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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Directorate of Intelligence
4 April 1972

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

The Situation in South Vietnam
(As of 1500 EST)

The Situation in MR-1

1. The pace of the fighting has slackened a bit in Quang Tri Province. The South Vietnamese still hold Dong Ha, and Quang Tri City, and nearby Fire Support Base Pedro. They evacuated Fire Base Anne under fire on 4 April opening a corridor which the North Vietnamese may be able to use to isolate Quang Tri City or to move further south towards Hue.

2. South Vietnamese reinforcements are arriving, and efforts to establish a new defensive line to protect Dong Ha and Quang Tri City are underway. The seasoned reinforcements may have a stabilizing influence on the badly disorganized South Vietnamese 3rd Division, the newest of the government's divisions.

3. The North Vietnamese are shipping large quantities of supplies on Route 1 through the DMZ to support the current offensive. On 1 April Rear Service elements reported that the "transportation" forces had begun moving down Route 1 and that by 3 April 130 vehicles carrying cargo had moved south. In addition, an aerial observer reported that the Communists have bridged the Ben Hai River in the vicinity of Route 1, and self-propelled artillery was noted crossing the bridge.

4. Fighting has been picking up in the foothills less than 10 miles west of Hue. Fire Support Base Bastogne has been the target of heavy shellings and attacks, and the enemy has destroyed a bridge between

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Bastogne and Fire Support Base Birmingham. The North Vietnamese 6th Regiment has been moving slowly eastward into this area, and parts of the 324B Division could also be moving towards the lowlands. Enemy units have also been noted making offensive preparations farther south in Quang Nam Province and action there could be stepped up at any time.

5. Additional information concerning Communist military objectives in the northern two provinces has come to light. Prisoner statements and a map taken from the body of a North Vietnamese officer indicate that the prime goals of the current campaign are to take both Quang Tri and Hue. [redacted] the attacks in Quang Tri Province were designed to draw South Vietnamese reinforcements from Thua Thien Province. Both provinces were then to be cut off from the south, and the remaining South Vietnamese forces were to be "destroyed." This report is in line with others which have suggested that the Communists were planning heavy military action simultaneously on several fronts to stretch the South Vietnamese thin.

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6. The North Vietnamese are making at least a pretense of setting up "liberation governments" in areas they have overrun. [redacted]

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7. Communist shellings and ground attacks in Kontum Province have been building in intensity since late last week. The heaviest action so far has come along so-called Rocket Ridge south of Dak To, where a string of South Vietnamese artillery and patrol bases form an outer screen of defense.

8. According to the latest reports from this sector, the South Vietnamese claim to have killed several hundred enemy troops from the 320th NVA Division in the fighting

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yesterday at and around Fire Support Base Delta. The South Vietnamese lost part of the base but eventually regained control, losing 20 men killed and 54 wounded. As previously reported, prisoners state that the 320th will continue to maintain pressure in this area. There are also additional signs that elements of the Communist 2nd Division are pressing from the north and west toward the key airfield at Dak To and an important South Vietnamese headquarters complex nearby. If elements of the 2nd and 320th Divisions attack the Dak To sector at the same time South Vietnamese forces there could be hard pressed to hold their ground.

9. In MR-3, a South Vietnamese outpost in northern Tay Ninh Province was attacked on 3 April by an estimated enemy regiment, and two South Vietnamese battalions enroute to relieve the position became heavily engaged. Casualty reports are incomplete.

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12. In Saigon, Prime Minister Khiem told a cabinet meeting on 4 April that heavy enemy action could be anticipated from April through July and that the North Vietnamese will attack Kontum and Quang Duc provinces in addition to the northern provinces on 3 April and assessed the situation as "very serious." Khiem also said that Thieu was to hold a conference on 4 April with the chairmen of the

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Senate and Lower House. Although the subject was not disclosed, some of the cabinet members speculated that the possibility of declaring a state of emergency and imposing martial law might be brought up.

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