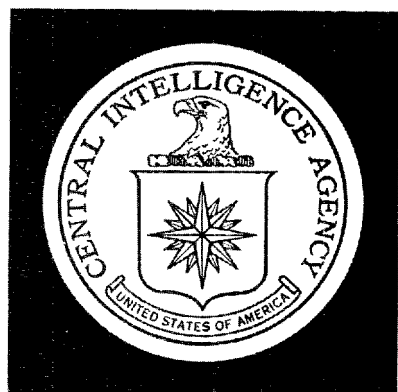
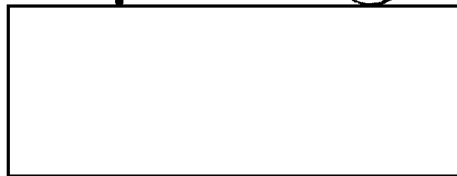


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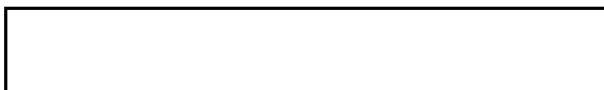
MEMORANDUM

The Situation in Vietnam

NSA review completed

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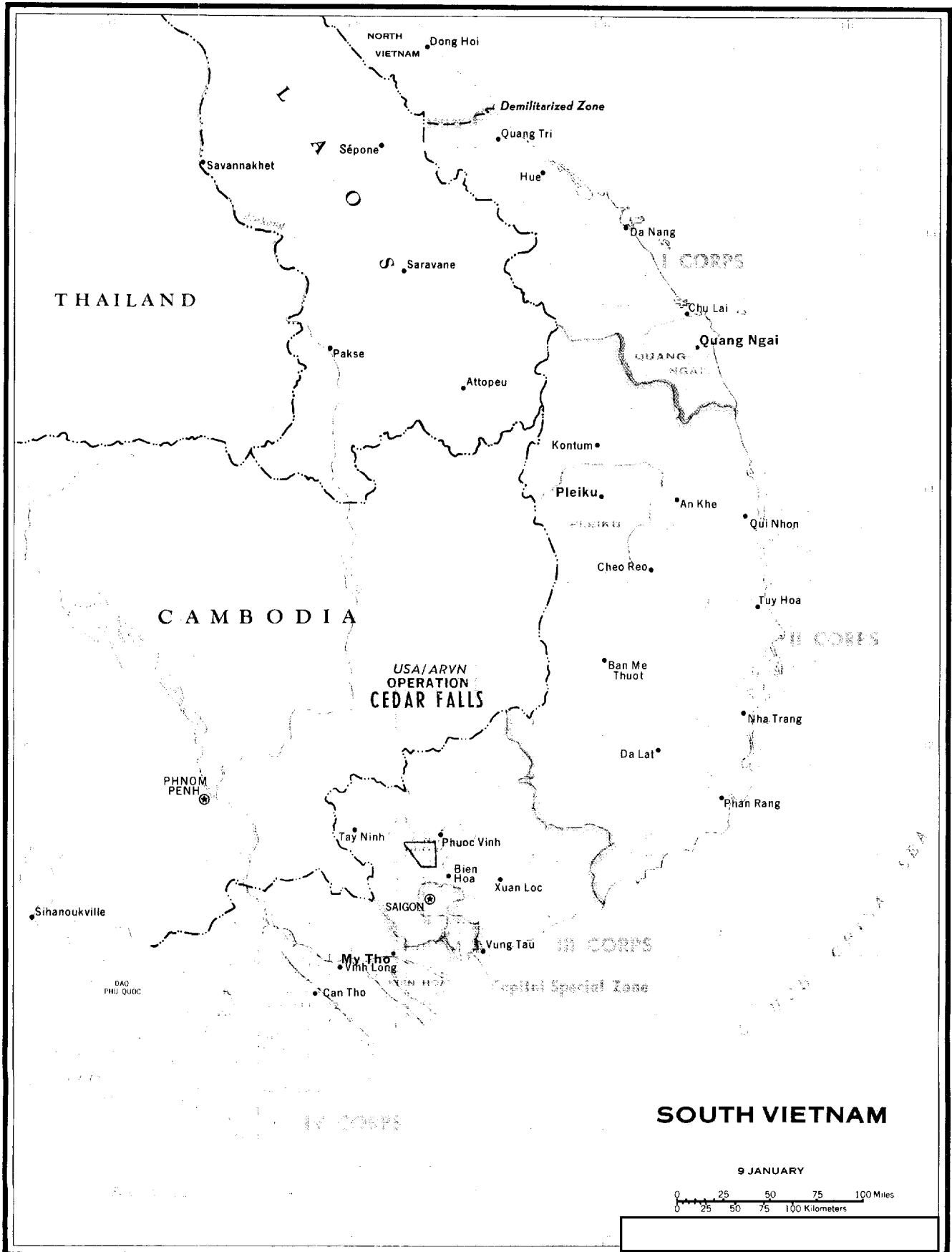
HIGHLIGHTS

I. The Military Situation in South Vietnam:
Viet Cong guerrillas attacked three ships in the Saigon River and sank a large dredge in the Mekong River near My Tho on 9 January (Paras. 1-2). Camp Holloway in Pleiku Province was attacked by mortars and small arms for the third consecutive day (Para. 3). Operation CEDAR FALLS has been expanded to 23 battalions and has resulted in 57 enemy soldiers killed and more than 20 tons of rice and 1,000 black uniforms seized (Para. 4). A US Air Force AC-47 aircraft was shot down by ground fire near Quang Ngai (Para. 5). A battalion-size Communist force attacked South Vietnamese positions five miles northeast of Quang Ngai on 8 January (Para. 6). A company-size force of Viet Cong, using civilians as a shield, attacked South Vietnamese positions in Kien Hoa Province (Para. 7).

III. North Vietnamese Military Developments:
There is nothing of significance to report.

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

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



I. THE MILITARY SITUATION IN SOUTH VIETNAM

1. Viet Cong guerrillas--in a classic river ambush--shelled two South Vietnamese minesweepers and a British oil tanker on the Saigon River on 9 January. The tanker was moving up the channel when the two minesweepers preceding it discovered four mines at a bend in the river. At that point, all three ships were fired upon by automatic weapons, small arms, and recoilless rifles. Heavy damage and casualties were reported by one of the minesweepers. A river patrol boat and armed helicopters repelled the attackers.

2. The Jamaica Bay, a large dredge operated by a civilian construction company, was sunk in the Mekong River near My Tho about 35 miles southwest of Saigon on 9 January. The \$3-million dredge was believed to have been sabotaged by personnel on board. Two civilian employees of the contracting firm were killed, one was wounded, and one was reported missing. Efforts will be made to salvage the barge.

Camp Holloway Attacked for Third Straight Day

3. Camp Holloway, located near Pleiku city, was attacked for the third straight day on 9 January by a group of Viet Cong raiders. The enemy force struck before dawn with mortars and small arms and it was over two hours before armed helicopters drove them off. One American was reported wounded; no enemy casualties were reported.

Binh Duong Province Operation Enlarged

4. Twenty-three battalions are now involved in Operation CEDAR FALLS, the large US/ARVN search-and-destroy operation being conducted in Binh Duong Province. Six Americans have been killed and 33 wounded in small unit contacts since this operation began on 7 January. Communist casualties to date are 57 killed, 16 captured, and 157 suspects detained. More than 20 tons of rice and two sampans containing 1,000 black uniforms have been seized. Eleven B-52 strikes have struck target areas within the area of operations in the past four days.

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Air Force Gunship Downed

5. A US Air Force AC-47, a heavily armed tactical support aircraft, was downed by Communist ground fire about 26 miles southwest of Quang Ngai city in coastal Quang Ngai Province. The aircraft was one of several on a quick-reaction mission to give close air support to allied ground units in contact with enemy forces. All seven crew members were killed. Another AC-47 in the area reported receiving 50 caliber machinegun fire from enemy positions near the crash site. This is the second such aircraft lost in the war.

6. Two Popular Force platoons and one Regular Force squad in night defensive positions five miles northeast of Quang Ngai city were attacked on 8 January by an estimated battalion-size Communist force. Fighting lasted for more than two hours when the enemy force retreated upon arrival of an ARVN reaction force. Friendly losses included 14 killed, 14 wounded, and 41 weapons lost. Enemy losses are unknown.

7. In the northern part of the Mekong Delta province of Kien Hoa, an estimated company-size Viet Cong force attacked a South Vietnamese Ranger battalion's position on 8 January with mortars and small arms. The Viet Cong force used civilians as a shield while advancing on the Ranger positions. When warned to stop or be shot, the Viet Cong resumed firing. The Rangers returned the fire until the Communist force withdrew. Ten civilian children were killed and another 25 civilians were wounded. At the same time, a nearby Popular Force outpost was overrun by an unknown-size Viet Cong force. Friendly losses in this latter action were five killed, and 17 missing. Enemy losses are unknown for both of these incidents.

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