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SC No. 07681/68

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Directorate of Intelligence
7 February 1968

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

Spot Report on the Situation in the Khe Sanh Area

1. Late reports indicate the North Vietnamese gained control of the Lang Vei Special Forces Camp on the afternoon of the 7th.

2. The Camp's defenders commenced evacuation from the area under cover of intensive friendly aerial and artillery bombardment. Six of the 24 Americans and over three-fourths of the 450 man Vietnamese garrison have not yet been accounted for. Earlier in the day, an estimated Communist company had controlled the camp above ground while friendly personnel were entrenched in underground bunkers.

3. Two relief columns were reportedly converging on the scene late in the afternoon for a combined raid on the camp. Neither had entered the camp-site at last report. One of the relief forces was composed of Special Forces personnel helo-lifted from Khe Sanh; the other was a local Laotian volunteer battalion.

4. The unit identity of the attacking Communist force is not yet clear. The attack was possibly conducted by elements from the 66th Regiment of the NVA 304th Division. A senior non-commissioned officer who defected one week ago, stated that when he left this unit, it was near Lang Vei awaiting orders to attack the camp. Radio direction finding has also fixed elements of the 304th Division generally south of Khe Sanh/Lang Vei in recent days.

5. It is also possible that elements of the 101D Regiment of the NVA 325C Division were involved. A radio terminal possibly serving the headquarters of

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the 101D was noted moving on 6 February to the south of Lang Vei. On the same day, the 325C headquarters moved to a position some six miles west of Lang Vei.

6. According to a report from the scene, the Khe Sanh garrison was faced with potentially serious complications on the night of 7 February when approximately 6,000 Laotian refugees moved from Lang Vei to within one-quarter mile of Khe Sanh.

7. The Khe Sanh base commander has been advised to deter the refugees from moving closer. Officials in Saigon will ask the Laotian charge to fly to Khe Sanh tomorrow to encourage the refugees to clear the area.

8. Aside from the obvious political delicacy of the situation, the mass of refugees poses tactical problems for the base defenders. Should the enemy attack, the refugees could shield his approach or cause confusion among friendly troops.

9. It is possible that very large numbers of refugees are in the area. Some of the dependents of the Laotian defenders at Ban Houei Sane were in the vicinity of Lang Vei, along with dependents of the Lang Vei camp itself.

10. There have been no other significant developments reported by field elements on the military situation in South Vietnam, or with regard to DRV aircraft.

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