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MESSAGE

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ROUTINE

FROM: ALUSNA SAIGON VIETNAM FROM SANA SGD KIDDER
TO : CSUSA DEPTAR WASH DC, SECY STATE WASH DC, DEPT OF
NAVY WASH DC, CSUSAF WASH DC
INFO: CINCPAC PEARL HARBOR TH, CINCFE TOKYO JAPAN,
CGUSARPAC FT SHAFTER TH, COMNAVPHIL MANILA PI, CTG
50.1, COMNAVFE JAPAN, COMFEAF TOKYO JAPAN
NR : 140545Z JOINT WEEKA 19 MAY 55

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Part 1. Political.

Third Diem cabinet: Prime Minister Diem May 10 announced new cabinet of 12 Ministers and 1 Deputy Minister. Four members are hold-overs. Principal posts go to Bui Van Thinh (Interior; formerly Min Justice), Vu Van Mau (Foreign Affairs; formerly President of Court of Cassation, member Bandung Delegation), Tran Trung Dung (Defense Deputy, Diem retaining Ministry; promoted from Sec State for Defense), Tran Chanh Thanh (Information; Sec State at Presidency in first Diem cabinet). Holdovers Tran Huu Phuong and Nguyen Duong Don have Economic-Finance, Education respectively. (UNCLASSIFIED)

First session new cabinet May 12 decided on establishment inter-Ministry group including ministers Interior, Justice, Information to organize general elections.

Comment: New cabinet only in numerical sense represents true broadening of Govt; most common Saigon reaction to date has been "who are they?". New members either technicians or staunch Diem backers (or both). Cao Dai got Ministries Labor and Agriculture under technicality of representation Cao Dai political fronts. Local observers speculate this "technician cabinet" may be intended only insure interim until general elections; Diem's statement presenting cabinet again emphasized intentions of early elections for National Assembly. (CONFIDENTIAL)

National Congress (Estates General) (WEEKA 18): Congress (Govt sponsored) formally completed labors May 5, adopting resolutions (1) Calling on Bao Dai to confirm Diem's full powers until National Assembly convened, when powers would be transferred from Chief of State to Assembly; (2) Oppose maneuvers of Communists, protesting coexistence engineered DA IN 140129 (15 May 55)

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Transfer of University: University at Saigon passed May 11 from joint Franco-Vietnamese control to full Vietnamese Government jurisdiction. (UNCLASSIFIED)

Trinh Minh The, ex-Cao Dai dissident killed fighting with National Army against Binh Xuyen (WEEKA 18), was rendered nation-wide honors, interred at scene of many of his guerrilla exploits. The's Deputy, Col Van Thanh Cao, succeeded to command of the forces and was promoted to Brig Gen in National Army. (UNCLASSIFIED)

Haiphong transfer: Phased turnover to Vietminh of last French Union beachhead in north Vietnam, in accordance Geneva Agreements, reportedly has proceeded on schedule despite demonstrations in Haiphong led by agitators trucked in by Vietminh. Haiphong City was transferred May 13; last French forces will leave Do Son May 18. (UNCLASSIFIED)

Refugees: 2,044 escapees entered Haiphong during week ending 1 May and 1,303 during week ending 8 May. 361 refugees arrived Haiphong 25 April with Vietminh Laissez-passers, transported to debarkation line by vehicle with Vietminh escort under ICC supervision. Report additional evacuees expected this route.

Status of evacuation 7 May: Non-French civilians 605,281; French civilians 37,321; Vietnamese troops 58,893; French troops 85,226; grand total 786,721.

Status resettlement: South Vietnam 7 May 377,387 refugees on resettlement sites and 32,554 housing units completed. Central Vietnam 110,151 refugees on resettlement sites and 6,281 housing units completed.

Physical inspection warehouses, docks Haiphong by US personnel indicates no MDAP or other American aid equipment left Haiphong. (LIMITED OFFICIAL USE)

Psychological: (Begin UNCLASSIFIED)

Anti-Bao Dai campaign continued with many papers denouncing Chief of State in editorials and cartoons. Considerable space was devoted to Senator Knowland's comment that Vietnamese must choose their own type of Government. Continuing anti-French comment and questioning of US purpose in Vietnam were noteworthy subjects.

DA IN 140129

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All available French shipping concentrated in Baie d Along area at present time in anticipation of final mass exodus of refugees from Tonkin Delta. Number of refugees during last phase seeking transportation to Free South has been disappointing to date. However, shipping is available if and when mass exodus does come.

Entire operation is backed up by 2 French carriers-- Lafayette and Bois Belleau and French cruiser Montcalm, which are stationed off beaches of Do Son. (CONFIDENTIAL)

Air:

French Air Force visit to Japan: Three French Air Force air crews departed Vietnam 4 May on goodwill mission to Japan, returning to Saigon on 9 May. Flight of Nord 2501 planes (similar to USAF "Packet") from 2/64 Transport Squadron was commanded by Lt Col Avenard. (UNCLASSIFIED)

Comment: Nord 2501 flight expected to leave IndoChina before 15 June 1955. Flight to Japan probably last official gesture prior to Squadrons final departure. (CONFIDENTIAL)

Hanoi:

Commie press gave large coverage establishment Thai-Meo autonomous zones North Vietnam and Congress Vietminh leaders met to implement this plan by which DRV will retain strict control over military, police, economic and legislative functions of autonomous area. Local press also called for repatriation to North Vietnam of 50,000 Vietnamese allegedly residing in Thailand.

First peoples court trial, witnessed by several thousand people, reported held Hanoi in which 5 students charged with "forcing other students evacuate south". Press announced defendants convicted and 3 received prison sentences. Vietminh have also reportedly taken over Lycee Honore de Balzac and demoted French founder to rank of teacher.

Vietminh announced preparations tenth month harvest emphasizing contribution cattle, seed and tools, plowing all fallow land and giving special attention flood control measures. DRV announcements of land reform program implied adherence Commie principles and possible future collectivization.

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Catholic sources indicated continued Vietminh harassment Catholic clergy including refusal grant missionaries reentry permits North Vietnam. (SECRET)

ACTION: G2

INFO : G3, JIC, OSA, OSD, PSYWAR, CAMG, AF, NAVY, STATE

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