

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

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February 9, 1968

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Enemy Scenario of the Future?

Although it is always dangerous to indulge in prediction, it is fairly evident that the enemy in Viet-Nam have embarked upon a program which is reasonably predictable in the sense that we know pretty well how they wish the future to unfold. We can expect them to act in a way consistent with their wishes--unless we prevent them.

I would guess that, several months ago, the enemy high command abandoned any thought of continued reliance upon prolonged conflict and the progressive attrition of our forces and our will. Instead, they decided "to go for broke" prior to our national election, taking advantage of the turmoil of an election campaign and the anticipated difficulties for the Administration in taking critical decisions in the election atmosphere. They may even hope to influence the choice of a peace-candidate if their spring activities are sufficiently successful.

In laying out their schedule, one can guess at some of the factors which the enemy leaders must be taking into account in establishing their calendar. For example, TET afforded an excellent opportunity for a surprise attack on the cities under the cover of their announced cease-fire. The monsoon weather is another factor affecting their plans since they should stage their much advertised winter-spring offensive under weather conditions most favorable to their side. These will obtain from now until about March 1, when the weather should change to our advantage. Finally, there is the Presidential election in the U.S. by which time Hanoi would hope to present the new administration with a coalition government in Saigon as a fait accompli.

Assuming the validity of the foregoing hypothesis, one can show in chart form the possible course of events. Such a chart is attached which accounts for the five phases which information leads us to believe to be in their plans.

- a. The attack of the cities.
- b. The winter-spring offensive in the North and Northwest.
- c. Negotiations while fighting (they would hope to take place under conditions of no bombing in North Viet-Nam).
- d. A coalition government emerging from negotiations under Communist domination.
- e. The eventual withdrawal of the U.S. military presence from South Viet-Nam following our elections.

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While the foregoing is largely speculation, it has enough plausibility to warrant reflection. We should be looking for ways to upset such a scenario.

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M. D. T.

Attachment:

Chart.

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VC/NLF WAR TIME SCHEDULE

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January 31, 1968
(TET)

March 1, 1968
(Weather changes)

November 1, 1968
(US elections)

January 1, 1969

Attack on the cities



Winter-Spring Offensive



Negotiations while Fighting



Coalition Government



US goes home

