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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
 Directorate of Intelligence
 9 April 1972

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

The Situation in South Vietnam

(As of 1500 EST)

ARMY Review Completed

1. The Communists are increasing their pressure against An Loc in northern Military Region (MR) 3. US Air observers have identified at least nine enemy battalions around the Binh Long provincial capital that appear to be preparing for an imminent assault. In the meantime, An Loc is being subjected to constant mortar and rocket attacks plus limited ground probes. A prisoner who claims to be from the Communist 9th

25X1

MORI/CDF pages 1-4 per
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2. Air support for the defenders at An Loc-- about eight battalions strong--has been hampered by poor weather. A South Vietnamese airborne brigade from Saigon moving up Route 13 to reinforce the An Loc garrison ran into an enemy blocking force at the Binh Duong Province border on the afternoon of 9 April and has been held up.

3. Elsewhere in MR-3, a large enemy force accompanied by armored vehicles was spotted about one mile northeast of the district capital of Phuoc Vinh in Binh Duong Province. An air strike on 9 April failed to halt the column's advance.

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All government representation (police, military, and civil officials) has been withdrawn from a district capital in Phuoc Long Province which borders on a Communist-controlled portion of Cambodia. In order to strengthen Saigon's defenses, cadets at the nearby Thu Duc Armor School have been formed into two armored companies and put on the alert as a reserve force in case the capital is threatened.

The Delta

4. Military activity has increased in MR-4, consisting mainly of Communist shellings and harassing attacks against a number of outposts and district towns throughout the Mekong Delta. Chuong Thien Province, in the heart of the delta, was the hardest hit. These attacks, which have been conducted by both main and local force units, appear to have been closely coordinated.

25X1

The Northern Provinces

5. Although the Communists have escalated their attacks in the northern provinces, the South Vietnamese are still holding their defensive lines near Dong Ha, Quang Tri, and Hue. Renewed shellings of South Vietnamese positions in southeastern Quang Tri Province are probably designed to mask the movement of North Vietnamese forces that thus far have been unsuccessful in moving south of the provincial capital. The Saigon military command anticipates the beginning of another phase of enemy action soon with attacks on both Quang Tri city and Hue.

The Western Highlands

6. Communist guerrilla and sapper units have been harassing provincial outposts, bridges, and

highways in Kontum Province, but the enemy's main force combat units continue to lie low. General Ngo Dzu, commander of MR-2, said on 6 April that his operations have been successful in keeping the enemy off balance and if the enemy continues to take the heavy casualties of the past few days, their combat effectiveness will be seriously impaired. Dzu also claimed that if he is allowed to keep the reinforcements assigned to him and if the weather remains good, his forces will be able to destroy the enemy forces presently concentrated in Kontum Province.

Further Reactions in the Northern Provinces

7. Prominent religious figures in the northern provinces continue to display mixed reactions to the current fighting. Buddhist monks in Hue view the situation in Quang Tri and Thua Thien provinces as serious. They blame overly optimistic government reports of the fighting for misleading the people in Quang Tri and giving them insufficient time to prepare for an orderly evacuation. The same situation, they feel, is currently taking place in Hue. A spate of rumors, including one that the US is ready to cede the northern provinces to the Communists in return for peace in the rest of Southeast Asia, is causing widespread apprehension, according to the monks. Radical students in Hue reportedly are further enflaming the situation by mingling with refugees from Quang Tri and spreading anti-government propaganda.

8. The government is trying to counter the rumors and apprehension through an extensive information program in both Hue and Quang Tri City. This is handicapped, however, by the basic distrust of the Buddhist population for the Saigon government, as well as their experiences in the 1968 Tet offensive, which have contributed to a large credibility gap which the government must overcome in order to be effective.

9. Farther from the battlefield, leading Catholic prelates in Da Nang are optimistic about the situation. One priest claims that Catholics in the area believe the Communists made a "major blunder" by moving across the DMZ to positions where American and Vietnamese air power can destroy them. Taking a more cautious approach, the Bishop of Da Nang is concerned by the threat to Hue, but he regards American air power as the decisive military factor in the battle. His opinions appear to reflect a fairly widespread view among the Vietnamese that the US still will bail out South Vietnam through air power or possibly even the reintroduction of ground troops.
(Secret/No Foreign Dissem)

MEMORANDUM

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

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URGENT INFORMATION

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MEMORANDUM FOR DR. KISSINGER

FROM: Phil Odeen *PO*

SUBJECT: CIA Study on NVN Capabilities

CIA has prepared at your request an assessment of NVN's manpower and logistics capabilities to conduct military operations over the next three months. The summary judgement of CIA is that:

" . . . the Vietnamese Communists have the overall manpower and logistic capabilities necessary to sustain their offensive activities for the next three months -- that is, to sustain major main force activity in Military Regions (MRs) 1 and 2, heavy main force probes in MR 3, and moderate harassment, principally by fire, in MR 4. As indicated above, this judgement performe ignores several critical variables -- for example, the impact of Allied counteroffensive operations or unusually heavy enemy supply or manpower losses as a result of Allied air activity (which are not postulated). It presupposes other variables, such as a pattern of combat generally similar to that seen since 30 March, a pattern incorporating lulls and respites even in periods of overall heavy pressure."

Manpower

NVN overall manpower reserves are fully adequate to continue fighting at current or expanded levels for the next 3 months. However, the heavy losses the NVN has suffered in recent years have reduced the quality of NVN soldiers, cadre and troops. These limits on experienced personnel limit combat effectiveness and NVN ability to expand its forces to any degree.

Over 120,000 troops have been sent south thus far this dry season, surpassing total infiltration last year. As shown below, the infiltration has primarily been for the forces in MR 1 and 2. The rather limited

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infiltration toward the areas farther south places limits on the intensity and duration of NVA combat in MR-3 and 4.

NVA Infiltration

	1970-71	1971-72
	<u>Dry Season</u>	<u>Dry Season</u>
<u>MRs 1 & 2</u>		
Northern MR-1 (TTH)	6000	12000
Southern MR-1 (MR-5)	14200	16000
Highlands (B-3)	14500	42000
<u>MR 3 and 4</u>		
COSVN	45000	36000
S. Laos	26500	14000
<u>Total</u>	106,200	120,000

As a result of this infiltration, enemy strength in SNV and border areas has increased over last year by about 27,000. The other troops were used to replace losses or to provide support. The enemy OB was further increased by the movement of an estimated 28,000 troops across the DMZ.

Enemy OB (000)

	<u>Dec 1969</u>	<u>Dec 1970</u>	<u>Dec 1971</u>	<u>Apr 1972</u>
<u>VC/NVA</u>				
SVN	130-150	85-95	80-90	115-130
Cambodia	-	20-25	25-30	30-35
<u>Khmer Comm</u>	-	10-20	15-30	15-30
<u>PL/NVA</u>				
N. Laos	35-40	30-35	40-45	40-45
S. Laos	20-25	30-35	30-40	25-35

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Combat Capability

As a result of this increased strength and U.S. withdrawals, the main force ratio has shown a significant decrease in all areas of SVN. The ratio is near 2-1 in MR 1 and 2 and near parity in the threatened areas. The GVN has a more favorable force ratio in MR-3 and 4. But our analyses have indicated that if the NVA commits all of its forces in Cambodia the relative main force strength will drop well below 2-1 and to parity in some areas. Thus the NVA has the forces to challenge the RVNAF in all four MRs. (This is not noted in the CIA paper.)

A major factor in NVA capabilities is the losses they are suffering from prevention attacks, bombing, etc. The extent is unclear, but CIA doubts if they have been as heavy as in past major campaigns given the bad weather which restricts friendly air.

Logistics

The enemy has made a major resupply effort this year and is in better logistic shape than he was a year ago. The supply flow has been especially heavy across the DMZ and thru Laos into the MR-1 and 2 areas.

Supply movements into Southern Laos and Cambodia have also been high this year, probably at record levels. Thus the enemy's supply situation is probably the best in years (since losing the Sihanoukville port). The supply movements seems to emphasize arms and ammunition, perhaps reflecting the adequacy of food from Cambodia. Thus the NVA apparently has the needed stock to wage a major effort in the South. However, CIA does not believe supplies are adequate for major combat in both MRs. A much more serious problem for the NVA is the distribution of supplies to its forces in SVN.