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INFORMATION

Thursday, June 6, 1968 - 4:30 pm

Pres file

Mr. President:

Herewith:

- evidence of enemy morale problems;
- evidence of enemy efforts to exploit believed ARVN morale problems.

W. W. Rostow

WWRostow:rln

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June 6, 1968

SUBJECT: May Offensive

A personal notebook belonging to Hong Hai of LBN 6938 Ap Bac C1 (possibly 2nd Battalion, 36th Regiment, 308th North Vietnamese Army Division) contains notes taken from April 19 to May 10, 1968.

An entry dated May 8 states that in compliance with order of the Tactical Command Post, "E" would participate in a SVN-country-wide offensive campaign. The campaign, designated XI, would be implemented throughout May 1968 climaxing during the periods May 4 to 10 and May 20 to 25, 1968.

The document further discloses that Hong Hai's unit encountered a serious morale problem when the unit was preparing for movement to its combat area in late April 1968. Some members of the unit committed suicide, wounded themselves, deserted or defected. In another entry, Hong Hai recorded that some of the unit members questioned, "Why is the enemy still capable of carrying out sweep operations in our base area while we claim that he had been heavily defeated". Other members just expressed disbelief, confusion and demoralization.

(It is interesting to note that, if, as indicated, this is a unit of the 308th, it has only been in South Vietnam since about March. Other documents indicate the unit was initially moved into A Shau, where it performed road building missions. After Operation Delaware, the unit moved back to Laos and then to an area south of Danang).

Worthy of note was the mention of a "Third Phase" possibly the Third Offensive Phase. The document states that XI Campaign will be very significant because the victories obtained from this campaign contribute to the "Third Phase".

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