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IN 44916

PAGE 1 OF 12 PAGE

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DIST 6 FEBRUARY 1968

COUNTRY SOUTH VIETNAM

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SUBJECT VIEWS OF FIVE KHANH HOA VIET CONG PRISONERS OF WAR ON OBJECTIVES OF CURRENT VC MILITARY ACTIVITY, THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES HAD THE VC TAKEN NHA TRANG, FUTURE VC PLANS AND STRATEGY, AND POPULAR RESPONSE TO VC FORCES.

ACQ VIETNAM, NHA TRANG (4 FEBRUARY 1968)

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SOURCE AN AMERICAN OBSERVER, FROM THE INTERROGATION OF FIVE KHANH HOA PROVINCE VIET CONG WHO WERE CAPTURED DURING ENEMY ATTACKS ON NHA TRANG DURING THE PERIOD 29 JANUARY - 4 FEBRUARY 1968. THE FIVE VIET CONG INCLUDED ONE POLITICAL CADRE, HUYNH TUONG, ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE NHA TRANG MUNICIPAL COMMITTEE AND A CANDIDATE-MEMBER OF THE KHANH HOA PROVINCE COMMITTEE; AND FOUR MILITARY CADRES: DUONG VAN XA,

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IN 44916

3.5(c)

PAGE 2 OF 12 PAGES

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SENIOR LIEUTENANT, COMMANDING OFFICER OF THE NHA TRANG MUNICIPAL UNIT; LE TRONG CACH, FIRST LIEUTENANT, DIRECTOR GENERAL OF THE SQUAD LEADER TRAINING SCHOOL AND ASSISTANT COMMANDER FOR COMBAT AND TRAINING OF THE KHANH HOA PROVINCIAL UNIT; HUYNH CHIEU, FIRST LIEUTENANT IN THE KHANH HOA PROVINCE UNIT AND SUBSECTOR GUERRILLA LEADER; AND NGUYEN VAN NHO, LIEUTENANT AND EXECUTIVE OFFICER OF THE NHA TRANG MUNICIPAL K-90 COMPANY.

1. ASKED WHAT THEY WERE TOLD THE OBJECTIVE WAS OF THE VIET CONG (VC)/NORTH VIETNAMESE ARMY (NVA) ATTACKS THROUGHOUT SOUTH VIETNAM, WHICH BEGAN ON 29 JANUARY 1968, THE PRISONERS REPLIED AS FOLLOWS:

A. HUYNH TUONG, POLITICAL CADRE: THE OBJECTIVE WAS TO SEIZE CONTROL OF THE CITIES, ESTABLISH A NEW GOVERNMENT WHICH WOULD INCLUDE ANY ELEMENTS OPPOSED TO PRESIDENT NGUYEN VAN THIEU AND VICE PRESIDENT NGUYEN CAO KY, AND ASK THE AMERICANS TO LEAVE SOUTH VIETNAM.

B. SENIOR LIEUTENANT DUONG VAN XA: AFTER STUDYING

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119

IN 44916

3.5(c)

PAGE 3 OF 12 PAGES

~~C-O-N-F-I-D-E-N-T-I-A-L~~~~NO FOREIGN DISSEM~~~~(classification)~~~~(dissem controls)~~

## RESOLUTION

13 OF THE NORTH VIETNAMESE COMMUNIST PARTY ON

20 DECEMBER 1967 AND STUDYING THE GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS TO ATTACK SOUTH VIETNAM ON 20 JANUARY 1968, HE KNEW THE REASON FOR THE ATTACKS WAS TO SEIZE GOVERNMENT POWER. THE VC THOUGHT IT WOULD BE POSSIBLE TO ATTACK SOUTH VIETNAM SUCCESSFULLY BECAUSE THE BALANCE OF FORCES BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT AND THE VC WAS FAVORABLE, THUS THE VC WOULD BE ABLE TO TAKE OVER THE GOVERNMENT IN SAIGON. BY APPLYING THE THREE -PRONGED TACTIC-- MILITARY, POLITICAL AND PROSELYTING--THROUGHOUT THE CAMPAIGN, THE VC BELIEVED THAT THEY COULD BRING ENOUGH PRESSURE ON THE AMERICANS TO FORCE THEM TO LEAVE SOUTH VIETNAM. BY PRESSURE THE VC MEAN THE STRENGTH OF VIETNAMESE AND WORLD OPINION AGAINST THE AMERICAN STAND IN VIETNAM, WHICH WOULD FORCE THE AMERICANS TO PULL OUT OF VIETNAM.

C. FIRST LIEUTENANT LE TRONG CACH: HE WAS NOT TOLD OF THE OBJECTIVE OR THE PURPOSE OF THE ATTACKS, BUT PERSONALLY FELT THAT IT WAS TO REGAIN THE OFFENSIVE.

D. FIRST LIEUTENANT HUYNH CHIEU: HE WAS TOLD BY COLONEL HOANH, KHANH HOA PROVINCIAL UNIT COMMANDER, THAT

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IN 44916

3.5(c)

PAGE 4 OF 12 PAGES

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THE PURPOSE OF THE ATTACKS WAS TO SEIZE POWER IN SOUTH VIETNAM.

E. LIEUTENANT NGUYEN VAN NHO: COLONEL HOANH, THE KHANH HOA PROVINCIAL UNIT COMMANDER, TOLD HIM THAT THERE HAD BEEN INSTRUCTIONS FOR A GENERAL ASSAULT AND UPRISING. THE PURPOSE OF THE ASSAULT WAS TO SEIZE POWER AND "ASK" U.S. TROOPS TO RETREAT FROM VIETNAM. HE HIMSELF BELIEVED THAT ONE OF THE PURPOSES OF THE ATTACKS WAS TO GAIN VICTORIES IN BATTLE FOR THE VC SO THAT THE VC WOULD BE IN A GOOD POSITION FOR PEACE TALKS.

2. WHEN ASKED WHAT FUTURE CONTINUING RESPONSIBILITIES EACH OF THEM WERE GIVEN BEYOND THE IMMEDIATE ATTACK ORDER, THE PRISONERS REPLIED AS FOLLOWS:

A. HUYNH TUONG: HE WAS TO ORGANIZE FOOD SUPPLIES FOR THE CITY OF NHA TRANG. (INTERROGATOR'S COMMENT: IN VIEW OF HIS POSITION WITH THE VC, TUONG PROBABLY HAD GREATER RESPONSIBILITIES THAN THIS.)

B. SENIOR LIEUTENANT XA: HE HAD NO ORDERS OR INSTRUCTIONS FOR FUTURE OPERATIONS IF THE ATTACK ON NHA TRANG WAS SUCCESSFUL. HE WAS TOLD, HOWEVER, THAT HE WOULD BE IN CHARGE OF THE MILITARY IN THE CITY. IF THE ATTACK FAILED,

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IN 44916

3.5(c)

PAGE 5 OF 12 PAGES

~~C-O-N-F-I-D-E-N-T-I-A-L~~ NO FOREIGN DISSEM  
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HIS ORDERS WERE TO STAY IN THE CITY AND AWAIT FURTHER INSTRUCTIONS.

C. FIRST LIEUTENANT CACH: IF THE ATTACK ON NHA TRANG WAS SUCCESSFUL, HE WAS TO LEAD THE PEOPLE IN A GENERAL UPRISING, ORDER GOVERNMENT OF VIETNAM (GVN) OFFICIALS AND ARMY OF VIETNAM (ARVN) OFFICERS TO GO HOME, AND PUBLICLY EXECUTE THOSE WHO DID NOT COOPERATE. HE WAS ALSO TO ATTACK AND SEIZE THE RADIO STATION AND TO MAKE AN APPEAL TO THE PEOPLE FOR ASSISTANCE. VC ARMED FORCES WOULD BE SENT TO OTHER AREAS AS NEEDED, AND THE ENTIRE 8TH BATTALION (BN) (OF THE 18/B NVA REGIMENT) WOULD BE SENT TO ANOTHER AREA OUTSIDE NHA TRANG. IN THE EVENT THE ATTACK ON NHA TRANG FAILED, HE AND HIS MEN WERE TO WITHDRAW TO BENH CANG (BP 988555) WHERE HE WOULD MEET AND JOIN THE 8TH BN.

D. FIRST LIEUTENANT CHIEU: IF THE ATTACKS ON NHA TRANG WERE SUCCESSFUL, HE WAS TO FORM HIS GUERRILLA UNIT TO PROTECT DEMONSTRATORS WHO WOULD BE GATHERED TO DEMONSTRATE AND HELP SET UP A NEW GOVERNMENT. HE WAS ALSO TO USE HIS GUERRILLAS TO SET UP DEFENSES AROUND SECTOR HEADQUARTERS IN

~~C-O-N-F-I-D-E-N-T-I-A-L~~ NO FOREIGN DISSEM

IN 44916

3.5(c)

PAGE 6 OF 12 PAGES

~~C-O-N-F-I-D-E-N-T-I-A-L~~ NO FOREIGN DISSEM  
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ORDER TO PROTECT THE VC IN THEIR POLITICAL PROPAGANDA EFFORT. IN THE EVENT OF FAILURE, HE WAS TO WITHDRAW TO THE LC VOI AREA WITHIN VINH NGOC VILLAGE (CP 022551) AND CONTACT A STAFF OFFICER FOR NEW INSTRUCTIONS.

E. LIEUTENANT NHO: HE HAD NO ORDERS FOR FUTURE OPERATIONS.

3. WHEN ASKED IF THEY WERE TOLD, AND IF THEY BELIEVED, THAT THE POPULATION WOULD JOIN IN A GENERAL UPRISING AGAINST GVN AND AMERICAN FORCES, THE PRISONERS REPLIED AS FOLLOWS:

A. HUYNH TUONG: HE WAS TOLD THAT THE POPULATION WOULD JOIN THE GENERAL UPRISING, AND HE BELIEVED THAT THEY WOULD IN MOST AREAS. BECAUSE OF THE ABSENCE OF STRONG POLITICAL FEELING AMONG THE PEOPLE OF KHANH HOA PROVINCE, HOWEVER, HE DID NOT EXPECT TO RECEIVE MUCH HELP FROM NHA TRANG RESIDENTS.

B. SENIOR LIEUTENANT XA: POLITICAL CADRES TOLD HIM THAT AFTER REVIEWING THE SITUATION THEY BELIEVED THAT THE POPULATION WOULD JOIN IN THE ATTACK BY STAGING DEMONSTRATIONS. HE HIMSELF BELIEVED THAT THAT WOULD BE THE CASE.

C. FIRST LIEUTENANT CACH: HE WAS TOLD THAT THE PEOPLE WOULD JOIN THE VC FORCES IN A GENERAL UPRISING AGAINST

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IN 44916



3.5(c)

PAGE 7 OF 12 PAGES

~~C-O-N-F-I-D-E-N-T-I-A-L~~ NO FOREIGN DISSEM  
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THE GVN AND THE AMERICANS. HE SAID THAT FOR REASONS HE

COULD NOT PUT INTO WORDS, IT WAS HARD FOR HIM TO BELIEVE THE PEOPLE WOULD HELP THE VC.

D. FIRST LIEUTENANT CHIEU: HE WAS TOLD THAT THE PEOPLE WOULD OFFER THEIR ASSISTANCE TO THE VC. HE BELIEVED THAT IF SECTOR HEADQUARTERS WERE DESTROYED, THEN THE RADIO STATION WERE CAPTURED, AND THEN NEWS OF THE GVN DEFEAT WERE BROADCAST, THE PEOPLE WOULD SUPPORT THE VC REVOLUTION.

E. LIEUTENANT NHO: HIS COMMANDERS TOLD HIM; AND HE HIMSELF BELIEVED, THAT THE POPULATION WOULD JOIN IN A GENERAL UPRISING AND SUPPORT THE VC BY DEMONSTRATIONS.

4. ASKED WHAT ACTUAL SUPPORT THEY RECEIVED FROM THE PEOPLE, THE ANSWERS WERE:

A. HUYNH TUONG: VC FORCES RECEIVED ALMOST NO HELP FROM THE POPULACE.

B. SENIOR LIEUTENANT XA: SO FAR AS HE KNEW PEOPLE DID NOT SUPPORT THE VC.

C. FIRST LIEUTENANT CACH: THE PEOPLE GAVE NO SUPPORT TO THE VC BECAUSE THEY WERE TOO BUSY TRYING TO CELEBRATE TET.

D. FIRST LIEUTENANT CHIEU: THE PEOPLE PROVIDED NO

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IN 44916

3.5(c)

PAGE 8 OF 12 PAGES

~~C-O-N-F-I-D-E-N-T-I-A-L~~~~NO FOREIGN DISSEM~~~~(classification)~~~~(dissem controls)~~

SUPPORT BECAUSE THE PEOPLE HAD NOT HAD ENOUGH CONTACT WITH REVOLUTIONARY IDEAS. THE VC HAD NOT HAD ENOUGH TIME TO EDUCATE THEM. FLEEING THE CITY HE TRIED TO BUY AN INCENSE STICK AND A BOTTLE OF BEER, BUT WAS RECOGNIZED AS A VC AND THE SHOPOWNER WOULD NOT SELL TO HIM. THE PEOPLE WERE DIRECTLY RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ARREST OF MANY VC.

E. LIEUTENANT NHO: THE PEOPLE GAVE NO SUPPORT TO THE VC.

5. ASKED IF THEY WERE LED TO BELIEVE THAT THE VC/NVA ATTACKS IN THE SOUTH WOULD BE SUPPLEMENTED BY MAJOR OFFENSIVE ACTION IN THE NORTH AT KHE SAN OR THE DEMILITARIZED ZONE (DMZ), THE PRISONERS REPLIED THAT THEY HAD NOT BEEN TOLD THIS WOULD HAPPEN. HUYNH TUONG REMARKED, HOWEVER, THAT THE VC WERE VERY HAPPY TO HEAR THAT 52,000 ARVN TROOPS WERE BEING SENT TO THE DMZ TO REPLACE AMERICAN TROOPS, BECAUSE IF THE AMERICAN TROOPS COULD NOT CONTROL THE SITUATION, HOW COULD THE ARVN? FIRST LIEUTENANT CHIEU REPLIED THAT HOANH, THE COMMANDING OFFICER OF THE KHANH HOA PROVINCIAL UNIT, HAD TOLD HIM THAT EVERY PROVINCE CAPITAL WOULD COME UNDER ATTACK.

6. ASKED IF THEY WERE AWARE OF ANY EFFORT TO ORGANIZE "ALLIANCE FOR PEACE AND DEMOCRACY" AS A COALITION MOVEMENT TO

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IN 44916

3.5(c)

PAGE 9 OF 12 PAGES

~~C-O-N-F-I-D-E-N-T-I-A-L~~~~NO FOREIGN DISSEM~~~~(classification)~~~~(dissem controls)~~

NEGOTIATE WITH THE NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT (NLF), THE PRISONERS MADE THE FOLLOWING REPLIES:

A. HUYNH TUONG: HE HAD FIRST HEARD OF THE ALLIANCE FOR PEACE AND DEMOCRACY AT A COMMITTEE MEETING IN EARLY DECEMBER 1967. AT THAT MEETING, HE AND ABOUT 40 OTHER MILITARY AND POLITICAL CADRES WERE INSTRUCTED ON HOW TO ORGANIZE THIS FRONT. ALL ELEMENTS WHO WOULD OPPOSE THIEU AND KY, INCLUDING HIGH-LEVEL GVN OFFICIALS SUCH AS PROVINCE CHIEFS, COULD JOIN THE FRONT. THE VC HAD NOT ORGANIZED THE FRONT IN KHANH HOA PROVINCE BECAUSE THAT COULD BE DONE ONLY WHERE THE VC DOMINATED THE SITUATION. IF THE VC HAD HELD NHA TRANG, THE VC WOULD HAVE ORGANIZED THIS FRONT IMMEDIATELY. ALLIANCE FOR PEACE AND DEMOCRACY WAS NOT THE NAME OF THE FRONT; IT WAS WHAT THE FRONT WAS. THE ACTUAL NAME OF THE FRONT WOULD BE CHOSEN LATER. TUONG SAID THAT HE HAD HEARD OVER THE RADIO THAT THE FRONT HAD BEEN FORMED IN BAN ME THUOT, DARLAC PROVINCE AND IN SAIGON, AND THAT THE FRONT IN SAIGON WAS CALLED "ALLIANCE FRONT FOR PEOPLE, PEACE, AND DEMOCRACY IN SOUTH VIETNAM."

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IN 44916

3.5(c)

PAGE 10 OF 12 PAGES

~~C-O-N-F-I-D-E-N-T-I-A-L~~~~NO FOREIGN DISSEM~~~~(classification)~~~~(dissem controls)~~

B. SENIOR LIEUTENANT XA: THE NLF HAS FORMED AN ORGANIZATION CALLED "LIEN HIEP LUC LUONG DAN TOC, DAN CHU VA HOA BINH" (ALLIANCE OF THE PEOPLE'S FORCES FOR DEMOCRACY AND PEACE). THE ORGANIZATION IS TO GATHER ENOUGH POPULAR SUPPORT TO FORCE THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT IN SOUTH VIETNAM OUT OF POWER AND TO PUT IN POWER A NEW GOVERNMENT WHICH WOULD THEN ACCEPT A COALITION GOVERNMENT.

C. FIRST LIEUTENANT CHACH: HE BELIEVED THAT THE PURPOSE OF THE ATTACK WAS TO INDUCE THE VC ARMED FORCES TO SUPPORT THE VC POLITICAL STRUCTURE WHICH WOULD THEN SET UP A GOVERNMENT COMPOSED OF ALL VC PARTIES AND THE BEST MILITARY OFFICERS. THE PRIMARY PURPOSE OF THIS NEW GOVERNMENT WOULD BE TO FORCE THE U.S. TO CHANGE ITS POLITICAL STAND IN SOUTH VIETNAM.

D. FIRST LIEUTENANT CHIEU: HE WAS NOT AWARE OF ANY EFFORTS TO ORGANIZE AN ALLIANCE FOR PEACE AND DEMOCRACY.

E. LIEUTENANT NHO: HE HAD NOT BEEN TOLD ABOUT THIS FRONT.

7. ASKED IF THEY WERE AWARE OF ANY PLANS FOR FOLLOW-UP STEPS IN THE CURRENT STRATEGY AND IF SO, WHAT WERE THEY,

THE PRISONERS ANSWERED:

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IN 44916

3.5(c)

PAGE 11 OF 12 PAGES

~~C-O-N-F-I-D-E-N-T-I-A-L~~  
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A. HUYNH TUONG: IF THE CURRENT STRATEGY SUCCEEDS, THERE WILL BE PEACE.

B. SENIOR LIEUTENANT XA: HE WAS NOT AWARE OF ANY FURTHER MOVES.

C. FIRST LIEUTENANT CACH: HE WAS UNAWARE OF ANY FUTURE PLANS, BUT STATED THAT THE VC FORCES COULD CONTINUE TO FIGHT.

D. FIRST LIEUTENANT CHIEU: AN UNIDENTIFIED PERSON TOLD HIM THAT AFTER SUCCESS, THE HARD CORE COMMUNIST ELEMENTS IN SAIGON WOULD ISSUE NEW AND FURTHER ORDERS.

E. LIEUTENANT NHO: HE DID NOT KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT FUTURE VC PLANS.

8. ASKED HOW THEY EXPECTED THE NLF AND/OR HANOI TO EXPLAIN THE FAILURE OF CURRENT MILITARY ACTIVITIES, IF IN FACT CURRENT MILITARY STRATEGY FAILS TO ACHIEVE VC MILITARY OBJECTIVES, THE PRISONERS REPLIED:

A. HUYNH TUONG: HE DID NOT KNOW. HE BELIEVED CURRENT VC MILITARY ACTIVITIES HAD BEEN SUCCESSFUL BECAUSE THE NLF RADIO HAD ANNOUNCED MANY VICTORIES AND THE FRONTS HAD BEEN ESTABLISHED.

~~C-O-N-F-I-D-E-N-T-I-A-L~~~~NO FOREIGN DISSEM~~

IN 44916

[Redacted]

3.5(c)

PAGE 12 OF 12 PAGES

~~C-O-N-F-I-D-E-N-T-I-A-L~~  
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B. SENIOR LIEUTENANT XA: THE NLF AND HANOI WILL DENY THE NEGATIVE FACTS PRESENTED BY THE GVN AND WILL TELL ONLY ABOUT THE GOOD POINTS OF THE ATTACKS.

C. FIRST LIEUTENANT CACH: HE HAD NO IDEA.

D. FIRST LIEUTENANT CHIEU: HE DID NOT KNOW. HE STATED "THE STRONGER OUR BELIEF IN VICTORY BEFORE, THE WEAKER IT IS NOW."

E. LIEUTENANT NHO: HE DID NOT KNOW BECAUSE IN HIS POSITION HE WAS NOT ABLE TO FIND OUT. IF IT IS TRUE THAT VC ATTACKS HAVE FAILED TO ACHIEVE VC MILITARY OBJECTIVES, THEN THE FAILURE WILL STRONGLY AFFECT THE MORALE OF NVA TROOPS AS WELL AS THAT OF THE PEOPLE IN NORTH VIETNAM.

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