

Dear Wes,

Surely you must read the newspapers.....and most of what you read is true but you must put it into perspective. During the past few days, there has been something of a morale booster with the ouster (I thought they'd NEVER get him out of there) of Lam and his replacement by Gen. Truong the former 4th Corps commander and before that the 1st division commander. Unfortunately, Gen. Khanh the Marine Corps commander has been replaced also (he's one of the last Ky men with troops so in the final analysis altho Thieu gave in to Abrahms on the replacement of Lam, he seems to won in removing Khanh) and to me he would have been the logical I Corps commander being more familiar with conventional warfare than Truong. That's just a thought. At any rate, Truong will be able to bring some order to what can only be described as one hell of a mess. Gen. Giai the 3rd Division commander is being made a scapegoat--after all, someone has to be responsible for the loss of quang tri and you can bet your bippy that it probably won't be Lam. If I feel sorry for Giai because he was an able commander--he had what can only be described as an indefensible position and troops which he had no control over (if you remember, the 3rd division was formed last year and was made up primarily of deserters, "cowboys, draft-dodgers, etc. ~~and the other unit which made up the defense of quang tri was the 52nd regiment, an autonomous unit i.e. not connected to any division which was made up of the same type of people--this unit defected EN MASSE about the 3rd or 4th day of the offensive)~~ so let's be a little kind to giai. Pierre maintains he should have stayed until the last soldier as the arvn are doing in an loc. However as some of my more optimistic friends have noted vis-a-vis an loc, the arvn can't get^{out} as they are blocked on all sides; they have to fight. In quang tri, most of the troops had already deserted (I'm not completely sure of this but will try to check on it). I'm going to go back, if you want ~~in~~ me to, to see exactly how many troops were in quang tri, how many at my chang etc. when quang tri fell. I'm also interested in what the casualties were. My feeling really is that it was indefensible and should have been abandoned and a counter-attack made at the very beginning of the offensive but lam and thieu were too cautious and really lacked the ability to take decisions. What is happening at an loc is a fiasco. Thieu really doesn't know what in the hell he's doing.....and worst of all, intelligence estimates indicate that the NVA have only committed 50% of their troops.

→ it's the 54th regiment that is autonomous and it did not defect. There were several battalions from the 3rd Division that took a vote and did surrender the 3rd or 4th day.

The prediction right now is that the NVA/VC will try to make an uprising around the end of this month but not along the same lines as in 1968. The difference is that they believe that the reason that a popular uprising failed in 1968 was because the local militia, police and regular soldiers put down the uprising. Now they plan to assign (if they can) one battalion to each district in the south to protect and of course participate in the uprising. There are already 58 battalions in the Delta, 14 of which are NVA.

If they do try this tactic -- a nationwide offensive -- it will look like the whole country is collapsing to the outside world. Most people here think that this whole offensive ^{so far} is being made to look like a repeat performance of 1968 and ^{to} show that the ARVN can't and won't fight and keep their territory. The major test of this is yet to come and I fear if a big push is made in the Delta and NOT in I Corps, the ARVN may be in trouble. The saving grace is that apparently the NVA 1st Division (the one in Cambodia) is not too keen in getting bogged down in the Delta either.....so, we will wait and see where the push comes and when.

Most of this information is from Vietnamese and American intelligence sources and not from Abrahms except for NVA troop strength estimates -

It will take me awhile to get to all of your questions.

Thieu is still playing politics as you can see by the following changes in Command:

Truong to I Corps (Abrahms & Bunker absolutely insisted on it - Thieu had no choice - Thieu wanted to fire Cao Van Vien but Abe said No. Instead Thieu appointed Khanh the Marine Corps Commander as Vien's assistant)

Nghi former 21st Division Commander & Mme Thieu's cousin as 4th Corps Commander

Hoang Duc Nha's brother as 21st Division Commander

NEPOTISM NEVER CEASES!!! (over)

I'm going to send this off to you and I'll try to get more news off to you in a few days.

Cheers.

Jalynn

the present situation is that the ARVN is that they believe that the reason that as in 1968. The difference is that they believe that the reason that a popular uprising called in 1968 was because the local militia, police and regular soldiers put down the uprising. Now they plan to assign (if they can) one battalion to each district in the south to protect and of course participate in the uprising. There are already 58 battalions in the Delta, 14 of which are NVA. If they do try this tactic -- a nationwide offensive -- it will look like the whole country is collapsing to the outside world. Most people here think that this whole offensive is being made to look like a repeat performance of 1968 and show that the ARVN can't and won't fight and keep their territory. The major test of this is yet to come and I fear if a big push is made in the Delta and NOT in I Corps, the ARVN may be in trouble. The saving grace is that apparently the NVA 1st Division (the one in Cambodia) is not too keen in getting bogged down in the Delta either.....so, we will wait and see where the push comes and when.

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Hoang due NVA's brother as 1st Division Commander

NE POSITIVE NEVER CEASES !!! (over)

May 8

According to Abrahms in an interview which I believe to be off the record, he says that the estimated number of North Vietnamese committed to fight in South Vietnam is approximately 200,000 men. In addition, there are approximately 160,000 Main Force, regional force and guerilla troops plus 65,000 Viet Cong infrastructure cadres.

The standing army of North Vietnam is 480,000 men. There are four divisions not committed in south vietnam--2 in norther Laos, 1 in southern Laos and 1 approximately 100 miles north of the DMZ. (325) There ~~is~~ are also several divisions in Cambodia--the intelligence is more spotty but the run-down for the four Corps areas goes something like this.

I Corps

ARVN - 1st Division

remnants of the 3rd Division (perhaps 1 regiment, not more)
Vietnamese Marines - 1 division

2nd Division (there is 1 regiment at Hue and 1 at Quang Nam and Quang Tin

2 Regiments from the 7th Division which are headquartered in the Delta

54th Regiment (autonomous) at Quang Nam

2 groups of Rangers

2nd ~~NNNN~~ Airborne Brigade from Saigon (formerly at Pleiku-brought to Saigon for a couple days rest)

NVA - 304th Division (elements)

Quang Tri	308th	"	"	supported by 2 regiments of artillery and 1 armored regiment
	324 B	"	"	
	324	"	"	part at Bastogne
	320 B	"	"	moving in north of Hue
	711	"	"	south of Danang between Quang Ngai and Quang Nam

We only know
note that the NVA ~~elements~~ *forces* have elements of these divisions operating but their strength is unknown.

II Corps

ARVN

remnants of the 22nd Division (2 regiments have been badly battered)

23rd Division

2 Korean Divisions

Blue Dragon in Binh Dinh

White Horse in Phan Rang and Tuy Hoa

Rangers (don't know how many battalions)

NVA

320th Division at Kontum and Pleiku

2nd Division at Kontum and Quang Tin

3rd Division at Binh Dinh

note; these are supported by armor and artillery but don't know for sure which units. There are also autonomous NVA/VC regiments but again, don't know their numbers or strength.

III Corps

ARVN

5th Division (2 regiments badly battered in Loc Ninh-An Loc fighting)

18th Division

25 Division (operating in Cu Chi- Tay Ninh area)

21st Division (normally headquarter in the Delta - all regiments are near LaiKhe on route 13)

2 Airborne Brigades (1st and 3rd)

1 group of Rangers

3rd Brigade of the 1st Cavalry Division scheduled to leave in June (american) these are combat troops

RAG (river assault groups) based in Vung Tau

NVA

5th Division

7th Division

9th Division

Autonomous regiments: 33rd (made first appearance May 5 in Duc Thanh district, Phuoc Tuy province--a ground probe--no further fighting)

E-6 in Binh Duong

320 in Long An and Hau Nghia

274 in War Zone D (Thudaumot and Bien Hoa)

Binh Long Group consisting of VC, Khmer Rouge - consisting of of approximately 1 division minus 1 regiment

III Corps (cont'd)

NVA

69th Artiller Command consisting of 3 regiments of artillery
Sapper Command which has 13 highly mobile sapper battalions

IV Corps

ARVN

1 regiment of 7th Division

9th Division

Rangers

NVA

NVA/VC 9 regiments consisting of 500-1,000 ~~mmx~~ men per regiment
very small

NVA 1st division is in Cambodia

~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~

Note that the Delta is extremely vulnerable as is II Corps. The strengths of both NVA and ARVN are in I and III Corps.

the NVA divisions are now composed of four ~~six~~ regiments -- each regiment consisting of approximately 2,000 men. In 1968, Each division consisted of 3 regiments of 1,500 men each.

the present divisions are ORGANIC which makes them completely different than in 1968. the NVA division breakdown looks like this;

- 1 infantry regiment (2,000 men)
- 1 sapper regiment (2,000 men)
- these two regiments are interchangeable
- 1 artillery regiment (antiaircraft, antitank, etc.)
- 1 LOC regiment (specialize in communications warfare - engineers etc. - roads, bridges waterways - blowing up and building where needed.)

In 1968, the divisions were not organic and had to depend on other units for artillery, support etc. The new organization has made each unit not only highly mobile but self-sustaining.

This is the breakdown as far as anyone here knows. I think it is pretty accurate. The estimate is that approximately 50% ~~per~~ of the enemy troop strength has been committed. There are at least 4 NVA regiments in III Corps which have not been heard from yet; the 33rd as I have noted finally made its appearance (we hope it was the 33rd to keep

things neat!