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7 February 1968

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Effect of the Viet Cong TET Offensive on the GVN Pacification Program

1. The data in this memorandum was compiled from all province and corps situation reports received as of 1500 hours EST 7 February 1968. Following the Summary and Conclusions is data for individual provinces.

Summary and Conclusions

2. The Viet Cong TET offensive appears to have caused a major disruption of the GVN/US pacification program in a majority of the provinces. Reporting is still too spotty to assess the full extent of damage caused the pacification program but it is likely that resources previously allocated to rural areas will be required to rebuild the heavily damaged urban areas and that the Revolutionary Development Cadre (RDC) Teams will be required in several cities to assist in reconstruction. In many areas the RDC Teams have been withdrawn from hamlets to more secure urban centers or as protection for urban centers. ARVN Battalions in support of the RDC have also been pulled into urban centers as security forces in many provinces. Throughout I and II Corps the Viet Cong are reported attacking hamlets in the 1967 and 1968 pacification plan. In Quang Nam all 17 of the RDC Teams contacted by 2 February had been in action against the Viet Cong. In Binh Dinh province the Senior Advisor's estimate is that the VC attacks have set the pacification program back 18 months. In Quang Tri and Ninh Thuan provinces the VC are occupying the pacification areas. Only Phu Bon, Quang Duc and Lam Dong provinces and the Cam Ranh Bay area have not reported setbacks in their pacification programs. Reporting from III and IV Corps is more spotty but it appears that four of the eleven provinces in III Corps have suffered major damage and six of the remaining seven provinces have reported some setback in their pacification programs. In IV Corps it appears that 12 of its 16 provinces have suffered major damage and only in An Giang and Chuong Thien does it appear that the pacification program has not suffered. The map attached displays our initial estimate of the degree of setback in the pacification program by province.

Approved for Release
 Date 24 JAN 1991

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3. It is still too early to estimate, with any degree of accuracy, how long it will take to recover from these setbacks. In some provinces the records installations, equipment, and vehicles were destroyed which may cause lengthy administrative delays. In other provinces, key personnel were lost and must be replaced. In some provinces RD cadre have melted away under VC pressure and the teams must be reorganized and replacement recruited and trained. Much will depend on how long it takes to re-secure the rural areas so that the RDC Teams can return to work. How many resources will be drawn from the RD program to rebuilding the urban areas is a matter of conjecture. It is unlikely that GVN officials will be able to put as much attention on the pacification program as they have in the past because of the damage done to the cities. In fact, the rural pacification program may take second place to rebuilding the cities. There is also the refugee problem which increases as the VC Tet offensive and allied counter action creates more refugees who must be cared for. There will undoubtedly be some lessening of confidence in the GVN in those areas that had previously been pacified and are now occupied by the VC. Hamlets must be rebuilt, confidence restored, and the government apparatus re-established. This will be made more difficult where the district officials assume a fortress mentality. Our tentative estimate from the limited data available is that the overall pacification program has been set back six months though some provinces will recover more rapidly and others more slowly.

4. In most instances the RD Cadre have performed well during the TET VC offensive but only a small number of teams have been contacted (see table below) so the casualties suffered and damage inflicted has not been toted. There is only limited reporting on the Static Census Grievance program but at least in IV Corps it appears to have been a major target of the Viet Cong. The Provincial Reconnaissance Units have been heavily engaged and have acquitted themselves well. To date, casualties reported for all programs are 29 KIA, 32 WIA, and 5 MIA. The situation of the Truong Son (Montagnard) teams is unknown because of the heavy fighting in Kontum, Pleiku, and Darlac.

-2-

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STATUS OF RDC TEAMS

REGION	ACCOUNTED FOR	PROBABLY HEARD FROM	UNKNOWN	TOTAL
I	17	74	38	129
II	41	79	42	162
III	7	44	32	83
IV	8	54	119	181
TOTAL	73	251	231	555
PERCENTAGE	13	45	42	100

I Corps5. Danang

A. All four RD Teams had been pulled into Danang City hall as security force, as of 1800 hours 5 February, Saigon time. Approximately 20 cadre are detailed to assist in various medical facilities in the city and to assist in various "help the people" projects on a temporary basis.

6. Quang Nam

A. Thirteen of the 30 RD Teams in Quang Nam had not been in radio contact, as of 1800 hours 2 February, Saigon time. Six teams, 1 KIA each; one team, 2 KIA; 1 team, 1 WIA; and 9 teams had contact with the VC but suffered no casualties. The RD control group was again in operation and more details are expected soon. Six of the teams were being used in Hoi An on other duties.

7. Quang Ngai

A. RDC compound received small arms and recoilles rifle fire the night of 30 - 31 January. The VC captured a RD driver and held him for 12 hours. He said the VC claimed their target was the RD house and compound. The status of RD teams is generally unknown. RD Team No. 14 at An Luong Hamlet, BS 649750, Son Long Village, Son Trinh District claimed to have captured more than 300 VC laborers. Americans consider this probably an exaggeration. The PRUs are on the job. The RD compound was well organized, as of 1200 hours 1 February Saigon time, indigenous guards have done a good job, exhibiting fire discipline as all stood by their posts.

B. Only three RDC have been reported KIA, as of 1000 hours 3 February Saigon time, but this figure may increase when all reports are in.

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C. Quang Ngai reported at 2000 hours 4 February Saigon time that the VC generally by-passed the RD Teams. Some teams were moved in close to district compounds to support local GVN forces. The PRUs were showing a good count, keeping casualties low (two WIA) and disrupting the enemy. All districts were happy with the PRU effort.

D. During the early morning of 6 February the RD Control Group Headquarters was attacked by a VC company using B-40 rockets and RR fire with six hits being registered. Friendly losses were 1 RDC KIA and 15 WIA. Enemy losses were not reported.

E. It is not possible to provide an accurate assessment of the RD teams at this time in terms of casualties and engagements with the VC during the recent actions in Quang Ngai Province. At the present time there are about 250 RD Cadres in Quang Ngai City. These include the RD Control Group Headquarters and members of teams who were in the city on leave over the Tet holiday. This group has centered around the RD Headquarters building and successfully defended their building and its surrounding area from a VC attack on the morning of 6 February. In addition, many of the cadres have been working with Regional and Popular Force units stationed in and around the city on sweep operations and clearing out small pockets of resistance. Morale among these cadres remains high. (Reported as of 1700 hours 7 February Saigon time)

8. Quang Tin, Tam Ky

A. During the 31 January attack PRU members captured 19 VC individual and crew-served weapons, including one 57mm recoilless rifle. PRUs killed 23 VC (U.S. advisors body count) and captured one VC. Two PRUs slightly wounded and damage to PRU camp was minimal. One VC battalion attacked from northwest striking PRU compound and ARVN compound on PRU East flank. ARVN soon withdrew to PIC leaving flank open. The PRUs put the area under fire with 3 MG and 5 M 79s plus their individual weapons. At about 0515 hours the PRUs began to receive intense machine gun fire from the area abandoned by ARVN. At 0645 hours 30 PRUs moved toward area from which the MG fire came and captured the MG, which later turned out to have been left behind by the ARVN unit. [REDACTED]

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9. Quang Tri

A. Reports received, as of 0900 hours 2 February Saigon time, indicate RDC Team No. 1 has killed 10 VC and captured seven weapons; Team No. 12 has killed five VC and captured one weapon.

-4-

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B. As of 0400 hours 3 February Saigon time, the enemy was holding about two-thirds of the RD campaign area mostly in Trieu Phong District. The allies are going to be forced to go in and root out these forces, which may wreak havoc on the hamlets in the process.

C. Quang Tri reported at 1000 hours 3 February Saigon time that because of withdrawal of ARVN battalions to Quang Tri City RD Teams have been relocated to provide them with the best possible security under the circumstances. The teams have encountered few VC attacks and sustained few casualties, but their field strength are low due to the confusion resulting from TET and the current VC offensive. The teams have been resupplied with ammunition where required. The RD control group has shown definite ineptitude in reorganizing teams, exploiting the psywar opportunities, and conducting required administration.

D. At 2000 hours 4 February Saigon time, it was reported that PRUs served as reaction units in Quang Tri City and sped from one spot to another clearing out enemy activity.

10. Thua Thien, Hue

A. As of 1330 hours 1 February Saigon time, the 50 PRUs in their Hue compound had repulsed five attacks, were surrounded by approximately two VC companies, were short of ammunition, and had had no food for two days.

B. As of 2220 hours 1 February Saigon time, the PRU had been forced out of its compound south of Hue City by the VC and were moving towards YD 768204. The VC occupied the compound and were destroying it. The PRU required ammunition and resupply was to be attempted the morning of 2 February by helicopter.

C. The 50 man PRU, reportedly twice driven from its compound in the southwest part of Hue, withdrew to Huong Tuy District Headquarters for resupply, as of 2400 hours 4 February Saigon time. Huong Tuy is about five miles southeast of Hue along Route 1. The PRU has been providing tactical information of value to Marine forces via a radio link with a PRU advisor now attached to the Marine Regimental Headquarters.

11. Binh Dinh

A. As a result of recent enemy activity in the city of Qui Nhon and Binh Dinh province, at least 20 RD teams have been temporarily removed from the hamlets they occupied before the attacks. The withdrawal of supporting troops to be used against the enemy necessitated the removal of these teams. There were 8 RD teams still in Qui Nhon conducting

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security operations, searching local residences for enemy supply caches and helping root out snipers that remained in the city. These temporary duties were all assigned by the province chief. Although these duties did not represent, in any way, an RD activity, the teams provided an effective force for containing and removing the enemy. In an Nhon and Tuy Phuoc districts, a large number of hamlets constructed in 1966 and 1967 were attacked. The province senior advisor and [REDACTED] province officers feel that it will take 18 months to reach the same stage of development that existed 6 months ago, and this will be only possible if the security situation improves to what it was 6 months ago. It was also felt that the 1968 RD plan would now have to conform to more realistic goals and return to areas previously worked. An opinion was expressed by local officials that most of the teams should be able to return to their hamlets in about 4 days, if the security situation remained at the same level currently held. Many of the refugees presently in the province formerly resided in the RD hamlets that were overrun. [REDACTED] 6 Feb 68)

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II Corps12. Binh Thuan

A. As of 1545 hours 2 February Saigon time, RD Teams were in their original locations and were operational with only one wounded in action. Quarter Zone teams are also operational and unharmed. PRUs operating in Thien Giao District had been hit by air strikes, casualties unknown.

13. Darlac

A. As of 1100 hours 4 February Saigon time, no information had been received for five days by American advisors concerning the situation of Vietnamese RD Teams in the province.

B. As of 6 February, the RDC program appeared almost in-operative largely due to the fact that only two out of seven RD teams in the area have been provided any security by local forces. The remainder of the teams have been pulled out of their areas of responsibility because of lack of security.

14. Khanh Hoa

A. There is no information on the RD teams but the VC mounted their attack on Nha Trang from the RD area.

15. Kontum

A. There is no information on the RD teams but heavy fighting has been reported in the RD areas.

16. Lam Dong

A. There is no information on the RD teams. This province has not been attacked.

17. Ninh Thuan

A. The PRU were in contact with a VC force ten kilometers southwest of Phan Rang in the evening of 4 February. At 2150 hours 4 February, a regional force unit was in contact with VC force in a 1967 RD hamlet seven and one-half kilometers southwest of town. The VC have been concentrating their destructive efforts against all hamlets in the province that were included in the 1967 RD plan and which are currently not protected by RD Teams. They have been collecting rice from these hamlets and destroying everything that represents the GVN. The 1968 RD hamlets, in which there are RD teams located, are not being hit. At present approximately 300 RDC who have not yet been deployed in 1968 program hamlets are being used to augment Phan Rang internal security forces. (See [REDACTED] 5 February 1968 for list of hamlets.)

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18. Phu Bon

A. There is no information on the RD teams. This province has not been attacked.

19. Phu Yen

A. RD Teams had encountered only light attacks and appeared to be in a little trouble, as of 1545 hours 2 February Saigon time. However, the heavy fighting in and around Tuy Hoa is where the major pacification area is located.

20. Pleiku

A. On the night 31 January 1968 PRU personnel set up listening posts and road blocks around American advisors compounds and the Pleiku Montagnard Training Center. Because of heavy fire from unknown sources, some thought to be ARVN, these people pulled back into the compound areas. One PRU WIA from what was considered ARVN fire. There is no reporting on RD or Truong Son teams.

-7-

~~SECRET~~21. Quang Duc

A. There is no information on the RD teams. This province has not been attacked.

22. Tuyen Duc

A. As of 1330 hours 5 February Saigon time, Census Grievance sources reported VC were tired and hungry but plan to stay in Dalat City until 7 February. They will resume attack on 10 February. RDC and TSRD in Tuyen Duc Province reported negative action with all teams in good condition and in place. (There has been no reporting on the teams since the VC forces in Dalat were increased. The RD teams are located around Dalat.)

III Corps

23. The pacification program seems to have been by-passed by the VC. No single RD team is known to have been the target of an attack and there are no reports of Provincial Reconnaissance Unit or Census Grievance casualties. Apparently the targets were the towns, with the RD groups being unimportant in this instance. Undoubtedly some of the cadres on TET visits will have been injured or have become so discouraged so as not to return, but all in all it appears as though the pacification personnel may have escaped serious injury. [REDACTED] 2 February 1968.)

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24. Bien Hoa

A. Five of the seven RD Teams have been contacted and are in no immediate danger, as of 2400 hours 1 February Saigon time. Team No. 4 in Cong Thanh District and Team No. 6 in Long Thanh District have not been contacted. The last contact with Team No. 4 prior to TET holidays revealed 20 cadre present. No means exists to contact Team No. 4 because bridge is out. Two members Team No. 4 reported captured but untested source suggests that they managed to escape. The SCG office in Long Thanh District reportedly destroyed but CG chief says all papers were removed and hidden prior to destruction.

25. Binh Duong

A. Phu Loc Village, about two kilometers from province capital, was mortared and attacked at 0345 hours 3 February. Two RDC KIA, 2 WIA. (There has been VC activity throughout the province.)

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~~SECRET~~26. Binh Long

A. Fifty percent of RDC are in their assigned positions because of TET holidays. In spot check at one RD site south of the province capital on 1 February, only three RDC were found on duty even though two teams were assigned to the site. The advisor was told there were other cadre on duty but they had gone to town to shop. (Most of Binh Long province outside of An Loc is under VC control.)

27. Binh Tuy

A. On PRU KIA in Ham Tan District during engagement with local VC company during the morning of 7 February.

28. Gia Dinh

A. One RDC was reported KIA the night 3-4 February 1968 and possibility exists that he was killed by friendly troops.

B. Two RDC were KIA during the early hours of 6 February in An Phu Hamlet, Binh Chanh District when the hamlet was attacked by a NVA company. RD Groups 2 and 10 in Binh Trung, Thu Duc District, were not at effective strength as of noon 7 February. Group 2 was operating with 24 members and group 10 had only 10 men present, the remainder of both teams have not returned from TET leave.

29. Hau Nghia

A. There is no information on the RD teams but there are reports of considerable VC movement throughout the province.

30. Long An

A. There is no information on the RD teams but there is considerable movement of VC forces in the province and the VC have announced the elimination of the PRUs.(untrue)

31. Long Khanh

A. One Trung Son cadre was missing along with nine weapons. As of 2400 hours 3 February, 11 PRU augmented security force at U. S. civilian compound.

32. Phuoc Long

A. There is no information on the RD teams but the VC appear to control the countryside and have cut lines of communication.

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~~SECRET~~33. Phuoc Tuy

A. There is no information on the RD teams but Baria, the province capital, was heavily attacked and the RDC advisor killed.

34. Tay Ninh

A. RDC were evacuated from their hamlets to respective district towns to augment existing district security forces, on 3 February.

IV Corps35. An Giang

A. There was no VC activity reported and no apparent problem with the RDC teams.

36. An Xuyen

A. [REDACTED] communications knocked out early 2 February.

B. In Camau City three PRU KIA and five WIA by late 2 February.

C. SCG reporting of VC activities, military strength, etc. PRU losses light - three KIA, five WIA. PRU assisted ARVN during daylight hours hunting down VC in the city. On night of the attack the PRU captured the secretary of the U Minh II Battalion along with a village party chapter member who were caught coming out of a movie theater. (Report of 2400 hours 3 February Saigon time.)

37. Ba Xuyen

A. No information is available on the teams but there has been heavy fighting in Soc Trang.

38. Bac Lieu

A. One PRU KIA on 3 February.

B. Both VC TET attacks were thwarted by PRU intelligence and action (4 February IV Corps Sitrep).

39. Chau Doc

A. Small PRU element helped drive off VC with advisor and Navy Seals on 31 January.

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-10-

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B. There were 40 PRUs in Chau Doc town during night of
February.

40. Chuong Thien

A. No VC activity reported in the province

41. Dinh Tuong, My Tho

A. RDC advisory compound was held and re-established contact
with operations center on 2 February.

B. The RD and CG houses and equipment were destroyed during
the seige. (Report of 2 February)

C. RD warehouse was occupied by VC and is ten percent destroyed.
All RD office and team supplies along with arms and ammunition which were
stored at the warehouse are gone and rumors have it that it may have been
looted or moved to province chief's house for safekeeping. The status of RD
teams throughout the province is unknown at this time. Special Police came
to defense of RDC compound which except for few bullet holes is unscathed.
(Report of 2400 hours 3 February Saigon time.)

42. Go Cong

A. The PRU made contact with an estimated VC battalion in the
late afternoon of 5 February. No casualties resulted. The deputy province
chief who was also acting as the chief of the RDC in Go Cong was reported
killed.

43. Kien Giang

A. RDC advisory office communications in Rach Gia, capital of
Kien Giang, were knocked out prior to 2 February.

B. The PRUs took part in defense of Rach Gia 31 January. RDC
house was one of first targets and received 15 explosive projectiles, both
B-40 rockets and rifle grenades, from 20 man terrorist group. Although
house was largely destroyed, the VC failed in their mission to occupy the
position, as guards, even though wounded, continued to deliver effective
fire. All personnel took cover safely on the roof and survived without
casualties. (Report of 2400 hours 3 February Saigon time.)

C. All units, including PRUs have done excellent job in defending
the city and at taking offensive action. (Report of 1800 hours 5 February
Saigon time.)

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~~SECRET~~44. Kien Hoa, Ben Tre City

A. RDC advisory personnel at office with 17 PRUs have good defensive position -- all other civilians in MACV compound, as of 2 February.

45. Kien Phong

A. As of 1800 hours 5 February, the status of the RDC in the province was listed as follows: Total strength 381 of which 177 are accounted for and 5 reported captured. 1 cadre was beheaded while on Tet leave. Also, 1 SGG inspector was captured and beheaded.

46. Kien Tuong, Moc Hoa

A. The VC tried to blast the RDC advisory compound wall but guards curtailed their action with automatic weapons fire. Personnel in the compound were originally going to retreat to their bunker but the province chief asked them to hold off until dawn. It appeared primary targets of VC were province chief's house and RDC compound. One guard and PRU WIA and have been evacuated to hospital. (Report of 0900 hours 2 February Saigon time.)

B. Third target of VC was pacification advisor's compound. Two RDC KIA including one who was believed leading VC from point to point, showing them where the installations were. One RDC was WIA by ARVN as he was leading a captured VC out of a house. This man was the RDC deputy leader. The PRU and RDC were used as defensive forces -- did an excellent job and are still effective units. (Report of 2 February.)

47. Phong Dinh

A. RD command post at Xeo Khe in Phong Phu District was attacked during night of 2 - 3 February and results are unknown although believed insignificant.

B. 303 out of 810 RDC have been accounted for on 6 February. All of the teams in the Tan Thoi area have been assembled at the RDC command post in Thuan Duc. Team 11 in Giai Xuan has been called back to Can Tho to act as a security force along with cadres already in the city. The PRU are giving security to the province chief and this far have sustained one killed and four wounded, one of whom was the PRU Chief.

48. Sadec

A. The VC reportedly have taken some outposts in the RD area and have raised the VC flag over the posts, as of 6 February. The RDC reportedly saw this display of the VC and decided to melt away in the countryside after donning civilian clothes.

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49. Vinh Binh, Tra Vinh

A. There was little known, as of 3 February, about the RD Teams although there have been no indications of casualties or disruption. SCG is intact and PRU had one KIA.

50. Vinh Long

A. RDC advisory personnel were evacuated to the Vinh Long City airport on night of 1 - 2 February.

B. PRU and armed propaganda team formed defense around PRU compound and although VC made no attack they suffered heavy casualties from friendly air strikes on 3 February.

Saigon

51. Responding to Gen Thang's operation recovery ten-day plan for Saigon and environs, 2,500 NTC Trainees and instructors arrived in Saigon 1130 hours 5 February by one LST and two LCU's. FAC and helicopter gunship air cover provided enroute. For personal safety, cadres changed from black pajamas to ARVN supplied fatigues with RD cadre emblem on jacket. Cadres arrived with weapons, one combat load of ammunition, two days rations and some HT-1 radios, RDC/MACV/CORDS will support the cadres with the same food allowance as received at the NTC, medical supplies as needed, and radios. Latter on loan basis. Cadre Directorate and ARVN to provide trucks, drives, and POL. RDC Division joined staff with Vietnamese directorate composed of Chief Ops, DC/Ops and Security, Finance/food, support and Psy/ops/CORDS/POD. Juspao movie, still photo and audio team of three on the job to exploit GVN efforts assist the peoples and the city's recovery from vicious VC attacks. Plans are for two to three days clean-up of trash and garbage in downtown Saigon. Security permitting, groups, supervised by NTC instructors, will assist 20 to 29 refugee areas on Saigon's periphery in reconstruction and medical assistance. Expect MACV and NLD assistance for former. Cadres are billeted at Saigon University and later will live in the refugee areas with the people. Cadres are to return to the NTC on or about 16 February, graduate 19 February, and commence returning to their provinces on 20 February.

Additional Material, as of 0900 Hours EST 8 February:

52. I Corps: Probably one of the most depressing aspects about the current VC/NVA offensive is that the pacification program will suffer a severe setback. Illustrative of this was the 6 February necessity of practically obliterating Cam Nam Island (BT 1656) with Napalm and 750-pound bombs

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because it was being used as a staging area for VC attacks against Hoi An. Cam Nam Island consisted of three hamlets, all prosperous, all very much GVN oriented, containing RD teams, and recipients of the best inputs in the revolutionary development program. Facilities completed or under construction included three new schools, many wells, sanitary toilet facilities, a maternity dispensary, and new bridges. Years of hard work by the GVN and the U. S. was destroyed in 30 minutes of military action, not to mention the propaganda value such destruction gives to the VC. [REDACTED] (7 February 1968)

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53. II Corps:

A. Pleiku: The Montagnard Training Center was hit the night of 7 - 8 February with mortar and small arms fire resulting in 4 friendly killed and 3 wounded.

B. Tuyen Duc: On 3 February the province chief had requested all RDC Teams to move to district headquarters for security reasons but the senior advisor was recommending against this action.

54. III Corps: In Long Khanh Province the Truong Son RD Chief was assigning his teams to check points and patrolling in support of province security forces (7 February).

55. IV Corps:

A. Chuong Thien province reported on 7 February that the PRU had killed 10 VC and captured 1.

B. Phong Dinh province reported the PRU had spotted a large VC concentration near the Chau Thanh District capital of Chai Rang on 8 February and were directing air and artillery strikes on this area.

C. Vinh Binh province reported that the PRU broke off contact with the VC element north of Tra Vinh City at 1600 hours 6 February after having 1 PRU killed and 7 wounded.

D. Vinh Long province reported that the PRU, as of 7 February, had lost 10 KIA, 17 WIA, and 30 MIA. The PRU dependents' housing was destroyed by friendly fire and appears to be the hardest hit of any place in Vinh Long city. There are no figures available on RDC Teams.

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Attachment

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