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R 131620Z FEB 68
FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 6562
INFO RUEHGX/WHITE HOUSE
RUEPJS/DOD
RUEHLG/CIA
RUEHIA/USIA WASHDC 4654
RUHHHQA/CINCPAC FOR POLAD
STATE GRNC
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E.O. 12958, Sec. 3.6

NLJ 96-197

By isp NARA Date 12-4-96

Rostow

~~SECRET~~ SECTION 1 OF 2 SAIGON 19239

STATE PASS AID

SUB: SITUATION REPORT PROJECT RECOVERY -- 1800 HOURS,
13 FEBRUARY.

1. GVN OFFICIALS EXHIBITED NEW CONFIDENCE AND MORE OPTIMISM
AT TODAY'S

~~Y.S. CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETING. VICE PRESIDENT KY~~
~~CHANGED HIS VIEW ON LIKELIHOOD OF SECOND WAVE ATTACK. ENEMY~~
~~FIRST WAVE OFFENSIVE BROKEN. APPARENTLY BADLY HURT, HE HAS~~
~~MOVED BACK FROM LOGICAL ATTACK POSITIONS. KY STILL GIVES~~
~~ENEMY CAPABILITY OF LIMITED ATTACKS. GENERAL LOAN FEELS THAT~~
~~SAIGON SITUATION WELL IN HAND. GENERAL VIEN INDICATED HIS~~
~~INTENTION OF TURNING SAIGON SECURITY CAMPAIGN OVER THE III CTZ/~~
~~CAPITAL MILITARY REGION TO COMMANDER KHANG. AS A RESULT,~~
~~COMMITTEE REALLY FOR FIRST TIME BEGAN TO APPROACH RECOVERY~~
~~PROBLEMS LOGICALLY.~~

2. THANG WAS IN GOOD FORM MAKING MANY SUGGESTIONS. HE FAVORS
UNIFORM CURFEW IN ALL SAIGON DISTRICTS WITH A FEW DAYS. HE
URGED GREATER ATTENTION BY CENTRAL COMMITTEE ON PROVINCES
WHICH FACE PROBLEMS EQUALLY AS LARGE AS DOES SAIGON. HE RAISED
PROBLEM, WHICH WE FED HIM YESTERDAY, OF PORT CONGESTION. THANG
WANTS 3,000 RD CADRE TO ORGANIZE AP DCI MOI AROUND SAIGON WITH
TRUSTED PRUSTED PEOPLE, LIKE CATHOLICS.

PRESERVATION COPY



3. KY ACTED LIKE EXECUTIVE CHAIRMAN GIVING POSITIVE INSTRUCTION TO ASSEMBLED MINISTERS. EXPRESSING HIS CONCERN ABOUT SANITARY CONDITIONS IN REFUGEE RECEPTION CENTERS, HE DIRECTED MINISTER OF HEALTH TO INSPECT ALL CENTERS. KY SAID HE WOULD VISIT RANDOMLY-SELECTED CENTERS AT END OF THE WEEK. HE AGREED THAT ARVN SHOULD START HELPING THE PEOPLE MORE. HE SAID THE GOVERNMENT

WOULD CANCEL LICENSES OF RICE DEALERS WHO WON'T OPEN THEIR STORES. ON THE PORT PROBLEM, HE TOLD THE MINISTER OF ECONOMY TO PRESS MERCHANTS TO UNLOAD SHIPS. THOSE WHO REFUSE TO PICK UP CONSIGNED CARGO WOULD LOSE THEIR IMPORT LICENSES. WHEN SUBJECT OF HIGHER INDEMNITY PAYMENTS WAS RAISED (QUE PROPOSED 12,000 PIASTER RESETTLEMENT ALLOWANCE COUNTRY WIDE), KY DIRECTED DR. QUE TO PRESENT PLAN BY SUNDAY GIVING NEW SCHEDULE, NUMBER OF FAMILIES INVOLVED, AND TOTAL COST. THANG ESTIMATED 30,000 HOMELESS FAMILIES WOULD BE ELIGIBLE FOR HIGHER PAYMENTS; QUE THOUGHT NUMBER WOULD BE MUCH LESS. THE VICE PRESIDENT ALSO DIRECTED THAT COMMITTEES ESTABLISHED IN PROVINCES SHOULD DECIDE ON USE OF COLLECTED DONATIONS -- GVN SHOULD NOT INTERVENE. T

4. MINISTER BUU DON, ARMED WITH CHARTS AND SKETCHES, DESCRIBED APARTMENT CONSTRUCTION PLANS. THREE AREAS BEING CONSIDERED. TOTAL ESTIMATED COST IN THREE BILLION PIASTERS. DETAILED DESIGN DRAWINGS WILL TAKE ONE MONTH TO PREPARE. BUILDINGS CAN BE PUT UP IN TWO OR THREE MONTHS AFTER CONSTRUCTION STARTS. FIFTY CONTRACTORS TURNED UP TO REVIEW PLANS. MOST THINK SHORTAGE OF LABOR WILL BE PRINCIPAL CONSTRAINT. IN ANSWER TO THIS, KY SAID THAT KONGER PLAN FOR FREEZING PRIVATE CONSTRUCTION MIGHT BE BEST SOLUTION. LAND OWNERSHIP WAS RAISED AS POTENTIAL STICKY PROBLEM. HE ALSO SAID THAT SQUATTERS SHOULD BE KEPT OFF CONSTRUCTION SITES, USING POLICE IF NECESSARY. THE VP AGREED WITH MRW'S REQUEST TO SET UP A SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON APARTMENT CONSTRUCTION. HE ALSO APPRECIATES THAT GVN WILL HAVE TO RE-EXAMINE ITS BUDGET IN LIGHT OF URGENT NEW NEEDS. SOME TRANSFERS OF FUNDS TO URGENT PRIORITY PROGRAMS MAY BE NECESSARY. TO END THE DISCUSSION, KY TOLD MPW TO GET STARTED RIGHT AWAY, EVEN IF IT ONLY MEANT SENDING A BULDOZER WITH A BANNER TO START CLEARING RUBBLE. HE SAID HE IS CONSIDERING PRESENTING THE PLAN TO THE NATION ON TELEVISION.

5. MOBILIZATION WAS A HOT TOPIC AT MORNING AND AFTERNOON SESSIONS. MINISTERS ALL COMPLAINED THAT NEW MOBILIZATION PLANS WOULD STRIP THEIR MINISTRIES OF ESSENTIAL TALENT. KY

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DEIDED IN PRINCIPLE THAT EXPERTS WOULD BE DRAFTED IN PLACE
AD, AFTER RECEIVING MILITARY TRAINING, WOULD REMAIN IN THEIR
JOBS. THANG SUGGESTED A THREE-DAY TRAINING PROGRAM. THE
MINISTER OF DEFENSE WILL DRAFT A PLAN.

6. THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE DIRECTED THAT COUNTRYSIDE ALL
FISHING BOATS WOULD BE PERMITTED TO FISH DURING DAYLIGHT.;

7. AIR VIETNAM PLANS TO RESUME SCHEDULED 10 COUNTRY FLIGHTS
TO QUI NHON, BAN ME THUOT, AND PHAN THIET ON 15 FEBRUARY, AND
TO TUY HOA ON 16 FEBRUARY. SPECIAL CARGO FLIGHTS CAN BE SET
UP BY REQUEST.

8. THE MINISTER OF TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS ANNOUNCED
THAT THE SAIGON-CHOLON TRAIN WHICH CARRIES LARGE NUMBERS OF
COMMUTERS WAS READY TO GO INTO OPERATION. THE COMMITTEE
REQUESTED MAYOR CUA TO AUTHORIZE RESUMPTION OF REGULAR DAYTIME
SCHEDULES.

9. KOMER VISITED PHAN THIET, TUY HOA, BAN ME THUOT AND DALAT

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IN II CTZ TO ASSESS DAMAGE, REVIEW RECOVERY ACTIVITIES AND
DETERMINE CRITICAL NEEDS.

A. PHAN THIET PROGRESSING WELL. -- EVACUEES BEING AMPLY
CAPED FOR, CLEAN-UP WELL UNDERWAY, RELAXED 1800 TO 0730 CURFEW
IN EFFECT, MARKET OPEN, FOOD PRICES DOWN TO NEAR NORMAL,
FISHING FLEET ACTIVE, PUBLIC SPIRIT HIGH WITH LOCAL MERCHANTS
AND SURROUNDING HAMLETS HAVING CONTRIBUTED

P PROXI

ITELY 500,000

PIASTERS TO REBUILDING FUND, FINANCE CHIEF HEADING PROVINCE
RECOVERY COMMITTEE WHILE PROVINCE CHIEF PUSHING MILITARY
OPERATIONS.

EVACUEES NOW NUMBER 72,00; 6,000 MORE ARE EXPECTED AS
RESULT OF CLEARING OPERATIONS INVOLVING HEAVY USE OF AIR AND
ARTILLERY IN HAMLETS WEST OF TOWN. ABOUT 1,300 HOUSES HAVE
BEEN DESTROYED OR HEAVILY DAMAGED. PSA DOES NOT BELIEVE VC
CAN MOUNT SERIOUS SECOND WAVE ATTACK WITH FORCES AVAILABLE
IN PROVINCES SINCE VC LOST MORE THAN 1,000 MEN IN THE FIRST
ATTACKS.

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R 131755Z FEB 68
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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 6563
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B. TUY HOA WAS ONLY LIGHTLY DAMAGED. EVEN THOUGH ENEMY DID NOT GET A STRONGFOOTHOLD IN THE CITY, THE VC INFRASTRUCTURE SURFACED TO ASSIST THE ATTACKERS. MANY WERE GIVEN WEAPONS AND TOLD TO FIGHT ALONGSIDE MILITARY UNITS. PROVINCE OFFICIALS, WITH HELP OF ADVISORS, ARE EXPLOITING. PROVINCE CHIEF AND PROVINCE SENIOR ADVISOR ARE CONFIDENT THEY CAN COPE WITH PROBLEMS WITH THENORMAL AMOUNT OF OUTSIDE SUPPORT.

C. BAN ME THUOT IS IN BAD SHAPE. CITY HAS JUST BEGUN

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TO GET MOVING AFTER SHOCK OF PROLONGED HEAVY FIGHTING AND WIDESPREAD DESTRUCTION. MORE THAN 21,000 EVACUEES ARE ALREADY IN TEMPORARY CENTERS. CORDON AND SEARCH OPERATIONS GOING ON IN CITY. PROVINCE TREASURY WAS COMPLETELY DESTROYED SO THAT PROVINCE CHIEF IS WITHOUT FUNDS EXCEPT FOR PROCEEDS FROM SALE OF GOVERNMENT RICE. MORE THAN 4,200 HOMES HAVE BEEN DESTROYED. MASSIVE OUTSIDE ASSISTANCE WILL BE REQUIRED. NEVERTHELESS, A RECOVERY COMMITTEE HAS BEEN SET UP UNDER CHAIRMAN OF THE PROVINCE CONCIL, WHO VOLUNTEERED TO TAKE ON THE JOB.

D. LAST REMAINING ENEMY FORCES WERE EXPELLED FROM DALAT TODAY. DOWNTOWN IS PRACTICALLY UNTOUCHED. SOME DESTRUCTION -- PROVINCE SENIOR ADVISOR ESTIMATES THREE PERCENT OF HOMES IN CITY -- IN OUTSKIRTS, PARTICULARLY IN NORTHEAST PORTION OF TOWN WHERE ENEMY HELD OUT LONGEST. THERE ARE REPORTS OF LOOTING BY MILITARY FORCES. TODAY THE MAYOR ORDERED LOOTERS SHOT ON SIGHT. DALAT, RICH AS IT IS, SHOULD BE ABLE TO RECOVER WITH MINIMUM OUTSIDE ASSISTANCE.

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13. LATEST FIGURES ON EVACUEES SHOW THAT NUMBER CLIMBED TO 485,000 (VERSUS 457,000 REPORTED YESTERDAY) -- 65,000 IN I CTZ (NO CHANGE) 66,000 IN II CTZ (NOTMKQQJNX 28,000 IN III CTZ (196,000 IN SAIGON/GIA DINH), AND 116,000 IN IV CTZ (UP FROM 79,000). AFTER MORE COMPLETE COUNT OF HOUSES DESTROYED, NUMBER NOW HAS REACHED ALMOST 37,000. CIVILIAN DAD (3,600) AND WOUNDED (19,000) FIGURES ARE SAME AS REPORTED ON 12 FEBRUARY.