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ACTION DEPARTMENT 979, INFORMATION CINCPAC 439, COM 3AF, CLARK AFB, PHNOM PENH, BANGKOK, VIENTIANE, MANILA, PARIS, SINGAPORE, TAIPEI, HUE, HONG KONG, LONDON UNNUMBERED, DEPARTMENT PASS JCS/ISA, AGSI, DCNO, CIA, HQUSAF (AFCIN & AFCIN (E-A)) AID, CINCPAC ALSO PASS CINCPAC POLAD, CINCPACFLT, CINCUSARPAC, CINCPACAF, BANGKOK ALSO PASS JUSMAAG, PHNOM PENH ALSO PASS MAAG, VIENTIANE, ALSO PASS MAAG, CLARK AFB PASS IDG, SEMI-WEEKLY INTELLIGENCE BRIEFING JANUARY 26, POLITICAL, FAIRLY RELIABLE CAS SOURCE REPORTS GROUP OF OFFICERS HEADED BY BRIGADIER GEN. NGHIEM, ALLEGES IT PLANNING GOUP AGAINST DIEM, CLAIMING BE MEMBERS THIS GROUP TOLD SOURCE NGHIEM COULD COUNT ON SUPPORT OF TWO OF THREE DIVISIONS UNDER HIS COMMAND PLUS OTHER ELEMENTS, ALTHOUGH THEY ADMITTED HE WAS UNSURE OF SUPPORT OF AIRBORNE UNITS, MARINES AND AIR FORCE. ONE OF THESE INFORMANTS CLAIMS NGHIEM GAVE HIM IMPRESSION THERE SOME URGENCY

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-2- 979 JANUARY 27 12 PM FROM SAIGON

SOME URGENCY ABOUT TAKING ACTION, AS NGHIEM FEARS HE MIGHT BE REPLACED AT ANY MOMENT. NGHIEM REPORTEDLY DEPENDING FOR POLITICAL ADVICE ON TRAN VAN LY, FORMER GOVERNOR CENTRAL VIET NAM AND ONE OF 18 SIGNERS OF CARAVELLE PETITION APRIL 1960. COMMENT: NGHIEM HAS ON OCCASION VOICED STRONG CRITICISM IN PRIVATE OF DIEM REGIME AND MIGHT WELCOME CHANGE IN REGIME. HOWEVER, QUESTIONABLE WHETHER HE WOULD HAVE AS MUCH SUPPORT AMONG MILITARY AS CLAIMED; WHETHER HE HAS SUFFICIENT DYNAMISM TO SERVE AS LEADER OF COUP GROUP; OR WHETHER HE SUFFICIENTLY DISSATISFIED PLOT AGAINST REGIME, AS ALLEGED. HAVE NO ADDITIONAL INFO TO SUPPORT THIS REPORT, WHICH IS FIRST RECENT ALLEGATION OF SPECIFIC MILITARY PLOTTING.

ECONOMIC

2. GVN OFFICIALS FEEL EFFORTS PROTECT RICE HARVEST AND ASSURE ADEQUATE FLOW TO MARKET PROVE EFFECTIVE SO FAR. ACCORDING DEPT. ECONOMY, RICE ARRIVALS IN SAIGON NOW ABOUT 2,000 TONS PER DAY, APPROXIMATELY SAME LEVEL AS LAST YEAR. THIS AMOUNT 900 TONS ABOVE CITY'S DAILY CONSUMPTION, LEAVING SURPLUS FOR SHIPMENT TO RICE DEFICIENT CENTRAL VN VC AND FOR BUILDING RESERVE STOCKS IN SAIGON. STOCKS IN CIO AS OF JAN 14 35,000 TONS. WHOLESALE PRICES SAIGON SLIGHTLY LOWER (NO. 1 QUALITY 8 PIASTERS PER KILO); RETAIL PRICES IN VICTIM GENERAL CONTINUE HIGH. PRICE RECEIVED BY GROWERS IN COUNTRY-SIDE CONTINUES FAIRLY HIGH. COMMENT: DESPITE SATISFACTORY SHIPMENTS TO SAIGON AND ADEQUATE STOCKS IN CITY AT PRESENT, GVN'S GOAL OF 150 TO 200,000 TONS EMERGENCY RESERVE STOCK STILL LONG WAY OFF.

INTERNAL SECURITY

3. DURING PERIOD JAN 16-22 OVERALL VIET CONG INCIDENTS REPORTED 465, DROP OF 30 FROM PREVIOUS WEEK'S TOTAL. AT PRESENT RATE, HOWEVER, APPEARS TOTAL VC INCIDENTS FOR MONTH MAY EXCEED ALL-TIME HIGH OF 1854 IN OCT. NEARLY 400 OF SOME 1400 INCIDENTS RECORDED SO FAR THIS MONTH

REPRESENT KIDNAPPINGS--

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-3- 979, JANUARY 27, 2 PM FROM SAIGON

REPRESENT KIDNAPPINGS--MOST OF WHICH OCCURRED IN I AND II CORPS AREAS--AS COMPARED 100 KIDNAPPINGS IN OCT. II CORPS MAAG ADVISOR BELIEVES INCREASED KIDNAPPING MAY POSSIBLY REFLECT SUCCESSFUL VC PROSELYTIZING OF YOUTH RATHER THAN ACTUAL ABDUCTION. ARMED ATTACKS APPROXIMATELY SAME LEVEL AS OCT EXCEPT IN II CORPS AREA, WHERE THEY SHOW CONSIDERABLE INCREASE. INCREASES KIDNAPPINGS AND ATTACKS IN II CORPS AREA BALANCED BY DECREASES IN REPORTS OF SABOTAGE AND SUBVERSIVE ACTIVITY IN III CORPS.

4. MOST SIGNIFICANT VC INCIDENT REPORTED DURING PERIOD WAS SIMULTANEOUS ATTACKS ON CIVIL GUARD POST AND NEARBY SDC POST ON JAN 21 IN AN XUYEN PROVINCE. CG POST ATTACKED BY ESTIMATED 200 VC WHILE SDC POST ATTACKED BY TWO 25-MAN GROUPS, ONE OF WHICH USED CAPTURED ARMORED LAUNCH. BOTH POSTS FELL WITH FOLLOWING FRIENDLY CASUALTIES: 31 KIA, 26 CAPTURED OR SURRENDERED, 52 WEAPONS LOST. VNAF AIRSTRIKES CONDUCTED IN AREA AFTER FALL OF POSTS.

5. RVNAF OPERATIONS CONTINUED ALL THREE CORPS AREAS. IN I CORPS RAIN HAMPERED OPERATIONS OF 1ST DIVISION. TWO BATTALION OPERATION WITH ARTILLERY BEGAN IN QUANG NGAI SECTOR JAN 15, BUT MINIMAL RESULTS REPORTED TO DATE. IN II CORPS AREA 23RD DIVISION OPERATION FROM JAN 8-12 IN DARLAC SECTOR RESULTED IN CAPTURE 110 TONS RICE, KEROSENE STOCKS AND 100 POUNDS SALT. UNITS PARTICIPATING WERE FOUR INFANTRY BATTALIONS, 2 RANGER COMPANIES, AND 1 ARMORED DETACHMENT. ENEMY LOSSES: 12 VC CAPTURED, CAMP AND 23 RICE DEPOTS DESTROYED. DURING OPERATION GVN MOVED 210 MONTAGNARDS TO BAN ME THUOT. SEVERAL GOVERNMENT-INITIATED ENGAGEMENTS OF VARYING SCALE REPORTED III CORPS AREA, MOST SUCCESSFUL WAS 9 HOUR ACTION IN KIEN PHONG PROVINCE WHERE CIVIL GUARD COMPANY AND SELF DEFENSE CORPS COMPANY ENGAGED VC COMPANY. RESULTS WERE 120 SAMPANS DESTROYED, 40 VC KIA (COUNTED) WITH ESTIMATED TOTAL 100 VC KIA. FRIENDLY LOSSES 4 CG WIA.

6. VC CASUALTIES

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-4- 979, JANUARY 27, 2 PM FROM SAIGON

6. VC CASUALTIES FOR PERIOD JAN 16-22: 515 KIA, 75 WIA, 12 CAPTURED. FRIENDLY CASUALTIES FOR PERIOD JAN 10-17: RVNAF: 31 KIA, 87 WIA, AND 4 CAPTURED; CG: 29 KIA, 50 WIA, 15 CAPTURED; SDC: 38 KIA, 70 WIA, AND 11 CAPTURED.

REMARKS: THE 1ST DIVISION OPERATIONS IN THE QUANG BINH PROVINCE WERE CHARACTERIZED BY A VARIOUS SCALE RECORDED IN THE QUANG BINH PROVINCE. THE 1ST DIVISION OPERATIONS IN THE QUANG BINH PROVINCE WERE CHARACTERIZED BY A VARIOUS SCALE RECORDED IN THE QUANG BINH PROVINCE. THE 1ST DIVISION OPERATIONS IN THE QUANG BINH PROVINCE WERE CHARACTERIZED BY A VARIOUS SCALE RECORDED IN THE QUANG BINH PROVINCE.

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