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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Directorate of Intelligence
2 February 1968

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

The Situation in South Vietnam No. 8
(As of 7:00 A.M. EST)

1. The Communist Tet offensive continued into its fourth day with Communist forces resisting allied mopping-up operations within, or on the outskirts of key cities throughout South Vietnam. The fighting in Saigon is subsiding; however, the Communists still maintain strong positions in the provincial capitals of Hue, Kontum, Ban Me Thuot, Da Lat, and several cities in the delta provinces.

2. Enemy losses continue to soar with US military authorities in Saigon claiming well over 10,000 Communists killed in the first three days of fighting. An additional 3,000 suspect Communists have reportedly been detained. By contrast only some 1,700 individual and crew-served enemy weapons have been recovered in the fighting. Friendly losses now total 559 killed (232 US) and some 2,300 wounded (1,000 US).

Saigon

3. Saigon was relatively quiet during the night of 1-2 February. In early morning action, however, the Viet Cong overran two South Vietnamese police precinct stations. Sporadic firing was reported at several other points in the city and fighting continued early this morning near Tan Son Nhut airbase just northwest of the capital. Only limited aircraft traffic was permitted at the airfield due to reports of an imminent rocket attack.

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4. Available evidence indicates that the enemy troops involved in the Saigon area were mostly in the 16 to 18 age bracket and were well armed with modern automatic rifles and rocket launchers. Several prisoners stated that they had infiltrated into the city in civilian clothes where they were armed from weapons caches which had been set up well in advance. The enemy in Saigon did not appear to be well trained, although their morale was high in the early stages of the fighting.

5. Several enemy units in the city have been tentatively identified as Viet Cong units from the Mekong Delta and from as far west as Tay Ninh Province. Reports of North Vietnamese units in the Saigon fighting have not been confirmed, but north-orners assigned to nearby Viet Cong units as cadre and fillers possibly participated.

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I Corps

7. The city of Hue is still the focal point of stubborn enemy resistance in South Vietnam's northern I Corps area. The rest of the major cities in the northern provinces are under the control of allied forces, although scattered attacks were conducted against some of them on 1-2 February.

8. Hue: The two-square-mile, walled citadel area is still partially occupied by enemy forces this morning. Two South Vietnamese armored battalions are committed to the clearing operations around the citadel, and a US 1st Air Cavalry battalion may be added to the effort. Three other South Vietnamese battalions have encountered stiff enemy resistance in clearing operations in some areas on the outskirts of the city. All US and South Vietnamese installations within Hue remain under allied control.

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9. Cam Lo: The Combined Action Platoon Headquarters at Cam Lo was attacked with mortar and small arms fire early today. The enemy was forced to withdraw after a heavy six-hour battle.

10. Phu Loc: The Phu Loc area, located some 25 miles south of Hue, was subjected to a day-long attack, which ended late last night. The Phu Loc District Headquarters and village were reported secure; however, a sizeable enemy threat is believed still in the general area. According to an unconfirmed report, the US Marine base at Phu Loc was overrun at one point in the fighting.

11. Tam Ky and Quang Ngai: Both of these provincial capitals were attacked by Communist mortar men during the night of 1-2 February. The bombardment of Tam Ky reportedly included artillery fire. No reports of casualties or damage have been received.

12. Duy Xuyen: This district capital located several miles southwest of Hoi An in coastal Quang Nam Province was reported still under the control of an unknown-sized enemy force. A South Korean brigade has moved into the area in preparation for a counterattack later today.

II Corps

13. Kontum: The most serious threat in the II Corps area continues to exist in the city of Kontum in the western highlands. The enemy continues attacks in and around the city, and has established strongpoints in several buildings, including pagodas and churches. An entire North Vietnamese battalion is still believed in control of approximately half of the city. The airfield has been cleared out is now open to emergency traffic.

14. Ban Me Thuot: At last report, elements of the North Vietnamese 33rd Regiment were still occupying most of the city. Two South Vietnamese 23rd Infantry Division battalions, together with US units, are attempting to regain control of the city. The airfield is still open, but has been hit by mortar and small arms fire.

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15. Da Lat: At last report, Communist forces still hold the market place in the center of town as well as scattered strongpoints within the city. South Vietnamese forces are leading the effort to drive the attackers out of the city.

16. Tan An: A total of 208 enemy troops were reported killed during a fierce two-hour battle yesterday, when they attempted to overrun this village which is located some 15 miles southwest of Pleiku. The village was defended by South Vietnamese irregulars who sustained light losses.

17. Phan Thiet: Heavy fighting was still reported from this coastal provincial capital through the mid-morning of 2 February. The MACV and Sector Headquarters compounds have not yet come under attack. US and South Vietnamese troops have established a blocking position and are presently attempting to sweep through the city in an effort to drive the attackers out.

III Corps

18. To the north of Saigon in III Corps--the area where the current Communist campaign has so far been the lightest--several new attacks were reported during the night of 1-2 February. Xuan Loc, the capital of Long Khanh Province, was under heavy attack throughout the night. One Viet Cong platoon penetrated into the town, but by morning allied reaction troops had cleared them out. First reports indicated that US and South Vietnamese casualties were light in the action. Other enemy assaults and mortar attacks occurred in Phuoc Tuy, Hau Nghia, and Tay Ninh but few details were available.

IV Corps

19. In the Mekong Delta, sharp fighting continues within several provincial capitals and a number of smaller towns.

20. Some 700-800 Viet Cong are still believed to be inside Ben Tre, the capital of Kien Hoa Province, where two companies of the US 9th Infantry Division companies have arrived to reinforce ARVN.

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forces. Heavy fighting occurred during the night in the provincial capital of Vinh Long. A US Navy patrol boat base in the city was overrun but later retaken by South Vietnamese forces.

21. Allied troops were also engaged with Viet Cong forces in Can Tho, My Tho and Moc Hoa, the capital of Kien Tuong Province. The latter city was under heavy mortar and rocket attack early this morning. The Viet Cong were reported using loud-speakers to appeal to ARVN troops to lay down their arms.

Prospects for the Immediate Future

22. The situation reported at Sa Dec is characteristic of many areas in South Vietnam, where enemy forces have been pushed out of the urban area, but continue to maintain positions on strategic ground nearby. It seems possible that, in some areas, the Communist units will attempt to renew their attacks on urban areas, or will attempt to remain nearby in an effort to keep the situation tense and the populace intimidated.

23. Although the enemy units so far involved in the current action have reportedly taken heavy losses in some of the fighting, it appears certain that the enemy high command was fully prepared to sacrifice these units in their entirety, if necessary, in order to carry out the offensive. This would strongly suggest that the enemy has not thrown his full weight into the current effort, but that it is rather a careful, selective application of his power. In the bitterly contested fighting in Hue, for example, only elements of the North Vietnamese 6th Regiment have been identified, along with a few, possible local force elements. This would indicate, in view of the standard OB for the area, that at least one other full NVA regiment is in this sector, and at least three other regiments within 20 miles.

24. Although the Communists are probably incapable, in the immediate future, at least, of again mounting a coordinated attack against so many targets as in the past four days, they do appear to have

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the necessary punch in reserve to keep up heavy pressure on selected semi-urban and urban areas for a considerable period. Prospects for such enemy pressure appear good.

25. Khe Sanh: The situation in the Khe Sanh area of western Quang Tri Province remains static. The US Marine garrison there received a light mortar attack during the night. According to [REDACTED] a prisoner, however, the second phase of the Communist Khe Sanh offensive will begin on 3 February with "artillery, tanks, and twice as many troops."

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