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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Directorate of Intelligence
11 February 1968

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INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

The Situation in South Vietnam No. 30
(As of 10:00 A.M. EST)

Summary

The widely anticipated, major "second phase" of-
fensive against the cities of South Vietnam still
has not materialized.

There are signs, in fact, that the city threat
is easing in some key areas. Elements of the enemy
concentrations near Da Nang, for example, appear to
be withdrawing to the southwest.

In other areas, however, the threat still per-
sists and, to some extent, seems to have intensified.
Strong Communist elements, for example, still are
nearby major urban centers in the Delta and, in the
past 24 hours, have stepped up their military pres-
sure against several provincial centers there.

The situation at Khe Sanh, in Saigon, and in
Hue, has undergone no significant change in the past
24 hours. Sporadic enemy shelling continues at
the former, and scattered fighting in the latter
centers.

Unusual DRV air movements are still taking place;
the latest involves the flight of AN-2's into at least
the southern DRV.

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I Corps

1. Khe Sanh came under heavy mortar and rocket attack around noon on 11 February. By 1:00 P.M., the enemy shelling had become sporadic. However, another C-130 transport aircraft was hit on 11 February and the airfield was again briefly closed. US Marine losses as a result of the shelling were three killed and seven wounded.

2. Late reports indicate that the sporadic enemy shelling at Khe Sanh on the 10th totalled some 125 rounds of mortar and rocket fire. Eight Marines were wounded.

3. Elsewhere in the DMZ area, major enemy action was limited to a few rocket rounds on Quang Tri City, but damage was light.

4. Allied military positions and Vietnamese urban centers in the DMZ sector can probably expect continued Communist mortar, artillery, and rocket attacks. [REDACTED]

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the shipment of large quantities of heavy caliber ammunition--up to 152-mm.--just north of the DMZ within the past week. The North Vietnamese are apparently using trucks to move the ammunition. [REDACTED]

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5. In Hue, newly reinforced South Vietnamese troops continued their efforts to dislodge enemy forces from the Citadel area. The Communists still held the Imperial Palace and a portion along the Citadel's southwest wall as well as a section immediately east of the Citadel on the 11th. Snipers are reportedly prevalent throughout the city--even south of the Perfume River where US Marines had gained control earlier.

6. Aside from the stiff enemy resistance, widespread looting has also apparently become a major problem in Hue. Police are reportedly among the looters.

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7. The enemy continues active along Route 1 between Hue and Danang. During the night of 10-11 February, Communist gunners twice shelled the Phu Loc district town area with rockets and mortars. The 4th NVA Regiment, which had overrun Phu Loc ten days ago, is believed still in this area and may be conducting an interdiction campaign against the important Route 1 transportation artery.

8. It appears that Communist pressure on Danang may be subsiding. Some sharp encounters south of the city in recent days have reportedly exacted significant casualties from elements of the 2nd North Vietnamese Division, 31st NVA Regiment, and local units. These actions may have disrupted Communist preparations for attacks in the Danang area and forced an enemy withdrawal to the southwest.

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10. Although there is a general expectation of renewed Communist offensive activity in most areas of I Corps, some urban centers seem to be returning to a semblance of normality. Some commercial establishments and market centers were open on the 9th and 10th in Quang Tri, Danang, and Hoi An. Civilian traffic filled the streets of these cities.

11. Rumors that the firmness of the US commitment to Vietnam is decreasing seem to have died down, at least in military and government circles in Danang, according to an American observer on the scene. However, some political party leaders and civilians continue to be skeptical of US views regarding a coalition government in Saigon. Overall, the observer reports the allied mood in Danang is optimistic.

12. [REDACTED] in Quang Tri city, however, indicates that rumors concerning US-Communist complicity in the recent attacks are gaining momentum there. Some people in the city apparently claim that

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American reaction forces were deliberately slow in arriving to defend the city.

II Corps

13. There has been no major change in the situation throughout this area, according to field reports.

14. An enemy company reportedly still controls a hamlet in the outskirts of western Da Lat city.

Saigon and III Corps

15. No major new Communist attacks were reported in the Saigon area during the night of 10-11 February. Moreover, with the exception of an enemy ambush of a small US Army convoy near Tay Ninh City, the eleven provinces of III Corps remained relatively quiet.

16. Sporadic small-scale fire fights were again reported in Cholon, as ARVN rangers and Marines continued to press their clearing efforts against stubbornly resisting pockets of enemy snipers and sappers. Allied air and artillery strikes were directed against an enemy force reportedly moving against Tan Son Nhut airbase from the northeast early on 11 February. No further information is available on the results of the strikes; however, no ground contact developed.

17. An updated report of the 122-mm. rocket attack against Bien Hoa airbase on the night of 10 February indicates that one American was killed and 60 wounded. In addition, seven US aircraft were destroyed and 16 damaged. Air operations were not affected, however.

18. Preliminary interrogation of a field commander and political officer from the Viet Cong 165 "A" Regiment, which participated in the recent attacks on Saigon, has revealed additional information on enemy plans and deployments in the capital area.

19. According to the prisoners, the main mission of their two-company strike force was to seize and hold Saigon-Cholon's Chi Hoa prison, regardless of the cost. They were absolutely forbidden to retreat and were told they would be executed if they did. The attack on the prison failed.

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20. The general plan of the attacks on Saigon, according to the prisoners, called for infantry units to seize and hold target areas preparatory to the commitment of artillery units.

21. The field commander maintained that a total of 30 battalions were in or near Saigon, with one to two divisions in reserve and artillery units "to come later." The political officer claimed that there were some 25 battalions in the Saigon area, that the "maximum utilization" of artillery units was programmed for the "second phase of attack," and that "divisions 5, 7, and 9" were reserve forces to provide support.

22. [REDACTED] indicate Viet Cong intentions to launch "large-scale attacks" against Saigon sometime between 9 and 13 February. The objectives of these attacks allegedly includes the blocking of supply routes into Saigon, and the occupation of Saigon's 6th, 7th, and 8th Precincts where an "insurrection government" will be formed." The destruction of Tan Son Nhut airbase, along with any densely populated areas where resistance is encountered is also planned, as is the assassination of high-ranking GVN officials and US/South Korean intelligence officers.

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23. Major elements of the Viet Cong 5th and 9th Light Infantry Divisions and the NVA 7th Division continue to be located within striking distance of the capital. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] Two regiments of the 5th Division are believed to be located east of Bien Hoa, with a third regiment to the north. Two regiments of the 9th Division are reportedly located just north of Saigon, with a third deployed in the vicinity of Thu Duc. While at least three battalions of the 9th Division are believed to have participated both in the initial attacks on Saigon and in recent heavy engagements north of the capital, MACV still credits the division with a minimum of six combat effective maneuver battalions.

24. Meanwhile, the 7th Division with nine combat effective battalions in three NVA regiments continues to consolidate its position in Binh Duong Province, north of Saigon. The mission of this division, as reflected in both the tactical behavior and the communications of its subordinate elements, is to relieve

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pressure on enemy units already committed to the Saigon campaign by containing allied reaction forces to static defense of their base areas in Binh Duong Province.

IV Corps

25. The overall trend of Communist actions in the Delta during the past few days has emphasized continued attacks by fire against provincial and district towns, interspersed with ground assaults against lightly defended rural outposts.

26. While the overall intensity of the coordinated ground attacks against urban centers has declined sharply, the majority of Viet Cong troop units in IV Corps remain deployed in close proximity to heavily populated areas--allied clearing operations notwithstanding. US authorities credit the enemy with a main force equivalent of 9 to 11 combat effective battalions in the Delta.

27. Elements of the Viet Cong force which attacked Bac Lieu City yesterday remain entrenched within the provincial capital. Five South Vietnamese were killed and 28 wounded during the initial seven-hour assault. Some of the attackers have attempted to exfiltrate the city, using nearly 100 women and children as shields. A large portion of the city has been destroyed by fire in this latest round of fighting.

28. Rach Gia, the capital of Kien Giang Province, came under B-40 rocket attack during the early morning hours of 11 February. The 30-minute bombardment resulted in 19 friendly casualties and total destruction to the CORDS building. There apparently was no follow-up ground attack and the city is now reported quiet.

29. An estimated 500-man Viet Cong force has reportedly surrounded Cao Lanh, the capital of Kien Phong Province. This strike force, supported by some 400 laborers, has constructed bunker complexes 1,000 to 1,500 meters from the city proper. All of the RD teams have been pulled into the capital or other district towns of Kien Phong, thus giving the Viet Cong free reign in the surrounding countryside.

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30. The populace of Cao Lanh seems indifferent and probably will remain so, [REDACTED] until the outcome of the anticipated attack is determined.

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31. The unprecedented relocation of a major Viet Cong command authority--Headquarters, Military Region (MR) 3--into Phong Dinh Province has probably sharply increased the enemy threat to provincial and district towns in that area.

32. On 8 February, [REDACTED] this command authority in southern Phong Dinh Province, marking the first time since July 1963 that Headquarters, MR 3 had been identified outside its normal operating area--some 50 miles to the southwest. The relocation of this headquarters into Phong Dinh Province, coupled with the recent identification of three Viet Cong main force battalions in the immediate area of Can Tho, may portend renewed enemy offensive activity in and around the provincial capital.

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North Vietnamese Air Developments

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37. The North Vietnamese are apparently taking pains to ensure that their three IL-28 jet bombers are not struck by US bombing raids. Two days ago, the

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IL-28's were moved from Phuc Yen--an oft-bombed airfield--to Hanoi/Gia Lam, which has not yet been struck. Since that time, the IL-28's have departed Gia Lam on at least four occasions, probably to avoid being caught on the ground by US strike aircraft detected in the area. Each time, the bombers have orbited in safe airspace over the North Vietnamese - Chinese border.

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