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CS/ADMIN



DIRECTORATE OF
INTELLIGENCE

MEMORANDUM

The Situation in Vietnam

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20 December 1967

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Information as of 1600
20 December 1967

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HIGHLIGHTS

The two major bridges near Hanoi have again been knocked out by recent US air strikes.

I. The Military Situation in South Vietnam: Thirty-nine enemy were killed in an abortive attack on a base camp of the US 25th Infantry Division in northern Tay Ninh on 20 December. Scattered fighting was reported in northern I Corps (Paras. 1-2). There is evidence that Viet Cong and North Vietnamese units are operating in close coordination (Paras. 3-4). The Weekly Review of South Vietnam Battle Statistics. (Charts)

II. Political Developments in South Vietnam: The National Assembly will send a 14-man delegation to the US in March at the invitation of the US House of Representatives (Para. 1). The Lower House has voted to establish a special committee to review the cases of political prisoners and will probably give particular consideration to those now on trial for involvement in the 1966 "struggle" movement (Paras. 2-3). The Viet Cong reportedly have issued a directive calling for the instigation of a second "struggle" in Da Nang and possibly other cities, but such efforts are unlikely to meet with much success (Paras. 4-5).

[redacted]

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IV. Other Communist Military Developments: A Spanish repatriate from North Vietnam has provided additional information on Chinese Communist military units (Paras. 1-3).

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

VI. Other Major Aspects: Truck traffic in the Laos panhandle seems to be running at about the same level as last year (Paras. 1-4). Both the Doumer and the Canal des Rapides bridges have again been cut (Paras. 5-6).

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I. THE MILITARY SITUATION IN SOUTH VIETNAM

1. Thirty-nine enemy were killed in an abortive attack on a base camp of the US 25th Division in northern Tay Ninh about 66 miles from Saigon during the early morning hours of 20 December. The enemy fired over 200 mortar rounds and a heavy volume of small-arms fire at the battalion-size base camp, killing three Americans and wounding nine. The Americans, part of Operation YELLOWSTONE, were supported by air strikes during the four hours of the action.

2. US Army forces operating in the Quang Nam - Quang Tin border area south of Da Nang reported killing 55 enemy troops in some two dozen separate skirmishes on 19 December. Farther north, in Quang Tri and Thua Thien, Communist troops launched brief mortar, automatic weapon, and grenade attacks against widely scattered US Marine positions and patrols during the past two days. A US truck convoy was hit moving west on Route 9 toward Ca Lu in central Quang Tri. On 19 December a Marine reconnaissance team ambushed a North Vietnamese Army patrol six miles west of Khe Sanh, killing four. US casualties in these I Corps actions have been relatively light.

Viet Cong - North Vietnamese Coordination

3. Interrogation of a captured North Vietnamese [redacted] indicates that a sapper unit has been organized in Khanh Hoa Province. It operates under joint Viet Cong - North Vietnamese control. [redacted] the North Vietnamese 18B Regiment wants to employ the sapper unit in an operation it must put its request through "the front." He says that "the front" consists of the Viet Cong province chief and the commanding officer and political officer of the 18B Regiment. This group probably equates to the southern sub-region of the Communist Military Region 5.

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4. The apparent joint control of units and operations in Khanh Hoa reflects a trend which has been evident for months in many parts of South Vietnam. Another recent indication of such closer coordination occurred in the Mekong Delta where on 16 December a native-born North Vietnamese infantryman was captured for the first time in the war. The captive states that he infiltrated into the delta in late September, 1967 with a group of 20 northerners, twelve of whom were assigned to the Viet Cong 267th Main Force battalion. [redacted] suspected for some time that North Vietnamese were serving as cadres or advisers in the delta but this is the first evidence of troop infiltration into the area.

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Weekly Review of South Vietnam Battle Statistics

5. The week of 10-16 December compared with the week of 3-9 December:

I. Casualties

	VC/NVA		US	
	3-9 Dec	10-16 Dec	3-9 Dec	10-16 Dec
Killed	1,898	1,685	194	187
Wounded	-----	-----	1,641	932
Missing/ Captured	-----	-----	-----	---
TOTALS	1,898	1,685	1,835	1,119

	GVN		FREE WORLD	
	3-9 Dec	10-16 Dec	3-9 Dec	10-16 Dec
Killed	369	278	21	13
Wounded	947	641	55	18
Missing/ Captured	53	179	1	---
TOTALS	1,369	1,098	77	31

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II. Viet Cong Incidents

	<u>3-9 Dec</u>	<u>10-16 Dec</u>
Attacks	86	56
Battalion or Larger	2	0
Small Unit.	84	56
Harassment	542	233
Terrorism	38	32
Sabotage	91	26
Propaganda	10	7
Antiaircraft	<u>236</u>	<u>195</u>
TOTALS	1,003	549

III. Weapons Captured

	<u>VC/NVA</u>		<u>GVN</u>	
	<u>3-9 Dec</u>	<u>10-16 Dec</u>	<u>3-9 Dec</u>	<u>10-16 Dec</u>
Individual	323	Not	229	269
Crew-Served	60	Reported	6	5
TOTALS	<u>383</u>		<u>235</u>	<u>274</u>

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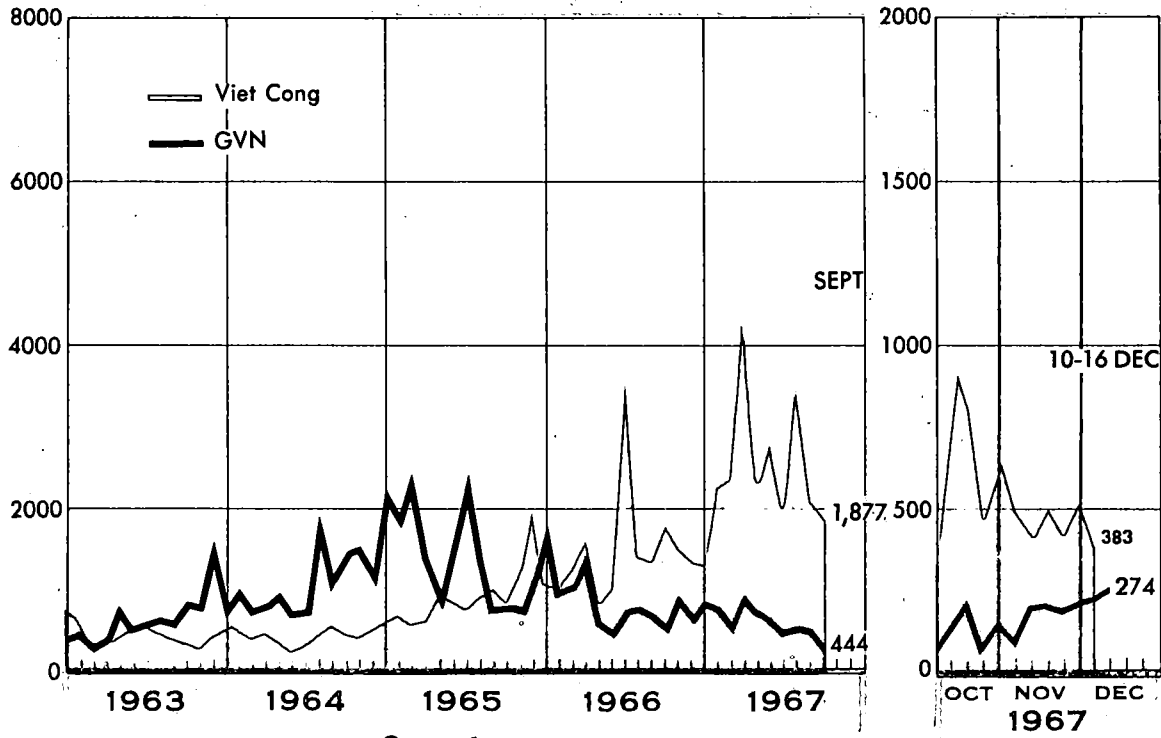
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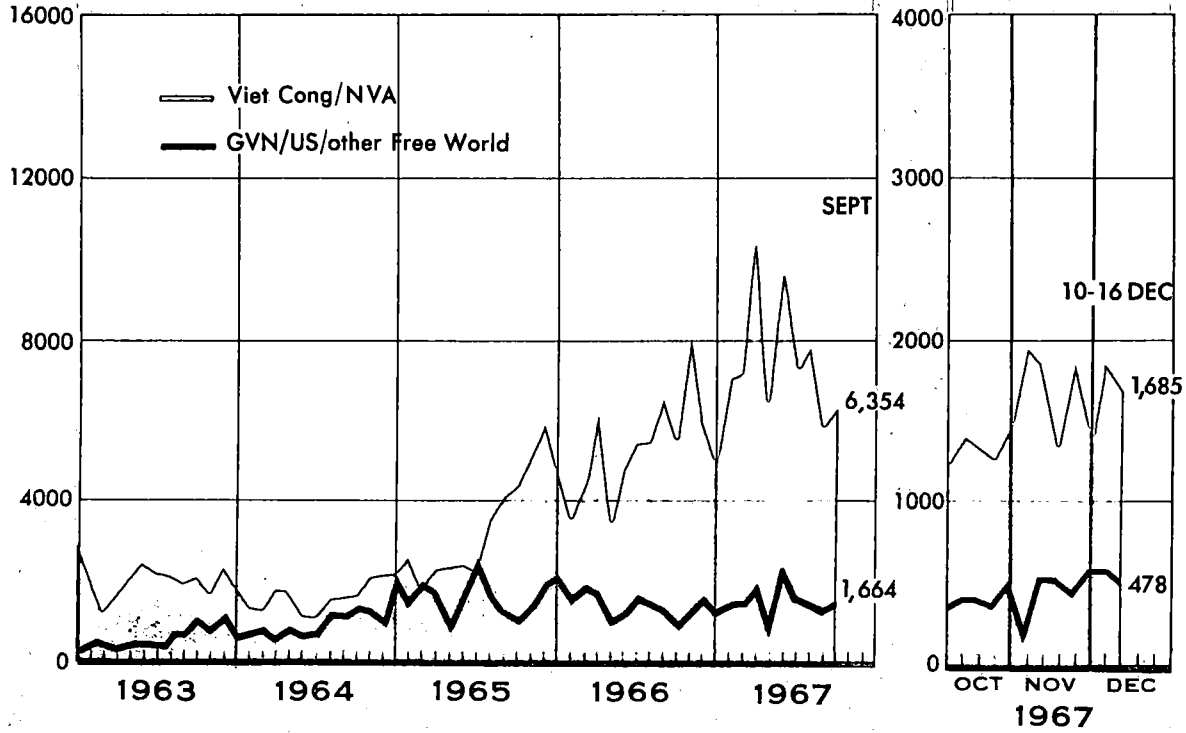
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Weapons Losses



Casualties (Killed only)*

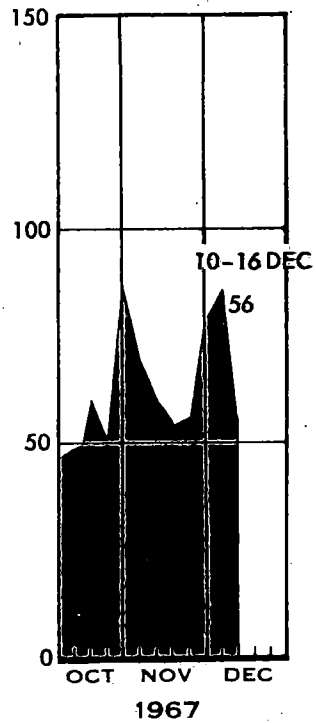
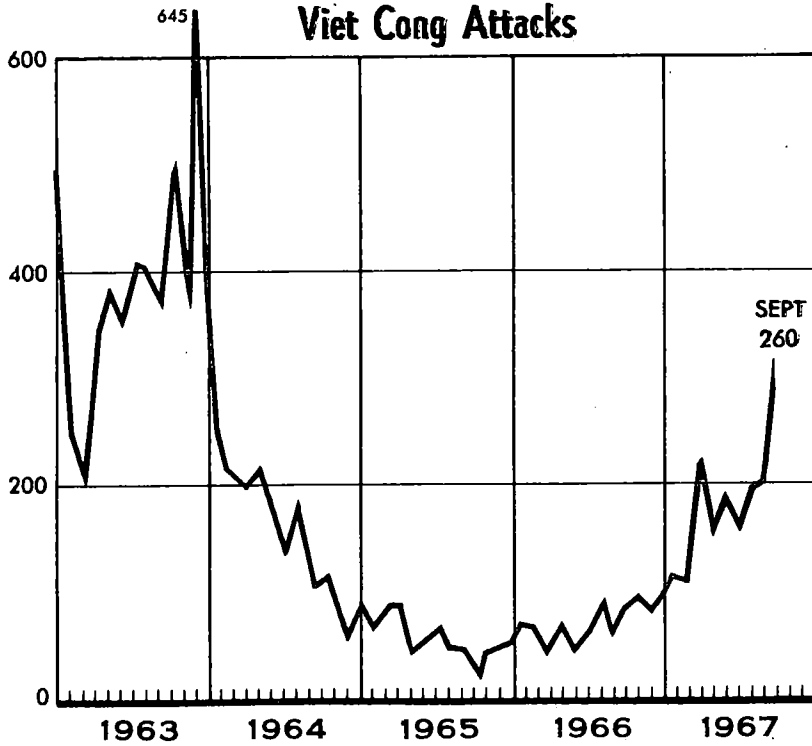


US Casualties to Date: Killed 15,646 Wounded 97,676 Captured 226 Missing 660

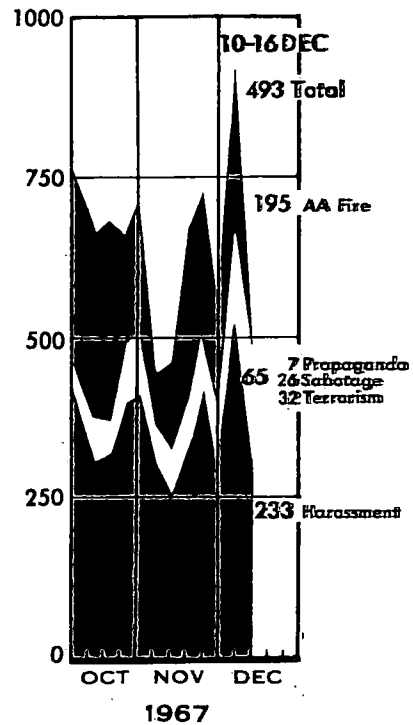
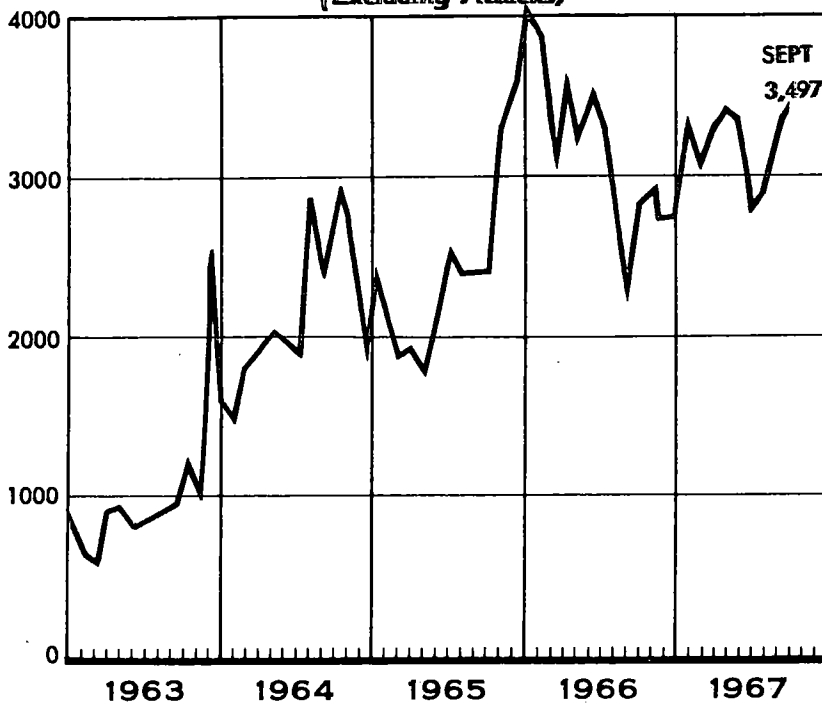
*Due to a change in the reporting of personnel losses, from 12 February 1967 the weekly and monthly figures represent only personnel killed.



Viet Cong Attacks



Viet Cong Incidents (Excluding Attacks)



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II. POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN SOUTH VIETNAM

1. South Vietnam has accepted an invitation from the US Congress to send 12 deputies and two administrative assistants from its National Assembly in March to observe Congress in session, meet with Congressmen, and tour several American cities. The invitation was extended by a group of 26 US Representatives.

Lower House on Political Prisoners

2. The Lower House on 19 December decided to establish a special committee to review the cases of political prisoners arrested since 1 November 1963. The Upper House established a similar committee in mid-November, and both houses will probably draft amnesty resolutions covering some or all of the political prisoners.

3. The Lower House committee was apparently established in direct response to the government's trial of 26 "struggle" movement leaders. Most members of the House had hoped to secure either the release of the defendants or a postponement of the trial, but as the trial had already begun on the morning of the 19th, the government felt it could not accommodate the Lower House. The special committee will probably now give particular consideration to obtaining leniency for the defendants.

Viet Cong Attempt to Foment New "Struggle"

4. The Viet Cong are apparently attempting to exploit the outcry against the trial. [redacted]

[redacted] the Viet Cong Da Nang City Committee issued a directive on 2 December instructing Viet Cong cadres to incite and lead a movement to support the 26 defendants. The directive reportedly outlined a three-phase campaign for organizing a second "struggle" in Da Nang which would then spread to other cities, especially Hue. Forces for the new "struggle," according to the directive, would be drawn from among students, Buddhists, workers, and "the masses" both in and around Da Nang--in short, everyone in the area.

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5. The Communists have shown other signs of interest in the trial. On 12 December they broadcast a lengthy tirade against government "suppression," characterizing the trial as an act of reprisal. It is unlikely, however, that these Communist appeals will get far. The Viet Cong apparently have little significant influence with the Buddhists, and their activities among students in Da Nang and Hue are kept under close police scrutiny. It is therefore doubtful that they could successfully instigate a new "struggle" using these elements, and any direct appeals to the people would probably be unsuccessful. The Buddhists themselves may attempt to arouse public feeling against the trial, but they have not since 1966 been able to generate much public interest in their protest activities.

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IV. OTHER COMMUNIST MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS

1. One of the recently repatriated Spanish Foreign Legionnaires reports he personally observed Chinese military convoys moving south on the road from Bac Son to Thai Nguyen during October and November. The convoys consisted of trucks, tanks, and self-propelled and towed artillery. Most of the vehicles bore Chinese characters. The trucks in the convoy returned without cargo from the Thai Nguyen area and proceeded north. The convoys moved both at night and during the day.

2. The convoys could have come from the P'ing-hsiang area in China [redacted]
[redacted] over 100 field artillery pieces in the area in July and possibly 45 tanks in October. Many of the trucks appeared to have been moved across the border to parking areas at Dong Dang by early September. Some appeared [redacted] moving south along Route 1B which leads to Thai Nguyen.

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3. [redacted] Chinese Communist construction and antiaircraft troops are in North Vietnam, presumably supported by some local security forces. [redacted] does not suggest that organized Chinese ground combat forces have deployed into North Vietnam. Attempts are being made to obtain additional information [redacted] about the equipment and personnel [redacted] near Thai Nguyen. The Chinese troops may have been helping move equipment to both Chinese and North Vietnamese units. A Chinese antiaircraft division is believed to be deployed near Thai Nguyen.

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V. COMMUNIST POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

1. There is nothing of significance to report.

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VI. OTHER MAJOR ASPECTSTraffic in Laos Panhandle

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1. [redacted] during the first six weeks of the current dry season suggest that truck traffic in the Laos panhandle has been at about the same level as that of the same period last year.

2. A daily average of 13, 11, and 6 trucks, respectively, were reported moving south between 1 November and 14 December near the Mu Gia Pass and on routes 23 and 911. Little or no traffic was reported moving south on routes in the southern panhandle, except on route 914, which had a daily average of four.

3. The level of traffic reported north of Tchepone seems reasonable but does not necessarily include all traffic. The traffic reported in the southern panhandle, however, appears low in view of photography during the past month which shows that the Communists are continuing to improve the roadnet in the southern panhandle. Rainy season damage to Route 922 leading to the A Chau Valley in South Vietnam has been repaired and new improvements are being made. Route 165 opposite the central highlands in South Vietnam is being extended, and may eventually connect with South Vietnamese Route 14. This construction effort suggests that more supplies will be moved through the panhandle this dry season than last winter. So far, however, truck traffic has not exceeded the levels of previous years.

4. Both the Paul Doumer and the Canal des Rapides bridges on the main transport approach to Hanoi were extensively damaged in the past week. Traffic from China and Haiphong will be delayed--although not halted--at these two river crossings until repairs are made.

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5. [redacted]

three spans of the Doumer Bridge, totaling about 840 feet, have been dropped and another 350-foot span badly damaged. [redacted]

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[redacted] two spans of the main Canal des Rapides Bridge, totaling about 214 feet, have been dropped and a third 107-foot span damaged.

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6. On past experience, the replacement of dropped spans will probably require several weeks. In the meanwhile, traffic will be forced to cross the Red River and the Canal des Rapides by ferries and pontoon bridges.

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