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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE
1 FEBRUARY 1968

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INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

SPOT REPORT ON THE SITUATION IN VIETNAM
(INFORMATION AS OF 5:30 P.M. EST)

SIDE EFFECTS OF THE CURRENT ENEMY OFFENSIVE: REPORTS ARE BEGINNING TO COME IN FROM THE FIELD WHICH PROVIDE SOME MATERIAL FOR TENTATIVE ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPACT OF CURRENT COMMUNIST MILITARY ACTION ON THE GOVERNMENT, THE PEOPLE, AND THE RURAL AREAS OF SOUTH VIETNAM.

1. IT IS CLEAR THAT THERE HAS BEEN WIDESPREAD DISRUPTION OF GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS, AFFECTING PARTICULARLY THE PACIFICATION EFFORT. REFUGEES HAVE BEGUN TO MOVE BOTH INTO OR OUT OF URBAN CENTERS, ACCORDING TO THE PREVAILING SITUATION IN THEIR AREAS. THE REACTION OF THE PEOPLE HAS GENERALLY BEEN ONE OF FEAR AND CONCERN FOR THEIR OWN SAFETY.

2. THE VIET CONG IN SOME AREAS HAVE ATTEMPTED TO STIR UP POPULAR SUPPORT FOR THEIR MILITARY ACTION, BUT THERE ARE FEW INDICATIONS THAT THEIR EFFORTS ARE SUCCEEDING AND IN FACT, SOME LOCAL OBSERVERS BELIEVE THAT POPULAR REACTION WILL BE DECIDEDLY NEGATIVE.

3. REVOLUTIONARY DEVELOPMENT CADRE OPERATIONS HAVE BEEN DISRUPTED. TEAMS IN MANY AREAS PARTICULARLY IN I CORPS HAVE BEEN ENGAGED BY ENEMY FORCES AND HAVE REPORTED HEAVY CASUALTIES. IN OTHER AREAS, CONTACT HAS NOT BEEN MADE WITH THE TEAMS, BUT THEIR STATUS IS UNCLEAR AND IN SOME AREAS THEY APPEAR TO HAVE LEFT THEIR POSTS. SOME OF THE CADRES SEEM TO BE CUT OFF FROM FRIENDLY MILITARY ELEMENTS AND SOME BECAUSE OF THE TET HOLIDAYS, WERE APPARENTLY CAUGHT OFF GUARD BY THE ENEMY OFFENSIVE AND HAVE NOT REPORTED BACK FOR DUTY. IN BINH LONG PROVINCE, FOR EXAMPLE, AN AMERICAN OBSERVER REPORTS THAT ONLY 50 PERCENT OF THE CADRES AT ONE RD SITE WERE ON DUTY, WHILE AT ANOTHER SITE NEAR THE

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FOR DUTY. IN BINH LONG PROVINCE, FOR EXAMPLE, AN AMERICAN OBSERVER REPORTS THAT ONLY 50 PERCENT OF THE CADRES AT ONE RD SITE WERE ON DUTY, WHILE AT ANOTHER SITE NEAR THE PROVINCIAL CAPITAL ONLY THREE CADRES WERE PRESENT OUT OF TWO TEAMS ASSIGNED TO THE AREA.

4. A NUMBER OF AREAS HAVE REPORTED LARGE REFUGEE FLOWS. RESIDENTS OF DUY XUYEN DISTRICT TOWN IN QUANG NAM PROVINCE HAD BEEN EVACUATED BY THE EVENING OF 1 FEBRUARY, AND IN HOA VANG DISTRICT IN THIS PROVINCE APPROXIMATELY 1,000 REFUGEES WERE REPORTED IN NEED OF FOOD. THE BINH LONG PROVINCIAL CAPITAL HAS SEEN A STEADY FLOW OF REFUGEES FROM OUTLYING AREAS, WHICH ARE REPORTEDLY IN COMMUNIST HANDS. EVEN IN LONG KHANH PROVINCE, WHERE NO MINOR ENEMY ATTACKS HAVE OCCURRED, PEOPLE ARE REPORTED LEAVING THE PROVINCIAL CAPITAL OF XUAN LOC BECAUSE THEY FEARED AN ASSAULT ON THE NIGHT OF 1-2 FEBRUARY.

5. THE POPULACE APPEARS GENERALLY COOPERATIVE WITH GOVERNMENT MEASURES, SUCH AS THE CURFEW, BUT FEARFUL FOR ITS OWN SAFETY AND IN MANY CASES, FOR THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE ENEMY'S OFFENSIVE ON THE GOVERNMENT AND THE FATE OF THE COUNTRY.

IN BIEN HOA, [REDACTED] THE APPROXIMATELY 50,000 NORTHERN REFUGEES IN THE PROVINCE HAVE REACTED QUIETLY, NEGATIVELY TO THE COMMUNIST OFFENSIVE AND WANT TO SEE THE VIET CONG DESTROYED, EVEN IF IT MEANS THE DESTRUCTION OF THEIR OWN PROPERTY. THE SOUTHERNERS, ON THE OTHER HAND, APPEAR DISMAYED AND INTIMIDATED BY THE COMMUNIST STRENGTH.

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6. ONE SENIOR VIETNAMESE MILITARY COMMANDER REPORTEDLY BELIEVES THIS LATTER REACTION WILL BE WIDELY SPREAD. HE BELIEVES THAT MANY OF THE POPULACE WILL NOT BE INTIMIDATED BY THE VIET CONG WILL AT LEAST LOSE CONFIDENCE IN THE GOVERNMENT AND THE US. INDICATIONS FROM OTHER QUARTERS ARE THAT MANY FEAR THE OFFENSIVE WILL RESULT IN THE ALLIES' ACQUIESCENCE IN THE FORMATION OF A COALITION GOVERNMENT.

7. THERE HAVE BEEN NO INDICATIONS, DESPITE WHATEVER FEAR MAY BE PREVALENT, OF SIGNIFICANT VIET CONG SUCCESSES IN GENERATING POPULAR SUPPORT FOR THEIR MILITARY ACTIONS. ISOLATED ATTEMPTS HAVE BEEN MADE TO START DEMONSTRATIONS BUT THESE HAVE APPARENTLY RECEIVED LITTLE RESPONSE. ONE RALLY CALLED BY THE VIET CONG IN FRONT OF A PAGODA IN DA NANG, WHICH IS USUALLY CENTER FOR

ANTIGOVERNMENT AGITATION, WAS PUT DOWN BECAUSE THE DA NANG BUDDHIST CONGREGATION SENT FOR HELP FROM THE AUTHORITIES. THE GATHERING

WHICH LISTED UNENTHUSIASTICALLY TO COMMUNIST CLAIMS OF VICTORY AND A CALL FOR THE END OF THE WAR IN CENTRAL VIETNAM, WAS DISPERSED AND SEVERAL VIET CONG WERE ARRESTED.

8. IN SAIGON, WHERE THE VIET CONG OCCUPIED THE MILITANT BUDDHISTS' AN QUANG POGODA FOR SEVERAL HOURS ON 1 FEBRUARY, A GROUP OF MONKS AND NUNS FROM A NEIGHBORING PAGODA STAGED A BRIEF DEMONSTRATION TO SHOW THEIR SYMPATHY FOR THE COMMUNISTS. THERE IS NO EVIDENCE, HOWEVER, TO INDICATE THAT THE MILITANT BUDDHIST LEADERS FAVORED THE TAKEOVER OF THEIR PAGODA.

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9. [REDACTED] ON THE INITIAL REACTION OF SOME OF THE TOP GOVERNMENT LEADERS TO THE CURRENT CRISIS. SINCE PRESIDENT THIEU WAS IN MY THO WHEN THE VIET CONG CURRENT OFFENSIVE BEGAN ON 30 JANUARY, VICE-PRESIDENT KY TOOK CHARGE AT THE JOINT GENERAL STAFF AND DIRECTED THE GOVERNMENT OF VIETNAM COUNTER-EFFORT UNTIL THIEU'S RETURN TO SAIGON. AT THAT TIME, KY ADVISED THIEU TO DECLARRE MARTIAL LAW AND TO TAKE OTHER MEASURES TO IMPOSE NEEDED CHANGES. HE ALSO ADVISED THIEU TO CALL A SPECIAL SESSION OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY. THE NEXT DAY KY HELPED DIRECT DEFENSE OF DAN SON TRUT AIRFIELD. DIRECTOR GENERAL OF INFORMATION LINH, UPON HIS RETURN TO SAIGON, FOUND PRIME MINISTER LOC SOMEWHAT BEMILDERED AND LEAVING EVERYTHING IN THE HANDS OF THE MILITARY. A CABINET MEETING ON THE MORNING OF 1 FEBRUARY DECIDED NOTHING EXCEPT THAT A COMMUNIQUE SHOULD BE DRAFTED AND BRAODCAST THAT EVENING. THE REST OF THE MEETING WAS DEVOTED TO UNPRODUCTIVE, SELF DEFENSIVE STATEMENTS BY THE VARIOUS MINISTERS.

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