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1968 FEB 24 17 20

FROM WALT ROSTOW
TO THE PRESIDENT
CITE CAP80542

By 18 NARA Date 9-23-96

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~~TOP SECRET SENSITIVE~~

FOR THE PRESIDENT
FROM WALT ROSTOW

FEBRUARY 24, 1968

HEREWITH SUB AND WESTY RESPOND TO OUR QUERY OF YESTERDAY
WITH THEIR PICTURE OF THE SITUATION.

... FROM HERE THE ENEMY SITUATION LOOKS LIKE THIS:

I CORPS - THE ENEMY ATTACKED KHE SANH YESTERDAY
WITH A HEAVY ATTACK BY FIRE AND CONTINUES TO ADJUST
HIS FIRE TO INCREASE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF HIS ARTILLERY.
THE THREAT TO QUANG TRI HAS BEEN REDUCED SOMEWHAT AND NOW
CONSISTS OF THE 333RD REGIMENT ATTEMPTING TO INTERDICT
THE CUA VIET RIVER, NORTH OF QUANG TRI CITY, AND THE 812TH
REGIMENT ATTEMPTING TO CUT ROUTE 1 SOUTH OF QUANG TRI CITY.
THERE ARE AT LEAST EIGHT EQUIVALENT COMBAT EFFECTIVE
BATTALIONS THREATENING HOI AN AND DANANG. THE BATTLE AT
HUE INVOLVES ABOUT EIGHT COMBAT EQUIVALENTS AND THE FIGHTING IS HEAVY AS THE ENEMY ATTEMPTS TO HANG ON
IN THE CITY. THERE IS EXTENSIVE SUPPLY ACTIVITY IN A-SHAU
VALLEY, AND THE ENEMY IS BUILDING A ROAD FROM THE VALLEY
TO JOIN HIGHWAY 547 WHICH RUNS TO HUE. WE HAVE NO INFOR-
MATION ON WHAT TROOP UNITS ARE LOCATED IN A-SHAU.

II CORPS - THE ENEMY IS TACTICALLY DEPLOYED TO
CONDUCT OFFENSIVE OPERATIONS IN THE DAK TO AREA. HE
IS CAPABLE OF CONDUCTING GROUND ATTACKS WITH SEVEN
BATTALIONS OF THE 1ST NVA DIVISION SUPPORTED BY ELEMENTS
OF THE 40TH ARTILLERY REGIMENT. AVAILABLE EVIDENCE
INDICATES THAT THESE ATTACKS CAN BE INITIATED AT ANY TIME.
IN KONTUM CITY, THE RELOCATION OF MAJOR UNITS COUPLED WITH
EVIDENCE OF DETAILED PLANNING INDICATES AN OFFENSIVE ACTION
AGAINST THAT CITY WITH AS MUCH AS THREE INFANTRY AND TWO
SAPPER BATTALIONS AT ANY TIME. IN PLEIKU CITY, THE ENEMY
DOES NOT POSE AN IMMEDIATE MAJOR THREAT AT THIS TIME. HE
IS, HOWEVER, CAPABLE OF ATTACKS BY FIRE AND HARASSMENT TYPE
ACTIVITY.

III CORPS - THE THREE REGIMENTS OF THE 9TH VC DIVISION
REMAIN IN NORTHERN AND WESTERN GIA DINH PROVINCE. ELEMENTS
OF THE 101ST NVA DIVISION HAVE BEEN IDENTIFIED NORTH OF
SAIGON, AND A PW FROM THE 141ST NVA REGIMENT, CAPTURED IN
SOUTHERN BINH DUONG STATED HIS BATTALION WAS FOLLOWING TWO
OTHERS TO GIA DINH. AIRBORNE DIRECTION FINDING LOCATED A
TERMINAL SERVING THE 2ND BATTALION, 274TH VC REGIMENT ON
20 FEBRUARY IN EASTERN GIA DINH. THUS, ELEMENTS OF THREE
DIVISIONS THREATEN SAIGON, ALTHOUGH SOME OF THEM HAVE BEEN
HIT HARD IN THE PAST WEEKS.

SATURDAY

Per file

IV CORPS - THE ENEMY IS CURRENTLY ATTEMPTING TO CAPITALIZE ON THE FACT THAT ARVN FORCES IN THE DELTA HAVE BEEN FORCED TO CONCENTRATE UPON THE DEFENSE OF URBAN CENTERS THROUGHOUT THE AREA. WHILE KEEPING HIS MANEUVER UNITS WITHIN STRIKING DISTANCE OF THE MAJOR CITIES AND LINES OF COMMUNICATION, HIS EFFORTS IN THE RURAL AREAS HAVE CENTERED AROUND RECRUITMENT AND ANTI-GVN/US PROPAGANDA. IT IS NOT CLEAR, HOWEVER, THAT HE IS MOVING RAPIDLY TO EXPLOIT THE SITUATION IN THE COUNTRYSIDE THROUGHOUT THE CORPS. DURING RECENT WEEKS THE ENEMY HAS BEEN ABLE TO SUCCESSFULLY INTERDICT HIGHWAY 4 THROUGHOUT THE DELTA. ROAD BLOCKS, CRATERING, AND HARASSING ATTACKS HAVE BEEN USED TO BRING TRAFFIC ON THIS MAJOR THOROUGHFARE TO A NEAR STANDSTILL. WE DOUBT THE ENEMY BELIEVES THAT THIS WILL CUT OFF FOOD SUPPLY TO SAIGON.

STRENGTH - ABOUT 69,000 ENEMY COMBAT AND COMBAT SUPPORT TROOPS WERE COMMITTED IN THE FIRST TWO DAYS OF THE TET OFFENSIVE. UP TO 25 PERCENT MORE WERE COMMITTED FROM THE GUERRILLAS, ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES AND POLITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE. OF THE TOTAL, ABOUT 30 PERCENT WERE NVA TROOPS. IN THE THREE WEEKS SINCE THAT TIME THE ENEMY HAS COMMITTED ADDITIONAL FORCES (FIVE TO SEVEN BATTALIONS IN I CORPS, FOUR BATTALIONS IN II CORPS, FIVE TO NINE BATTALIONS IN III CORPS, AND NONE IN IV CORPS). MAIN FORCE STRENGTH AT THE BEGINNING OF THE OFFENSIVE WAS ABOUT 133,000 DUE TO THE ARRIVAL OF THE 304TH AND 308TH DIVISIONS. ABOUT HALF OF ENEMY'S MAIN FORCE STRENGTH PROBABLY REMAINS UNCOMMITTED, THE MOST SIGNIFICANT INTACT ELEMENTS BEING THOSE AT KHE SANH, THE DMZ, THE HIGHLANDS, AND FOUR NVA REGIMENTS (2ND DIVISION AND 31ST REGIMENT) IN THE DANANG-HOI AN AREA.

REINFORCEMENT - ALTHOUGH A FEW PV'S HAVE STATED THAT THE 308TH AND 330TH DIVISIONS ARE IN THE DMZ, THERE IS NO CREDIBLE INTELLIGENCE HELD BY MACV INDICATING THAT ADDITIONAL DIVISIONS ARE IN OR NEAR SOUTH VIETNAM OR ENROUTE THERETO. THE NVA DIVISIONS LOCATED IN NVN HAVE NOT EXHIBITED ANY UNUSUAL COMMUNICATIONS PATTERNS WHICH WOULD INDICATE SOUTHWARD DEPLOYMENT, ALTHOUGH THE 330TH DIVISION IS NOT CURRENTLY ISOLATED IN SIGHT.

SUMMARY - WE AGREE WITH YOU THAT THE ENEMY CAN CONDUCT SIMULTANEOUS LARGE SCALE ATTACKS AGAINST KHE SANH, HUE, DANANG, DAK TO, AND SAIGON. HE WILL NO DOUBT ATTACK OTHER TOWNS AND CITIES AT THE SAME TIME. WITH DUE CONSIDERATION FOR THE LOCATION AND STRENGTH OF THE ENEMY THREAT COMUSMACV HAS DEPLOYED HIS FORCES TO BE IN THE BEST POSTURE TO COUNTER THESE SIMULTANEOUS ATTACKS THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY.

WHILE WE ARE PREPARED TO DEFEND AGAINST MULTIPLE ATTACKS, THERE IS SOME EVIDENCE THAT THE ENEMY MAY DELAY FOR WEEKS, EVEN MONTHS BEFORE INITIATING HIS NEXT OFFENSIVE. IN THE MEANTIME HE WILL ATTEMPT TO INVEST THE CITIES AND TOWNS, ATTRITING THE AIR FORCE OF THE REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM AND WEAKENING THE WILL OF THE CIVILIANS AND THEIR LOYALTY TO THE GVN. TO CAPITALIZE ON ANY SUCH DELAY, TOGETHER WITH RVNAF WE ARE PROCEEDING WITH OPERATIONS DESIGNED TO DESTROY THE ENEMY OR TO PUSH HIM AWAY FROM THE TOWNS, WHILE MOVING TO REOPEN LINES OF COMMUNICATION AND REASSERT FRIENDLY PRESENCE IN THE COUNTRYSIDE.

~~TOP SECRET~~

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