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THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN.....

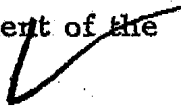
INFORMATION

June 23, 1972

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MEMORANDUM FOR: THE PRESIDENT

FROM: ALEXANDER M. HAIG, JR. 

SUBJECT: General Abrams' Special Assessment of the  
Military Situation in Vietnam 

Attached at Tab A is General Abrams' June 21 special assessment of what the enemy can do in Vietnam within the next 30 days and of possible ARVN countermeasures. The General's report is summarized below.

General Abrams believes that with our continued full support ARVN can hold its own during the coming month and make modest progress in regaining lost territory. The primary area of interest will be MR-1 where both the enemy and ARVN are preparing offensives. Elsewhere, the enemy is not expected to be able to launch and sustain a major main force offensive.

MR-1. In MR-1, the enemy -- despite heavy losses -- continues preparations for an imminent attack against Hue. Meanwhile, ARVN prepares for a main counteroffensive against Quang Tri scheduled to begin on June 28. Abrams believes that ARVN's position in MR-1 has steadily improved since early May. The counteroffensive, if it proceeds as planned, will probably succeed, despite minimal ARVN forces. If, however, the enemy attacks Hue before June 28, his offensive will be defeated. "There will be hard fighting and probably some dark days, but the outcome should be favorable."

MR-2. In MR-2, the enemy has suffered a major defeat at Kontum and has logistical and personnel problems. His units have now redeployed to restaging areas. ARVN should be able to hold its own and gradually reassert GVN influence over some lost territories. The situation in Binh Dinh probably will continue at about the same tempo and ARVN is doing its best with the forces currently available.

ARMY review completed.

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MR-3. In MR-3, the enemy's losses at An Loc have "degraded significantly any further capability to launch and sustain a main force offensive"; however, the shifting of enemy forces from MR-3 to the Cambodian Parrots Beak area poses a threat along the boundary of MR-3 and MR-4. ARVN reinforcements engaged at An Loc are now being reassigned to MR-4. Abrams does not see a serious threat to Saigon in the coming month but notes that the enemy could conduct sapper attacks for publicity impact. ARVN can cope with the situation in MR-3. The major problem continues to be deficiencies in senior level military leadership in the region.

MR-4. In MR-4, the enemy's capability for any major offensive action similarly is reduced.

[Redacted]

[Redacted] the enemy does not have the ability to achieve this goal. 25X1  
ARVN has done a good job of intercepting and hurting enemy units attempting to enter the area, but needs the reinforcements being released from An Loc to clean up pockets of resistance and continue effective border defense.

VC. Concerning the Viet Cong, General Abrams comments that their efforts are not expected to be of great significance during the next 30 days. The failure of the NVA offensive has discouraged the Viet Cong Infrastructure, and the North Vietnamese, in turn, are displeased with inadequate performance by VC cadre.

WLS:APA:pab (Jun 22, 1972)

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General Abrams' June 21 Special Assessment  
of the Military Situation in Vietnam

This message is an assessment of what the North Vietnamese and Viet Cong can do within the next thirty days in South Vietnam and the actions RVNAF can take against this.

In MR-1 the enemy continues his preparations for an attack against Hue in spite of heavy losses. He has the capability of launching the attack from the north, northwest and southwest. Since early May, the RVNAF position in MR-1 has steadily improved. Good progress has been made in rebuilding depleted forces, command and control and fire support coordination have improved and aggressive ground actions have been conducted. This combination of activities has steadily eroded enemy units and logistics. A coordinated operation was initiated by MR-1 in early June to set the stage for a major counteroffensive to retake Quang Tri City and vicinity. The preliminary phase of the operation has involved the massive use of fire power and spoiling attacks by ground forces. The tempo of action has been gradually increased since June 1 in preparation for the main counteroffensive scheduled to begin on June 28. If the enemy attacks in the Hue area before the June 28 counteroffensive, and there are strong indications that he intends to do so, I believe that he will be defeated. There will be hard fighting and

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probably some dark days but the outcome should be favorable for GVN. If the counteroffensive goes as scheduled it will probably move slowly but should succeed. The greatest danger of a setback is that of an enemy attack on Hue from the southwest at the same time the counteroffensive is moving north toward Quang Tri. Everything possible is being done to pre-empt this but if it does occur, the plan is such that the forces attacking toward Quang Tri should be able to fall back into their defensive positions near Hue. The RVNAF is in a good position in MR-1 to face the next 30 days although their forces for the counterattack are minimal.

On the B-3 Front the enemy has suffered a major defeat. The main enemy units which were involved in the fighting have deployed away from Kontum into restaging areas. They have logistical and personnel problems which indicate a seriously restricting resupply effort and trafficability will progressively worsen. RVNAF should be able to hold their own and gradually reassert GVN influence over some lost territory. In the next 30 days, the situation in Binh Dinh will probably continue at about the same tempo until rebuilding of depleted units enables RVNAF to reinforce there. They are doing about all they can with forces currently available.

In MR-3, the enemy's failure to seize An Loc and the accompanying major losses in manpower and equipment have degraded significantly any further capability to launch and sustain a main force offensive. The remnants of the 7th and 9th Divisions are expected to eventually withdraw to refit and

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resupply. The situation will now allow the release of RVNAF reinforcements that have been engaged in the An Loc area. The Airborne Brigade is being moved from An Loc to MR-1 to participate in the counteroffensive. The 15th Regiment is being returned to the 9th Division in MR-4. The 21st Division is expected to be released from the An Loc area in the next few days and will probably be returned to MR-4 control although JGS has not made a final decision on this. There will be some rearrangement of forces and areas of responsibility along the MR-3/MR-4 boundary. The enemy intentions in the COSVN area are not entirely clear but his shifting of forces out of MR-3 to the Parrots Beak area poses a threat along the boundary between MR-3 and MR-4. I do not see a serious threat to Saigon although sapper type attacks could be conducted to make headline news and create the impression of strength. The main problem in MR-3 continues to be deficiencies in senior level leadership which I have discussed in detail with President Thieu. RVNAF is capable of coping with the situation in and adjacent to MR-3 during the next 30 days.

In MR-4, the enemy's recent commitment of main force units into Kien Thuong Province failed to seize either Moc Hoa or Tuyen Binh, indicating a greatly reduced enemy capability for any major offensive action in MR-4. Despite a period of refitting and resupply, the 5th Division fought with young and inexperienced personnel, took additional heavy losses amounting to over 1,000 in its shallow incursion into the Delta, and has withdrawn to the Parrots Bear area.

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[REDACTED] The RVNAF in 25X1

MR-4 has been doing a good job of intercepting and hurting the enemy forces attempting to enter the MR. They have shifted their forces quickly and effectively to meet each threat. MR-4 now needs reinforcement to clean up enemy pockets inside the MR and to defeat the enemy along the Cambodian border. This should be facilitated by the return of the 15th Regiment and probably the 21st Division.

Concerning the VC, there is evidence that the failure of the NVA invasion has discouraged the already ineffective VCI in RVN, and COSVN is reportedly displeased over the inability of VC cadre to generate local support for the NVA throughout the country. VC efforts, which will probably consist mainly of sapper activity and terrorism, are not expected to be of great significance and will be controlled shortly after individual acts are initiated.

During the next 30 days, I believe that RVNAF, with our continued full support, can hold its own and make modest progress in regaining lost territory.

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