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DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE

MEMORANDUM

The Situation in Vietnam

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Information as of 1600
27 December 1967

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HIGHLIGHTS

The first major ground action after the Christmas cease-fire occurred north of Quang Tri city. South Vietnamese Army units engaged units of North Vietnam's 5th Regiment.

I. The Military Situation in South Vietnam:
South Vietnamese Army forces reported killing over 200 Communist troops in a battle near Quang Tri city on 26 December (Paras. 1-3). There are indications that additional enemy forces may be moving from the central highlands south to III Corps (Paras. 4-7). The Weekly Review of South Vietnam Battle Statistics (Para. 8). (Charts)

II. Political Developments in South Vietnam:
Senator Nguyen Van Ngai has reportedly drafted a political parties law for presentation to the National Assembly (Paras. 1-2). Acting Foreign Minister Lam believes Saigon will be under pressure to close the Mekong River because of South Vietnam's problems with Cambodia (Paras. 3-5).

III. North Vietnamese Military Developments:
[redacted] increase in truck traffic in southern North Vietnam during the Christmas cease-fire (Paras. 1-3).

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

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

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I. THE MILITARY SITUATION IN SOUTH VIETNAM

1. South Vietnamese Army forces reported that they killed more than 200 Communist troops on 26 December some nine miles northeast of Quang Tri city, the northernmost province's capital. This was the first major ground engagement after the Christmas truce.

2. The government infantrymen, supported by tanks and helicopter gunships, also captured 42 enemy weapons. They described their losses as "light." The enemy unit was identified as the 416th Battalion of the North Vietnamese 5th Regiment.

3. In the central highlands an enemy force overran a hamlet on the outskirts of Kontum city early on 27 December and killed 12 South Vietnamese civilians and wounded 26.

Possible Enemy Reinforcements Moving to III Corps

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North Vietnamese forces are moving from the central highlands southward to the III Corps area.

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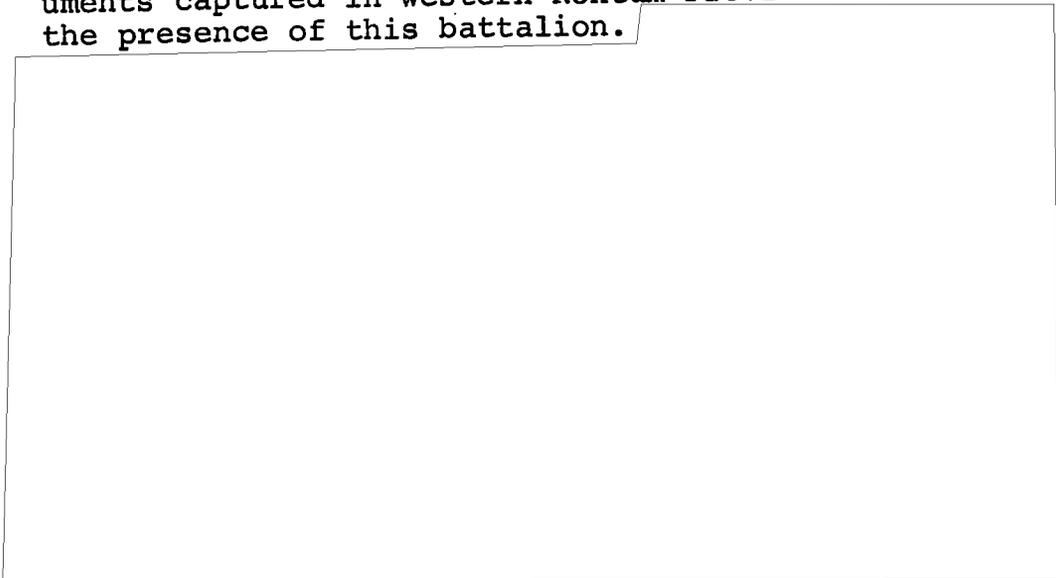
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6. A Communist captured recently in the highlands stated that a battalion of the North Vietnamese 673rd Regiment had infiltrated to the B-3 Front in June and was to continue "southward." Documents captured in western Kontum Province confirmed the presence of this battalion.

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Weekly Review of South Vietnam Battle Statistics

8. The week of 17-23 December compared with the week of 10-16 December:

I. Casualties

	<u>VC/NVA</u>		<u>US</u>	
	<u>10-16 Dec</u>	<u>17-23 Dec</u>	<u>10-16 Dec</u>	<u>17-23 Dec</u>
Killed	1,685	1,523	187	166
Wounded	-----	-----	932	1,627
Missing/ Captured	-----	-----	---	-----
TOTALS	1,685	1,523	1,119	1,793

	<u>GVN</u>		<u>FREE WORLD</u>	
	<u>10-16 Dec</u>	<u>17-23 Dec</u>	<u>10-16 Dec</u>	<u>17-23 Dec</u>
Killed	278	234	13	20
Wounded	641	629	18	34
Missing/ Captured	179	26	---	---
TOTALS	1,098	889	31	54

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II. Viet Cong Incidents

	<u>10-16 Dec</u>	<u>17-23 Dec</u>
Attacks	56	51
Battalion or Larger	0	2
Small Unit.	56	49
Harassment	233	358
Terrorism	32	37
Sabotage	26	56
Propaganda	7	5
Antiaircraft	<u>195</u>	<u>105</u>
TOTALS	549	612

III. Weapons Captured

	<u>VC/NVA</u>		<u>GVN</u>	
	<u>10-16 Dec</u>	<u>17-23 Dec</u>	<u>10-16 Dec</u>	<u>17-23 Dec</u>
Individual	415	Not	269	137
Crew-Served	58	Reported	5	8
TOTALS	<u>473</u>		<u>274</u>	<u>145</u>

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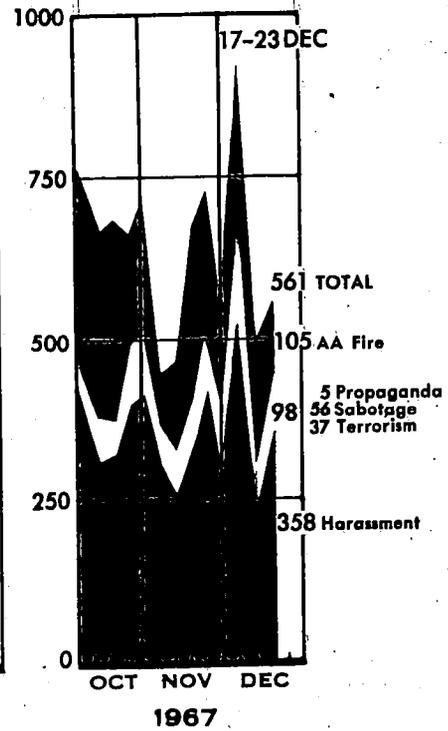
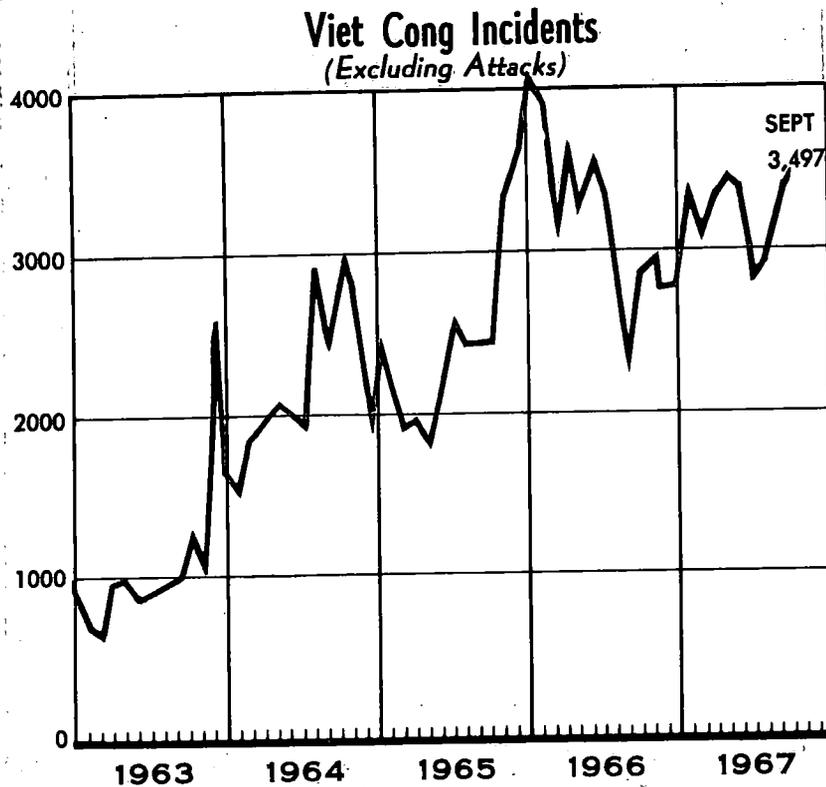
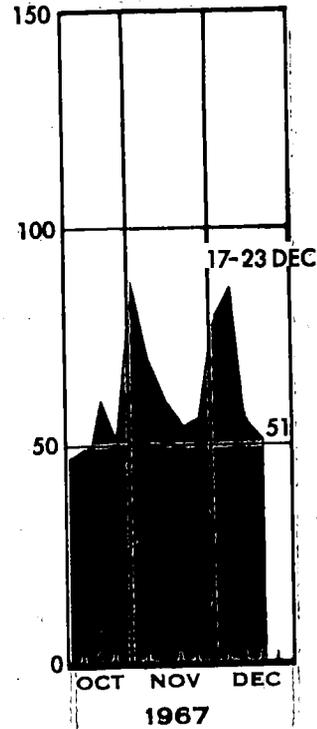
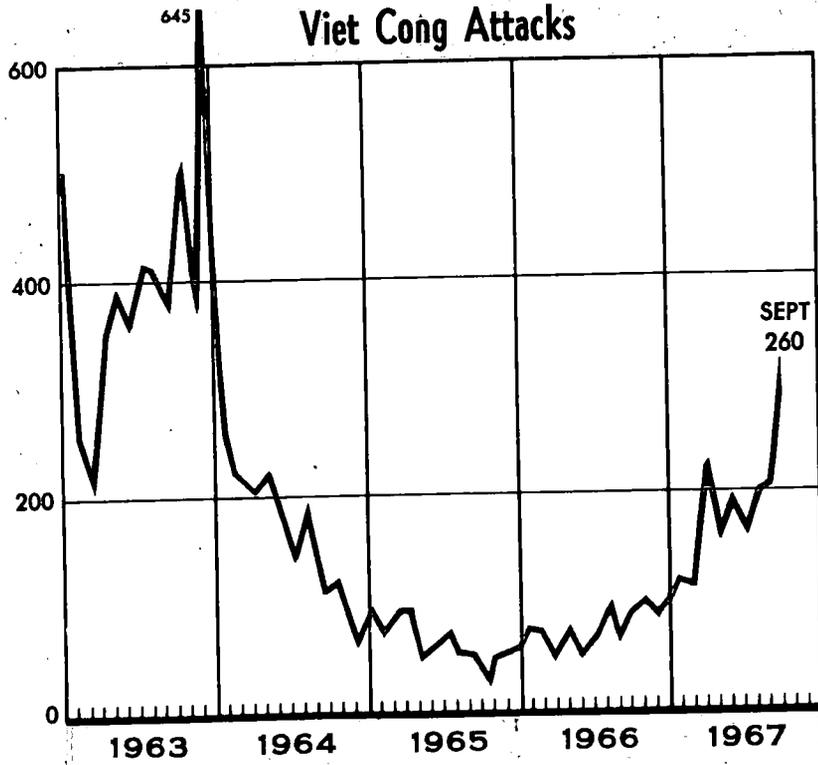


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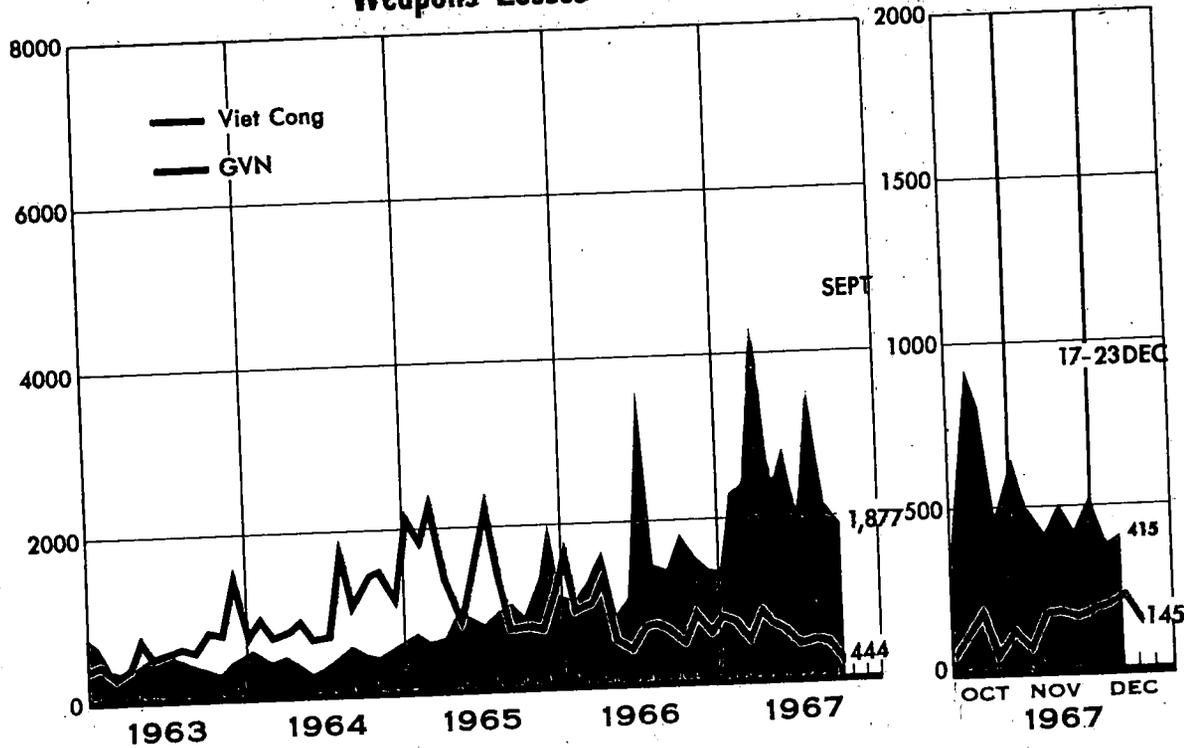


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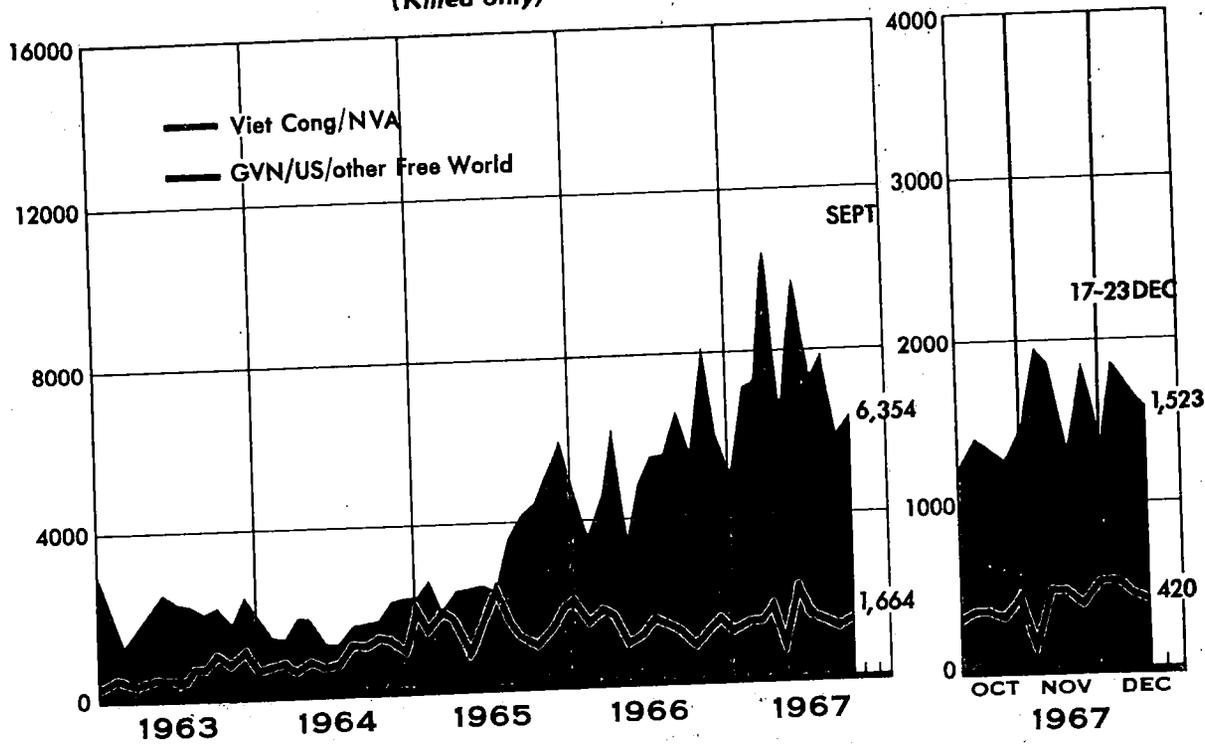
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Weapons Losses



Casualties (Killed only)*



US Casualties to Date: Killed 15,812 Wounded 99,303 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.

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II. POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN SOUTH VIETNAM

1. Senator Nguyen Van Ngai intends to circulate a draft of a proposed law dealing with the creation of political parties [REDACTED]. Ngai reportedly believes that the National Assembly would take at least two months to draft such legislation, and is taking the initiative himself by presenting the assembly with a draft from which it can work. He will circulate his draft on 29 December [REDACTED] and will also give copies to the press.

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2. Ngai's draft reportedly includes provisions which would facilitate the development of a two-party system and eliminate clandestine and regional parties. Political groups would be required to establish publicly identified provincial committees in at least ten provinces before qualifying as legal parties. Ngai claims that President Thieu urged him several weeks ago to help him draft a political parties law, but Ngai has not consulted with Thieu on his current draft. Although Ngai expects opposition from several quarters to certain provisions of his proposed law, he is reportedly confident that it will be approved essentially as written.

South Vietnamese - Cambodian Relations

3. Acting Foreign Minister Pham Dang Lam recently discussed with an embassy officer the contents of Cambodia's reply of 26 December to the note of 4 December from the United States on problems along the Cambodian - South Vietnamese border. Lam expressed concern that the South Vietnamese Government will be under pressure to take a public position when Phnom Penh's reply is released. Pressures would come, he believed, not only from the South Vietnamese Senate, which has addressed a letter to the government asking for an explanation of its attitude toward Cambodia, but also from the South Vietnamese press and the public for an explanation of measures their government intends to take with respect to Cambodia.

4. Lam felt that the government would have to take into consideration public resentment about past Cambodian provocations. Hinting at a possible closure

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of the Mekong River, he said that the Mekong River Convention of 1954 would have to be re-examined in the light of present developments. Lam anticipated that most Vietnamese would probably support action to bloc shipping up the Mekong to Cambodia.

5. The embassy believes pressures will probably mount not only to close the Mekong but also possibly to enact a forceful policy of "hot pursuit" for South Vietnamese forces. The time when the government might have been prepared to make some conciliatory gesture toward Cambodia as a step toward restoring normal relations has apparently passed. Foreign Minister Tran Van Do's statement of 26 December in Paris suggests that the government is giving serious thought to "hot pursuit." The whole Cambodian question will be aired at the monthly cabinet meeting scheduled for 28 December.

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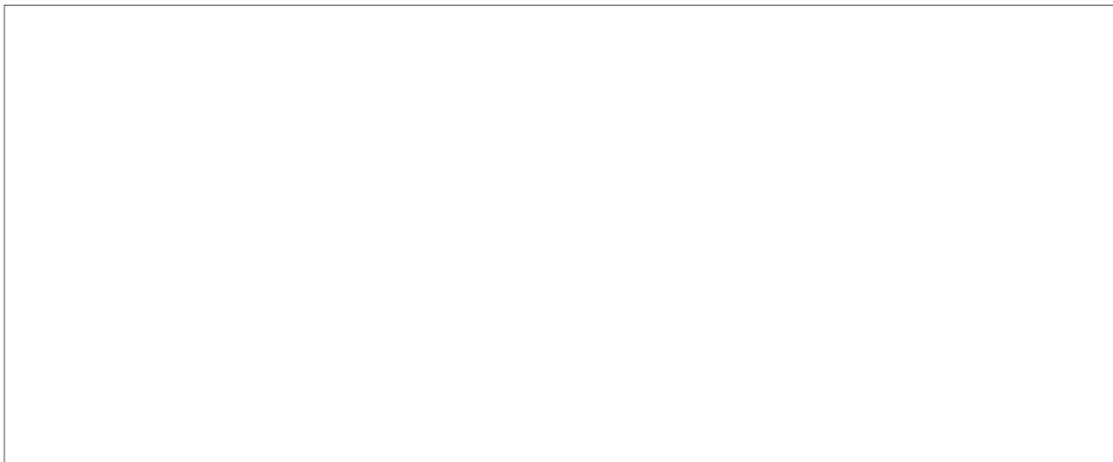
III. NORTH VIETNAMESE MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS

1. [redacted] increase in truck traffic in southern North Vietnam during the Christmas cease-fire. It is not possible, however, to estimate the quantity of goods moved south on the basis of this evidence.

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2. In the week ending 25 December, a special effort was made to observe truck traffic in southern North Vietnam. About 900 trucks were observed on routes south of Thanh Hoa and north and south of Quang Khe, compared with only about 84 trucks observed the previous week under normal conditions. During and just after the Christmas cease-fire, about half the 900 trucks were observed moving even farther south toward the Demilitarized Zone. Large concentrations of trucks were near Vinh and in the Quang Khe area. Photography of 25 December showed a large number of trucks near Quang Khe unloading their cargoes for further shipment south by water. Considerable traffic was also observed continuing on Routes 137 and 15 leading toward the North Vietnam - Laos border.

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