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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Directorate of Intelligence
4 February 1968*Reid 7-00p*

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

The Situation in South Vietnam No. 14
(AS OF 5:00 P. M. EST)I Corps

1. With the exception of Hue, where heavy fighting continues, the situation in the northern provinces remains generally quiet--particularly in the recently troubled areas of Quang Tri City, Da Nang, Hoi An, Tam Ky, and Quang Ngai.

2. Hue: The situation in Hue remains tense, as allied reaction forces continue to press air and ground assaults against an estimated three Viet Cong companies entrenched within the walled citadel area of the ancient imperial capital. US Marines are also engaged in house-to-house fighting along the banks of the Perfume River, Hue's principal waterway. The citadel airstrip apparently remains in ARVN hands, but is not operational. Two US Marine convoys en route to Hue from Phu Bai have encountered heavy enemy sniper fire along Route 1, thus delaying their commitment as reinforcements to the provincial capital defenses.

II Corps

3. The main Communist thrust in II Corps continues to be directed against Kontum, Pleiku, and Ban Me Thuot in the western highlands and against Dalat and Tuy Hoa in the coastal provinces, although no major new fighting has been reported since our last situation report. Enemy still are being reported in the vicinity of these cities. Phan Thiet, which was previously under attack by three Viet Cong battalions, has been cleared of enemy forces.

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The Saigon Area

4. Although the security situation in some areas of the capital city has stabilized, there continue to be numerous reports of small-scale Viet Cong activity. The National Police headquarters compound came under heavy mortar and automatic weapons fire on 4 February. However, National police director General Loan stated at 10 P.M. local Saigon time on 4 February that the capital city was quiet and the situation in surrounding Gia Dinh Province seemed to be under control.

5. South Vietnamese forces apparently have planned a major operation to begin on the morning of 5 February to clear Viet Cong remnants from Saigon. The multi-battalion sweep is to include a thorough house-to-house search and will be controlled by senior officers of the Joint General Staff, the National Police and the ARVN III Corps headquarters. Possibly as many as 16 battalions of Vietnamese marines, rangers, paratroopers, army forces and police are committed.

6. There is no confirmation of the indications, noted in the 8:30 A.M. Sitrep, that the VC 9th Division may have moved closer to Saigon. US military officials in Saigon, however, report they have some evidence from prisoners that at least elements of the 3 regiments of the 9th were involved in the initial assault on the city.

Other III Corps

7. The eleven provinces of III Corps have reported no significant changes in the allied or enemy situation since 1800 Hours 4 February Saigon time.

IV Corps

8. Multibattalion Viet Cong troop concentrations are continuing to apply heavy pressure against friendly areas in and around the provincial capitals of Tra Vinh, Bac Lieu, Vinh Long City, and Cao Lanh. The district capital of Duc Thanh, in Sa Dec Province, is also reported to be under heavy enemy mortar and ground attack. On the positive side, however, allied

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forces have generally cleared major enemy elements out of the important delta cities of Can Tho, My Tho, and Ben Tre.

Khe Sanh

9. A late report indicates that fighting has broken out in the Khe Sanh area. At 4:20 A.M. on the morning of 5 February (Vietnam time) Hill 861, one of the main defense points for Khe Sanh some 4 1/2 kilometers to the northwest, received a ground attack by an unknown size enemy force. Contact is said to be continuing.

10. Khe Sanh base has also received an unknown number of rocket rounds.

Threat to Captive Americans

11. The Communist's Liberation Radio on the morning of 5 February Vietnam time carried a statement denouncing an alleged allied plan to try a number of Communist soldiers captured in the recent fighting. It warned that if they were killed, the Communist National Liberation Front "will take retaliatory action against detained Americans."

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