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8 March 1966

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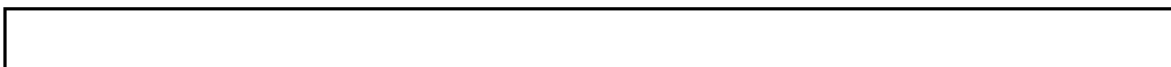
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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN

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*Vietnam: (Information as of 4:30 AM EST)

The Military Situation in South Vietnam: The intense fighting reported in several major allied operations over the weekend has slackened during the past 24 hours.

Allied forces conducting Operation UTAH/LIEN KET 26 northwest of Quang Ngai city have reported little contact since 6 March with the remainder of an estimated regiment of enemy troops. The operation, initiated on 4 March, has now resulted in cumulative enemy losses of 586 killed and five captured; allied casualties during this period are 113 killed (83 US) and 324 wounded (205 US).

SILVER CITY, a large search-and-destroy operation, was initiated last night in the Viet Cong "War Zone D" stronghold some 30 to 40 miles north of Saigon. A combined US-Australian-ARVN force, including seven battalions and an airborne brigade, is involved in the operation which is scheduled to last several days.

US forces continued their offensive on the fringe of "War Zone D" near the eastern border of Binh Duong Province yesterday, when B-52 Stratofortresses bombed a suspected Viet Cong troop location and supply area. US troops sweeping a nearby area reported no opposition, although a major battle with elements of an enemy regiment in this vicinity on 4 and 5 March resulted in nearly 200 Viet Cong killed.

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*Guatemala: (Information as of 4:30 AM EST)

The electoral tribunal suspended announcing voting results yesterday in a move that may fore-shadow the padding of rural returns in favor of the government-backed Institutional Democratic Party (PID).

As of late yesterday, the Revolutionary Party's Mendez led with 153,266 to 88,744 votes for Aguilar of the PID. Ponciano of the National Liberation Movement had 84,656 votes. However, at this point with approximately half of the vote counted, no candidate seems likely to win an absolute majority. In order to win, one party must achieve over 50 percent of the vote; if not, the election falls to the newly elected congress after it meets on 5 May.

Mendez [apparently] was drawing the upcountry vote that was predicted to favor the PID--at which time the government apparently felt it wise to suspend the counting.

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Ecuador: The military junta has announced constitutional reforms which have been denounced by Ecuador's political leaders, and opposition increases.

Along with such expected provisions as a ban on re-election of presidents and congressmen, the decree apparently bypasses the courts--and their unwillingness to prosecute subversives--by making insurgents subject to military justice. The decree also postpones general elections from 5 June to 3 July to allow more time for voter registration.

A new grouping has been formed by leading politicians who, according to the US country team, have a "blind and almost fanatical devotion" to the idea of getting the government out of power. The politicians have unanimously reasserted their persistent demand for a constituent assembly to supervise the transition to constitutional government.

Political leaders who had previously indicated they would probably participate in the planned general elections now vow they will not. They may even try to bring the demagogic ex-President Velasco Ibarra back from exile.

Although military unity--on which stability ultimately rests--appears intact at the moment, the US ambassador believes that "the government could be upset with little warning." In this event, the junta would probably be replaced by a new military government.

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NOTES

Syria: [Some violence may accompany today's celebration in Damascus of three years of Baathist rule in Syria. Festivities have apparently been canceled in Aleppo, where there is uncertainty over army loyalty to the Baathist military junta which took over two weeks ago. Disgruntled army units--including key units on the Israeli border--might take advantage of any disorders to attempt a counter-coup.]

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Sudan: [The inept coalition regime in Khartoum is still beset by differences among its leaders, deteriorating finances, and rebellion in the Sudan's southern provinces. The situation is giving rise to speculation that a faction in the army--three-fourths of which is bogged down in an apparently hopeless campaign to crush the Negro rebels--might try to take over the government. There is no firm evidence of military plotting as yet, but the army is said to be disgusted with current conditions and could eventually feel compelled to resume the control it gave up in 1964.]

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Haiti: [The US Embassy reports that Haitian President Duvalier is going through a period of increasing apprehension over the stability of his regime. His normal state of suspicion has been reinforced by the recent coups in Africa, exile plotting, a deteriorating economic situation, and his inability to obtain significant US aid. Despite this uneasy political situation, there is no indication that elements of the military or internal anti-Duvalier groups are presently willing or sufficiently organized to attempt to overthrow the dictator.]

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Austria: Despite the clear majority won by the centrist People's Party in the parliamentary elections on 6 March, Chancellor Klaus has restated his promise to re-establish his party's 21-year-old coalition with the Socialists. Negotiations are likely to be lengthy, since there are those in the People's Party who advocate driving a hard bargain. Socialist election losses were a blow to Austria's new Communist Party secretary general, who had switched from his party's traditional hard line to support the Socialists in order to gain prestige and prevent a People's Party majority. Election results indicate just the opposite effect.

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The Special Assistant for National Security Affairs

The Scientific Adviser to the President

The Director of the Budget

The Department of State

The Secretary of State

The Under Secretary of State

The Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs

The Deputy Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs

The Counselor and Chairman of the Policy Planning Council

The Director of Intelligence and Research

The Treasury Department

The Secretary of the Treasury

The Under Secretary of the Treasury

The Department of Defense

The Secretary of Defense

The Deputy Secretary of Defense

The Secretary of the Army

The Secretary of the Navy

The Secretary of the Air Force

The Assistant Secretary of Defense (International Security Affairs)

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Chief of Naval Operations, United States Navy

Chief of Staff, United States Air Force

Chief of Staff, United States Army

Commandant, United States Marine Corps

U.S. Rep., Military Committee and Standing Group, NATO

Supreme Allied Commander, Europe

Commander in Chief, Pacific

Commander in Chief, Atlantic

The Director, Defense Intelligence Agency

The Director, The Joint Staff

The Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence, Department of Army

The Director of Naval Intelligence, Department of Navy

The Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, Department of the Air Force

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