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Friday, November 17, 1967
6:30 AM
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MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

South Vietnam

Dak To airfield, the scene of four enemy mortar attacks totalling some 90 rounds on Wednesday, was hit yesterday with a 43-round barrage. Little damage was done yesterday however. The attacks on Wednesday killed 20 Americans and wounded 22 in addition to destroying two heavy transport planes and igniting ammunition dumps.

US casualties in the two weeks of fighting in the Dak To area now stand at 121 killed and over 600 wounded. Approximately 700 enemy have been killed.

Last evening, 9 miles northwest of Dak To, elements of an ARVN Airborne battalion were attacked by an estimated two platoon enemy force. Enemy mines were also encountered. Thus far 15 ARVN have been wounded; enemy casualties are not known. As of 3:30 this morning contact was reported continuing.

Four miles southwest of Dak To a US Army company engaged an enemy force in well dug-in positions last night. Another company has been sent in to reinforce and tactical air and artillery are supporting. At last report the fighting was continuing. An interim casualty report indicates 12 US killed and 10 wounded.

In the First Corps area, Marine and ARVN patrols have reported killing 53 enemy in scattered small-unit actions. The only friendly casualties reported were 3 ARVN killed and 7 wounded.

In Operation Kien Giang 9-1, centered 35 miles northeast of Can Tho, a US Army company reported light contact with an enemy unit yesterday. One US soldier was killed and 9 were wounded compared with 11 enemy reported killed.

North Vietnam

US pilots flew 240 sorties yesterday. Among the significant strikes were the Hanoi Bac Main Airfield, 3 miles south of Hanoi, and the Hanoi Ship Yard Thuong, 4 miles southeast of Hanoi, which was struck for the first time. Additionally, the Ke Sat highway bridge pontoon bypass, 21 miles southeast of Hanoi was hit. Strikes scheduled against Haiphong Shipyard No. 4 were cancelled because of foreign shipping in the vicinity of the target.

Four US aircraft were lost yesterday. One F-105D was lost 30 miles southwest of Hanoi; the pilot ejected and search operations are in progress. An F-4B was lost 20 miles southeast of Hanoi; the crew is believed to have gone down with the craft. An RF-4C was hit 23 miles northeast of Hanoi by [redacted]

crewmembers were recovered. An F-4B was hit by a SAM 24 miles southwest of Haiphong; the crew was captured.

Two North Vietnamese MIG-21s and 4 US F-4s fought a prolonged air battle 50 miles west of Hanoi yesterday. The MIGs later recovered at Communist China's Ning-ning Airfield. No aircraft were lost by either side.

The engagement was unusual because Hanoi's MIG-21s customarily have refrained from attacking US planes, particularly F-4s, unless they have a distinct tactical advantage. This time they chose to fight despite being outnumbered and extended the battle beyond their usual hit-and-run tactics. The incident also marked the third time North Vietnamese MIGs have landed in China after a combat mission.

Casualties reported during the past 24 hours -- to 5:30 AM

	<u>Killed</u>	<u>Wounded</u>
Enemy	64	--
United States	13	19
South Vietnamese	3	22

All casualties were undoubtedly higher but were not reported because of ongoing actions.

Late Item

Moscow Radio is carrying a report of extensive civilian casualties and damage to the Diplomatic center in Hanoi as a result of last night's bombing. We have also received a report from the Indonesian Ambassador in Hanoi to the effect that US air activity over Hanoi this morning caused considerable damage in the Diplomatic quarter of the city. Among the buildings reported hit were the Soviet Military attache's office, the ICC office building where an Indian sergeant was reported killed, and the British Consulate office. It is not clear from the reports whether the ordnance falling on these buildings was all from US aircraft or whether some was from antiaircraft activity. The hit on the Soviet office was described as from a rocket.

White House Situation Room

Arthur McCaffrey
Briefing Officer