

19 November 1969

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Out-of-Country Threat Estimate

1. The purpose of this memorandum is to calculate a series of consistently defined out-of-country threat estimates to be added to the series of Main and Local Force estimates developed by the average battalion strength methodology for the period end 1967 through the 3rd Quarter 1969.

2. In addition to those enemy units within or near the borders of South Vietnam, there are a number of NVA units located in southern North Vietnam which should be considered as part of the enemy threat estimate to the Republic. These units are picked up in the threat estimate when they infiltrate or exfiltrate into the threat area, arbitrarily defined as stretching generally from Dong Hoi, North Vietnam, to the DMZ area. The threat estimate does not include those units subordinate to the B-5 Front which normally operate in and out of the DMZ and which are already carried in the "in-country" estimate.

3. The following chart indicates those NVA units and their estimated strengths which should be considered as part of the enemy's military threat to South Vietnam for the month shown. Changes in the threat from one month to another reflect the fact that the units either were picked up in the "in-country" estimates or dropped from the order of battle altogether as they moved out of the threat area.

4. In December 1967, seven NVA regiments (i.e., 31st Independent Regiment, 3 regiments of the 304th and 3 of the 320th Divisions) were in the process of infiltrating South Vietnam and are considered as a threat. These units arrived in South Vietnam in January in preparation for the Tet offensive with an estimated 20,000 troops.

5. The March threat figure comprised the estimated 2,000 men infiltrating in the 36th Regiment. This regiment arrived in early April and is included in the June "in-country" estimate. Also, during the first quarter 1968, two other NVA regiments arrived in South Vietnam -- the 27th in February and the 141st in March. They, in effect, transited the threat area during the quarter, however, and are not considered in any quarterly threat estimate. These regiments are carried as in-country units in our March estimates.

6. The June threat consisted of the infiltrating 138th Regiment. This regiment arrived in July with some 2,000 men. Although the 88th and 102nd Regiments, 308th Division, and the 246th Independent Regiment arrived in South Vietnam in May and June, they are not part of the threat estimates but carried as in-country units for end-June. They also transited the threat area during the quarter. (It should be noted that current monthly estimates made at the time units were in the threat area would have placed them there. Therefore, there are some apparent discrepancies between certain past estimates and this series.)

7. The third quarter 1968 saw the exfiltrating of the entire 304th Division and the 88th and 102nd Regiments of the newly arrived 308th Division. After suffering heavy casualties at Khe Sanh, the 304th Division withdrew from South Vietnam during June. Although during its initial exfiltration the division still may have been a threat, the heavy casualties incurred in South Vietnam and the fact that the unit had moved deep into North Vietnam by the end of the quarter keeps the division from being considered a threat in September. The two regiments of the 308th Division, however, are considered a threat in September. Although the regiments are believed to have left South Vietnam in July, they initially deployed to base areas in Laos and only later moved northward to North Vietnam. Because of their suspected proximity to South Vietnam and the fact that the units were believed to have been able to return to South Vietnam at anytime, they are carried as part of the threat estimate for September. The units were dropped entirely from the estimates in the fourth quarter when [ ] suggested that both units had moved to North Vietnam.

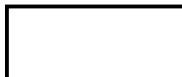
8. The threat estimate of 20,000 for December 1968 includes three infantry regiments of the 304th Division, three infantry regiments of the 325th Division (AKA the 308th), and one artillery regiment which deployed to the Dong Hoi area of North Vietnam in December. After suffering heavy casualties in Quang Tri, South Vietnam, the 320th Division began deploying to North Vietnam in October. Because it was apparently being replaced by either the 304th or 325th Division, it is not in the December threat estimate.

9. During the first quarter of 1969, only the 38th Regiment deployed to the DMZ area and was picked up in the "in-country" estimates. The other six regiments appear to have been in a holding position during the period and continued to be carried as a threat for March. In addition, a 281st AAA Regiment appeared in the Dong Hoi area and is included in the March estimate of 20,000.

10. In June 1969, the threat had diminished to some 9,000 troops comprised of the 9th and 66th Regiments (304th Division) and the 218th AAA and 204th Artillery Regiments. This reduction in threat resulted

from the northward deployment out of the threat area of the entire 325th Division and the picking up of the 24th Regiment (304th Division) in the in-country estimate in April. The shift of the 204th Artillery Regiment out of the DMZ area to Dong Hoi did not affect the total estimate as the unit was already carried as part of the "in-country" estimate and simply moved to the threat category.

11. The September threat of 10,000 troops included the 24th and 66th Regiments (304th Division), and the 218th AAA, 204th Artillery, and the 138th Infantry Regiments. During the third quarter, the 9th Infantry Regiment (304th Division) moved down from the Dong Hoi into the DMZ area. This unit was dropped from the threat category and picked up in the "in-country" estimate. At the same time, the 24th Regiment moved out of Quang Tri to Dong Hoi; the unit was thus shifted from the in-country to the out-of-country threat estimate. In addition, the 138th Infantry Regiment appears to have pulled out of the DMZ in early July and moved to Dong Hoi where it has not been heard from since. This unit also was shifted from the in-country to the threat category.



Out-of-Country Threat

<u>Date</u>	<u>Unit</u>	<u>Strength</u>
Dec 67	31st Regt. 304th Div. 320th Div.	20,000
Mar 68	36th Regt.	2,000
Jun 68	138th Regt.	2,000
Sep 68	88th Regt., 308th Div. 102nd Regt., 308th Div.	4,000
Dec 68	304th Div. 325th Div. 38th Arty Regt.	20,000
Mar 69	304th Div. 325th Div. 218th AAA Regt.	20,000
Jun 69	9th Regt., 304th Div. 66th Regt., 304th Div. 204th Arty Regt. 218th AAA Regt.	9,000
Sep 69	24th Regt., 304th Div. 66th Regt., 304th Div. 204th Arty Regt. 218th AAA Regt. 138th Inf Regt.	10,000