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INFORMATION Document #

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Monday, January 22, 1968
6:20 p.m.

7:00 file

Mr. President:

You will wish to read this two-part message from Gen. Westmoreland, especially part I. He concludes:

"The current winter-spring campaign is unusual in its urgency and intensity. The bulk of our evidence suggests that the enemy is conducting a short-term surge effort, possibly designed to improve his chances of gaining his ends through political means, perhaps through negotiations leading to some form of a coalition government."

W. W. Rostow

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By rcs, NARS, Date 9-25-84

MAC 00967, January 22, 1968

WR 57 Duplicate of 38-76

WWRostow:rln

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By is, NARS, Date 12-16-83

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CBS Subpoena, January 22, 1968

Case # NLJ/CBS 8

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Document # 1

This is a two-part message. Part I represents my assessment of the enemy's overall winter-spring campaign; Part II gives my current views on the enemy's disposition and offensive plans in Quang Tri-Thua Thien. Part I follows:

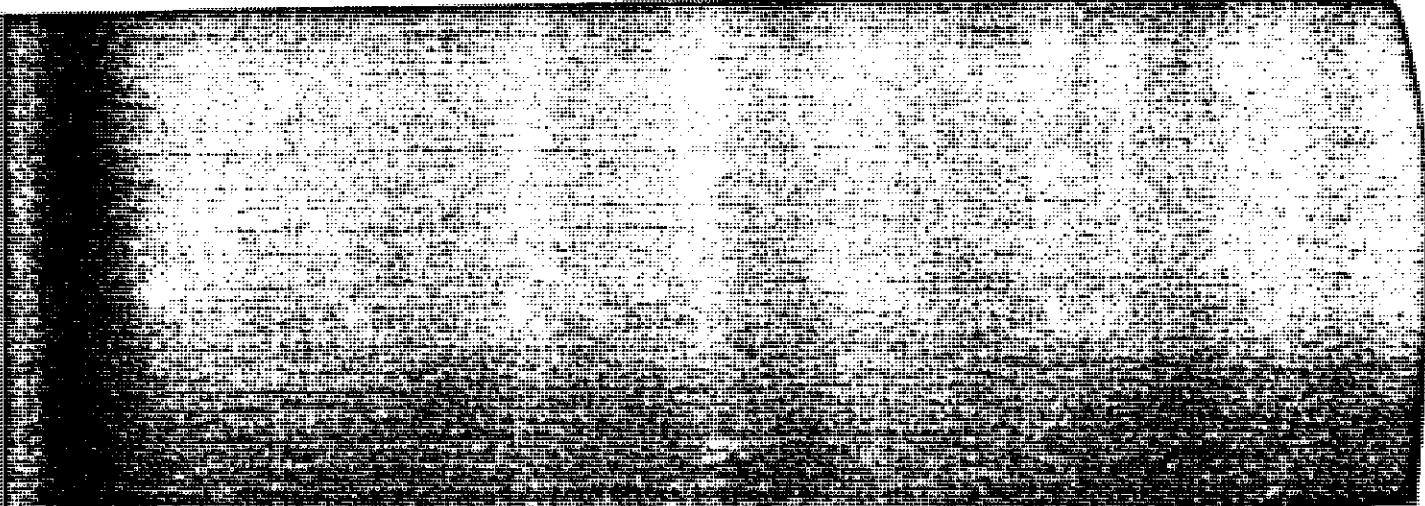
The enemy's winter-spring activity to date has given rise to a number of widespread impressions: that he is showing an unusual sense of urgency, that he has increased the tempo and intensity of the war, that his infiltration exceeds our estimates, that he is engaging in unprecedented unit reinforcement, and that he has increased the coordination of his forces. Some of these, I believe, are valid, while others are false or marginally true.

He is definitely displaying a very unusual sense of urgency. His documents indicate this, exhorting all his forces to conduct continuous operations in this "decisive campaign". In the Central Office for South Vietnam area, final victory is even promised in this campaign. His operations also show this urgency.

Song Be and Dak To were attacked with inadequate preparation.

[REDACTED] persist in the offense despite serious losses.

The intensity of the war has increased. Although total incidents have decreased since September, the number of assaults and attacks by fire have shown a steady increase throughout the year. Enemy action in the DMZ influenced this through September; since then, however, sharp drops in the First and Second Corps have been counterbalanced by increases in the Central Office for South Vietnam area.



IN NEW Yellow MARKED
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DATE: 1/22/68

WR 57 (Duplicate of 94-3a
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The enemy achieved an unusual degree of coordination during the last week in October, with near simultaneous actions beginning in the Fourth Corps and moving northward to the Second Corps. Since then, however, he has shown little improvement in his ability to coordinate at higher levels. He has achieved through reorganizations an improvement at the lower level. We believed, however, that this resulted from normal evolutionary moves, and is not specifically attributable to the present enemy campaign.

To summarize my view of the current impressions, I feel that the truly unusual factors of the present enemy campaign are his urgency and the increased intensity of the war in the Third and Fourth Corps. Enemy losses are not significantly higher than average 1967 rates, but it is striking that the enemy has not attempted to reduce his losses. The other factors enumerated in paragraph 2 seem less unusual, and partially explainable either as extensions of long-standing trends or similar to previously observed patterns of enemy activity.

There are two possible hypotheses for the unusual aspects of the enemy activity. Either the enemy is making a major effort for a short period of time in order to gain exploitable victories for political purposes, or else the enemy has escalated the tempo and hopes to continue the protracted war at current tempo.

Abundant documentary evidence favors the short-term hypothesis. Enemy documents increasingly talk of the possibility of negotiations and of a coalition government. The enemy drawdown on his coastal defenses in North Vietnam also suggests a concern with relatively short-term goals. He has made determined attempts to gain a spectacular victory, and is now preparing for another attempt in northern First Corps. I believe that the enemy sees a similarity between our base at Khe Sanh and Dien Bien Phu and hopes, by following a pattern of activity similar to that used against the French, to gain similar military and political ends.

On the other hand, there is some evidence supporting a longer-term hypothesis. Some very recent captured documents refer to continuation of the war at least into the summer. There is no firm indication to date that North Vietnam has backed down from its previous conditions for negotiation.

The key question becomes the enemy capability to continue the war at its present pace. The answer to this lies in his manpower problems. Continuation of the war at the present tempo will presumably cause enemy losses in 1968 at least as great

as those suffered during the past year. The enemy's current input is failing to meet his requirement by at least 5000 men per month. A continuation of such losses, with a resultant upgrading of local and guerrilla forces, would cause the rapid deterioration of the Viet Cong and the war would become increasingly a North Vietnamese Army war. To counteract this, if the enemy made a maximum effort with infiltration of about 11,000 men per month, and takes losses no greater than in 1967, he could sustain the war at current levels for only about one year, and then at great sacrifice. The enemy cannot indefinitely accept either alternative.

In summary, the current winter-spring campaign is unusual in its urgency and intensity. The bulk of our evidence suggests that the enemy is conducting a short-term surge effort, possibly designed to improve his chances of gaining his ends through political means, perhaps through negotiations leading to some form of a coalition government.

This message is Part II of a two-part message and gives my current views on the enemy's disposition and offensive plans in Quang Tin-Thua Thien Province.

In the Khe Sanh area, evidence indicates that the 325C and 304th North Vietnamese Army divisions are deployed north and south of the camp, respectively.

Since late December, [REDACTED] has been deployed from east to west across the DMZ and has been transporting supplies from depots north of the DMZ to caches north and northeast of Khe Sanh. At least 114 short tons of rice were moved, and I believe that 200-300 tons probably were transported. This is enough rice to feed an entire division for one month. In addition, at least 41 tons of ammunition, i. e., the equivalent in weight of a basic load for one division, were also moved. Unlike past years, traffic north of Dong Hoi to the DMZ area has been extremely heavy since January 7, indicating a continued supply buildup, probably artillery ammunition, increased truck traffic in Laos indicates the enemy will be supplied from the west as well.

[REDACTED] may be deployed north of Highway 9.

From his deployment, I believe that the enemy plans a coordinated offensive designed to seize and hold key objectives in the northern two provinces. Current