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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Directorate of Intelligence
1 February 1968

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

The Situation in South Vietnam No. 6
(As of 7 A.M. EST)

Rec 2 909a

1. The vigor of the Communist Tet offensive-- now in its third day--is slackening. The enemy still has partial control of several major provincial capitals, but his attacks for the most part, have been reduced to scattered pockets of resistance throughout the rest of the country.

2. Initial, incomplete reports reflect extremely high enemy losses in personnel in contrast to allied casualties. More than 6,000 Communists reportedly have been killed during the past three days. This number is expected to increase as more complete reports come in. Friendly losses now stand at 571 killed (99 US) and 1,714 wounded (562 US). No estimate of civilian casualties is yet available, but it is expected to be high.

3. The Communists have added a new element to the situation with their announcement on 31 January of the establishment of a "Revolutionary Administration" in South Vietnam. It appears that they plan to use the new organization as another mechanism for attempts to rally support from the South Vietnamese populace. Details of the new apparatus are described below.

I Corps

4. With the exception of Hue in Thua Thien Province, allied reaction forces have effectively countered the enemy's latest thrust throughout the northern I Corps area.

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5. Quang Tri city: Two battalions of Communist troops attacked this northernmost provincial capital yesterday afternoon, but were forced to withdraw early this morning. An estimated 300 bodies were left behind by the retreating enemy force. The city is now considered secure.

6. Hue: An enemy force believed to be of regimental size, and tentatively identified as the North Vietnamese 6th Regiment, is still in control of an important sector of the city. They are concentrated north of the Huong River in the "imperial city" or citadel. However, key military installations in this sector, including the South Vietnamese 1st Division Headquarters, are still in allied hands and believed to be in no immediate danger. The enemy may attempt to make a prolonged stand within the citadel, which is relatively easy to defend.

7. Hoi An: The provincial capital of Quang Nam is reported by MACV to be under complete allied control. However, several smaller towns, including a district capital west of Hoi An, were attacked by enemy forces yesterday. South Korean Marines were dispatched to the area and have encountered sporadic resistance.

8. Tam Ky: Enemy attacks and attempts to overrun Quang Tin's capital city were repulsed late yesterday and the city is now quiet. The fighting cost the enemy some 226 killed; South Vietnamese and American casualties were light.

9. Quang Ngai City: Sporadic contact was reported continuing early this morning with enemy units in isolated areas of the city. The city, nevertheless, appears to be largely in allied hands.

II Corps

10. The cities of Kontum and Ban Me Thuot in the western highlands remained in contest at last report. Most of the cities in the coastal provinces have been secured, but sporadic contact is still reported in the outskirts of several provincial capitals.

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11. Kontum: The Communists still occupy about half of the city; however, all allied military compounds and installations are controlled by friendly forces. US reinforcements are expected to completely clear the city today. A South Vietnamese civilian who claims to have mingled with the enemy troops this morning reported that they hope to hold the town for seven days until reinforcements arrive from across the Cambodian border--some 35 miles to the west. To date, 210 enemy troops have been reported killed in the heavy fighting. Enemy forces in the city are identified as elements of the North Vietnamese 174th Regiment supported by three Viet Cong local force and sapper battalions.

12. Ban Me Thuot: At mid-day on 1 February, heavy fighting was reported still going on in this city with the enemy force concentrated near the airfield. Two battalions of the North Vietnamese 33rd Regiment, together with a Viet Cong local force battalion and a district company have been identified as participating in the action. The MACV compound and Headquarters of the South Vietnamese 24th Division have been subjected to heavy fire, but have managed to hold out. The South Vietnamese 23rd Ranger Battalion has been airlifted into the city to assist in driving out the attackers.

13. Nha Trang: Light contact with elements of the retreating 8th Battalion of the North Vietnamese 18B Regiment was reported west of the city during the night. Also during the night, the airfield and nearby Special Forces compound were hit by a barrage of mortar fire. The action caused no casualties or damage to aircraft or facilities, however, the city is now quiet and completely in friendly control.

14. Qui Nhon: An enemy force of undetermined size attacked an ammunition dump at Qui Nhon late last night with 90-mm. recoilless rifle fire. At last report, the depot was still on fire with parts of it already destroyed. A reaction force has been deployed.

15. No further action in the other major cities of II Corps has been reported.

Saigon and III Corps

16. Sharp fighting flared again in the Saigon area late on 31 January and on 1 February. Within the Tan Son Nhut airfield and headquarters complex northwest of the city, allied forces met heavy opposition while successfully clearing out a number of enemy strongpoints. In the capital itself, heavy fighting took place on the western outskirts near the race track, and around the South Vietnamese Joint General Staff compound. Fighting also flared at several points in the downtown area where enemy forces have established pockets of resistance.

17. By mid-day on 1 February, (local Saigon time) most enemy forces in the capital area had been routed but Viet Cong platoons still held out in a building near the Joint General Staff compound and in the An Quang Buddhist Pagoda, while an estimated 100 Viet Cong were in the Gia Dinh market area. At last report allied troops were moving against these forces.

18. A late report indicates that South Vietnamese forces were driven back in an attempt to clear the An Quang pagoda. This site is suspected by MACV to be the VC command post for their Saigon operation.

IV Corps

19. In the delta south of Saigon sporadic heavy fighting continued on 1 February within or on the outskirts of several provincial capitals and other smaller towns. In no instance, however, have the Viet Cong completely gained control of a major town.

20. The heaviest enemy attacks on 1 February in the delta were at My Tho, the capital of Dinh Tuong Province, and at Ben Tre in Kien Hoa Province and Chau Phu in Chau Doc Province. My Tho was under heavy mortar and ground attack at noon on the 1st. US Army troops were scheduled to be airlifted into the city during the afternoon. At Ben Tre enemy action also continued on 1 February. Enemy forces are reported in regimental strength in this fight, but ARVN troops were holding their own at last report. In Chau Doc Province, to the west along the Cambodian border, a

large Viet Cong force, which seized control of Chau Phu city on the 31st, apparently is still contesting the area and heavy fighting is reported within the city.

Other Related Developments

21. "Revolutionary Administration" Established: The clandestine Viet Cong Liberation Radio in South Vietnam and Hanoi Radio late last night announced the establishment of a "Revolutionary Administration" in South Vietnam.

22. The "Revolutionary Administration" purportedly would have authority and administrative power in Saigon and in areas where the Viet Cong have an influence on the people. The purpose of the "Revolutionary Power," according to the Communists, is to act as an authoritative voice to demand the withdrawal of US forces to end the war and to call for negotiations with the Liberation Front. The Hanoi broadcast asserted that "an unprecedented enthusiastic atmosphere is powerfully mounting throughout Saigon city and its suburbs." According to the broadcast, the Communists, in areas of the city they allegedly control, have started organizing thousands of "militia units" and establishing "revolutionary political parties."

23. Since the new Communist political move has been endorsed by both Hanoi and the Front radio, it would appear to be a carefully calculated act and further attests to the extensive planning and to the high significance which the Communists attach to their latest offensive.

24. It would now appear, in view of their political move, that the Communists consider their current push to represent at least the start of their classic "general uprising" which has been their grand strategy for some years in seizing power in South Vietnam. While they almost certainly do not expect to topple the Saigon government with their current offensive, they may believe it will establish a better base for them in their attempts to influence the populace--especially the urban populace. Communist documents indicate that their loss of contact with the people, and their failure to influence those in

the cities, was increasingly their weakest point. By a bold military move, accompanied by the establishment of a new political mechanism to facilitate contact, the Communists apparently hope to remedy the situation.

25. The full ramifications of the "Revolutionary Administration" will probably not be clear for some time. How it fits in with the long established National Liberation Front, for example, is still imprecise. It would appear, however, that the Communists regard it as something in between the Front and the people, designed to facilitate greater popular support. With their new organization, they can work better in the streets among the people without some of the stigma attached by the NLF which posed in some respects as a formal national government.