

Friday, February 9, 1968

Free file

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

Continuing review of prisoner interrogation reports and captured documents still support the original evidence that the VC/NVA had been led to expect the support of the populace in the recent uprising and that this failed to materialize. There is evidence to support the fact that in some areas the local people are providing food and shelter to the soldiers (whether from fear of reprisal or from belief in the cause is unknown).

Evidence continues to support the fact that withdrawal plans had not been prepared, that many VC/NVA were unfamiliar with the terrain in which they were fighting (perhaps indicating a stepping-up in the planning with a resultant lack of time for proper preparation), and that the troops had been ordered to "hold at all costs."

In addition, we are accumulating material to answer the question "What did the VC/NVA expect in the way of replacing the SVN Government?"

On January 30, 1968, 80 Viet Cong political cadres were captured by Provincial officials in Hien Nhon District. They had been organized into a provincial government cadre group and included among their number the individual designated to be the Province Chief.

In Out Nhon, the plan had been to capture the Province Chief and Police Chief (unsuccessful) and to force the Province Chief to broadcast over the captured radio station urging formation of a coalition government.

A prisoner captured in Chau Doc stated that the assault force which hit Chau Doc included ten party members who were to constitute the city front which was to organize a provisional government.

Prisoners captured in Bien Hoa stated that they had come to receive the Province. They had been told that the "Americans" had negotiated with the National Front for the Liberation of South Vietnam for the establishment of a coalition government. They had no knowledge of efforts to organize an "Alliance for Peace and Democracy" as a coalition movement to negotiate with the National Front for the Liberation of South Vietnam.

On January 30, 1968, a Radio Liberation broadcast claimed the formation of an organization called the "Alliance of National and Peaceful Forces" (supposedly comprising representatives of all major economic, political, and religious groups in South Vietnam) which was calling for both withdrawal of US forces from the country and negotiations with the National Front for the Liberation of South Vietnam in order to restore "peace, sovereignty, and independence" to South Vietnam. On February 1, 1968, Radio Liberation announced that in line the "Peaceful and Democratic National Alliance Front" was making similar appeals to the people. It also announced that the Viet Cong were in control in Saigon and setting up a "revolutionary administration" supported by the masses, thousands of militia, and many puppet troops.

According to two Viet Cong high ranking cadres who were captured and interrogated by Saigon police, the Viet Cong plan to organize a "Coalition Front of People for Peace" to negotiate for peace. This new Front plans to substitute General Duong Van Mien for Thieu and Ky as National Leader of South Vietnam. The Front will then contact top US officials to discuss a cease fire and a coalition government.

In Nha Trang, two prisoners claimed knowledge of similar Fronts. One, the Assistant Secretary of the Nha Trang Municipal Committee and a Candidate-Member of the Khanh Hoa Province Committee stated that he first heard of the "Alliance for Peace and Democracy" at a Committee Meeting in early December 1967. He claimed that "Alliance for Peace and Democracy" was not the name of the Front; it was what the Front was. A name would be chosen later. The second prisoner stated that he thought the National Liberation Front had formed an organization called "Alliance of the People's Forces for Democracy and Peace" which was to gather enough popular support to force the present government in South Vietnam of power and put in power a new government which would then accept a coalition government.

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AmnC:sjb