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Reh

MESSAGE

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
STAFF COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE

STATE SECRET
ROUTINE

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FROM: ALUSNA SAIGON VIETNAM FROM SANA SGD KIDDER
TO: DEPT OF STATE WASH DC, DEPTAR WASH DC, DEPT OF NAVY
WASH DC, DEPT OF AIR FORCE WASH DC
INFO: CINCPAC PEARL HARBOR TH, CINCFE/TOKYO JAPAN, COMFEAF
TOKYO JAPAN, CGUSARPAC FT SHAFTER TH, COMNAVPHIL,
CTG 50.1, COMNAVFE JAPAN (CINCPAC)
NR: 6/NFT JOINT WEEKA 18 070645Z MAY 55

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Part 1. Political:

Aftermath of battle: National Army after series fights limited in scope but not in ferocity has eliminated Binh Xuyen organized military force in Saigon-Cholon and has averted their immediate threat to government. Only remaining organized Binh Xuyen groups in city hold isolated former surete headquarters and another post in "French security zone", where they constitute source of irritation but not military threat. National Army offensive south of Saigon May 2-3 (see military) drove remaining Binh Xuyen forces further from capital. VNA May 5 however ceased operations for "3 for 4 days".

Binh Xuyen leaders Le Van Vien, Lai Van Sang, Lai Xuu Tai appear to have escaped and may now attempt carry out threat to organize guerrilla warfare. Outstanding individual casualty was General Trinh Minh The, Cao Bai leader rallied to government, killed while leading his forces against Binh Xuyen.

Victory was costly to civil population of city. Column of smoke from burning buildings was virtual landmark over Cholon during most of week as widespread destruction was caused while Binh Xuyen were driven from city. (UNCLASSIFIED)

Prime Minister Diem, his position bolstered by forceful reaction to Binh Xuyen, successfully resisted Bao Dai's summons to France and attempt to take military command from his hands. Inspector General Nguyen Van Vy, after abortive effort carry out Chief of State orders to assume military command, returned, discredited, to Dalat. General Nguyen Van Hinh, dispatched by Bao Dai from France as political emissary, was stopped in Phnom

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Status on evacuation 1 May: Non-French civilians 601,618; French civilians 37,241; Vietnamese military 57,970; French military 85,019; Grand total 781,848.

Resettlement data for this week not available because office of commissioner general for refugees destroyed by fire during disturbances.

Ministry of Social Action estimates forty to fifty thousand persons burned out or displaced as result Bien Xuyen-National Army battle Saigon area. To meet emergency shelter and relief needs USOM mission released 3 million piastres, French 1 million piastres, and Vietnamese Government 4 million piastres. USOM imported prefabricated housing frames will be erected immediately on burned out sites to provide 360 family dwelling units for 1,800 persons. Additional units to be erected as situation permits. Direct relief Saigon area to victims administered by Filipino-Vietnamese JC. 250,000 piastres disbursed for direct relief. (LIMITED OFFICIAL USE).

Psychological: (Begin UNCLASSIFIED).

During past week all local newspapers have been devoting most of space to accounts of fighting which broke out April 28, peoples revolutionary committee activities, meeting of National Congress which opened May 4, and violent attacks on Chief of State Bao Dai and "French colonialists".

All newspapers carried numerous declarations by revolutionary committee and Congress, and protests against summons of Diem to Cannes by Bao Dai. These declarations were all anti-Bao Dai and anti-French. (All Vietnamese papers are per force pro-government.)

One newspaper ran double column cut of Chief of State with huge X mark inked in over face; another paper carried picture of Bao Dai with big dog, over query-caption asking, "which face if most sympathetic ques".

All Vietnamese-language newspapers have carried stories accusing French "colonialists" of actively assisting Binh Xuyen in fight against National Army. French-language Journal D Extreme Orient has been just as vigorous in its denials; Journal sensing bitter anti-French feeling existing locally, May 5 carried warning to French to stay out of gatherings and be wary of their activities after dark.

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"imperialism". Ho Chi Minhs absence-radio fails to mention him-leads to speculation whether Ho has gone to Kunming for talks where Chou En Lai repaired after the Bandung conference. (UNCLASSIFIED).

Last weeks reemphasis on "forced evacuation" charges continues this week with reports of mass protest rallies being held throughout north. General Van Tien Dung formally requested armistice commission to investigate charges. Party organ Nhan Dan denounces as "US maneuvers" further evacuations of northern refugees to south; paper asks rhetorically: "Who actually respects freedom of movement?" (UNCLASSIFIED)

Radio avidly reports (from western news sources) details of fighting in Saigon, blaming "American intervention" for provoking crisis and stepping up its call for new government which will "respect peoples rights, abide by armistice and cooperate with north". DRV reaction to anti-Bao Dai campaign is summed up in line "Diem has taken off his mask", thus showing his American sponsors. French authorities are criticized for failing to maintain order in south as required by armistice agreements. (UNCLASSIFIED).

Hanoi:

Organized program mass meetings workers and soldiers, parades and sporting events marked local government celebration May Day which emphasized Viet Minh workers connection with our world league of labor associations. Delegation Polish Catholic priests visiting Delta provinces advised people not evacuate south and protested against "American plots force evacuation". Local press claimed thousands, who had previously evacuated south, have now returned North Vietnam.

In order compensate for high cost living, Viet Minh announced salary raise former French administration workers who stayed on job after "liberation". Regime also announced formation town-country liaison committee handle land reform problems involving absentee landlords residing in city. Ho Chi Minh proclaimed establishment autonomous regions Thai and Meo minorities North Vietnam effective May 7.

Local government press highlighted recent fighting and political events Saigon charging incidents result of "American imperialist intervention". (SECRET).

Military - Army.

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French Navy assumed security Saigon business-hotel district adjacent naval port, maintaining heavily armed motorized patrols of Commandos and sailors with their colorful pompons rouge flat hats. (UNCLASSIFIED)

Carrier LaFayette arrived Cap St Jacques 3 May for final evacuation of North Vietnam. 13 May, Haiphong and environs; 15 May, Do Son Peninsula; 16 May, Do Son Proper; 18 May, Cac Ba, Surprise, Union and Paix Islands. (CONFIDENTIAL)

King Norodom Suramarit in public ceremony opened Cambodian Navy instruction center at Chru-Changvar (Phnom Penh). (UNCLASSIFIED)

Ship movements: MDAP newest type mine sweeps Alysse (ex-USS 95), Myosotis (ex-USS 123) and Paquerette (ex-USS 140) to be returned USN Subic Bay, Philippines about 30 May. USS LSSLS 9022, 9023 and 9026 to be returned USN Yokosuka, June. (CONFIDENTIAL).

USS Diachenko (APD 123) relieved USS Cook (APD 130) as station ship Haiphong. (UNCLASSIFIED)

Polish Kilinsko departed Qui Nhon central regroupment zone 3 May for North Vietnam unengaged final phase Viet Minh lift. (UNCLASSIFIED).

Air:

Officer reassignment: Lt Col Sagon, French officer formerly commander of Vietnamese Air Force, was designated this week as Commander of Bien Hoa Airfield close to Saigon, effective 15 May.

Comment: Col Sagon dissatisfied with change in assignment as he feels he has confidence of Vietnamese Army generals. He is afraid that after his departure new French Commander will be bypassed by VNAF Staff Officers who will deal directly with subordinates in Air Force because of their current feeling against French.

Cambodian Air Force: Cambodian air force received last week 3 Morane-Saulnier 733 aircraft. Four more planes of same type scheduled for delivery this month.

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