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By isp, NARA, Date 8-14-95

COUNTRY NORTH VIETNAM

DOI 5 AUGUST 1967

SUBJECT OFFICIAL NORTH VIETNAMESE BRIEFING FOR FOREIGNERS ON NORTH VIETNAM'S DIKE
SYSTEM AND ALLEGED AMERICAN AIR ATTACKS AGAINST THE DIKES

ACQ

FIELD NO.

SOURCE

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SUMMARY. ON 5 AUGUST 1967 PHAM MY, THE NORTH VIETNAMESE VICE MINISTER OF HYDROLOGY, DESCRIBED THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE NORTH VIETNAMESE DIKE SYSTEM TO THE MEMBERS OF A VISITING FOREIGN DELEGATION. MY CHARGED THAT AMERICAN AIRCRAFT HAVE BEEN SYSTEMATICALLY

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BOMBING THE DIKES FOR ALMOST TWO YEARS. HE CLAIMED THE VIETNAMESE HAVE DEVELOPED A SYSTEM FOR RAPIDLY REPAIRING THE DIKES AND ARE BUILDING PARALLEL DIKES IN KEY AREAS IN PREPARATION FOR INCREASED AMERICAN ATTACKS ON EXISTING DIKES.

1. ON 5 AUGUST THE NORTH VIETNAMESE VICE MINISTER OF HYDROLOGY, PHAM MY, BRIEFED A VISITING FOREIGN DELEGATION ON THE NORTH VIETNAM DIKE SYSTEM. MY SUPPORTED HIS BRIEFING WITH CHARTS AND PHOTOGRAPHS AND WAS BOTH CONVINCING AND OBVIOUSLY VERY SERIOUS THROUGHOUT THE MEETING. HE BEGAN HIS TALK WITH A SHORT BRIEFING ON THE HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE NORTH VIETNAMESE DIKE SYSTEM, NOTING THAT PRIOR TO THE MID-1950S IT WAS NOT UNUSUAL FOR RICE GROWING AREAS OF THE RED RIVER DELTA TO BE INUNDATED FOR PERIOD OF UP TO THREE YEARS. THE NORTH VIETNAMESE AGRARIAN REFORM PROGRAM BEGAN IN THE MID-1950S AND THE PRESENT DIKE SYSTEM DEVELOPED AT THE SAME TIME. THE DELTA AREA AND THE SURROUNDING PLAIN WHERE THE DIKE SYSTEM IS CONCENTRATED NOW CONTAINS NINE MILLION PEOPLE AND THE POPULATION DENSITY VARIES FROM 600 TO 1500 PER SQUARE KILOMETER. EIGHTY PERCENT OF THE RICE GROWING AREA IN NORTH VIETNAM IS NOW ARTIFICIALLY IRRIGATED AND THIS IS POSSIBLE BECAUSE OF THE DIKE SYSTEM. THE NORTH VIETNAMESE ARE WELL AWARE OF THE VULNERABILITY OF THE DIKES TO AIR ATTACK AND ARE MAKING AN EFFORT TO INSURE THAT THE SYSTEM WILL BE SECURE AGAINST SUCH ATTACK. THE AMERICANS HAVE BEEN BOMBING THE DIKES FOR THE PAST TWO YEARS AND THE CURRENT VIETNAMESE EXPERTISE FOR REPAIRING DAMAGED DIKES HAS DEVELOPED AS A RESULT OF THIS BOMBING. THE VIETNAMESE HAVE INSTITUTED A SYSTEM WHEREBY REPAIR MATERIALS AND LABOR BRIGADES ARE AVAILABLE IMMEDIATELY IN MANY KEY AREAS. THEY ARE THUS ABLE TO BEGIN REPAIRING THE DIKES ALMOST AS SOON AS THE AIRCRAFT LEAVE THE SCENE. THEY HAVE ALSO STARTED

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CONSTRUCTION OF SMALLER DIKES PARALLEL TO KEY DIKES BUT ON HIGHER GROUND SO THAT ANY MAJOR BOMB DAMAGE TO KEY DIKES WILL AFFECT ONLY A SMALL AREA AS THE WATER RELEASED WILL AGAIN BE CONTAINED WHEN IT REACHES THE LEVEL OF THE PARALLEL DIKE.

2. MY CLAIMED THAT THERE WERE 55 AMERICAN AIR ATTACKS SPECIFICALLY AGAINST DIKES IN 1966 AND THAT THERE HAVE BEEN 36 SUCH ATTACKS SO FAR IN 1967. THESE ATTACKS HAVE BEEN DIRECTED PRIMARILY AGAINST THE REGIONS NEAR THE TRA LY RIVER IN THAI BINH PROVINCE AND THE NINH CO RIVER IN NAM HAN PROVINCE. BOMBS OF UP TO 3,000 POUNDS HAVE BEEN USED IN THESE ATTACKS. MY EXHIBITED TO THE GROUP BEFORE AND AFTER PHOTOGRAPHS WHICH HE SAID SHOWED CERTAIN DIKES DAMAGED BY BOMBS AND THE SAME DIKES AFTER THEY HAD BEEN REPAIRED.

3. COMMENT. THE NORTH VIETNAMESE BRIEFING WAS PROBABLY A PART OF AN EFFORT TO CONVINCING VISITORS THAT THE UNITED STATES WAS CONDUCTING A PROGRAM TO DESTROY NORTH VIETNAM DIKES. NEVERTHELESS, THE INDIVIDUAL WHO ATTENDED THE BRIEFING WAS CONVINCED THE NORTH VIETNAMESE WERE GREATLY CONCERNED OVER THE POSSIBILITY OF A CONCERTED AMERICAN AIR ATTACK AGAINST THE DIKE SYSTEM, PARTICULARLY DURING THE COMING HIGH WATER SEASON.

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