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INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

By iso, NARA, Date 8-14-95

Vietnam Elections Situation Report No. 1

SUMMARY

The CIA Station in Saigon advises that the VC have apparently learned a lesson from last year's fiasco when they advertised that they would smash the Constituent Assembly elections and actually did very little. This time they are promising less and doing more. The number of significant incidents of Communist violence is now at least three or four times normal and well above last year's pre-election level. Significant enemy-initiated activity has increased during the week throughout South Vietnam. While none of this recent activity has had the impact of the earlier shelling of Can Tho, the assault on Quang Ngai, or the attack on Thang Binh District headquarters, recent terrorist actions do show the enemy's capability to hit the people. To date, however, we have seen no evidence that this terrorism is likely to cause a significant reduction in voter turn-out.

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1. Saigon: The Combined Security Committee has a report that VC cadre operating in the Saigon area will shell the city on the night of 2-3 September. An artillery attack will start at 0500 hours on 3 September (1700 hours, 2 September Washington time) against sensitive installations in the Capital, especially polling booths. In support of the attack VC special mission cadres will set off explosions simultaneously at numerous polling places in order to prevent election participation.

2. In the past 72 hours, there have been twelve terrorist incidents in the Saigon area, resulting in 1 VC dead, 2 US dead, 18 VN wounded and 3 US wounded. Eight of these incidents, including four involving US personnel, took place during the night of 1-2 September. All US personnel killed and one of the US wounded were in Cholon area, which US personnel had been warned to avoid.

3. General: In I Corps, all major population centers except Quang Tri were attacked during the past week. There was a sharp increase in attacks by fire along the coast of II Corps; propaganda, terrorism, and sabotage were evident in III Corps, and indiscriminate mining of roads and shelling of civilians was the rule in IV Corps. In the period 26 through 31 August, there were 324 incidents compared to the weekly average for 1967 of 478 but a better indicator of the intensity is the level of activity as measured by the increase in assaults, attacks by fire, kidnapping, and mining.

4. I Corps: In the past 24 hours I Corps reported the kidnapping of a hamlet chief, 12 subchiefs, and 52 civilians near Hoi An for the third group abduction in the area. Also in the Hoi An area, a resettlement camp was mortared resulting in one killed, one wounded, and the destruction of 50 houses.

5. In II Corps, a polling place was attacked and burned at Song Cau with three wounded. Near Tuy Hoa a base camp was attacked and an artillery position was mortared. The Dien Khanh District headquarters, Khanh Hoa Province was attacked by an unknown number of enemy with hand thrown charges killing two civilians and wounding 30. The Du Long District Hqs. and MACV Team No. 39, Ninh Thuan, received small arms and mortar fire killing one civilian and wounding 9.

6. In III Corps, terrorism and sabotage in the past day included detonation of a bike bomb in Ben Cat, Binh Duong Province, wounding 17 civilians and two ARVN. In Hau Nghia, Binh Long and Bien Hoa Provinces, highways 1, 13, and 15 were interdicted by mining of bridges and culverts.

7. IV Corps reports a civilian bus detonating a mine in Dinh Tuong with casualties of 10 civilians killed and 15 wounded. Also in Dinh Tuong two bridges were destroyed along highway 4. In Vinh Long, Tra An District town was mortared with 15 civilians wounded.