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NSA review completed

HAK TALKING POINTS

The Current Situation in Vietnam

Issues for Discussion

1. Enemy Activities

(a) MR 1. Our VSSG studies last summer clearly indicated a massive enemy effort in MR-1 into similar to actual occurrences. Why is it that the VC/NVA offensive came as a tactical surprise when it was anticipated a year in advance? What happened to our COMINT on enemy troop movements? Why didn't we know about the enemy's bridge building efforts?

Enemy activity is now apparently light and the lines have stabilized. Do we think this situation will continue? Will the enemy accept a stalemate without making a major attempt to seize control of either Quang Tri city or Hire? When could we be ready for such an attempt?

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(b) MR 2. Why has the major enemy effort envisaged for MR 2 not materialized? I have seen reference to the success of allied interdiction effort, but is this the real reason? What is the likelihood now that the enemy's target effort will come in Kontum and Pleiku? Could the attacks in MRs 1 and 3 be diversionary efforts aimed at spreading ARVN there?

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(c) MR 3. Why was the attack on Binh Long not accurately anticipated? I remember clearly reports of the movement of 3 NVA divisions (the 5th, 7th, and 9th) to Eastern Cambodia prior to the offensive. What did we think the enemy was doing with those units?

The situation in An Loc seemed to be stabilizing over the weekend. Now, it appears that the 9th NVA division is going to be thrown against the town. Will An Loc hold? Is the 7th NVA division still held in reserve in Cambodia, likely to be used there or against Tay Ninh or some other target closer to Saigon. Does everyone agree 25X1

that the 7th Division will be thrown against Tay Ninh city as well as 25X1
elements of the enemy's 9th division? What are the capabilities of this force were the attack launched? Can the enemy attack in both Binh Long and Tay Ninh?

(d) MR 4. There seems to be a wide divergence of views here. While DOD reported "a large number of low level incidents on April 7th," CIA reported "a sharp increase in activity" and predicted "a wide spread coordinated series of ground probes and shelling attacks." What accounts for these differences?

Our earlier interagency work predicted no large scale or main force activity in MR 4. Has the infiltration of the 88th Regiment and other units changed this picture? What are the implications of substantial enemy offensive activity in MR 4?

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2. Enemy Capabilities

(a) Manpower. A recent DOD estimate shows that the enemy main forces can match the RVNAF's main forces in number countrywide if all (excluding the 325th) units deployed south/are committed to battle. Isn't this much more pessimistic than earlier estimates? What are its implications for the eventual outcome? Doesn't it mean that for RVNAF to exceed the enemy in strength, its reserves must be committed precisely? Can we do this?

(b) Logistics.

the NVA 25X1
 "will continue to move large quantities of supplies through the Laos panhandle at least through April." This raises the question of how sustainable the enemy's offensive efforts are. Our earlier estimates implied through mid- summer. Is this view still held?

3. Enemy Objectives

(a) What are the enemy's objectives over the next few months?

Possibilities mentioned include (a) seizure of a provincial capital(s) and holding of territory; (b) destruction of ARVN's offensive capabilities without seizure of territory; (c) a major reversal of the control situation. In short, we don't really know yet what the objectives of the offensive are.

(b) Where will the enemy's offensive actions eventually focus? Most observers agree that the offensive will be lost for several months. If ARVN reinforcements are to serve their purpose, it must be accurately judged

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whether the enemy will (1) continue its MR 1 threat with diversionary attacks elsewhere; (2) make MR 2 the eventual focus of its offensive while attempting to hold in MR 1 and elsewhere, or (3) thrust in MR 3 and the Delta -- the most recent focal point of their efforts. Clearly, this judgement has to be linked to the best guess we can make about NVN's objectives.

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