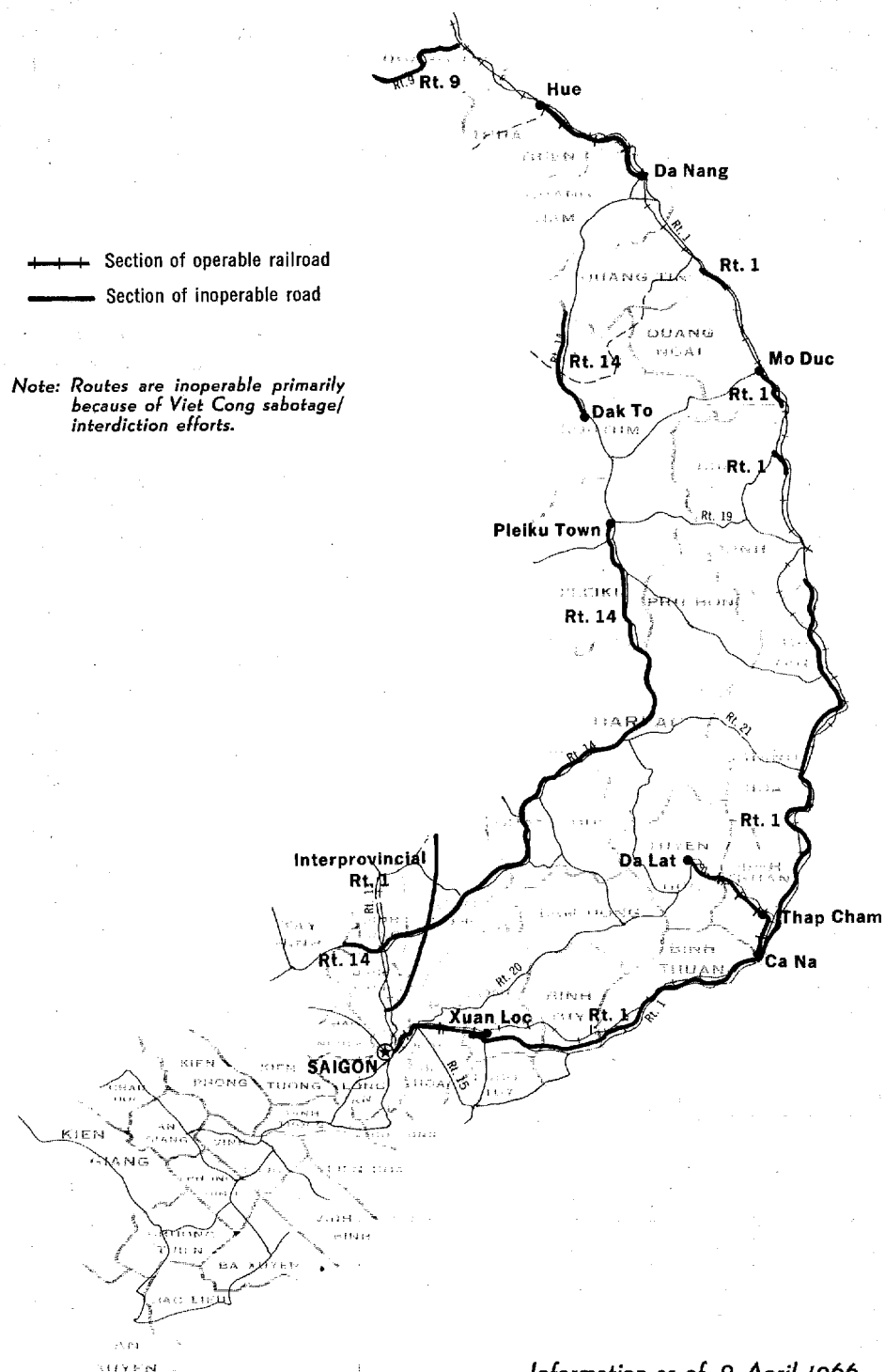
7. Three battalions of the ROK Capital Division have terminated search-and-destroy Operation BUN KAE V northwest of Qui Nhon, in Binh Dinh Province, after 12 days. Korean sources claim that 292 Viet Cong were killed, 74 captured, and 107 suspects apprehended, in contrast to ROK casualties of 23 killed and 63 wounded.

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# CURRENT OPERATIONAL STATUS OF MAJOR TRANSPORTATION ROUTES AND COASTAL RAILROAD



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8. A 50-man Vietnamese CIDG Special Forces reconnaissance patrol yesterday engaged an estimated PAVN company near the Cambodian border in southwestern Pleiku Province. In the firefight that ensued, one US Special Forces team commander was killed and 21 CIDG troops wounded, including a Vietnamese Special Forces base commander. Enemy losses were unknown.

#### Operational Status of Major Communication Routes

9. The operational status of South Vietnam's major highways reflected little significant improvement during the period 2-9 April. The opening of Route 4 in the delta province of Vinh Long and portions of Route 1 in Binh Dinh Province was somewhat offset by the closure of stretches of Route 1 in Quang Tin Province. The nation's coastal railway displayed some limited gains in operational capability with the reopening of the important northern terminus from Da Nang to Hue. However, this development, too, was offset by the closure of a stretch of rail line along the south-central coast from Thap Cham (Ninh Thuan Province) to Ninh Hoa (Khanh Hoa Province).

#### WEEKLY REVIEW OF SOUTH VIETNAM BATTLE STATISTICS

10. This week (2-9 April) as compared with last week (26 Mar - 2 Apr):

##### I. VIET CONG INCIDENTS

<u>Time Period</u>	<u>At-tacks</u>	<u>Regimental-size</u>	<u>Battalion-size</u>	<u>Company-size</u>	<u>Ter-rorism</u>
26 Mar - 2 Apr	8	0	1	1	651
2 - 9 Apr	5	0	0	1	537

<u>Time Period</u>	<u>Sabotage</u>	<u>Propaganda</u>	<u>Anti-Aircraft</u>	<u>Total Incidents</u>
26 Mar - 2 Apr	48	43	155	905
2 - 9 Apr	101	33	139	815

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## II. CASUALTIES

	<u>VC/PAVN</u>		<u>GVN</u>	
	<u>26 Mar-2 Apr</u>	<u>2-9 Apr</u>	<u>26 Mar-2 Apr</u>	<u>2-9 Apr</u>
Killed	962	785	155	67
Wounded	---	---	337	211
Missing/Captured	<u>73</u>	<u>140</u>	<u>26</u>	<u>0</u>
TOTALS	1,035	925	518	278

	<u>US</u>		<u>FREE WORLD</u>	
	<u>26 Mar-2 Apr</u>	<u>2-9 Apr</u>	<u>26 Mar-2 Apr</u>	<u>2-9 Apr</u>
Killed	101	95	18	15
Wounded	690	501	51	25
Missing/Captured	<u>12</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
TOTALS	803	598	69	40

## III. WEAPONS

	<u>VC/PAVN</u>		<u>GVN</u>	
	<u>26 Mar-2 Apr</u>	<u>2-9 Apr</u>	<u>26 Mar-2 Apr</u>	<u>2-9 Apr</u>
Individual	247	245	102	36
Crew-served	<u>8</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>
TOTALS	255	248	104	36

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## II. POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN SOUTH VIETNAM

1. The National Political Congress is scheduled to vote tomorrow morning on institutions to create an eventual civilian government.

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the proposal for an elected constitutional convention has overwhelming support among the delegates.

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2. The congress yesterday elected officers and adopted a bylaw setting forth the purpose of the congress. This morning's session was largely taken up by a number of general statements on the need for a constitutional convention. Attendance increased to 118 delegates today, with the additions including representatives of the government-sponsored Council of Religions and a number of private individuals.

3. The Buddhists' decision to send representatives to tomorrow's session of the congress does not necessarily reflect a softening of their demands. They may attempt to persuade other delegates to ask for the immediate resignation of the Ky regime in favor of some interim government until elections can be held. There were indications at today's session of some support for such a demand. Dr. Pham Quang Dan, elected chairman of the congress yesterday, reportedly has not yet made up his mind as to whether the Ky government should remain in office during the interim period.

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6. Premier Ky remarked to several Vietnamese journalists at a dinner last night that he was fully prepared to resist any attempts to replace him at this time. Ky was critical of Deputy Premier Co and Chief of State Thieu, indicating that he was not sure of their present loyalties.

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7. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] Premier Ky said that the Directorate was prepared to accept as inevitable the decision of the National Political Congress for an elected constitutional convention. Ky then stated that the major point of contention now was which government would oversee the elections, and that he and his colleagues would resist any attempt to replace the current regime until a civilian government is established. He hinted that if the Buddhists refuse to accept his government during the interim period, he would "unleash" field-grade officers who are reported eager to take action against antigovernment elements.

8. Saigon remained relatively quiet but tense today, largely because of the Viet Cong attack on Tan Son Nhut Air Base and several grenade incidents. A major Buddhist demonstration is scheduled tomorrow in Saigon; one source has predicted that there may be as many as 100,000 participants. General Khang, the Saigon military commander, says the government has given permission for the demonstration. He reportedly intends to station some 10 of the 12 infantry battalions now in the capital along the line of march.

9. Officials of the nationalist VNQDD Party in Hue told US officials today that they plan a demonstration in Hue tomorrow which will be anti-Communist and partially "antistruggle movement." Leaders of the struggle groups, however, have reportedly demanded that some of the participants carry antigovernment banners. VNQDD leaders are reportedly not certain at present how they should reply to this demand, but they are apparently going ahead with their plans for the demonstration. US officials are trying to dissuade participants from carrying arms. Last night in Hue, 3,000 to 4,000 high school and university students climaxed a torchlight parade by burning Ky and Thieu in effigy.

10. A small antigovernment demonstration was reported from Da Nang today. Buddhist "student troops" from Da Nang arrived today in Tam Ky, capital of Quang Tin Province, and local authorities fear a clash between the students and VNQDD elements. All US military personnel except duty officers have been ordered to remain inside the military compound.

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12. There is evidence of friction and uncertainty among Catholic groups over current political events. Thus far, northern Catholic refugee leader Father Hoang Quynh has successfully kept militant Catholics from taking to the streets in opposition to the Buddhists, [redacted]

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[redacted] Father Quynh has also had some publicized contacts with Buddhist Institute leaders. His independence in this regard has aroused other members of the northern refugee bloc, who have reportedly attempted to restrict his authority by forming a seven-man presidium which will issue future announcements and policy statements for the northern group. Exactly what this policy might be is not clear, although one member of this group hinted at some kind of anti-Buddhist action with the help of some members of the current military government.

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[redacted] Generally, Catholics do not want to be totally uncommitted in the event that a new government is formed.

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III. MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS IN NORTH VIETNAM

1. The loss of a US A-1H Skyraider to a SAM in the vicinity of Vinh on 13 April is the sixth SAM kill in the southern DRV since 25 February. Prior to that time, no SAM deployments had been noted south of Thanh Hoa. The North Vietnamese are apparently trying to make the best use of their limited amount of missile equipment by dispatching individual firing battalions to areas of concentrated US air activity, while most of the equipment is kept in the Hanoi-Haiphong area. If B-52 attacks on targets in the Laos-Vietnam supply corridor continue, the North Vietnamese will probably deploy SAMs to that area.

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IV. OTHER COMMUNIST MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS

1. There is nothing of significance to report.

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V. COMMUNIST POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

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