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NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20506

14 May 1968

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. ROSTOW

SUBJECT: The Pace of the War

The opening of talks in Paris has added a new dimension to the war. But there is not a shred of evidence to show that there has been any change in Hanoi's objectives since the 31st of March. All the evidence points in the opposite direction -- that Hanoi views negotiations as a tactical device for improving its chances of achieving its objectives.

For example, a captured document issued by the political staff of the 3rd NVA Division:

- instructs all units to convince the troops that the restriction of bombing in NVN "derived from the successful all-out attacks carried out by our army and our population!" and
- states that "while there will come the time when we have to accept diplomatic meetings with the U.S.,!" this will not change basic policy. Military objectives are to remain unchanged:

- a. To destroy ARVN and overthrow the CVN.
- b. To destroy a significant portion of U.S. troops and war facilities.

What the enemy has actually done since 31 March is consistent with what they say.

The following monthly indicators show that activity in South Vietnam is substantially higher than in 1967. The decline in most indicators since the first quarter, however, is consistent with the recent decline in the enemy's capability as a result of their heavy losses since TET.

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By iis, NARS, Date 6-25-84

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	<u>1967</u>	<u>Jan-Mar 1968</u>	<u>April 1968</u>
Enemy attacks	206	512	391
" sabotage	120	288	212
" harassment	1,603	1,830	1,930
" terrorism	163	113	75
" KIA	7,342	24,152	11,582
U. S. KIA	780	1,616	1,409
GVN KIA	1,060	1,812	1,283

Most recently, the enemy has launched a new wave of attacks on the cities -- especially Saigon. These latest attacks have not equalled the intensity nor have they had the impact of the TET attacks. They have, however, greatly surpassed the second wave of attacks on the cities in mid-February. Captured PWs, ralliers, and documents indicate further attacks will be forthcoming (TABS). In terms of magnitude, the latest attacks:

- have destroyed or damaged 20,000 houses in Saigon and Gia Dinh compared with 27,000 at TET;
- have produced about 90,000 refugees in Saigon and Gia Dinh as compared with more than 130,000 at TET; and
- have caused an all-time weekly high in U. S. killed in action -- 562 compared with 543 during TET week,

At the same time, North Vietnam is making a major effort to improve their capability for prosecuting the war in SVN, as shown by the following monthly rates:

	<u>1967</u>	<u>Jan-Mar 1968</u>	<u>April 1968</u>
Infiltration	6,700	8,000 - 10,000	12,000 - 30,000
Enemy vehicles observed	3,974	8,265	12,515
" " destroyed	503	1,072	1,713
Waterborne logistics craft sighted (not available)		819	1,549
Tons moving south	2,700 (Nov 67-Mar 68)		6,700

From the positioning of their troops and from PWs and captured documents, we know that they plan to use this capability if they can:

- to continue to harass the major cities and provincial and district capitals;
- to try to seize Danang; and
- to attack in the Highlands.

North Vietnam has also taken full advantage of the current bombing restrictions to restore and expand its economic and military capacity:

- Inoperative factories and power plants have been repaired.
- Dredging the port of Haiphong.
- Repair and new construction of bridges, railroads, and roads.
- POL imports, 47,000 metric tons compared with 33,500 per month for the first quarter.
- MIG training activities increased 50%.
- Air defenses shifted southward.
- All airfields in North Vietnam, except Dien Bien Phu, are serviceable.
- Three airfields south of 20 degrees restored to serviceability since 31 March -- and MIGs have operated from two of them -- Vinh and Bai Thuong (just south of 20 degrees).
- Number of fire control radars increased south of 20 degrees.
- Indications of SAMs moving southward.

These factors clearly show that the new tactic of talking while fighting has not changed the enemy's objective. That objective will not be compromised until the enemy is convinced that:

- we are not prepared to give him a military advantage at the negotiating table; and
- he cannot win at the negotiating table the political objectives which he has failed to achieve by military action.

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ROBERT N. GINSBURGH

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May 8, 1968

SUBJECT: COSVN Resolution #6

An incomplete notebook, entries dated from October 15, 1967, to April 12, 1968, kept by a member of a Sapper Battalion (possibly 11th Company, 4th NVA Sapper Battalion), contains notes taken from Resolution #6, passed by COSVN, which he had to study during the period April 8 to 12, 1968, when his element was stationed in Bien Hoa Province.

In the first portion, the Resolution recapitulates combat exploits of VC/NVA forces during the first stage of the general offensive (possibly 1968 Tet Offensive). Resounding VC/NVA victories have driven FWMAF/RVNAF into an extremely critical situation and moreover have been fully supported by people of the world including US progressives. However, greater successes were not achieved due to the following deficiencies: Poor combat spirit, lack of coordination, inadequate preparations and faulty operation plans. Many shortcomings also existed in the propaganda and civilian proselytizing programs. There were cases where the masses tossed grenades on our troops.

In the second portion, the Resolution asserts that FWMAF/RVNAF with their aggressive nature would intensify their military actions to drive VC/NVA forces out of the areas adjacent to RVN cities and towns and clear main routes of communications to relieve VC/NVA pressure on their rear bases. The Resolution stresses that, despite their desperate efforts, FWMAF/RVNAF would be totally defeated by VC/NVA forces which were strongly backed by the Socialist countries.

In the third portion, the Resolution emphasized that in the future the war would be more violent and may spread to NVN and even Indo-China. It exhorts VC/NVA forces to rush forward and fight until final victory is achieved, no matter how long the war may be.

In the last portion, the Resolution directs VC/NVA forces to:

-- Conduct violent attacks in delta and city areas to wear down the FWMAF/RVNAF potential.

-- Liberate the rural areas and carry out land reform.

-- Expand guerrilla warfare and rapidly develop armed elements.

- Maintain heavy pressure on cities and towns.
- Expand over the victories of Phase 1 and prepare for the third stage of the general offensive.
- Totally defeat FWMAF/RVNAF in the shortest period of time.

A notebook, entries dated January 31, 1968, to April 16, 1968, kept by a surgeon of an unspecified dispensary, contains notes taken from a study of Resolution #6. It states that the Vietnam War has taken a new turn, and the battlefields will be in the cities. The strategy adopted by General Westmoreland for the Vietnam War was upset and President Johnson had to change his policy. FWMAF/RVNAF practically lost their fighting strength and were bogged down in the city areas. However, the Resolution asserts that FWMAF/RVNAF would intensify military action to stabilize the situation until the US presidential elections. In the future the war would be more violent.

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ENEMY PLANS

TDCS-314/07712-68

"The source stated that the second phase of the offensive would last for a period of seven to ten days beginning on 4 May. He said the Viet Cong had considered the present time as the most appropriate time to launch the offensive because of the internal problems of the Government of Vietnam and the problems of the GVN's allies. He said that the second phase of the offensive was also meant to enhance the North Vietnamese position at the forthcoming peace talks."

MACV 12726

"Subject also noted that according to the estimate of central (communist, Lao Dong party), the theater of operations in Tri-Thien-Hue MR would be the scene of large-scale operations which would determine the war issue throughout South Vietnam. Captured data: 25 Apr 68."

CDEC 04-3214-68 Notebook, entries dated from 22 Mar to 26 Apr 68.

" Document reveals specific assignments of this cadre as follows:

- "1. Assist local authorities in carrying out directives of COSVN.
- "2. Set up guerrilla units in suburban and city areas newly liberated by VC.
- "3. Keep abreast of the over-all situation of the guerrilla warfare.
- "4. Assist local authorities in expanding their forces."

CDEC 04-3236-68 Notes taken from a political re-orientation session conducted on 6 Apr 68 by U/I Agency of Quang-Nam Prov.

" Coming missions. General Offensive and Uprising is a phase of continuous attacks to be conducted until final victory. It also means the efforts to work against time to gain successes quickly. As the General Offensive and Uprising are the final operations of the Revolution, all the people and soldiers could be mobilized to conduct the three-pronged attacks with continuity to disintegrate the entire puppet Army and Administration, and primarily it war facilities. From now to the completion of

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missions, 60% of the FWMAF/RVNAF war facilities must be destroyed. Meantime, the RVN machinery of oppression and hostile administrative personnel should be entirely annihilated. During this phase, partial revolts should be conducted in the rural areas, towns, and cities, paving the way for General Offensive and Uprising. Efforts should be made to develop the rural areas in every field, especially the recruitment of Party members and promotion of the people's guerrilla warfare."

CDEC 04-2602-68

"On an average, from now to the end of the year, each guerrilla participating in combat should kill 6 enemy soldiers, and each guerrilla remaining at the rear should kill 3 enemy soldiers. From now until July 1968, each guerrilla in the front should eliminate 3 enemy soldiers and each at the rear 2 enemy soldiers."

"From now to the end of the year, each village should shoot down 4 aircraft and until July 1968 2 aircraft."

"Criteria from now until the end of this year: six military vehicles (per village) are to be destroyed. From now until the end of July 1968, 3 vehicles are to be destroyed by each of the following villages: ---"

TDCS-314/07789-68

"The source stated that his unit received seven days of indoctrination prior to the May attacks on Saigon. Their political officers also briefed them on the national and international situation and told them that the front would agree to negotiate with the GVN after all Americans had moved out of South Vietnam. He said they were told that the fighting would continue until this condition was met."