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Tuesday, July 2, 1968
6:45 p. m.

MR. PRESIDENT:

I promised you a professional military appraisal of the Vietnam situation.

While developing it here, Abrams' attached evaluation came in.

The marked passages at the bottom of page 1 and the top of page 2 are an excellent summary.

Key passages marked throughout, if you wish to pursue it.

W. W. Rostow

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White House Guidelines, Feb. 24, 1983
By 19, NARA, Date 4-1-82

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AMEMB SAIGON FOR AMB AND DEP AMB ONLY SEC I OF II.

SUBJ: WEEKLY ASSESSMENT OF MILITARY POSITION(U)

REF: A. JCS MSG 8667 DTG 092254Z MAY 68 (TS)

B. MACV MSG 13635 DTG 131148Z MAY 68 (TS)

1. (C) THIS MESSAGE PROVIDES THE WEEKLY ASSESSMENT OF CURRENT ALLIED AND ENEMY MILITARY POSUTRE AS REQUESTED BY REF A FOR THE REPORTING PERIOD ENDING 29 JUNE 1968.

2. (S) PART I (APPRAISAL OF ENEMY AND FRIENDLY SITUATION),

A. ENEMY SITUATION:

(1) SINCE EARLY JUN THERE HAS BEEN A LULL IN THE PATTERN OF ENEMY ACTIVITY. WE SEE A VARIETY OF REASONS TO EXPLAIN IT. IN THE DELTA AND THE COASTAL REGIONS OF II CTZ, ENEMY FORCES ARE DECIDEDLY WEAK, LIKELY TO REMAIN SO, AND CAN CONDUCT LITTLE BUT HARASSMENT. IN III CTZ, THE ENEMY IS WEAKENED BY A COMBINATION OF CONTINUED ATTRITION IN BATTLE AND THE EFFECTS OF THE MASSIVE FIRE POWER OF AIR STRIKES. HOWEVER, HE IS IN A CONTINUING STAGE OF PREPARATION WITH A HEAVY FLOW OF REPLACEMENTS TO SUPPORT RENEWED ATTACKS AGAINST SAIGON. WE EXPECT CONSTANT PRESSURE AGAINST THE CAPITAL AT A HEAVY COST TO HIS FORCES. IN THE B-3 FRONT, WE BELIEVE THE LULL RESULTS FROM PRE-EMPTION OF AMBITIOUS PLANS. AS A RESULT, HIS EFFECTIVENESS IS SIGNIFICANTLY DOWN AND WE EXPECT LITTLE FROM HIM UNTIL AFTER THE MONSOON SEASON. IN SOUTHERN I CTZ, THE LULL IS BEST EXPLAINED BY PREPARATION FOR MAJOR OFFENSIVE ACTION. IN NORTHERN I CTZ, WE SEE A LULL DERIVING FROM BOTH HEAVY LOSSES AND A DECIDED PHASE OF PREPARATION. HIS FORCES HAVE BEEN

ACT: J3-8

INFO: C3CS-1DJS-3 SJCS-3 J5-2 SACS-3NMCC-1 SECDEF-7 ASD/ISA-9

W/H-4 STATE-1 DIA-15 CIA-4 CSA-1CNO-2 CSAF-1 MC-7

2
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PAGE 1 OF 6

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WEAKENED BUT MAY BE REGENERATING BY TEMPORARY WITHDRAWAL AND POSSIBLE LARGE SCALE REINFORCEMENT.)

(2) ALTHOUGH THIS HAS IMPLICATIONS IN THE CONTEXT OF THE CURRENT PARIS DIALOGUE, IT IS TOO EARLY TO DRAW CONCLUSIONS OF POLITICAL INTENT. OTHER EVIDENCE INDICATES NO DELIBERATE DE-ESCALATION. IT APPEARS THAT THE PRESENT COUNTRY-WIDE LULL IN ENEMY ACTIVITY IS NOT OF HIS OWN CHOOSING BUT HAS BEEN FORCED UPON HIM BY HIS DETERIORATING FORCE POSTURE AND THE OVERPOWERING STRENGTH OF FRIENDLY COUNTER ACTION AND FIRE POWER. WE CANNOT RULE OUT POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS OF SOME OF THE ENEMY'S LACK OF ACTIVITY, BUT IT APPEARS DOUBTFUL THAT WE ARE SEEING DELIBERATE DE-ESCALATION.)

(3) IN I CTZ, THE ENEMY CONTROLS 93 MANEUVER BATTALIONS. AT KHE SANH, ACTIVITY HAS BEEN AT A MUCH REDUCED LEVEL. ELEMENTS OF THE 304TH NVA DIVISION HAVE NOT BEEN IDENTIFIED RECENTLY IN CONTACT; THE DIVISION HAS POSSIBLY WITHDRAWN TO REFIT AND RECEIVE REPLACEMENTS, LEAVING ELEMENTS OF THE 308TH NVA DIVISION IN THIS AREA TO TIE DOWN FRIENDLY FORCES. ENEMY FORCES IN THE QUANG TRI CITY AND HUE AREAS REMAIN DISPOSED IN THE VICINITY OF BASE AREAS. MAJOR ENEMY ACTION DOES NOT APPEAR IMMINENT IN THIS AREA, AND HE WILL PROBABLY CONTINUE TO LIMIT ACTION TO HARASSING ATTACKS, LOGISTIC OPERATIONS, AND DEFENSIVE MEASURES IN THE NEAR FUTURE. IN CENTRAL I CTZ THE ENEMY RETAINS A CONCENTRATION OF FORCE BUT CONTINUING DIFFICULTIES HAVE APPARENTLY CAUSED HIM TO DELAY HIS PLANS. THESE FORCES ARE NOT TACTICALLY DEPLOYED, SUGGESTING NO IMMEDIATE MAJOR OFFENSIVE ACTIVITY. MAJOR ENEMY OFFENSIVE ACTION IN CENTRAL AND SOUTHERN I CTZ SEEMS UNLIKELY BEFORE MID-JULY. IN THE NORTHERNMOST PROVINCES, LATE JULY OR EARLY AUGUST APPEAR AS THE MOST LIKELY PERIODS FOR A RENEWED OFFENSIVE.

(4) IN II CTZ, THE ENEMY HAS 55 MANEUVER BATTALIONS. IN THE WESTERN HIGHLANDS HE HAS CONTINUED TO AVOID CONTACT AND HIS FORCES ARE PROBABLY REGROUPING IN CAMBODIAN BASE AREAS. THERE ARE NO CURRENT INDICATIONS OF OFFENSIVE INTENTIONS IN KONUM PROVINCE. DURING THE 1967 MONSOON SEASON THE ENEMY CONDUCTED OFFENSIVE OPERATIONS IN PLEIKU PROVINCE, AND THE SAME PATTERN MAY BE FOLLOWED IN 1968. SUCH OPERATIONS ARE NOT LIKELY BEFORE EARLY AUGUST, HOWEVER. ACTIVITY ELSEWHERE IN II CTZ HAS BEEN LIMITED TO WIDELY SCATTERED LIGHT CONTACTS. THE ENEMY'S CURRENT PATTERN

PAGE 2 OF 6

14164

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OF SMALL SCALE HARASSMENT ACTIVITY WILL PROBABLY CONTINUE, MAJOR ENEMY ACTION IN THE WESTERN HIGHLANDS APPEARS UNLIKELY FOR AT LEAST THE NEXT MONTH.

(5) IN III CTZ THE ENEMY CONTROLS 55 MANEUVER BATTALIONS, THE ONLY RECENT MAJOR ENEMY INITIATED ACTIONS HAVE BEEN BATTALION SIZE ATTACKS IN LONG KHANH PROVINCE, ALTHOUGH FRIENDLY OPERATIONS HAVE RESULTED IN FREQUENT CONTACTS IN THE PROVINCE SURROUNDING SAIGON. THERE ARE NO INDICATIONS THAT THE ENEMY HAS ABANDONED HIS PLANS TO CONTINUE HIS GENERAL OFFENSIVE IN THE SAIGON AREA. ON THE CONTRARY, RECENT EVIDENCE SHOWS THAT THE ENEMY SEES THE RENEWAL OF GROUND PRESSURE ON SAIGON AS MANDATORY, HOWEVER, ANY ATTACKS IN THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE COULD BE OF ONLY LIMITED INTENSITY BECAUSE OF CURRENT MUNITIONS SHORTAGES AND DISRUPTIONS CAUSED BY FRIENDLY OPERATIONS. WHILE WE STILL EXPECT ANOTHER ATTACK ON SAIGON AT ANY TIME, THE ENEMY APPEARS WEAKENED, PARTIALLY PRE-EMPTED, AND STILL INVOLVED IN PREPARATIONS. DELAYED BY AGGRESSIVE FRIENDLY ACTION.

(6) IN IV CTZ THE ENEMY HAS 27 MANEUVER BATTALIONS. THE NUMBER OF ENEMY INCIDENTS DECREASED FROM THE PREVIOUS WEEK, BUT THE INTENSITY OF ENEMY ATTACKS BY FIRE INCREASED SIGNIFICANTLY. THERE IS INCREASING EVIDENCE OF ENEMY DIFFICULTIES IN RECRUITING, AND OF DESPERATE EFFORTS TO MEET HIS MANPOWER REQUIREMENTS. AFTER A BATTLE IN VINH BINH PROVINCE EXAMINATION OF 15 BODIES SHOWED THAT ALL WERE BETWEEN 14 AND 16 YEARS OF AGE. THE ENEMY WILL PROBABLY CONTINUE HIS RECENT PATTERN OF SMALL SCALE ATTACKS, ATTACKS BY FIRE, AND INTERDICTION OF LOGS, WHILE HE CONCENTRATES ON RESUPPLY, TRAINING, AND BUILDING OF HIS FORCES, ALTHOUGH THERE ARE NO INDICATIONS OF MAJOR ATTACKS IN THE NEAR FUTURE. HE MAY LAUNCH LIMITED BATTALION SIZE ATTACKS AND ATTACKS BY FIRE IN COORDINATION WITH ENEMY INITIATIVES IN III CTZ.

B. FRIENDLY SITUATION:

FRIENDLY OPERATIONS DURING THE PAST WEEK WERE CHARACTERIZED BY ACCELERATED OPERATIONS TO INTERDICT THE ENEMY'S INFILTRATION ROUTES FROM LAOS AND CAMBODIA AND TO PENETRATE INTO THE ENEMY'S BASE AREAS IN ORDER TO DISRUPT HIS OFFENSIVE PREPARATIONS. THE REDUCTION OF THE ENEMY THREAT TO MAJOR POPULATION CENTERS RELEASED UNITS COMMITTED TO THE SECURITY OF VITAL INSTALLATIONS AND CITIES AND ENABLED THEM TO RESUME NORMAL COMBAT OPERATIONS. THE FRIENDLY

PAGE 3 OF 6

14164

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COMBAT DEPLOYMENT IS WEIGHTED AGAINST THE TWO PRIME
THREAT AREAS IN I CTZ AND III CTZ. SIXTY-THREE PERCENT OF THE
US/FW/RVNAF MANEUVER BATTALIONS ARE LOCATED IN THESE AREAS WITH
ABOUT NINETY PERCENT OF THE TAC AIR SORTIES FLOWN IN SUPPORT OF
FORCES IN THE TWO HIGH THREAT CTZS.

(1) I CTZ.

(A) THERE ARE NINETY-TWO MANEUVER BATTALIONS IN I CTZ
OPERATING AGAINST NINETY-THREE ENEMY BATTALIONS. THE PRESENT
ENEMY STRENGTH REPRESENTS AN INCREASE OF ONE BATTALION DURING
THE PAST WEEK.

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PAGE 4 OF 6

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(B) THE US/FW/RVNAF FORCES CONTINUE TO PREEMPT ENEMY INITIATIVES THROUGHOUT I CTZ WITH EMPHASIS ON RICE DENIAL OPERATIONS AND RECONNAISSANCE IN FORCE INTO ENEMY BASE AREAS. THE PHASE-OUT OF THE KHE SANH COMBAT BASE CONTINUED DURING THE WEEK. MOBILE OPERATIONS WILL CONTINUE IN WESTERN QUANG TRI PROVINCE.

(2) II CTZ.

(A) THERE ARE SIXTY-THREE MANEUVER BATTALIONS AVAILABLE IN II CTZ TO CONDUCT OPERATIONS AGAINST FIFTY-FIVE ENEMY BATTALIONS. (AN INCREASE OF FIVE FROM LAST WEEK'S TOTAL).

(B) THE ENEMY'S APPARENT WITHDRAWAL FROM THE WESTERN HIGHLANDS AND THE COASTAL LOWLANDS HAS AFFORDED FRIENDLY FORCES A GREATER OPPORTUNITY TO PENETRATE THE ENEMY'S BASE AREAS, TO INTENSIFY OPERATIONS IN FORMER ECONOMY OF FORCE AREAS, AND TO INCREASE PRESSURE ON LOCAL VC FORCES. OPERATIONS THROUGHOUT THE CORPS WERE CHARACTERIZED BY RECONNAISSANCE IN FORCE TO LOCATE AND MAINTAIN CONTACT WITH THE ENEMY AND TO MAINTAIN CONTROL OF KEY TERRAIN.

(3) III CTZ.

(A) THERE ARE NINETY-SIX MANEUVER BATTALIONS IN III CTZ OPERATING AGAINST FIFTY-FIVE ENEMY BATTALIONS. THIS REPRESENTS AND INCREASE OF TWO FRIENDLY BATTALIONS AND A DECREASE OF VIE ENEMY BATTALIONS FROM LAST WEEK'S TOTAL.

(B) OPERATIONS IN III CTZ WERE CONDUCTED TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE ENEMY'S FAILURE TO CARRY OUT HIS PLANNED ATTACK ON SAIGON.

PAGE 5 OF 6

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AGGRESSIVE ACTIONS TO DECISIVELY INTERDICT THE ENEMY'S LOC AND TO SEVER HIS INFILTRATION ROUTES FROM CAMBODIA WERE CARRIED OUT. TWO BRIGADES POSITIONED IN THE NORTH ASTRIDE ENEMY INFILTRATION ROUTES ARE CONDUCTING OPERATIONS IN CONJUNCTION WITH CIDG FORCES AND LONG RANGE RECONNAISSANCE PATROLS TO INTERCEPT ENEMY ELEMENTS REINFORCING FROM CAMBODIA. THE MOBILITY OF THE MOBILE RIVERINE FORCE WAS UTILIZED BY DEPLOYING THIS UNIT FROM IV CTZ TO III CTZ TO REINFORCE FRIENDLY OPERATIONS IN LONG AN PROVINCE. THE DISCOVERY OF LARGE MATERIEL CACHES COUPLED WITH MASSES B-52 STRIKES ON SUSPECTED STAGING, SUPPLY AND REFIT AREAS HAVE EFFECTIVELY DISRUPTED ENEMY OFFENSIVE PREPARATIONS.

(4) IV CTZ.

(A) THERE ARE FORTY-FIVE FRIENDLY MANEUVER BATTALIONS
(A DECREASE OF TWO FROM LAST WEEK'S TOTAL) OPERATING AGAINST
TWENTY-SEVEN ENEMY BATTALIONS.

(B) DURING THE PAST WEEK, FRIENDLY FORCES CONTINUED TO CONDUCT OFFENSIVE SWEEPS TO KEEP THE ENEMY OFF BALANCE AND TO SECURE FRIENDLY LOC. DELTA BLACKHAWK OPERATIONS IN BORDER PROVINCES LOCATED AND DESTROYED SEVERAL LARGE ENEMY CACHES.

3. (S) PART II: (ENEMY CAPABILITIES)
ENEMY PERSONNEL INFILTRATION IS NOW ESTIMATED AT AN AVERAGE
OF 15,000 TO 17,000 ENTERING SVN EACH MONTH FOR THE PERIOD JUNE
THROUGH SEPTEMBER. THIS SUPERSEDES PREVIOUS ESTIMATES OF PERSONNEL INFILTRATION DURING THE PERIOD. OTHER ESTIMATES OF ENEMY CAPABILITIES, WEAKNESSES AND VULNERABILITIES CONTAINED IN THE WEEKLY ASSESSMENT ENDING 012400H JUNE 68 REMAIN VALID. GP-3.

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PAGE 6 OF 6

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