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21 September 1967

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MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT      Preliminary Assessment of 16 and 17  
                 September 1967 BLACK SHIELD Photography

Summary

Two BLACK SHIELD missions--flown on 16 and 17 September--made two passes each over North Vietnam on identical routes, covering about 65 percent of the country north of the panhandle. Cloud cover averaged about 70 percent on the first mission and ten percent on the second. Four of North Vietnam's six major airfields, over 60 percent of the SAM sites, and many US strike and interdiction targets were photographed. No evidence of surface-to-surface missile deployment was noted.

Note: This memorandum was prepared by the Directorate of Intelligence.

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1. BLACK SHIELD missions 6722 and 6723--flown on 16 and 17 September--made two passes each over North Vietnam on identical routes, covering about 65 percent of the country north of the panhandle. The initial pass of each mission covered the area along the Chinese border from the Tonkin Gulf to beyond Lao Cai. The second pass covered a strip from Dien Bien Phu over Hanoi to Haiphong. Cloud cover averaged about 70 percent on the 16 September mission and about ten percent on the 17 September mission. Clear photography of both the Hanoi and Haiphong areas was obtained by the 17 September mission. No evidence of surface-to-surface missile deployment was noted.

2. North Vietnamese Air Defenses: The missions revealed no unusual developments in the fighter aircraft and surface-to-air missile elements of the DRV air defense system. Over 60 percent of the country's more than 200 SAM sites were photographed. Four appeared to be new installations. Only 19 of the sites photographed were occupied by SAM equipment.

3. Four of North Vietnam's six primary air-fields were photographed. The number of MIG jet fighters identified was close to current estimates. Ten MIG-21s and nine MIG-15/17s were noted at Phuc Yen Airfield. Seven MIG-17s and four MIG-15s--one without a tail assembly--were observed at Hanoi/Gia Lam Airfield, and two MIG-15/17s without tail assemblies were detected at Hoa Lac Airfield. The air order of battle at Kep Airfield was not discernible.

4. Ship allegedly carrying SS-N-2 missiles to the DRV: Clear photographic coverage of Haiphong on 17 September showed the Soviet large-hatch freighter Partizanskaya Iskra--an alleged carrier of SS-N-2 (STYX) cruise missiles--berthed and with all five hatches open.

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5. Bomb damage assessment of land transportation system: The missions covered 21 bridges and rail yards that are included on the CIA priority requirements list for bomb damage assessment. The vital Red River Bridge was noted undergoing repairs--four work barges were observed tied to the previously destroyed span. A removable deck span--noted in [redacted]

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[redacted] was observed in place on the bridge. The bridge is probably serviceable to limited truck traffic at present. In addition, the rail ferry eight miles south was noted in use, indicating that magnetic-influence mines dropped on 22 August are not presenting a serious obstacle to traffic. The railroad highway bridge over the Canal des Rapides, as well as the accompanying highway bypass bridge, were shown to be serviceable for truck traffic.

6. The bridge at Viet Tri on the Hanoi-Lao Cai rail line--destroyed in June 1966--has a cable network strung across it indicating it may possibly be serviceable to motor vehicle traffic. In addition, highway ferries were noted in use at this bridge. The Haiphong-Hanoi rail line was shown to be serviceable for through traffic as far as the Red River at Hanoi. All bridges along this line have been repaired.

7. Bomb damage assessment of port areas: Recent air strikes in the Haiphong and Cam Pha areas appear to have done little damage. The rail yard and targeted bridges in Haiphong were not damaged. A cratered approach to a highway bridge was the only damage noted. Attacks on Cam Pha were apparently concentrated on the rail choke point. The wharf and handling equipment at Cam Pha were not damaged, and one empty, medium-hatch ship was noted in the harbor. Coverage of Port Wallut shows heavy damage throughout the area, structures being dismantled, and no reconstruction activity, suggesting that the naval facility may have been abandoned.

8. Hanoi thermal power plant: Photography from the 17 September mission showed the roofing repaired over one of the two newest boilers of the plant.

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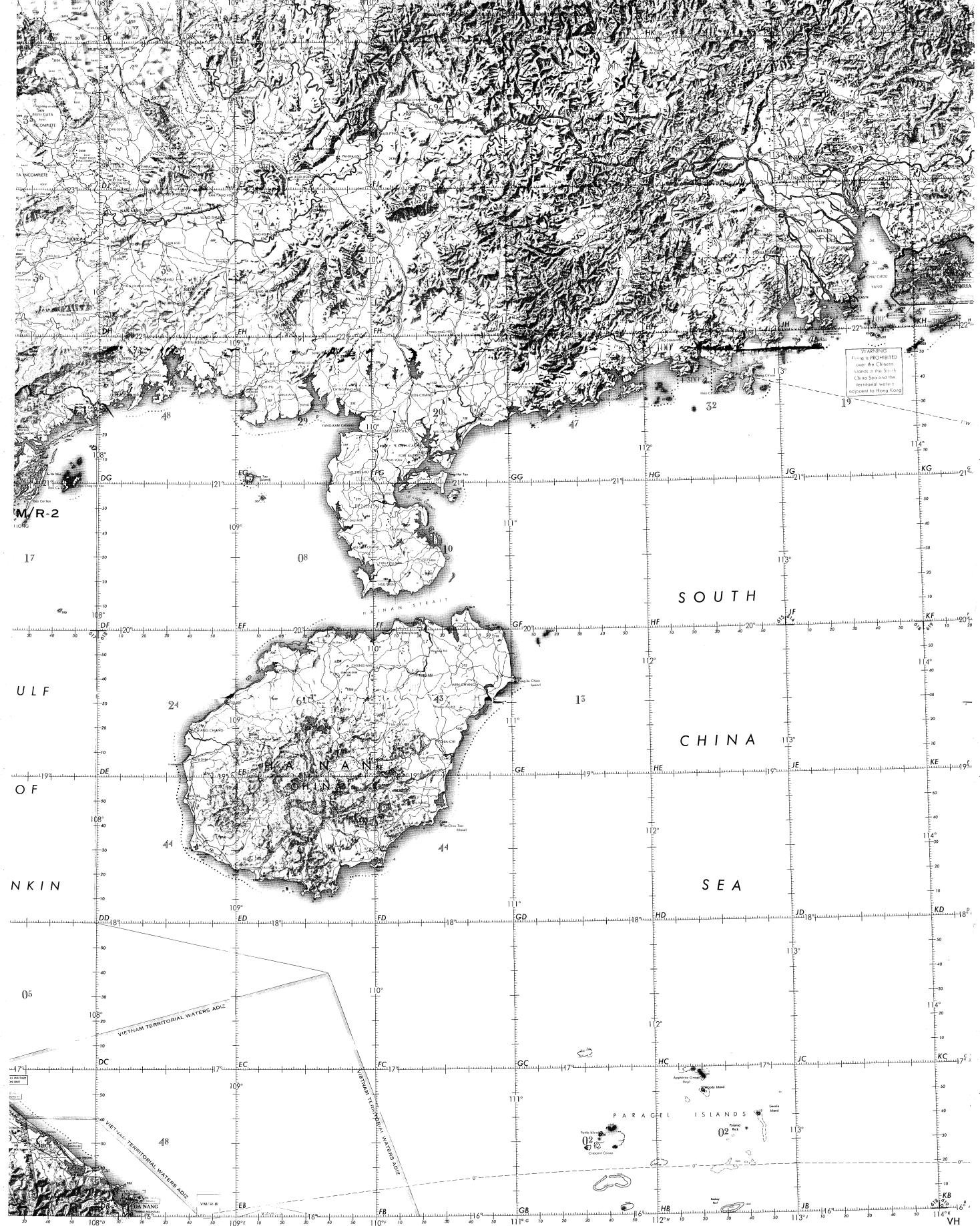
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