

Pres file

33

Tuesday, June 11, 1968
3:45 p. m.

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MR. PRESIDENT:

Herewith a cool MACV military appraisal for the week.

Here is the line-up by Corps areas:

Relative Strength
(in combat-effective battalion equivalents)

	<u>Enemy</u>	<u>Allied</u>
I Corps	49	93
II Corps	31	66
III Corps	26	91
IV Corps	13	47
	<u>119*</u>	<u>297**</u>

*Average: 4-500 men

**Average: 800 men

Briefly:

- pressure increasing at Khe Sanh;
- increased pressure expected soon at eastern end of DMZ;
- in II Corps Abrams believes he's headed off a big attack with B-52's and other pre-emption;
- Saigon main enemy focus;
- in IV Corps harassment of lines of communication, etc.

W. W. Rostow

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By ics, NARS, Date 6-26-84

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Monday, June 10, 1968

TEXT OF CABLE FROM COMUSMACV (16652)

SUBJECT: Weekly Assessment of Military Position

This message provides the weekly assessment of the current Allied and enemy military posture for the reporting period ending June 8, 1968.

Part I -- Appraisal of Enemy and Friendly Situation

The enemy's major interest presently appears to be in the central III Corps around Saigon. Another immediate threat exists in the DMZ area where the enemy is building pressure on the Khe Sanh Combat Base. The threat also continues in central I Corps and in the Western Highlands of II Corps. Friendly force operations in Quang Nam and western Kontum provinces appear to have upset the enemy's timetable in these areas, but it is doubtful that he will abandon efforts which have required such extensive preparations.

In I Corps, the enemy has 46 to 49 combat-effective battalion equivalents. At Khe Sanh, where he now has from six to nine combat-effective battalions, recent developments indicate that the enemy intends to increase the scope and intensity of his activities. Ralliers and documents indicate the presence of a newly-infiltrated North Vietnamese regiment there. From the eastern DMZ south through Hue, the enemy has 19 combat-effective battalion equivalents. In the eastern DMZ, the enemy will probably soon try to gain the offensive, and he may need new infiltration of enemy elements to reinforce those depleted by recent large losses. Elsewhere in this area, the enemy will probably continue to resupply and await replacement, attempt to secure the rice harvest, and conduct only small-scale attacks by fire. In the central and southern Corps area, the enemy has 21 combat-effective battalion equivalents, although activity has been at a low level. Attacks by fire against Danang and Chu Lai are likely, and reflect a significant threat to friendly installations there. Activity is expected to remain light in southern I Corps.

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By ies, NARS, Date 7-25-83

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In II Corps, the enemy controls 31 combat-effective battalion equivalents. The anticipated major ground offensive in Kontum province has still failed to materialize. It apparently has been preempted by B-52 strikes and friendly operations. The enemy retains the capability to launch multi-battalion attacks on fixed installations and to contest friendly initiated actions. However, he has probably lost the capability to coordinate several simultaneous large-scale attacks. In Pleiku and Darlac provinces, the enemy will probably continue the attacks by fire and ambushes which have characterized his actions during the past week. Elsewhere in II Corps, the enemy can be expected to maintain pressure on friendly units with attacks by fire and small probing attacks, and to continue harassment of the Revolutionary Development program in hamlets and villages.

In III Corps, the enemy is credited with 26 combat-effective battalion equivalents. The increase reflects primarily the influx of infiltrators. Throughout the week, the enemy continued to apply pressure on Saigon and its environs with a limited force, while conserving and rebuilding his remaining units in the outlying provinces.

It is apparent that Saigon is now the enemy's major target. His efforts here directly contribute to his major objectives: the creation of conditions which will lead to a popular uprising, and the creation of an impression of strength and momentum in order to erode Allied will to resist, and to enhance his position in negotiations. In his Saigon effort, the enemy is applying lessons learned at Tet: that frontal attacks are costly and generally unsuccessful; that small numbers of troops, once entrenched inside a city, are difficult to dislodge, can raise great havoc and cause widespread destruction of property. Thus his tactics for Saigon are to hold around the periphery of the city with his Main Force units, keep his lines of communication open, and provide a springboard from which to rotate small unit probes into the Capital both to inflict damage and to force heavy destruction by our forces. He also seeks to generate fear, impatience, indignation, and a sense of desperation within the populace. To this end, he augments his ground probes with random shelling of the city and attacks on utility systems. This has been the nature of his effort since May 5.

The enemy is apparently geared for sustained effort. During the last two weeks of May, he has had average losses of 260 killed per day in III Corps. Our estimates indicate that infiltration units in this area have top priority. We estimate that 16 to 18 thousand infiltrators are destined to arrive here over the next three months which represents a significant portion of the total

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infiltration effort. We know that one or more battalions have moved up from IV Corps, and believe the enemy may choose to redeploy one or two regiments from II Corps. He thus may be able to absorb present losses. It is apparent that the current attrition of his units and incoming replacements is not sufficient to significantly reduce the threat the enemy can pose to Saigon for the next two or three months. Meanwhile, he can be expected to continue efforts to keep the city in a state of unrest and economic disruption, and provide a source for lurid news headlines.

In IV Corps, the enemy continues to control 11 to 13 combat-effective battalion equivalents. Continued attempts to harass Allied forces and urban areas controlled by the Government of Vietnam, through sporadic attacks by fire and interdiction of lines of communication, remains the most probable enemy course of action.

Part II -- Friendly Situation

A. There are 93 maneuver battalions in I Corps operating against 49 enemy battalion equivalents.

B. In western Quang Tri province, there are 6 combat maneuver battalions conducting offensive operations against the enemy build-up around Khe Sanh. In I Corps north, 7 km northeast of Phu Bai, continued pressure on enemy forces by the 1st ARVN Division Black Panther company, supported by gunships of the 101st Airborne Division and psyops assets resulted in the capture of 23 North Vietnamese Army and 38 Viet Cong prisoners plus the return of 8 Hoi Chanh. Current III Marine deployments in Quang Nam and Quang Tin province appear to be adequate to meet the present central I Corps threat of 21 enemy combat-effective battalion equivalents.

There are 66 maneuver battalions available in II Corps to conduct operations against 31 enemy battalion equivalents. The apparent preemption of the predicted enemy attack in the Kontum area will permit the return of the 3rd Brigade, 101st Airborne Division to III Corps. Friendly operations were undertaken in Tuyen Duc province on June 8 with the movement of the 3rd Battalion, 506th Airborne to an area southwest of Dalat. Two battalions of the ARVN 44th Regiment will remain in the vicinity of Phan Thiet to maintain security there. The Allied effort in II Corps continues to be supported at a reduced level by B-52 strikes.

There are 91 maneuver battalions in III Corps operating against 26 enemy combat-effective battalion equivalents. The build-up of enemy

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of enemy combat-effective battalion equivalents from 16 - 19 to 26 during the past three weeks has influenced the shifting of friendly operations to Gai Dinh province. Currently, there are 29 U.S./South Vietnamese maneuver battalions conducting operations in Gia Dinh province. Inter-Corps moves from I Corps and IV Corps to III Corps have improved the friendly posture in III Corps. During the past week, four maneuver battalions were moved to III Corps (3 ARVN Airborne battalions from I Corps and 1 U.S. battalion from IV Corps); additionally, the ARVN Delta Force (a 600-man reconnaissance unit) was moved from Nha Trang in II Corps to Saigon. The Delta Force will be used to ferret out and eliminate snipers in the greater Saigon area. To further enhance the friendly force posture in III Corps, the 3rd Brigade, 101st Airborne Division will begin its move from II Corps on June 9 to Phuoc Vinh in Vinh Duong province. By June 11, there will be 93 U.S./Free World/ARVN maneuver battalions in III Corps.

There are 47 maneuver battalions operating against the enemy's 11 to 13 battalion equivalents. Two battalions of the Mobile Riverine Force were moved to Sadec province to continue riverine operations in that area.

Part III -- Enemy Capabilities

With respect to the forecast of enemy infiltration, it is now estimated that an average of 12,500 to 14,600 infiltrators will enter South Vietnam each month through September 1968. This will be insufficient to maintain his strength if recent loss rates continue. However, the enemy retains the capability to reduce his losses by cutting back the tempo of activity and avoiding engagements.

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