

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY Intelligence Information Cable

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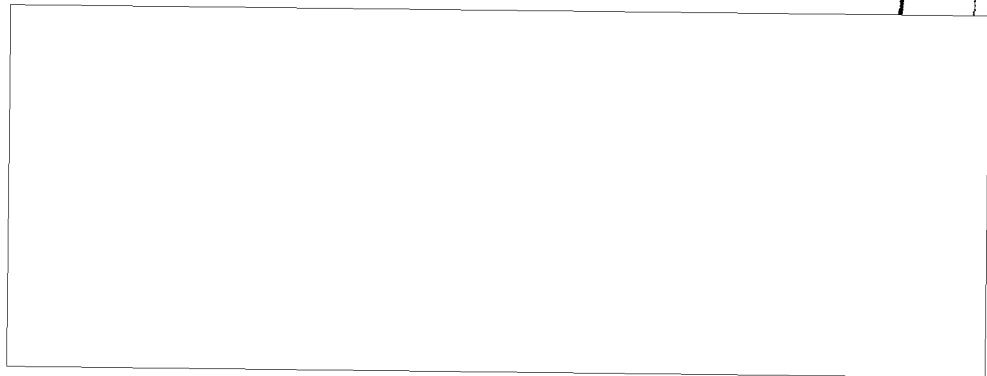
DIST 6 FEBRUARY 1968

COUNTRY SOUTH VIETNAM
DOI
SUBJECT PROPAGANDA, RUMORS, AND ATTITUDE OF THE NHA
TRANG POPULACE DURING THE NORTH VIETNAMESE
ARMY/VIET CONG TET AGRESSION.

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1. THE MOST PROMINENT THEME OR QUESTION THAT HAS DEVELOPED AMONG THE LOCAL INDIGENOUS POPULACE IN NHA TRANG, KHANH HOA PROVINCE, FOCUSES ON THE RUMOR OF A POSSIBLE COALITION GOVERNMENT SET UP BY THE AMERICANS IN COLLUSION WITH THE VIET CONG (VC). SOME VIETNAMESE IN NHA TRANG BELIEVE THAT BECAUSE NO AMERICAN INSTALLATIONS IN THE CITY WERE ATTACKED

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(WHICH IS ERRONEOUS) THAT "WASHINGTON AND SAIGON", THROUGH A PREVIOUS ARRANGEMENT, HAD ALLOWED THE VC TO ATTACK GOVERNMENT OF VIETNAM (GVN) FORCES THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY AND IF POSSIBLE TAKE OVER CITIES AND TOWNS IN ORDER TO FORCE THE GVN INTO ACCEPTING A COALITION GOVERNMENT. AT PRESENT, THIS RUMOR APPEARS TO BE SPREADING THROUGH THE VIETNAMESE POPULACE WITH SIZEABLE MOMENTUM AND MANY PEOPLE SEEM TO BE PLACING CONSIDERABLE BELIEF IN ITS VALIDITY.

2. ALL LOCAL VIETNAMESE QUESTIONED FELT THAT THE BULK OF THE POPULATION WAS ANGERED BY THE VC/NVA ATTACKS. THE FACT THAT THEY OCCURRED DURING TET AND ESPECIALLY AFTER THE ENEMY HAD SPREAD LEAFLETS CALLING FOR A SEVEN DAY TRUCE PERIOD WAS DESCRIBED AS "DISGUSTING AND SHAMELESS." THE COMBINATION OF A ~~BROKEN~~ TRUCE PROMISE AND THE DEATH AND DESTRUCTION WHICH RESULTED FROM THE ATTACKS HAS CAUSED EVEN THOSE VIETNAMESE SYMPATHETIC TO THE VC CAUSE TO CRITICIZE VIOLENTLY THE ENEMY'S EFFORT TO GAIN CONTROL OF THE LARGE URBAN CENTERS.

3. IN MOST INSTANCES, THE VIETNAMESE PEOPLE FELT THAT THE LOCAL GVN FORCES REACTED PROMPTLY AND COURAGEOUSLY.

SOME WERE CONVINCED THAT CERTAIN GVN OFFICIALS POSSESSED

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INFORMATION WARNINGS OF THE ATTACKS, BUT DUE TO ENTHUSIASTIC TET CELEBRATIONS, THESE WARNINGS TENDED TO BE IGNORED. IN FACT, AS A RESULT OF INFORMATION ON IMPENDING ATTACKS RECEIVED BY POLICE HEADQUARTERS AND ARVN, ORDERS WERE GIVEN TO HAVE AT LEAST FIFTY PERCENT STRENGTH MANNING ALL POSTS, BUT THESE ORDERS WERE NOT FULLY OBEYED BECAUSE OF TET. ALSO, SOME VIETNAMESE FELT THERE WAS NOT ENOUGH BEING DONE TO RELIEVE THE PLIGHT OF THE REFUGEES WHO ARE NOW POSING A SERIOUS PROBLEM IN MOST URBAN AREAS.

4. SOME LOCAL VIETNAMESE SAID THAT VC PROPAGANDA WAS NEGLIGIBLE OTHER THAN THE SPREAD OF RUMORS OF COALITION GOVERNMENT. [Redacted]

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MR. THO, CHAIRMAN OF THE NATIONAL FRONT FOR THE LIBERATION OF SOUTH VIETNAM, IN A BROADCAST CALLING FOR THE SOLDIERS OF THE GVN TO "TURN RIFLES TO OVERTHROW THE THIEU-KY CLIQUE AND FIGHT AGAINST THE AMERICAN AGRESSORS."

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