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NSC BRIEFING

13 May 1954

INDOCHINA MILITARY

I. Generally accepted fact war Indochina will be won, lost in Tonkin delta.

A. Militarily, control means hold on most densely populated (7,000,000) area.

1. Contains second best seaport Indochina, four of six major airfields.

B. Economically, Viet Minh capture would give it light industrial facilities far beyond what it now has.

1. Also, delta normally produces about 2,000,000 tons rice annually. **THIS**

NEARLY ENOUGH TO SUPPORT DELTA POPULATION AND LOOKS LIKE PRIZE TO HUNGON VIET MINH

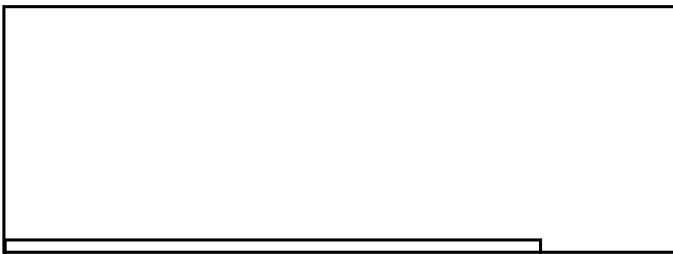
OGA DIA reviews completed

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C. Psychologically, it traditional center nationalism in Vietnam and loss would be heavy blow anti-Communist morale rest Vietnam.

II.



III.

[Redacted] vanguard

enemy's battle force will reach Tonkin delta 26 May, ready for combat.

A. Force would amount to nine battalions, to be followed by remainder, 19 more battalions.

IV.

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according to French figures, over 40
^{REGULAR} battalions could be concentrated
delta. In addition, there are
reserves of regional forces now north
of delta in training.

A.

B.

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control delta
airfields key to struggle; if
airfields lost, Hanoi will
become another Dien Bien Phu.

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C. Enemy movement from Dien Bien Phu not yet discerned but air observation shows it ~~abandoned~~ ^{evaluated} its AA emplacements.

V. Viet Minh now has 37mm AA guns protecting supply route from Caobang southward to delta, according French.

A. This underlines report last week that enemy improving supply network from China border to delta.

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VII. In Cambodia, invasion early April by two regular Viet Minh battalions upset delicate military balance Cambodia.

(5 Bns)

A. Shift of Cambodian units (meet threat northeast) exposed south, central portions country to increased enemy harassment.

B. O'Daniel, after 10-11 May visit Phnom Penh, commented on defensive-mindedness of Cambodians (due French advice) and failure Cambodians react to Viet Minh incursion as invaded nation should.

C. O'Daniel believes Cambodians must form three light divisions by November, otherwise country will be under heavy Viet Minh invasion.

Cam - 11 Bns
+
2 Lt Bns

Fr Union - 1 Bn

[3 of 11 Cam Bns are under Fr control]

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VIII. Laniel, apparently reversing past French strategy, this week told Dillon in Paris that French might be forced withdraw completely from Laos and Cambodia to protect key areas Vietnam.

*Laos 14 Bns
+
6 R Bns*

A. Such withdrawal from Laos would deliver that country to the Viet Minh in short order.

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B. Cambodia could be expected
oppose Viet Minh in the
hope of US technical aid.
But any Viet Minh intervention
in division strength would
bring about quick collapse.

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[Redacted]

Viet

have in China's sphere
of influence - Laos

Cambodia in India's

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[Redacted]