

Mr. President

7:20 p.m., 2-11-68.

Permit
the CIA
order of battle
estimate.

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11 February 1968

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MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Increase in Enemy Forces in Vietnam Since December

1. A review of COMUSMACV's order of battle figures for the period December-January reflects no significant change in the confirmed strength of North Vietnamese and Viet Cong Main Force and Local Force combat units. There have been changes in the listing of non-combat elements (combat support and administrative support, etc.) of a bookkeeping character which do not really reflect changes in the enemy's combat potential.

2. In early December, COMUSMACV listed the enemy strengths as follows:

	<u>Combat</u>	<u>Support Personnel</u>	<u>Total</u>
Main and Local Force	109,860	25,653	134,513
Paramilitary	<u>112,760*</u>	<u>39,165**</u>	<u>151,925</u>
Total	222,620	64,818	286,438

*Included Self-Defense Militia

**Political cadre

3. As of January, COMUSMACV shifted to the new basis, dropping the Self-Defense Militia and the Political cadre from the accounting, establishing new categories for support personnel, and significantly increasing the strength of the latter. The 22 January figures reported by COMUSMACV are as follows:

	<u>Combat</u>	<u>Admin</u>		
	<u>Combat</u>	<u>Support</u>	<u>Support</u>	<u>Total</u>
Main and Local Force	110,286	14,155	38,000	162,441
Guerrillas	<u>73,500</u>	-----	-----	<u>73,500</u>
Total	183,786	14,155	38,000	235,941

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4. A comparison of the two tables reflects an increase of 28,828 in total Main Force and Local Force strength in January over December. This increase results, as indicated above, from changes in accounting techniques for support elements -- it does not represent an increase in combat strength.

5. COMUSMACV has not yet, to our knowledge, added to his confirmed order of battle holdings for combat forces those North Vietnamese Army units known to have infiltrated into South Vietnam since November. These include the 304th and 320th Divisions, which have moved into the area south of the DMZ, and the 31st Regiment of the 341st Division, which has moved down into Quang Nam province from its former location north of the DMZ. These units represent from 22,000 to 27,000 troops which should be considered as additional to the 110,286 Main Force and Local Force elements listed in paragraph 3 above.

6. Because of numerous indications of significant increases in the strength of enemy combat units throughout the country just prior to and since the beginning of the Tet offensive, we believe it would be premature to attempt any recomputation of enemy combat strength on the basis of the casualties reported since 29 January. These indications suggest a widespread recruiting campaign to bring all units up to full strength (significantly above MACV's "confirmed" figure) just before the offensive, and the creation and arming of substantial numbers of guerrillas in populated areas into which the enemy has moved since the offensive began. Thus, while the enemy KIA figures reported from Saigon almost certainly have resulted in a qualitative decrease in the enemy's combat potential, we are not confident that there has been a significant quantitative decrease.

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