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Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs

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INTRODUCTION

Government and Regionalism

Until the arrival of the French, Vietnam was ruled by a nonhereditary Mandarin class, open to any who could pass a qualifying examination, in Chinese. The mandarinate maintained order and dispensed justice. There were no cruel punishments (at least not for the day), no great extremes of wealth and poverty, and ownership of land was widespread. Nevertheless, the literary education and antique values of the mandarins froze Vietnam in the past.

The central monarchical government claimed power only in religious and military affairs. But it was far from easy for even this limited government to hold the country together, because “the Vietnamese are as conscious of region as the Indian is of caste.” Centuries before the Geneva partition, “the political, psychological, moral, and economic differences between the North and South constituted a profound reality.”

Northern Vietnamese saw themselves as “dynamic and southerners as rather lazy and slow-witted.” Southerners viewed northerners as “aggressive, money-hungry, harder-working, and more enduring.” Southerners perceived themselves as “more pacific than the militant inhabitants of the Red River Delta, possessing in their enjoyment of the bounties and beauties of nature the secret of true happiness.” The roots of these widely held perceptions lay in both the geography and the history of the country.

Vietnamese regionalism, rooted in geography and ethnicity, found itself reinforced by centuries of political division and warfare. In the five hundred years before the Geneva partition of Vietnam along the 17th parallel, there had only been a few decades during which a single government controlled all of Vietnam and only one hundred years of unity out of the past four thousand. During the 1954–1975 period, the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV; North Vietnam) constantly propagandized that an independent state in southern Vietnam was some sort of “temporary and intolerable aberration.” This was total disinformation—centuries of partition between the 16th and 18th parallels meant that the Geneva partition, by historical criteria, was normal, not exceptional.

With the defeat of the French at Dien Bien Phu and the commencement of the Geneva Conference in 1954, Vietnam found itself divided into two spheres of influence, one Communist and the other a fledgling democracy. The course of events in North Vietnam was led by Ho Chi Minh. He promoted collectivization, isolation, and increased dependence on the USSR and Communist China for everything from military equipment to foodstuffs and medicine. The approach of the 1956 reunification elections, mandated by the Geneva Agreement, was supported by Ho Chi Minh and the various Communist cells in central and southern Vietnam. He was thwarted in his efforts to dominate South Vietnam due to the character and personality of Ngo Dinh
Diem. Diem, supported by the United States, postponed the elections and thwarted all efforts at unification by establishing an independent, non-Communist government in the south.

Political Affairs and Communist Insurgency Background

The French garrison at Dien Bien Phu surrendered on May 7, ending the siege that had cost France its Indochinese colonies and taken the lives of 25,000 Vietnamese and more than 1,500 French troops. The following day, peace talks on Indochina began in Geneva, attended by Ho Chi Minh’s DRV in northern Vietnam, the Associated State of Vietnam (Bao Dai government), Cambodia, Laos, France, the United Kingdom, Communist China, the USSR, and the United States. In July, a compromise agreement was reached consisting of two documents: a cease-fire and a final declaration. The cease-fire agreement, which was signed only by France and the Ho Chi Minh government, established a provisional military demarcation line at the 17th parallel and required the regroupment of all French military forces south of that line and of all Viet Minh military forces north of the line. A demilitarized zone (DMZ), no more than five kilometers wide, was established on either side of the demarcation line. The cease-fire agreement also provided for a three hundred-day period, during which all civilians were free to move from one zone to the other, and an International Control Commission (ICC), consisting of Canada, India, and Poland, to supervise the cease-fire. The final declaration was endorsed through recorded oral assent by the North Vietnamese government, France, the United Kingdom, Communist China, and the USSR. It provided for the holding of national elections in July 1956, under the supervision of the ICC, and stated that the military demarcation line was provisional and “should not in any way be interpreted as constituting a political territorial boundary.” Both the United States and the Associated State of Vietnam (South Vietnam), which France had recognized on June 4 as a “fully independent and sovereign state,” refused to approve the final declaration and submitted separate declarations stating their reservations.

The Geneva Agreement was viewed with doubt and dissatisfaction on all sides. Concern over possible U.S. intervention, should the Geneva talks fail, was probably a major factor in Ho Chi Minh’s decision to accept the compromise agreement. The United States had dissociated itself from the final declaration, although it had stated that it would refrain from the threat or use of force to disturb the agreement. President Dwight D. Eisenhower wrote to the new prime minister of the Bao Dai government, Ngo Dinh Diem, in September 1954 promising U.S. support for a non-Communist Vietnam. Direct U.S. aid to South Vietnam began in January 1955, and American advisers began arriving the following month to train South Vietnamese army troops. By early 1955, Diem had consolidated his control by moving against lawless elements in the Saigon area and by suppressing the religious sects in the Mekong Delta. He also launched a “denounce the communists” campaign, in which, according to Communist accounts, 25,000 communist sympathizers were arrested and more than 1,000 killed. In August 1955, Diem issued a statement formally refusing to participate in consultations with the DRV, which had been called for by the Geneva Agreement to prepare for national elections. In October, he easily defeated Bao Dai in a seriously tainted referendum and became president of the new Republic of Vietnam (RVN).

Despite the growing likelihood that national elections would not be held, the Communist leadership in Hanoi decided for the time being to continue to concentrate
its efforts on the political struggle. Several factors led to this decision, including the weakness of the party apparatus in the South, the need to concentrate on strengthening the war-weakened North, and pressure from the Communist leadership of the USSR, which, under Premier Nikita Khrushchev, had inaugurated its coexistence policy with the West. By 1957, however, a shift to a more militant approach to the reunification of the country was apparent. Partly in response to Diem’s anti-Communist campaign, the party stepped up terrorist activities in the South, assassinating several hundred officials of the Diem government. This led to the arrest of another 65,000 suspected Communists and the killing of more than 2,000 by the Saigon government in 1957. Repression by the Diem regime led to the rise of armed rebel self-defense units in various parts of the South, with the units often operating on their own without any party direction. Observing that a potential revolutionary situation had been created by popular resentment of the Diem government and fearing that the government’s anti-Communist policy would destroy or weaken party organization in the South, the Vietnamese Workers’ Party (VWP) leadership determined that the time had come to resort to violent struggle. At the 15th Plenum of the Central Committee, DRV leaders formally decided to take control of the growing insurgency in the South.

By 1960, some of the 90,000 Viet Minh troops that had returned to the North following the Geneva Agreement had begun filtering back into the South to take up leadership positions in the insurgency apparatus. Mass demonstrations, punctuated by an occasional raid on an isolated post, were the major activities in the initial stage of this insurgency. Communist operations launched in the lower Mekong Delta and Central Highlands resulted in the establishment of liberated zones, including an area of nearly fifty villages in Quang Ngai Province. In areas under Communist control, the guerrillas established their own government, levied taxes, trained troops, built defense works, and provided education and medical care. In order to direct and coordinate the new policies in the South, it was necessary to revamp the party leadership apparatus and form a new united front group. Accordingly, the Central Office for South Vietnam (COSVN) was established with General Nguyen Chi Thanh, a northerner, as chairman and Pham Hung, a southerner, as deputy chairman. On December 20, 1960, the National Front for the Liberation of South Vietnam, informally called the National Liberation Front (NLF), was founded, with representation on its Central Committee from all social classes, political parties, women’s organizations, and religious groups, including Hoa Hao, Cao Dai, Buddhists, and Catholics. In order to keep the NLF from being obviously linked with the VWP and the DRV, its executive leadership consisted of individuals not publicly identified with the Communists, and the number of party members in leadership positions at all levels was strictly limited. Furthermore, in order not to alienate patriotic non-communist elements, the new front was oriented more toward the defeat of the U.S.-backed Saigon government than toward social revolution.

In 1961 the rapid increase of insurgency in the South Vietnamese countryside led President John F. Kennedy’s administration to decide to increase U.S. support for the Diem regime. Some $65 million in military equipment and $136 million in economic aid were delivered that year, and by December 3,200 U.S. military personnel were in Vietnam. The U.S. Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (MAC-V) was formed under the command of General Paul D. Harkins in February 1962. The cornerstone of the counterinsurgency effort was the strategic hamlet program, which called for the consolidation of 14,000 villages of South Vietnam into 11,000 secure hamlets.
each with its own houses, schools, wells, and watchtowers. The hamlets were intended to isolate guerrillas from the villages, their source of supplies and information, or, in Maoist terminology, “to separate the fish from the sea in which they swim.” The program had its problems, however, aside from the frequent attacks on the hamlets by Communist guerrilla units. The self-defense units for the hamlets were often poorly trained, and support from the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) was inadequate. Corruption, favoritism, and the resentment of a growing number of peasants who were being forcibly resettled plagued the program. It was estimated that of the 8,000 hamlets established, only 1,500 were viable.

In response to increased U.S. involvement, all Communist armed units in the South were unified into a single People's Liberation Armed Force (PLAF) in 1961. These troops expanded in number from fewer than 3,000 in 1959 to more than 15,000 by 1961, most of whom were assigned to guerrilla units. Southerners trained in the North who infiltrated back into the South were an important element of this force. Although they accounted numerically for only about 20 percent of the PLAF, they provided a well-trained nucleus for the movement and often served as officers or political cadres. By late 1962, the PLAF had achieved the capability to attack fixed positions with battalion-sized forces. The NLF was also expanded to include 300,000 members and perhaps 1 million sympathizers by 1962. Land reform programs were begun in liberated areas. Despite local pressure for more aggressive land reforms, the peasantry generally approved of the program, and it was an important factor in gaining support for the liberation movement in the countryside. In the cities, the Workers' Liberation Association of Vietnam, a labor organization affiliated with the NLF, was established in 1961.

In the early 1960s, American intelligence estimates noted that unless the South Vietnamese government could protect the peasants and win their cooperation and support, areas under Viet Cong control would expand and dissatisfaction and discontent with the government would continue to rise.

In a September 1960 cable, U.S. Ambassador Elbridge Durbrow analyzed two separate but related threats to the Diem government. These were danger from a potential non-Communist demonstration or coup and the danger of the gradual Viet Cong extension of control over the countryside. Durbrow explained that a coup d'état would be partly motivated by a sincere desire to prevent a Communist takeover. He suggested methods Diem might use to mitigate both threats, particularly in sending his brother, Ngo Dinh Nhu, abroad and improving relations with the peasantry. Durbrow summarized the report with the admonition that “if Diem’s position in country continues to deteriorate as a result of failure to adopt proper political, psychological, economic, and security measures, it may become necessary for the U.S. government to begin consideration of alternative courses of action and leaders in order to achieve our objective.” Throughout 1961 and 1962 Kennedy’s support of Diem and the RVN saw a rise in military advisers; material increases, including helicopters and aircraft with American pilots and mechanics; and increasing defense and foreign aid appropriations—all in order to stem the deterioration of the political and military situation in South Vietnam. During Vice President Lyndon B. Johnson’s visit to South Vietnam, he called Diem the “Churchill of Asia” and pledged continued support for South Vietnam. But the lack of viable reform at upper levels in the military and government, the restless populace, and the coup d’état–prone military eventually led the United States to reevaluate its relationship with Diem.
Diem grew steadily more unpopular as his regime became more repressive. His brother and chief adviser, Ngo Dinh Nhu, was identified by regime opponents as the source of many of the government’s repressive measures. The strategic hamlets program, the lackluster primary component of Operation Sunrise, proved an abysmal failure and reinforced in the populace’s mind the repressive nature of the Diem government. Harassment of Buddhist groups by ARVN forces, widespread corruption, Communist infiltration of the government and military bureaucracies, and Diem’s isolation continued throughout 1963. Outraged by the Diem regime’s repressive policies, the Kennedy administration indicated to South Vietnamese military leaders that Washington would be willing to support a new military government. Diem and Nhu were assassinated in a military coup in early November, and General Duong Van Minh took over the government.

Economic Background
When the North and South were divided politically in 1954, they also adopted different economic ideologies, one Communist and one capitalist. In the North, the Communist regime’s First Five-Year Plan (1961–1965) gave priority to heavy industry, but priority subsequently shifted to agriculture and light industry. The North imposed agricultural collectivization, which was met by resistance from the peasantry and later scaled back.

The economy in the South between 1960 and 1963 became increasingly dependent on foreign aid. The United States, the foremost donor, financed the development of the military and the construction of roads, bridges, airfields, and ports; supported the currency; and met the large deficit in the balance of payments.

Social Background
At the time of the 1954 partition, Vietnam was overwhelmingly a rural society; peasants accounted for nearly 90 percent of the total population. During the ensuing years of political separation, however, the North and the South developed into two very different societies. In the North, the Communists had embarked on a program intended to revolutionize the socioeconomic structure. The focus of change was ostensibly economic, but its underlying motivation was both political and social as well. Based on the Marxist principle of class struggle, it involved no less than the creation of a totally new social structure. Propertied classes were eliminated, and a proletarian dictatorship was established in which workers and peasants emerged as the nominal new masters of a socialist state.

As a prelude to the socialist revolution, a land reform campaign and a harsh, systematic campaign to liquidate “feudal landlords” from rural society were launched concurrently in 1955. Reminiscent of the campaign undertaken by Communists in China in earlier years, by 1963, the liquidation of landlords cost the lives of an estimated 50,000 people and prompted the party to acknowledge and redress “a number of serious errors” committed by its zealous cadres.

In urban sectors the party’s intervention was less direct, initially at least, because large numbers of the bourgeoisie had fled the North in anticipation of the Communists’ coming to power. Many had fled to the South before the party gained full control. Those who remained were verbally assailed as exploiters of the people, but, because the regime needed their administrative and technical skills and experience, they were otherwise treated tolerantly and allowed to retain private property.
In 1958 the regime stepped up the pace of “socialist transformation,” mindful that even though the foundations of a socialist society were basically in place, the economy remained for the most part still in the hands of the private, capitalist sector. By 1963 all but a small number of peasants, artisans, handicraft workers, industrialists, traders, and merchants had been forced to join cooperatives of various kinds.

Intellectuals, many of whom had earlier been supporters of the Viet Minh, were first conciliated by the government, then stifled. Opposition to the government, expressed openly during and after the peasant uprisings of 1956, prompted the imposition of controls that graduated to complete suppression by 1958. Writers and artists who had established their reputations in the pre-Communist era were excluded from taking any effective role in national affairs. Many were sent to the countryside to perform manual labor and to help educate a new corps of socialist intellectuals among the peasants.

Throughout the early 1960s the dominant group in the new social order were the high-level party officials, who constituted a new ruling class. They owed their standing more to demonstrations of political acumen and devotion to nationalism or Marxism-Leninism than to educational or professional achievements. Years of resistance against the French in the rural areas had inured them to hardship and at the same time given them valuable experience in organization and guerrilla warfare. Resistance work had also brought them into close touch with many different segments of the population.

At the apex of the new ruling class were select members of the Politburo of the Communist Vietnamese Workers Party (VWP or Lao Dong Party), and a somewhat larger body of Central Committee members holding key posts in the party, the government, the military, and various party-supported organizations. Below the top echelon were the rank and file party members, including a number of women and members of ethnic minorities. Party cadres who possessed special knowledge and experience in technical, financial, administrative, or managerial matters were posted in all social institutions to supervise the implementation of party decisions.

Occupying an intermediate position between the party and the citizenry were those persons who did not belong to the party but who, nevertheless, had professional skills or other talents needed by the regime. Non-Communists were found in various technical posts, in the school system, and in the mass organizations to which most citizens were required to belong. A few even occupied high, though politically marginal, posts in the government. The bulk of the population remained farmers, workers, soldiers, miners, porters, stevedores, clerks, tradespeople, teachers, and artisans.

Social reorganization did little to evoke mass enthusiasm for socialism, and socialist transformation of the private sector into cooperative- and state-run operations did not result in the kind of economic improvement the government needed to win over the peasants and merchants. The regime managed to provide better educational and health care services than had existed in the pre-1954 years, but poverty was still endemic. The party attributed the “numerous difficulties” it faced to “natural calamities, enemy actions, and the utterly poor and backward state of the economy,” but it also acknowledged its own failings. These included cadre incompetence in ideological and organizational matters as well as in financial, technical, and managerial affairs.
South of the demarcation line after partition in 1954, the social system remained unchanged except that power reverted to a Vietnamese elite. The South's urban-rural network of roles, heavily dependent on the peasant economy, remained intact despite the influx of nearly a million refugees from the North. Land reform, initiated unenthusiastically in 1956, had little socioeconomic impact in the face of obstruction by the landowning class. In contrast to the North, there was no doctrinaire, organized attempt to reorganize the society fundamentally or to implant new cultural values and social sanctions. The Diem government was more concerned with its own immediate survival than with revolutionary social change, and if it had a vision of sociopolitical reform at all, that vision was diffusive. Furthermore, it lacked a political organization comparable in zeal to the Communist Party apparatus of the DRV, in order to achieve its goals.

In the 1960s, prolonged political instability placed social structures in the South under increasing stress. The Communist insurgency, which prevented the government from extending its authority to some areas of the countryside, was partially responsible, but even more disruptive were the policies of the government itself. Isolated in Saigon, the Diem regime alienated large parts of the population by acting to suppress Buddhists and other minorities, by forcing the relocation of peasants to areas nominally controlled by the government, and by systematically crushing political opposition. Such policies fueled a growing dissatisfaction with the regime.

As the insurgency in the South intensified, it created unprecedented social disruption in both urban and rural life. Countless civilians were forced to abandon their ancestral lands and sever their network of family and communal ties to flee areas controlled by the Viet Cong or exposed to government operations against the Communists. By 1963 a growing percentage of the entire southern population were becoming displaced; some were relocated to government-protected rural hamlets while others crowded into already congested urban centers. Few villages, however remote, were left untouched by the war. The urban-rural boundary, once sharply defined, seemed to disappear as throngs of uprooted refugees moved to the cities. Traditional social structures broke down, leaving the society listless and bereft of a cohesive force other than the common instinct for survival.

The disruption imposed by the growing war, however, did not alter conventional socioeconomic class identifiers. In the urban areas, the small upper-class elite continued to be limited to high-ranking military officers, government officials, people in the professions, absentee landlords, intellectuals, and Catholic and Buddhist religious leaders. The elite retained a strong personal interest in France and French culture; many had been educated in France and many had sons or daughters residing there. In addition to wealth, Western education—particularly French education—was valued highly, and French and English were widely spoken.

The urban middle class included civil servants, lower and middle-ranking officers in the armed forces, commercial employees, school teachers, shop owners and managers, small merchants, and farm and factory managers. A few were college graduates, although the majority had only a secondary-school education. Very few had been able to study abroad.

At the bottom of the urban society were unskilled, largely uneducated wage workers and petty tradespeople. While semiliterate themselves, they nevertheless were able to send their children to primary school. Secondary education was less common, however, particularly for girls. These children tended not to proceed far
enough in school to acquire an elementary knowledge of French or English, and most adults of the lower class knew only Vietnamese unless they had worked as domestics for foreigners.

Village society, which embraced 80 percent of the population, was composed mostly of farmers, who were ranked in three socioeconomic groups. The elite were the wealthiest landowners. If they farmed, the work was done by hired laborers who planted, irrigated, and harvested under the owner's supervision. In the off-season, landowners engaged in money lending, rice trading, or rice milling. Usually the well-to-do owners were active in village affairs as members of the village councils. Interest in seeking such positions waned, however, as village leaders increasingly were targeted by Viet Cong.

The less prosperous, middle-level villagers owned or rented enough land to live at a level well above subsistence, but they tended not to acquire a surplus large enough to invest in other ventures. They worked their own fields and hired farm hands only when needed during planting or harvesting. A few supplemented their income as artisans, but never as laborers. Because of their more modest economic circumstances, members of this group tended not to assume as many communal responsibilities as did the wealthier villagers.

At the bottom of village life were owners of small farming plots and tenant farmers. Forced to spend nearly all of their time eking out a living, they could not afford to engage in village affairs. Because they could not cultivate enough land to support their families, most of them worked also as part-time laborers, and their wives and children assisted with the field work. Their children frequently went to school only long enough to learn the rudiments of reading and writing. This group also included workers in a wide range of other service occupations, such as artisans, practitioners of oriental medicine, and small tradespeople.

Family Life

In the first decade after World War II, the vast majority of North and South Vietnamese clung tenaciously to traditional customs and practices. After the 1950s, however, some traditions were questioned, especially in the North. The timeless notion that the family was the primary focus of individual loyalty was disparaged as feudal by the Communists, who also criticized the traditional concept of the family as a self-contained socioeconomic unit.

In the North, family life was affected by the growing insurgency in the South and by the policies of a regime doctrinally committed to a major overhaul of its socioeconomic organization. Major family reform was initiated under a new law enacted in 1959 and put into effect in 1960. The law's intent was to protect the rights of women and children by prohibiting polygamy, forced marriage, concubinage, and abuse. It was designed to equalize the rights and obligations of women and men within the family and to enable women to enjoy equal status with men in social and work-related activities. Sources of stress on the family in the North in the 1960s included the trend toward nuclear families, rural collectivization, population redistribution from the Red River Delta region to the highlands, prolonged mobilization of a large part of the male workforce for the war effort, and the consequent movement of women into the economic sector.

In the South, despite the hardships brought on by the French–Viet Minh War and the post-1955 insurgency, the traditional family system endured. Family lineage
remained the source of an individual’s identity, and nearly all southerners believed that the family had first claim on their loyalties, before that of extrafamilial individuals or institutions, including the state.

The first attempt to reform the family system in the South occurred in 1959, when the Roman Catholic–oriented Diem government passed a family code to outlaw polygamy, forced marriage, spousal abuse, and concubinage. The code also made legal separation extremely difficult and divorce almost impossible. Under provisions equalizing the rights and obligations of spouses, a system of community property was established so that all property and incomes of husband and wife would be jointly owned and administered. The code reinforced the role of parents, grandparents, and the head of the lineage as the formal “validators” of marriage, divorce, or adoption, and it supported the tradition of ancestor cults. The consent of parents or grandparents was required in the marriage or the adoption of a minor, and they or the head of the lineage had the right to oppose the marriage of a descendant.

During the early war years, family life was disrupted as family members were separated and often resettled in different areas. If the distance from one another was too great, they could not assemble for the rites and celebrations that traditionally reinforced kinship solidarity. Family ties were further torn by deaths and separations caused by the war and by political loyalties, which in some instances set relatives against each other. In those areas where hostilities occurred, the war was a family affair, extending to the children. Few Vietnamese children had the opportunity simply to be children. From birth they were participants in the war as well as its victims. They matured in an environment where death and suffering inflicted by war were commonplace and seemingly unavoidable.

The early years of military conflict and refugee movements tended in certain parts of the South to break up the extended family units and to reinforce the bonds uniting the nuclear family. The major preoccupation of the ordinary villager and urbanite alike was to earn a livelihood and to protect his immediate family, holding his household together at any cost.

Minorities

Living somewhat separately from the dominant ethnic Vietnamese were (and are still today) the numerous minorities. There were at least fifty-three minorities accounting for a substantial percentage of the national population. The Hoa, or Han Chinese, were the single largest bloc in the lowland urban centers of both the North and the South. Of the other minority groups, at least thirty resided in the North, while the remaining twenty-two groups lived in the South.

The bulk of the non-Chinese minority peoples were for the most part highlanders or, known by their generic name, Montagnards. The Vietnamese also disparagingly called them “moi,” meaning savage. They lived in relative independence and followed their own traditional customs and culture. Both North and South governments attributed the backwardness of the Montagnards to the overwhelming influence of their history as exploited and oppressed peoples.

Before the arrival of the French in the nineteenth century, the highland minorities lived in isolation from the lowland population. Upon the consolidation of French rule, however, contacts between the two groups increased. The French, interested in the uplands for plantation agriculture, permitted the highlanders their linguistic and cultural autonomy and administered their areas separately from the rest of Vietnam.
Conferring this special status gave the French a free hand in cultivating the largely unexploited highlands, where their administrators and Christian missionaries also set up schools, hospitals, and leprosariums. Often, however, conflicts arose between the upland communities and the French, who were distrusted as exploitative, unwelcome interlopers. The French, however, eventually overcame the unrest and successfully developed some of the highland areas.

After the mid-1950s, North and South Vietnam dealt with the minorities differently. The DRV regime, recognizing the traditional separatist attitudes of the tribal minorities, initiated a policy of accommodation by setting up two autonomous zones for the highlanders in return for their acceptance of DRV political control. By offering limited self-government, the Communist government leaders hoped that integration of the minorities into Communist Vietnamese society could eventually be achieved. By contrast, the RVN opted for direct, centralized control of the tribal minorities and incurred their enduring wrath by seizing ancestral tribal lands for the resettlement of displaced Catholic refugees from the North.

In the early 1960s, the RVN granted a modicum of autonomy, but the ill-conceived strategic hamlet program caused further disruption by forcing highlanders to relocate to fortified enclaves, sometimes in lowland regions. While the program was proposed to improve physical security of the rural populace, as well as to deny food and services to the Viet Cong, it largely embittered the Montagnard minority participants, who wanted to be left alone to continue living on their ancestral lands in the traditional manner.

Foreign Relations

Vietnam has been considered the heart of Southeast Asia. It borders on China, Laos, and Cambodia and has been considered of strategic importance to every country interested in domination of the western Pacific and Indian Ocean. It is at the crossroads between the Pacific Basin and the Indian subcontinent.

In hopes of gaining more prestige and recognition outside Communist bloc countries, the DRV conducted extensive propaganda activities and initiated recognition missions throughout the world. As the various African republics became independent, the DRV extended recognition to each in the hope that they in turn would recognize the DRV. Additional efforts to enhance their international prestige included educational and cultural exchanges, delegations to international youth and peace organizations, and support of Communist-front “friendship” organizations. Every propaganda effort was utilized to point out the negatives of the RVN.

RVN foreign relations centered on strengthening ties with non-Communist Asia through official state visits by President Diem and his leading foreign affairs advisers. Numerous missions were sent to Afro-Asian countries, and embassies were opened following diplomatic recognition by a number of European and Asian governments. In addition, South Vietnam became a signatory of the Japan War Reparations Agreement and concluded economic, financial, and trade cooperation pacts with a number of countries, including France and the United States. South Vietnamese participation in the South-East Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) and the Colombo Plan brought advantageous international security and technological aid.

U.S.–Vietnamese Relations

Hoping to construct in southern Vietnam a bulwark against further Communist expansion in Southeast Asia, President Dwight D. Eisenhower and his Secretary of
State John Foster Dulles, in the aftermath of the Geneva Conference, had intervened in strife-torn Vietnam to support Diem against the victorious Communist government in North Vietnam and the defeated France. American backing enabled President Diem to withstand major internal threats in 1954 and 1955, and for the rest of the decade, the Eisenhower administration provided him lavish economic and military aid and advisers and endorsed his refusal to go along with the national elections called for by the Geneva Agreement.

By the time President John F. Kennedy took office, however, the U.S. commitment seemed at best precarious. Fearing extinction at the hands of President Diem, the Vietnamese Communists who had stayed in South Vietnam after Geneva launched a rebellion against the government, and within several years North Vietnam began to infiltrate men and supplies into the South in support of the insurgents. Like Eisenhower, President Kennedy and his advisers viewed the conflict in Vietnam as part of the larger, global cold war. Indeed, they came to regard it as a prototype for the Communist strategy of “wars of liberation.” Preoccupied at the outset with crises in Cuba and in adjoining Laos, the administration watched Vietnam with growing alarm. After the embarrassing debacle at the Bay of Pigs in April 1961 and after agreeing to compromise in Laos, however, Kennedy and his advisers felt even more compelled to take a strong stand in Vietnam.

Following weeks of deliberation, the administration in late 1961 drastically escalated the U.S. commitment. Rejecting General Maxwell Taylor’s proposal to send combat troops, the president nevertheless launched what was called Project BEEF-UP, a massive infusion of aid to save the embattled South Vietnamese government. U.S. military assistance more than doubled and included such items as armored personnel carriers and more than three hundred military aircraft. The number of U.S. military advisers was increased from 3,200 at the end of 1961 to more than 9,000 by the end of 1962. More important, perhaps, the “advisers” were authorized to play an increasingly active role in combat.

Project BEEF-UP brought only a short-lived advantage to the United States and its South Vietnamese ally. The infusion of American aid and personnel gave an immediate boost to South Vietnamese morale, and the helicopters, in particular, at first intimidated the NLF guerrillas. But the advantage proved to be of only short duration. Even with the most sophisticated military equipment, it remained extremely difficult to locate the elusive enemy. Diem was reluctant to commit his troops to combat, and when they were committed they fought indifferently. The much ballyhooed strategic hamlet program, launched with great fanfare by the United States and South Vietnam, was poorly conceived and implemented, and it alienated rather than won over the peasantry of South Vietnam. By early 1963, the insurgents had regained the initiative and, despite bold claims of progress by U.S. and South Vietnamese officials, the war effort was faltering.

The Kennedy administration significantly escalated the war in Vietnam. Inheriting from Eisenhower a small and still qualified commitment to uphold the fledgling South Vietnamese government of Ngo Dinh Diem, the Kennedy administration expanded that commitment rhetorically by repeatedly proclaiming Vietnam’s importance to U.S. security and tangibly by increasing the number of U.S. military advisers to more than 16,000 and authorizing their involvement in combat.

In 1963, few Americans imagined that a commitment to war in Vietnam would finally cost the United States billions of dollars, generational discord, and 58,000 American lives.
Scope and Content

These records highlight the containment policy of the early 1960s and cite Vietnam as an example of the domino theory. Eventually dragged into the Vietnamese quagmire, the records highlight the Kennedy administration’s attempts to stabilize the deteriorating economic, political, and military situation in South Vietnam. In addition, much documentation outlines the early extent of North Vietnamese infiltration of troops and military equipment into the South, attempts to overthrow President Diem, the repressive measures of both the North and South against their respective populations, the extent of external aid to North and South, and efforts by both to seek worldwide recognition.

Material related to the DRV include such documents as “DRV Trends” and “DRV Highlights.” These present commentary and analysis on a variety of topics such as governmental changes and policies, military programs and activities, psychological and propaganda operations, agricultural and industrial estimates, data on the economic and financial situation, and social problems. In addition, propaganda materials, ICC reports, and French embassy memoranda and telegrams provide a unique view into the mind and soul of Communist North Vietnam.

The Indochina materials, filed by the State Department under the Indochina country number, have been included in this collection due to the large quantity of material on Vietnam. The majority of these materials relate to the activities of the ICC in Vietnam and Laos. The documentation highlights the efforts and evidence of North Vietnamese support of the insurgency in South Vietnam and Laos; activities of the Canadian, Indian, and Polish delegations; activities of the GVN [government of the Republic of Vietnam] Liaison Office; international efforts of the United States and its allies to support South Vietnam; actions under the various security treaties, such as SEATO; and East-West efforts at nation-building in Laos and Vietnam.

The majority of the collection relates to South Vietnam and the Diem era. Materials document a variety of the issues, including Diem and his brother Nhu’s cult of personality, the naivete and arrogance of American military leaders and advisers in regard to Vietnam and Asia in general, corruption and incompetence in the South Vietnamese government, lack of political control of the countryside and alienation of the peasantry, balance of payments and foreign trade, and U.S. and international aid efforts.
SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

Confidential U.S. State Department Central Files, 1960–January 1963

The U.S. State Department Central Files are the definitive source of American diplomatic reporting on political, military, social, and economic developments throughout the world in the twentieth century. Surpassing the scope of the State Department’s *Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS)* series, the Central Files provide extensive coverage of all political, military, social, and economic matters relating to a particular country and/or world event.

The State Department Central Files for 1960–January 1963 cover a crucial period in U.S. and world history. Each part of the 1960–January 1963 series contains a wide range of primary materials: special reports and observations on political and military affairs; studies and statistics on socioeconomic matters; interviews and minutes of meetings with U.S. and foreign government officials and leaders; legal and claims documentation; full texts of important letters and cables sent and received by U.S. diplomats and embassy personnel; reports, news clippings, and translations from journals and newspapers; and countless high-level/head of state government documents, including speeches, memoranda, official reports, aide-mémoire, and transcripts of political meetings and assemblies.

In addition, these records offer new insights into the evolution of American foreign policy toward both allies and adversaries and into the shaping of the policies of these countries toward the United States. Of even greater importance for the study of individual countries is the comprehensive manner in which the Central Files illuminate the internal affairs of foreign countries. There are thousands of pages arranged topically and chronologically on crucial subjects: political parties, unrest and revolution, human rights, government administration, fiscal and monetary issues, labor, housing, police and crime, public health and works, national defense, military equipment and supplies, foreign policy making, wars and alliances, education, religion, culture, trade, industry, and natural resources. On these subjects and more, the Central Files offer authoritative, in-depth, and timely documentation and analysis.
SOURCE NOTE

Microfilmed from the holdings of the National Archives, College Park, Maryland, Record Group 59: Records of the Department of State, Central Decimal Files, decimal numbers 751K, 851K, and 951K (Vietnam internal affairs); 751G, 851G, and 951G (Indochina (general) internal affairs); 651K and 611.51K (Vietnam foreign affairs), and 651G and 611.51G (Indochina (general) foreign affairs) for the period 1960–January 1963. All available original documents have been microfilmed.
From 1910 to 1963 the Department of State used a decimal classification system to organize its Central Files. This system assembled and arranged individual documents according to their subject, with each subject having been assigned a specific decimal code. The decimal system from 1950 to January 1963 consists of ten primary classifications numbered 0 through 9, each covering a broad subject area.

CLASS 0: Miscellaneous.

CLASS 1: Administration of the United States Government.

CLASS 2: Protection of Interests (Persons and Property).

CLASS 3: International Conferences, Congresses, Meetings, and Organizations.

CLASS 4: International Trade and Commerce. Trade Relations. Customs Administration.


CLASS 7: Internal Political and National Defense Affairs.

CLASS 8: Internal Economic, Industrial, and Social Affairs.

Internal Affairs

For this section of the U.S. State Department Central Files, University Publications of America (UPA) has microfilmed the documents contained in Classes 7, 8, and 9. Within these classes each subject is defined by a decimal file number. The decimal file number is followed by a slant mark (/). The number after the slant mark (/) refers to the date on which the document was generated. Documents within each decimal file number are arranged in chronological order. The entire decimal file number is stamped on the right side of the first page of every document.

These classes are concerned almost exclusively with the internal matters of individual countries. The class number (7, 8, or 9) is followed by the country number. The number following the decimal point indicates subtopics within the major classifications. The date after the slant mark (/) identifies the individual document.

In a small number of instances, documents were assigned erroneous or incomplete decimal numbers. UPA has included, in brackets, corrected decimal entries. In addition, misfiled decimal number documents have also been included in brackets.

CLASS 7. Example, 751K.13/7-162

Class of Records—Internal Political and National Defense Affairs

Subject—Executive Branch of Government—Cabinet; Ministry

751K.13/7-162 indicates a document dated July 1, 1962, relating to the cabinet of the executive branch of government (13) in Vietnam (51K).

CLASS 8. Example, 851K.411/1-460

Class of Records—Internal Economic, Industrial, and Social Affairs

Subject—Social Matters: People—Refugees

CLASS 9. Example, 951G.40/4-1161

951G.40/4-1161 indicates a document dated April 11, 1961, relating to radio (40) in Indochina (51G).

Note: For the convenience of the researcher, wherever a specific classification number totals more than one hundred pages, a breakdown of the material by month and year is provided. Where applicable, major subjects have been included with the month and year breakdown.

Foreign Affairs

For this section of the U.S. State Department Central Files, UPA has microfilmed the documents contained in Class 6. Within this class each subject is defined by a decimal file number. The decimal file number is followed by a slant mark (/). The number after the slant mark (/) refers to the date on which the document was generated. Documents within each decimal file number are arranged in chronological order. The entire decimal file number is stamped on the right side of the first page of every document.

In this publication records classified 651K and 651G deal with the foreign policy of Vietnam and Indochina and its political relations with other nations. Due to the State Department’s arrangement of these records, countries assigned numbers below 51K will not be found in this file. UPA, however, has included files dealing with the political relations between the United States (11) and Vietnam (51K) and Indochina (51G) in this publication. In order to find the political relations between Vietnam and Indochina and countries other than the United States that have a number lower than 51K, the researcher should check the Class 6 records for that country. These records can either be found at the National Archives, College Park, Maryland, or, for many countries, in microform publications that UPA has made available for libraries.

In a small number of instances, documents were assigned erroneous or incomplete decimal numbers. UPA has included, in brackets, corrected decimal entries. In addition, misfiled decimal number documents have also been included in brackets.
CLASS 6. Example, 651K.87/11-2061

651K.87/11-2061 indicates a document dated November 20, 1961, relating to the bilateral relations between Vietnam (51K) and Iraq (87).

CLASS 6. Example, 611.51K/10-260

611.51K/10-260 indicates a document dated October 2, 1960, relating to the bilateral relations between the United States of America (11) and Iraq (51K).

Note: For the convenience of the researcher, wherever a specific classification number totals more than one hundred pages, a breakdown of the material by month and year is provided. Where applicable, major subjects have been included with the month and year breakdown.
00  THE WORLD (Universe)
01  Outer Space (Aerosphere)
01a Moon
02  Antarctic
03  Arctic
10  THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE
11  United States
11a Hawaii (Ocean or Kuré Islands and Palmyra Island)
11b U.S. Possessions in the Pacific Ocean
11c Puerto Rico
11d Guam
11e American Samoa (Tutuila, Manua Islands, etc.)
11f Canal Zone (Panama Canal Zone), Perido, Naos, Culebra, and Flamenco Islands
11g Virgin Islands of the U.S. (St. Croix, St. John, and St. Thomas)
11h Wake Island
12  Mexico
13  CENTRAL AMERICA
14  Guatemala
15  Honduras
16  El Salvador
17  Nicaragua
18  Costa Rica
19  Panama
20  SOUTH AND CENTRAL AMERICA (South of the Rio Grande River)
21  Colombia
22  Ecuador (Galapagos Islands)
23  Peru
24  Bolivia
25  Chile
31  Venezuela
32  Brazil
33  Uruguay
34  Paraguay
35 Argentina
36 WEST INDIAN REPUBLICS
37 Cuba, including Isle of Pines
38 Haiti
39 Dominican Republic
40 EUROPE
40a Ireland (Eire) (Irish Free State)
40b Iceland
41 Great Britain, United Kingdom
41a Northern Ireland
41b British possessions in the Western Hemisphere (except Canada)
41c British Honduras
41d British Guiana
41e British West Indies (includes 41f–41j)
41f The West Indies (Federation of British Colonies in the Caribbean)
41g Bahamas
41h Bermuda
41j Virgin Islands
41r Falkland Islands
41s South Orkney Islands (South Georgia, South Orkneys, and South Sandwich Islands)
41t South Shetland Islands
42 Canada (including Newfoundland and Labrador)
43 Australia
44 New Zealand (Cook Islands, Kermad Islands, and Union Islands [Tokela])
45 British Territories in Africa
45a Union of South Africa (Cape of Good Hope, Transvaal, Orange Free State, Natal)
45b British South Africa (45c–45f)
45c Rhodesia (Mashonaland, Matabeleland, and Nyasaland Federation)
45d Basutoland
45e Bechuanaland
45f Swaziland
45g British West Africa
45h Nigeria (including that portion of the Cameroons under British Protectorate)
45j Ghana (see 79)
45m Sierra Leone
45n Gambia
45p British East Africa
45r Kenya Colony
45s Uganda
45t Zanzibar
45u Somaliland (protectorate)
45w Sudan
45x British Southwest Africa (formerly German Southwest Africa)
46 British territories in Asia
46a Andaman and Nicobar Islands
46b Laccadive Islands
46c Aden Colony and Protectorate (Hadramaut, Kamaran, Perim, Socotra, Abdul Quiri, and Kuria Muria Islands)
46d Bahrein Islands
46e Ceylon
46f Singapore (Christmas Island in the Indian Ocean)
46g Hong Kong
46h British Borneo (North Borneo, Brunei, and Sarawak)
46j Republic of the Maldives Islands
46k Fiji
46m Papua (formerly British New Guinea)
46n Pacific Islands, including Tonga (Friendly), Cocos (Isla de Cocos), Labuan, Solomon, Pitea island, Gilbert Islands, Ellice Islands, and British interest in Christmas Island, Phoenix, and Keeling Islands
47 British territories in Mediterranean
47a Gibraltar
47b Malta
47c Cyprus
47d St. Helena and dependencies (Diego Alvarez, Gough, Inaccessible, and Nightingale Islands)
47k Tristan da Cunha
47l Ascension Island
47g Seychelles
47h Mauritius
48 Poland (including Danzig)
49 Czechoslovakia
50 WESTERN CONTINENTAL EUROPE
50a Luxembourg
50b Monaco
50c Andorra
50d San Marino
50f Liechtenstein
50g Free Territory of Trieste (FTT)
51 France (including Corsica)
51a St. Pierre and Miquelon
51b Martinique
51c Guadeloupe and dependencies (Marie Galante, Les Saintes, Desirade, St. Barthelemy and St. Martin) (French West Indies, collectively)
51d French Guiana (Cayenne) Inini
51e French colonies in America
51f French India
51g Indochina
51h Cambodia
51j Laos
51k Vietnam
51m New Caledonia and dependencies (Isle of Pines, Loyalty Islands, Huon Islands, Chesterfield Islands, Wallis Archipelago)
51n Society Islands (Tahiti, Moorea-Morea; Leeward Island-Iles Sous-le-Vent)
51p Lesser groups (Tuamotu-Tumotu or Low Archipelago; Gambier Archipelago; Marquesas; Tubuai Archipelago-Austral Islands)
51r New Hebrides
51s Algeria
51t French West Africa and the Sahara (Senegal, French Guinea, Ivory Coast, Dahomey, French Sudan, Upper Senegal, and the Niger; Mauritanian and Dakar), Togo
51u French Equatorial Africa (French Congo) (Gabun-Gabon; Middle Congo-Moyen Congo; Ubanga Shari-Oubangui Chari; and Chad-Tchad; Brazzaville); Cameroun
51v French Somali Coast and dependencies (Somali Coast); Djibouti, Issa-Somalis; Dankali, Adaels, Ouemas, and Debenehs
51w Madagascar
51x Other African Islands (Mayotte, Comoro, Reunion, Amsterdam, St. Paul Marion, Crozet, and Kerguelen)
51y French possessions and protectorates in Oceania and Eastern Pacific (Australasia and Oceania)
52 Spain
52a Canary Islands
52b Spanish possessions in Africa
52c Rio de Oro and Adrar (Western Sahara)
52d Rio Muni and Cape San Juan (Spanish Guinea)
52e Fernando Po, Annobon, Corisco, and Elobey Islands
52f Tetuan and Ceuta; Gomera, Alhucemas, Melilla
52g Balearic Islands
53 Portugal
53a Madeira
53b Azores
53c Mozambique
53d Portuguese India (Goa, Damao, Diu)
53e Macao (Macau)
53f Timor
53g Cape Verde Islands (Santo Antão, São Nicolau, São Vicente, Fogo, Santiago, Boa Vista, Sal Santa, Luzia, Branco, Raso, Maio, Brava, Rei, and Rombo)
53h Portuguese Guinea (Guinea Coast), Bijagoz Islands, and Bolama Island
53k São Thomé (São Tomé) and Principe
53m Ladana and Cabinda
53n Angola (Portuguese West Africa), Congo, Loanda, Benguella, Mossamedes, Huilla, and Lunda
53p Portuguese East Africa
54 Switzerland
55 Belgium
55a Belgian Congo (Belgian Kongo)
56 Netherlands
56a Surinam (Netherlands Guiana)
56b Netherlands Antilles (formerly Netherlands West Indies) (Curaçao, Bonaire, Aruba, St. Martin, St. Eustatius, Saba)
56c Miscellaneous Islands (Riau-Lingga Archipelago, Bangka-Banca; Billiton, Moluca, Timor Archipelago, Bai and Lombok, Netherlands New Guinea, or Western New Guinea)
56d Indonesia
56f Sumatra
57 Norway
57a Scandinavia (57, 58, 59, 60e)
57b Spitsbergen (Spitzbergen)
57c Lapland (Parts of 57, 58, 60e, 61)
58 Sweden
59 Denmark
59a Greenland
59b Faeroe (Faroe) or Sheep Islands
60 EASTERN CONTINENTAL EUROPE (including Balkans, 67, 68, 69, 81, and European part of 82)
60a Baltic States
60b Esthonia
60c Latvia
60d Lithuania
60e Finland (Aland Islands)
61 Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
61a Bessarabia
61b Ukraine
61c Sakhalin Island (Russian portion)
62 Germany
62a Federal Republic of Germany (West Germany) (Saar)
62b Russian Zone (East Germany)
62c Polish Administration
63 Austria
64 Hungary
65 Italy
65a Vatican City
66 Rumania (Roumania)
67 Albania
68 Yugoslavia
69 Bulgaria
70 AFRICA (For Belgian possessions, see 55a) (For British possessions, see 45) (For French possessions, see 51s, etc.)
70a Mediterranean countries (General)
70b Republic of Guinea (see 79)
70g Congo Republic
70x Republic of South Africa
71 Morocco
72 Tunisia
73 Tripoli (Libya or Libia), Barca, Misurata, Benghazi, Derna, Cyrenaica
74 Egypt (see 86b)
75 Ethiopia (Hamara, Galla, and Harar)
75a Eritrea
76 Liberia
77 Trust Territory of Somaliland
78 Tanganyika Territory (Ruanda-Urundi), formerly German East Africa
79 West African states (includes 45j and 70b)
80 NEAR EAST
81 Greece
81a Crete
81b Samos
82 Turkey
83 Syria (see 86b)
83a Lebanon (Levant States)
84 Palestine
84a Israel
85 Jordan (Hashemite Jordan Kingdom) (formerly Trans-Jordan)
86 Arabia (Arab League) (United Arab states, includes 86b and 86h)
86a Saudi Arabia (Kingdom of Hejas and Nejd)
86b United Arab Republic (includes 74 and 83)
86d Kuwait
86c Muscat and Oman
86f Qatar
86g Trucial Sheikhs
86h Yemen
87 Iraq (Mesopotamia)
88 Iran (Persia)
89 Afghanistan
90 FAR EAST (including all of Asia)
90a Bhutan
90b Burma
90c Nepal
90d Pakistan (Baluchistan)
91 India
92 Thailand (Siam)
93 China
93a Manchuria
93b Tibet
94 Japan
94a Formosa (Taiwan)
94b Sakhalin Island (Japanese portion)
94c Ryukyu Islands (Okinawa), Nampo Islands (Bonin, Volcano, and Marcus)
95 Korea
95a North Korea
95b South Korea
96 Philippine Republic
97 Malaya (Federation of Malaya comprises the states Pahang, Perak, Negri Sembilan, Selangor, Johore, Kedah, Perlis, Kelantan, Trengganu, and the settlements Malacca and Penang) (includes Province of Wellesley)
98 Republic of Indonesia (Java, Sumatra, Borneo, Celebes)
Pacific Islands (Mandated), New Guinea, Bismarck Archipelago, Solomon Islands (Bougainville, Baku), Marshall Islands, Nauru, Caroline Islands, Pelew (Palau) Islands, Marianna Islands (Ladrone Islands), Samoa (Samoan Islands, Western Samoa), Savaii, Upolu
ACRONYMLIST

ARVN
Army of the Republic of Vietnam

CERP
Current Economic Reporting Program

CVTC
Confédération Vietnamienne du Travail Chretien

ICC
International Control Commission

ICFTU
International Confederation of Free Trade Unions

IMF
International Monetary Fund

KMT
Kuomintang

MAAG
Military Advisory Assistance Group

MAC-V
Military Assistance Command, Vietnam

NBC
National Broadcasting Corporation

P.L.
Public Law

POWs
prisoners of war

PRC
People's Republic of China

ROC
Republic of China (Nationalist)

RVNAF
Republic of Vietnam Air Force

STANVAC
Standard Oil Vacuum Company

UN
United Nations

UN/FAO
United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization

UOV
Union Ouvriere du Viet-Nam (South Vietnamese labor union)

USSR
Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
## REEL INDEX

### Reel 1

**Internal Political and National Defense Affairs—Vietnam**

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<td>March 1960&lt;br&gt;Internal security; corruption; ICC operations; Viet Cong military operations; Kontum Province.</td>
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<td>April 1960&lt;br&gt;Internal security; corruption; Viet Cong military operations; ARVN morale; ICC operations; Can Lao Party.</td>
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<td>0253</td>
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<td>May 1960&lt;br&gt;Corruption; political opposition to Diem government; ICC report and operations; National Assembly developments; internal security; MAAG increase.</td>
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<td>June 1960&lt;br&gt;Can Lao Party; ICC operations; Confederation Vietnamienne du Travail Chretien (CVTC) Third National Congress; Saigon police leadership; Agroville program; Viet Cong military operations; political opposition to Diem government; peasant attitudes toward Diem government; U.S. policy toward Diem government; North Vietnam political developments; corruption.</td>
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<td>July 1960&lt;br&gt;Binh Dinh Province; political opposition to Diem government; internal security; South Vietnamese–Cambodian relations.</td>
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<td>0785</td>
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<td>Viet Cong military operations and political objectives; internal security; Agroville program; ICC operations; Women’s Social Solidarity Movement.</td>
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<td>0092</td>
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<td>Viet Cong military operations; political opposition to Diem government; cabinet changes; Communist infiltration through Laos; election of National Assembly officials; anti-Diem coup attempt; Vietnamese refugees in Cambodia; coup leaders escape to Cambodia; internal security; Nationalist Chinese economic aid; Viet Cong “liberated areas” in South Vietnam.</td>
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<td>0248</td>
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<td>Military conscription; Viet Cong military operations; terrorism in Saigon; Communist Party of Vietnam; internal security; political reforms; Cambodia–South Vietnam border control problem.</td>
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<p>| 751K.00 | January 1961 | Counterinsurgency plan; cabinet changes; presidential elections law; security conditions on rubber plantations; November 1960 coup attempt chronology; rural conditions; Viet Cong military operations; General Edward Lansdale’s report on Vietnam; Viet Cong propaganda; internal security; political opposition to Diem government; Quang Nam Province; political reforms. |</p>
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| 0207   |        | February 1961
Village administrative reorganization; political reforms; Diem's reelection campaign; removal of officials guilty of misconduct;
Seno Base issue in Laos; counterinsurgency plan; Saigon economic review; Mansfield Report on Vietnam. |
| 0287   |        | March 1961
Removal of officials guilty of misconduct; presidential election campaign; civic action programs; Viet Cong military operations;
cabinet changes; internal security; South Vietnamese–Cambodian relations; political opposition to Diem government. |
| 0449   |        | April 1961
Presidential election campaign; assassinations of South Vietnamese civilians; Madame Ngo Dinh Nhu; South Vietnamese–Cambodian relations;
Viet Cong military operations; ARVN force levels; President Diem's reelection; UN presence in Southeast Asia; counterinsurgency plan;
South Vietnamese violations of Geneva Agreements; Vietnam action program. |
| 0709   |        | May 1961
Internal security; ARVN training; counterinsurgency plan; Lyndon Johnson's visit to South Vietnam; ARVN force levels;
Vietnam action program; Viet Cong military operations; losses in Vietnamese guerrilla war; South Vietnamese–Cambodian relations;
U.S. recreational travel limitations. |
| 0807   |        | June 1961
Commitment of U.S. military forces; political opposition to Diem government; Hue consular district report; ICC operations;
South Vietnamese–Cambodian relations; press laws; border clashes with Pathet Lao; Viet Cong assassinations of village chiefs and provincial leaders; internal security; Viet Cong military operations and terrorist activities. |

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**751K.00** Political Affairs [General] cont.

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| 0001   |        | July 1961
Commitment of U.S. military forces; Viet Cong military operations and assassinations; U.S. and North Vietnamese violations of Geneva Agreements; removal of officials guilty of misconduct; French–North Vietnamese relations; political reforms; Front for National Unity; National Revolutionary Movement; Special Financial Group to Vietnam recommendations; village administrative reorganization; Phong Dinh Province. |
August 1961
Village administrative reorganization; South Vietnamese guerrilla operations; South Vietnamese–Cambodian relations; Ba Xuyen Province; Viet Cong military operations and assassinations; interrogations of Viet Cong POWs; Quang Ngai Province security conditions.

September 1961
Quang Ngai Province; Viet Cong military operations and terrorist activities; South Vietnamese refugees in Cambodia; trial of November 1960 coup leaders; South Vietnamese–Cambodian relations; alleged Cambodian government collusion with Viet Cong; Darlac Province; tribal resettlement program in Quang Tri Province; North Vietnamese violations of Geneva Agreements; Viet Cong infiltration through Laos.

October 1961
Viet Cong infiltration through Laos; ICC operations; South Vietnamese–Cambodian relations; counterinsurgency plan; U.S. defoliant operations; Viet Cong political activities among Montagnards; Lam Dong Province; Taylor Mission; security conditions and tribal problems in Pleiku and Kontum Provinces; Tuyen Duc Province; internal security; corruption; possibility of anti-Diem coup; Diem issues state of emergency decree; treatment of Cambodian minority in Vietnam; North Vietnamese violations of Geneva Agreements; commitment of U.S. military forces; South Vietnamese tribal customs and tribal social action programs; Viet Cong military operations; U.S. flood relief activities.

November 1961
U.S. evaluation of Diem government; Viet Cong military operations; tribal social action programs; ICC operations; U.S. defoliant operations; Taylor Mission report; internal security; North Vietnamese violations of Geneva Agreements; South Vietnamese–Cambodian relations; Viet Cong infiltration through Cambodia and Laos; commitment of U.S. military forces.

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Internal Political and National Defense Affairs—Vietnam cont.

November 1961 cont.
Viet Cong infiltration through Cambodia and Laos; Taylor Mission report; internal security; Montagnard program; Viet Cong military operations; South Vietnamese political and military operations in Binh Dinh Province; commitment of U.S. military forces; white paper on subversion; intelligence
services reorganization; U.S. violations of Geneva Agreements; U.S. contingency planning; U.S. command arrangements; intelligence report on coup plotting in South Vietnam; ICC operations.

0336 December 1961
Commitment of U.S. military forces; creation of National Economic Council; evaluation of coup possibilities; political reforms; intelligence services reorganization; U.S. violations of Geneva Agreements; anti-U.S. propaganda in South Vietnam; U.S. defoliant operations; ICC operations; role of village councils; Viet Cong military operations; U.S. economic and military aid; Vietnam White Paper; counterinsurgency plan; U.S. propaganda; U.S. command arrangements; internal security; U.S. pacification operations; establishment of provincial councils; political situation in North Vietnam; military conscription decree; Saigon International Teachers’ Conference.

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751K.00 Political Affairs [General] cont.
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0269 February 1962
U.S. command arrangements; U.S. defoliant operations; Quang Ngai and Binh Dinh Provinces; political developments in North Vietnam; National Internal Security Council; General Paul Harkins’ appointment as U.S. commander in South Vietnam; strategic hamlet program; internal security; ICC operations; U.S. military aid; South Vietnamese air attack on presidential palace; Vietnamese People’s Revolutionary Party; North Vietnamese violations of Geneva Agreements.

0530 March 1962
ICC operations; U.S. defoliant operations; Viet Cong infiltration through Laos; North Vietnamese administrative organization; PRC activities and intentions in Vietnam and Laos;
counterinsurgency plan; opposition to U.S. military involvement; internal security; Viet Cong military operations; North Vietnamese political developments; military situation reports; Soviet policy on Vietnam; U.S. violations of Geneva Agreements; report on February bombing of presidential palace; strategic hamlet program.

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Internal Political and National Defense Affairs—Vietnam cont.

001 April 1962
U.S. defoliant operations; U.S. military aid; strategic hamlet program; North Vietnamese five-year plan; opposition to U.S. military involvement; military situation reports; Soviet military mission in North Vietnam; rules of engagement for U.S. aircraft; internal security; Viet Cong political program and military operations; North Vietnamese violations of Geneva Agreements; Vietnam reunification issue; North Vietnamese political developments; establishment of provincial councils; ICC operations; tribal resettlement program; North Vietnamese propaganda; Chuong Thein Province.

0298 May 1962
Opposition to U.S. military involvement; Viet Cong infiltration through Cambodia; PRC policy on Vietnam; strategic hamlet program; Viet Cong military operations; Cambodian–South Vietnamese relations; proposed International Conference on Vietnam; Vietnam reunification issue; U.S. and Australian military aid; Viet Cong terrorist activities; ICC operations; North Vietnamese political developments; military situation reports; North Vietnamese violations of Geneva Agreements; social purification law; North Vietnamese propaganda.

0573 June 1962
Viet Cong military operations; strategic hamlet program; ICC operations and report on North Vietnamese subversion; province rehabilitation program; North and South Vietnamese violations of Geneva Agreements; military situation reports; North Vietnamese propaganda; postponement of National Assembly elections; North Vietnamese political developments; amnesty program; redeployment of U.S. Marines in Thailand.
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<td>ICC operations and report on North Vietnamese subversion; North Vietnamese violations of Geneva Agreements; Hue Political Rehabilitation Center; Viet Cong infiltration through Laos; military situation reports; strategic hamlet program; province rehabilitation program; U.S. defoliant and crop destruction operations; Montagnard refugees; North Vietnamese political developments; Viet Cong military operations and terrorist activities; role of Buddhists in fight against Viet Cong; South Vietnamese-Cambodian relations; application of POW convention in Vietnam.</td>
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<td>0175</td>
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<td>Viet Cong military operations; U.S. defoliant and crop destruction operations; Indian and British views on Vietnam; application of POW convention to Vietnam; South Vietnamese military mission to Cambodia; Montagnard refugees; ICC operations; province rehabilitation program; South Vietnamese propaganda; strategic hamlet program; military situation reports; South Vietnamese torture of prisoners; list of South Vietnamese provincial officials; South Vietnamese commando raids in North Vietnam; repatriation of Vietnamese refugees from Thailand; Bernard Fall’s interviews with Ho Chi Minh and Pham Van Dong.</td>
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<td>U.S. defoliant and crop destruction operations; military situation reports; ICC operations; strategic hamlet program; Montagnard refugees; Viet Cong international activities; Phu Bon Province; politico-economic assessment; South Vietnamese-Cambodian relations; North Vietnamese political developments; U.S. violations of Geneva Agreements; application of POW convention in Vietnam.</td>
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<td>0651</td>
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<td>State of the Nation speech by President Diem; ICC operations; Viet Cong terrorist activities and military operations; Montagnard refugees; White Paper on “The Aggressive Policy of the Viet Minh Communists and the Subversive Communist War in South Vietnam”; military situation reports; Soviet call for neutralization of Vietnam; counterinsurgency plan; corruption; strategic hamlet program; U.S. defoliation and crop destruction operations; North Vietnamese report on “U.S. Policy of Intervention and Aggression in South Vietnam”; North Vietnamese political developments.</td>
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0001 November 1962
   ICC operations; military situation reports; U.S. defoliant and
crop destruction operations; Montagnard refugees; Viet Cong
political activities, terrorist activities, and military operations;
province rehabilitation program; strategic hamlet program.

0151 December 1962
   U.S. defoliant and crop destruction operations; napalm use;
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Cong military operations; North Vietnamese political
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0290 January 1963
   Kidnapping of U.S. missionaries by Viet Cong; Viet Cong
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0421 751K.00 May
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751K.00(W) Political Affairs: Weeka Reports
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0495 February 1960

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0554 April 1960

0592 May 1960

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0732 September 1960

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751K.00(W) Political Affairs: Weeka Reports cont.
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0294 751K.001 Political Affairs: Communism
0343 751K.02 Political Affairs: Government
0366 751K.02A Political Affairs: Government—Advisers
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Cambodian and South Vietnamese claims to offshore islands in the Gulf of Thailand.

0403 April 1960
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0426 May 1960
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<td>South Vietnamese Cadastral Service organization report.</td>
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|       |        | Internal security; counterinsurgency plan; Civil Guard and ARVN antiguerrilla training.                                               |
| 0017  |        | March 1960  
|       |        | Internal security; MAAG force levels; Civil Guard antiguerrilla training.                                                             |
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| 0065  |        | May 1960  
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| 0077  |        | June 1960  
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| 0089  |        | July 1960  
|       |        | ARVN force levels; internal security.                                                                                                  |
| 0104  |        | August 1960  
|       |        | Internal security.                                                                                                                     |
| 0108  |        | September 1960  
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|       |        | Viet Cong operations in Quang Ngai Province; coup attempt.                                                                             |
| 0140  |        | December 1960  
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| 0142  |        | January 1961  
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0152 March 1961
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0171 April 1961
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0175 May 1961
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0178 June 1961
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0192 July 1961
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0209 August 1961
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0273 September 1961
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0288 October 1961
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0303 November 1961
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0424 December 1961
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0557 January 1962
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0669 February 1962
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0001 March 1962
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0146 April 1962
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0337 May 1962
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0523 June 1962
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0709 July 1962
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0775 August 1962
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0876 September 1962
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0011 November 1962
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0061 December 1962
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0138 January 1963
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751K.5MSP National Defense Affairs: Mutual Security Program
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0258 January 1960
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0297 February 1960
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0251 May 1961
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0393 June 1961
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0523 July 1961
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0572 August 1961
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0684 September 1961

0748 October 1961

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0836 December 1961

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0843 April 1962
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0003 751K.521 National Defense Affairs: Intelligence Activities—Biographical Data

0024 751K.53 National Defense Affairs: Military Courts

0061 751K.54 National Defense Affairs: Maneuvers; Troop Movements

0119 751K.5411 National Defense Affairs: Troop Movements; Overflights—U.S.

0155 751K.5451H National Defense Affairs: Troop Movements—Cambodia

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0368 | 751K.5811 | National Defense Affairs: Missions—U.S.                                 |

June 1960
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0369 | 751K.5811 | National Defense Affairs: Missions—U.S.                                 |

July 1960
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0380 | 751K.5811 | National Defense Affairs: Missions—U.S.                                 |

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September 1960
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0386 | 751K.5811 | National Defense Affairs: Missions—U.S.                                 |

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January 1961
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August 1961
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September 1961
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October 1961
Admiral H. D. Felt visit and meeting with President Diem; U.S. flood relief.

November 1961
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December 1961
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February 1962
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March 1962
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April 1962
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June 1962
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November 1962
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December 1962
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| 0478  | 751K.5837 | National Defense Affairs: Missions—Cuba |
| 0486  | 751K.5842 | National Defense Affairs: Missions—Canada |
| 0489  | 751K.5851H | National Defense Affairs: Missions—Cambodia |
| 0490  | 751K.5893 | National Defense Affairs: Missions—China |
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| 0507  | February 1960  
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| 0549  | March 1960  
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| 0582  | April 1960  
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| 0593  | May 1960  
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| 0672  | June 1960  
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0700  August 1960
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0711  September 1960
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0733  October 1960
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0745  November 1960
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0755  December 1960
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0841  January 1961
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0053  March 1961
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0077  April 1961
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0099  May 1961
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0182  June 1961
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0222  July 1961
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| 0325  |      | September 1961  
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| 0711  |      | December 1961  
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| 0098    | March 1962  
   ICC operations and expenses; Viet Cong infiltration routes and military operations; South Vietnamese violations of Geneva Agreements. |
April 1962
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May 1962
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June 1962
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July 1962
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August 1962
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September 1962
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October 1962
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March 1960
CVTC organization and membership.

April 1960
Labor laws; labor training programs; International Labor Organization manpower survey.

May 1961

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August 1961
ICFTU Asian Regional Organization meeting.

September 1961
Proposed labor and welfare programs.

November 1961

December 1961
Proposed labor and welfare programs.

January 1962
Proposed labor and welfare programs.

April 1962

May 1962
Labor report; UN/FAO food distribution plan; Irving Brown report; South Vietnamese Department of Labor activities.

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<td>Viet Cong theft of latex collection equipment from rubber plantation.</td>
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851K.0651 Economic Matters: Labor—Hazardous Employment: Employer's Liability

851K.072 Economic Matters: Pensions—Old Age

851K.10 Financial Matters [General]
February 1960
Brookings Institute budget program for South Vietnam.

April 1960
Laotian monetary and fiscal policies.

June 1960

July 1960
South Vietnamese budget.

January 1961
South Vietnamese budget; industrial investments.

April 1961
West German loan to South Vietnam.

October 1961
Loftus Report.

November 1961
U.S. aid to increase cotton textile capacity; South Vietnamese budget.

December 1961
U.S. economic aid; fiscal reforms.

January 1962
Fiscal reforms; South Vietnamese–Cambodian financial settlement.

February 1962
Fiscal and monetary reforms; taxation decrees; currency devaluation; foreign exchange rates.

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| 0820  |      | August 1960  
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| 0238  |      | March 1960  
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| 0241  |      | May 1960  
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| 0245  |      | June 1960  
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| 0253  |      | July 1960 |
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| 0290  |      | January 1961  
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| 0306  |      | October 1961  
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| 0316  |      | December 1961  
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| 0328  |      | January 1962  
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| 0329  |      | March 1962 |
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| 0331  |      | July 1962  
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October 1961
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December 1961
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April 1962

May 1962
British medical aid.

August 1962
Viet Cong shortages of medical supplies and food.

September 1962
U.S. economic aid for Montagnard refugees; plague outbreak in Bien Hoa Province.

November 1962
Foreign economic aid for Montagnard refugees.

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Public Order, Safety and Health; Charities: Municipal Government—Police Organization

Public Order, Safety and Health; Charities: Traffic in Narcotics

Public Order, Safety and Health; Charities: Public Health

Public Order, Safety and Health; Charities: Public Health—Quarantine Against Communicable Diseases

Public Order, Safety and Health; Charities: Public Health—Practice of Medicine

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Communications; Transportation; Science—Vietnam

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*International Political Relations; Bilateral Treaties—U.S.—Vietnam*

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This index provides an entry under each of the topic names assigned by the State Department in its decimal number classification system for which documents appear in the collection. In order to avoid confusion, the term “Foreign relations” has been substituted for the State Department’s term “Political relations.” Additional terms have been supplied to provide more detailed topical access. Terminology and spellings are those used in the original documents. Researchers may consult the acronym list on page xxxv.

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