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C O N T E N T S

(Information as of 1200 EST)

GENERAL

Vietnam
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Situation report.

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GENERAL

Vietnam

North Vietnam: North Vietnam's port operations continue to be hampered by cargo handling difficulties. Essential needs are being met, however, and in recent months port congestion has been somewhat eased.

In the first half of 1967 imports by sea reached a record high of about 128,000 tons per month. Imports at this pace placed heavy demands on port facilities, particularly at Haiphong. As cargo backlogs stacked up on the docks, ships had to wait longer and longer to unload. By August the turnaround time for ships in North Vietnamese ports was averaging more than 30 days.

Since that time, imports by sea have been cut back considerably. The total for October was about 90,000 tons. This has helped to ease port congestion and has reduced the average turnaround time for ships visiting North Vietnam in October to 19 days. Turnaround time is still higher, however, than in 1966 when the average was only 13 days.

Silting problems continue to hamper entry into Haiphong, although ships drawing 26 feet of water are still able to enter the harbor on very high tides. Frequent air raid alerts have cut considerably into work time, and bomb damage to key bridges has made moving cargo through

the port difficult and time consuming.

If the problems at Haiphong become worse, the Communists could begin to offload ships outside the port area. There are many potential island anchorages nearby from which cargo could be lightered by barge to shore. The barges are vulnerable, however, and Hanoi would probably use them only as a last resort.

In the Laos panhandle area, it is clear that the resumption of supply shipments to South Vietnam following the rainy season is now well under way. Reports indicate that between 1 and 11 November about 120 trucks moved in a southerly direction along Route 23 just south of the Mu Gia Pass. Stockpiling has been under way in the pass area since September. Aerial observers, moreover, report that over 300 trucks were operating on Route 912--the second road from North Vietnam into Laos--during late October.

South Vietnam: Military action in the central highlands has slackened at least temporarily. Two American facilities in the Dak To area were hit by heavy mortar assaults on 13 November, but only light casualties were sustained.

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