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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

Memorandum



THE SITUATION IN VIETNAM

Information as of 1600
9 September 1966

PREPARED FOR THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL
FURTHER DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION
CONTAINED HEREIN IS **NOT** AUTHORIZED

State Department review
completed

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25X1

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9 September 1966

HIGHLIGHTS

Two US aircraft were engaged by three MIG-21s on 9 September in extreme northeastern North Vietnam. No aircraft were lost on either side in this incident which marks the first time since 20 July 1966 that MIG-21s have attempted to engage US planes. In a generally favorable pre-election summary, the US Embassy anticipates that the size of the voter turnout on 11 September will be respectable, and that Buddhist or Viet Cong incidents will not seriously interfere with the election.

I. The Military Situation in South Vietnam:

Light contact was reported as Operation PRAIRIE continues in northernmost Quang Tri Province (Para. 1). US Marines report light contact as Operation NAPA continues in Quang Tin Province (Para. 2). Heavy enemy losses have been reported by a government force reacting to an attack on a South Vietnamese battalion in Binh Dinh Province (Para. 3). A South Vietnamese outpost was attacked, overrun, and reoccupied in Binh Dinh Province on 7 September (Para. 4). Weekly review of South Vietnam battle statistics (Para. 6).

II. Political Developments in South Vietnam:

In a generally favorable pre-election summary, the US Embassy anticipates a satisfactory voter turnout despite any last-minute dramatic act by the Viet Cong or militant Buddhists (Para. 1). Government security forces reportedly moved quickly in Saigon today to quell any antielection disturbances by the Buddhists (Para. 2). Coup rumors are also circulating in the capital,

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III. Military Developments in North Vietnam:
One MIG engagement [redacted] took place on 9 September (Paras. 1-3). Press reports of large numbers of "barrage balloons" over Hanoi and Haiphong are discounted (Paras. 4-5).

25X1

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

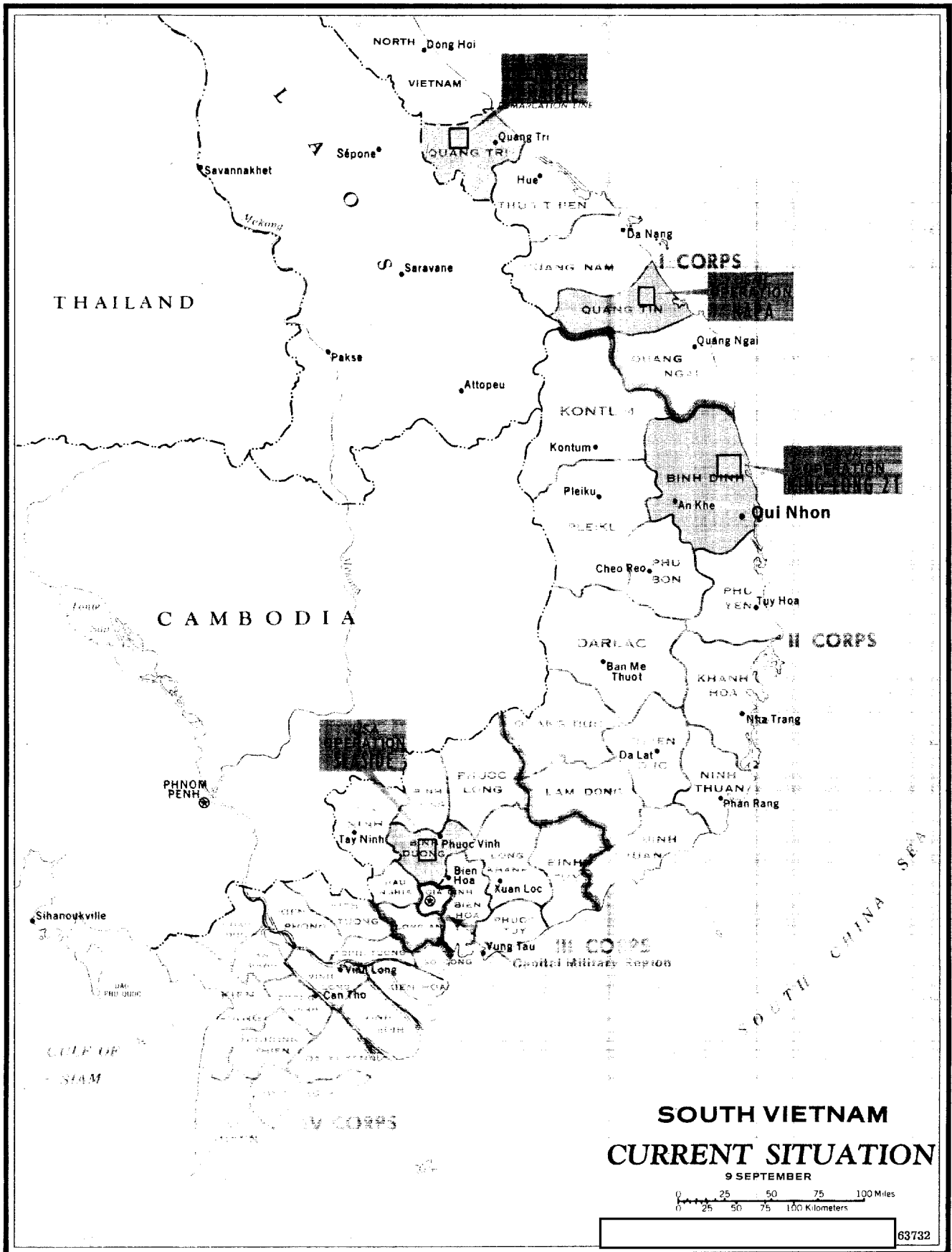
V. Communist Political Developments: There is nothing of significance to report.

ANNEX:

South Vietnam Battle Statistics 28 Aug - 3 Sept
Total Personnel Losses
Cumulative US Combat Casualties
Total Friendly Forces Personnel Losses

South Vietnam Battle Statistics 28 Aug - 3 Sept
Viet Cong Incidents
Viet Cong Attacks
Weapons Losses--GVN/VC

9 September 1966



25X1

I. THE MILITARY SITUATION IN SOUTH VIETNAM

1. A company of US Marines participating in search-and-destroy Operation PRAIRIE in northernmost Quang Tri Province encountered an estimated platoon-size Communist force on 8 September (Vietnam time). In the ensuing 90-minute battle, five Americans were killed and one wounded. Six enemy soldiers were reported killed. The total enemy casualty toll in Operation PRAIRIE now stands at 237 killed and three captured. American casualties total 43 killed and 162 wounded since this operation began on 3 August.

2. The US Marine search-and-destroy Operation NAPA continues in Quang Tin Province. Light contact was reported yesterday, resulting in four enemy soldiers killed and ten captured. The South Vietnamese portion of this operation--LIEN KET 56--ended on 7 September with friendly losses of 16 wounded. Three Viet Cong were killed in the operation.

3. One South Vietnamese Army battalion was attacked by an estimated company-size enemy force yesterday about 35 miles northwest of Qui Nhon in the coastal lowlands of Binh Dinh Province. A second battalion of South Vietnamese troops and a battalion of South Korean infantry were committed as a reaction force and established contact with the Communists. The allied forces were supported by artillery from the US 1st Cavalry Division. Friendly losses during the four-hour battle were seven killed, 24 wounded, and 37 missing. According to press reports, as many as 150 Viet Cong were killed, with a possible 50 more killed as a result of tactical air strikes.

4. A South Vietnamese outpost about 48 miles northwest of Qui Nhon was overrun by a Communist force of unknown size on 7 September. In reaction to the attack, two South Vietnamese Army battalions and two Regional Force companies began Operation KING LONG 21. The outpost was reoccupied, with friendly casualties reported as 16 killed and 15 wounded. Enemy losses are not known.

9 September 1966

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5. The one-battalion US Operation SEASIDE, which began on 7 September in Binh Duong Province, ended yesterday. No contact was established with enemy forces.

Weekly Review of South Vietnam Battle Statistics

6. The week of 28 August - 3 September compared with the week of 21-27 August:

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>Harass-ment</u>	<u>Ter-rorism</u>
21-27 Aug	23	0	3	4	356	15
28 Aug-3 Sep	8	0	0	1	358	20

<u>Time Period</u>	<u>Sabotage</u>	<u>Propaganda</u>	<u>Anti-Aircraft</u>	<u>Total Incidents</u>
21-27 Aug	31	31	214	670
28 Aug-3 Sep	6	15	110	517

II. Casualties

	<u>VC/NVA</u>		<u>GVN</u>	
	<u>21-27 Aug</u>	<u>28 Aug-3 Sep</u>	<u>21-27 Aug</u>	<u>28 Aug-3 Sep</u>
Killed	1,009	885	205	109
Wounded	-----	-----	375	305
Missing/Captured	<u>191</u>	<u>169</u>	<u>78</u>	<u>23</u>
TOTALS	1,200	1,054	658	437

	<u>US</u>		<u>FREE WORLD</u>	
	<u>21-27 Aug</u>	<u>28 Aug-3 Sep</u>	<u>21-27 Aug</u>	<u>28 Aug-3 Sep</u>
Killed	87	74	5	4
Wounded	599	570	14	15
Missing/Captured	<u>1</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
TOTALS	687	654	19	19

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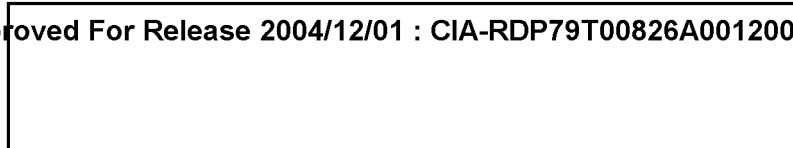
III. Weapons Captured

	<u>VC/NVA</u>		<u>GVN</u>	
	<u>21-27 Aug</u>	<u>28 Aug-3 Sep</u>	<u>21-27 Aug</u>	<u>28 Aug-3 Sep</u>
Individual	247	Not	208	51
Crew-served	<u>21</u>	Reported	<u>6</u>	<u>0</u>
TOTALS	268		214	51

9 September 1966

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25X1



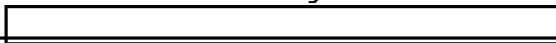
II. POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN SOUTH VIETNAM

1. In a generally favorable pre-election summary, the US Embassy anticipates that the size of the voter turnout on 11 September will be respectable--probably 60 percent or more of the 5,288,000 registered voters. The embassy concluded that, although there is a danger that the Viet Cong or militant Institute Buddhists might attempt to divert attention on the eve of the election by some dramatic or violent act, this would not seriously interfere with the election.

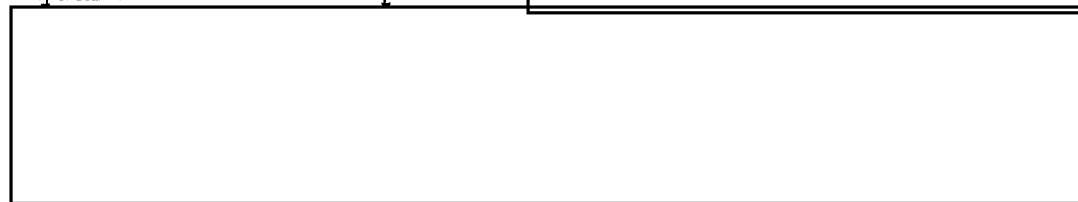
Developments in Saigon

2. According to the press, government police moved quickly today to disperse a group of 12 Buddhist monks near the US Embassy who were protesting the election. Eight of the monks were reportedly arrested. Later, two Vietnamese airborne companies surrounded the central market area when reports began spreading that the Buddhists were planning to converge there. Press accounts stated that government forces were showing signs of tension brought on by widespread antielection threats and incidents of terrorism.

3. Perhaps as further evidence of pre-election tension, coup rumors have been circulating in some quarters in the capital.



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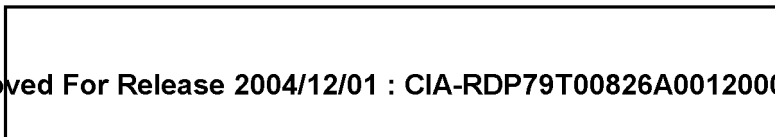


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There has been no recent evidence of any serious coup plotting, although the possibility exists that a minor effort--which would have little real chance of success--could be launched by any one of a number of dissident groups to create an additional problem for the government on the eve of the election.

9 September 1966

25X1



25X1

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III. MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS IN NORTH VIETNAM

1. Two US Air Force F-105s were engaged in the early morning hours of 9 September by three MIG-21s in the extreme northeastern portion of the DRV near the Chinese border.

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2. The US aircraft involved were returning from a SAM suppression mission when the MIGs attacked from behind using cannon fire. In the engagement that followed one of the F-105s fired at the MIGs but no planes were lost on either side. No air-to-air missiles were used in the air battle, a portion of which occurred at tree-top level. The returning pilots described the MIGs as silver in color, and they observed no markings. The incident marks the first time since 20 July 1966 that MIG-21s have attempted to engage US planes.

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Air Defense Balloons Over North Vietnam

4. Press reports of large numbers of "barrage balloons" over Hanoi and Haiphong are essentially erroneous. There have been pilot sightings on 12 and 15 August of about 20 weather balloons tethered along a ridge line 18 miles northeast of Haiphong. The varicolored balloons appeared to be about 12

9 September 1966

III-1

25X1

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25X1

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feet in diameter and ranged in altitude between 2,000 and 3,800 feet above sea level.

5. The balloons are not placed over any specific target in the manner employed in World War II as implied by the press. Their apparent purpose is to deny US aircraft attacking the Haiphong area a low-level approach over the hills northeast of the city.

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9 September 1966

III-2

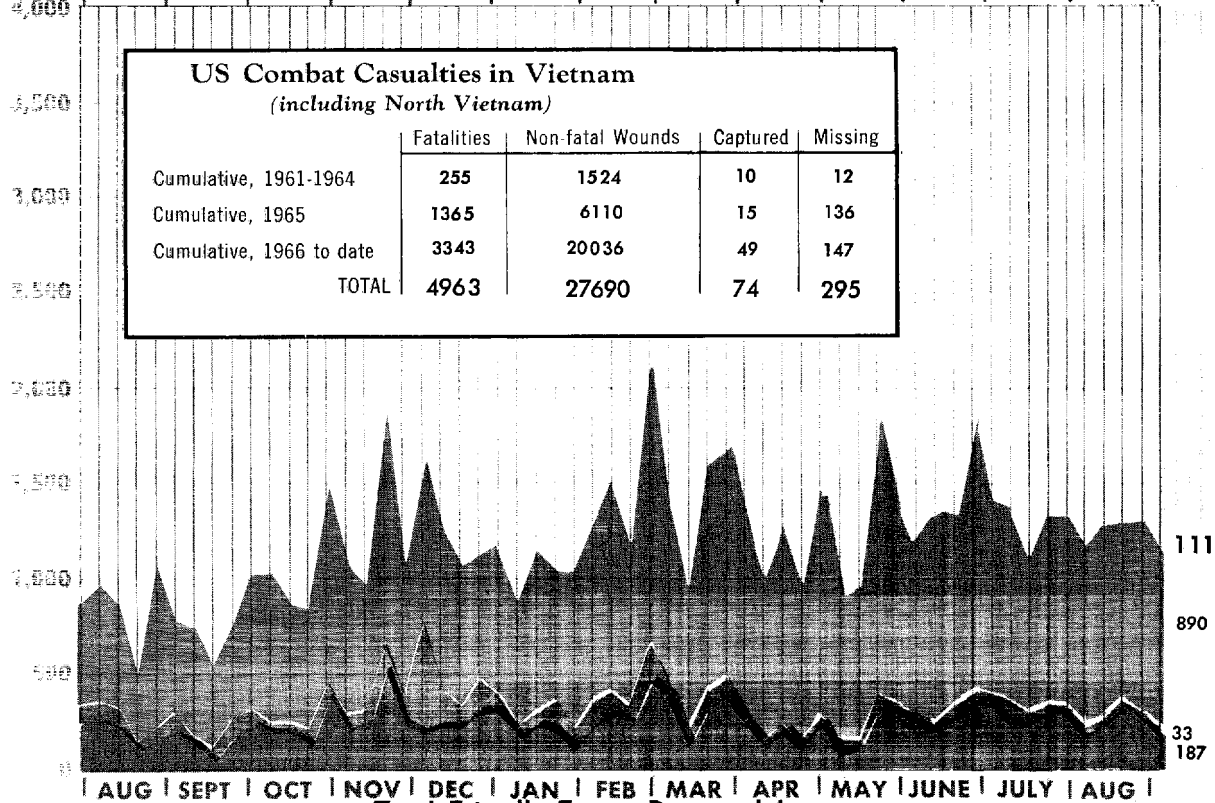
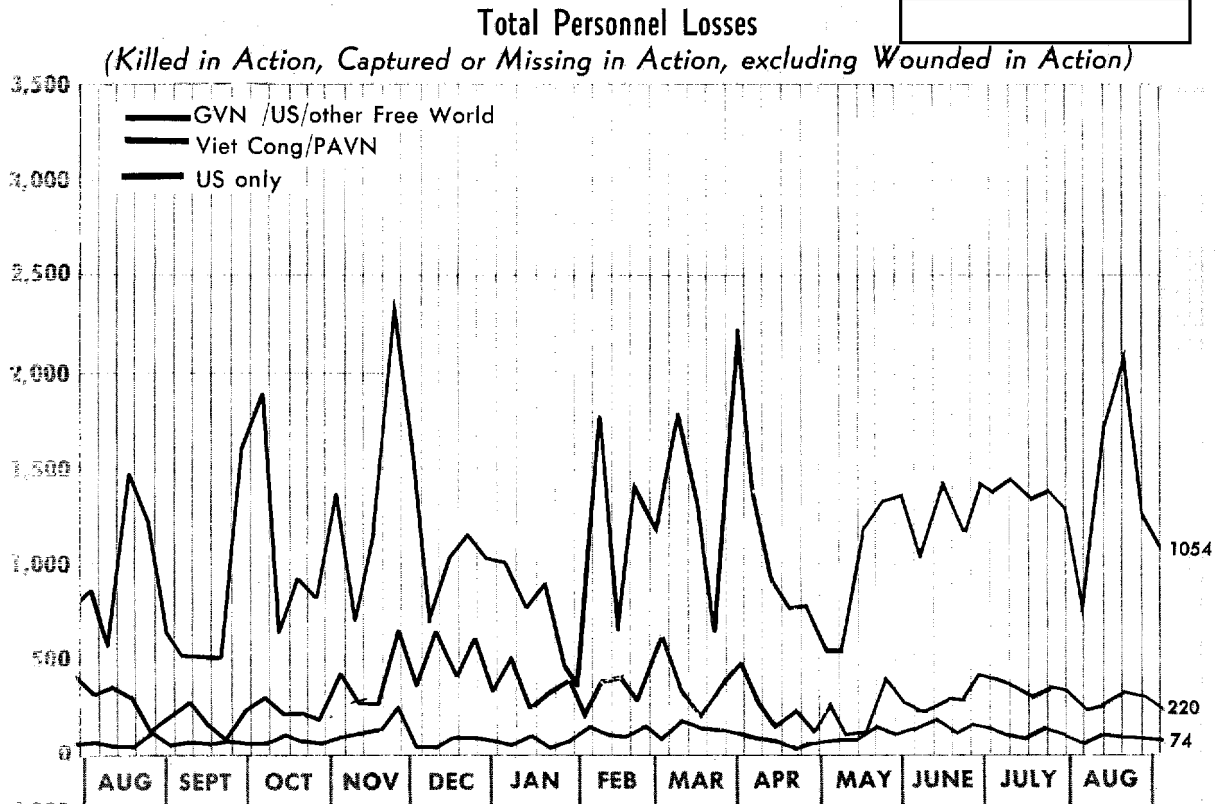
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SOUTH VIETNAM BATTLE STATISTICS

WEEKLY REPORT 28 AUGUST - 3 SEPTEMBER 1966

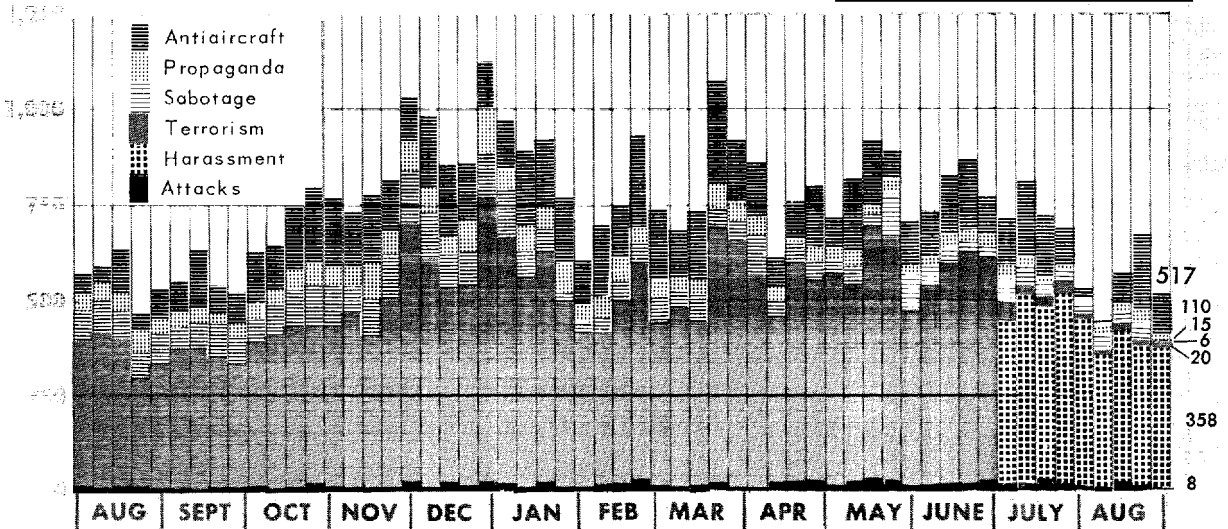
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SOUTH VIETNAM BATTLE STATISTICS

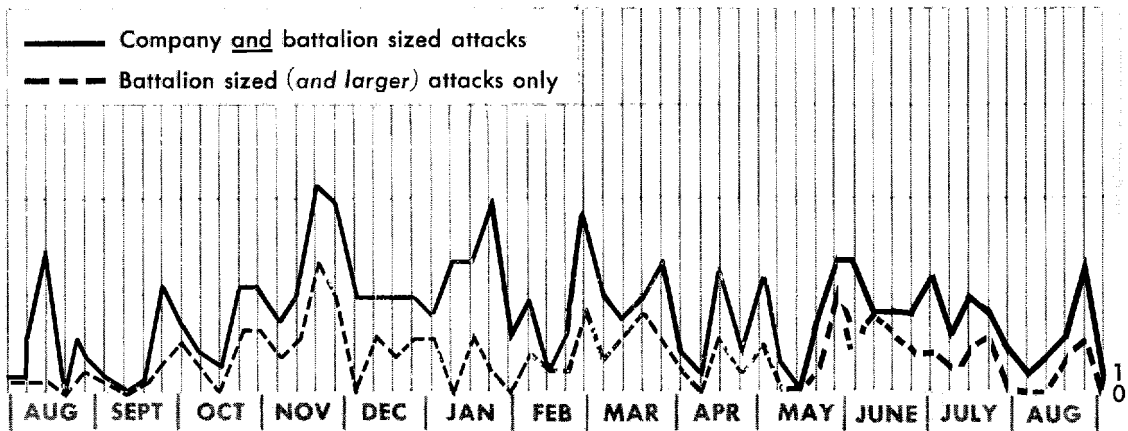
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Viet Cong Incidents

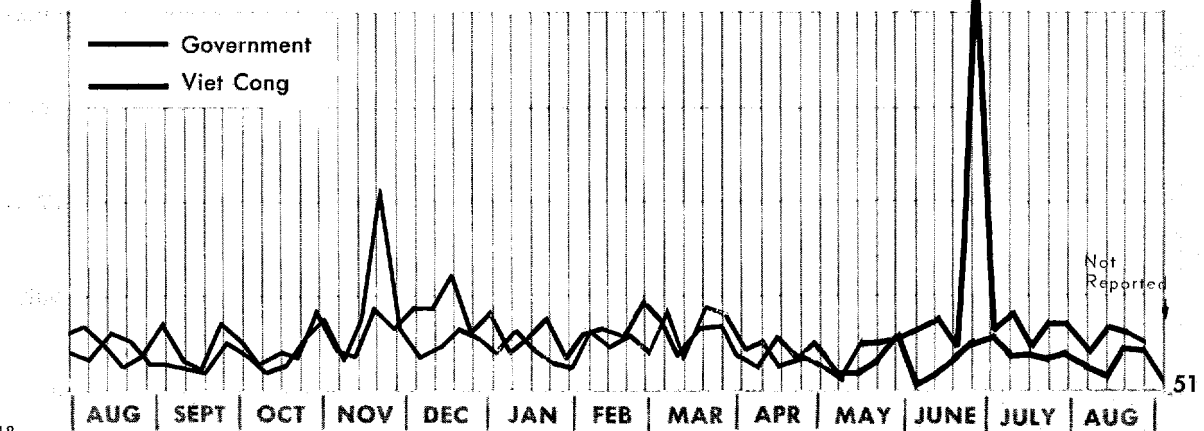


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Viet Cong Attacks



Weapons Losses



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