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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Directorate of Intelligence
10 February 1968

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

The Situation in South Vietnam No. 29
(As of 5:00 P.M. EST)

The situation at Khe Sanh and throughout South Vietnam has remained comparatively quiet. Fighting continues in Hue. Bien Hoa Airbase was hit by a rocket attack. Fighting in Saigon continues at approximately the same level as in the past few days.

I Corps

1. The Khe Sanh air strip is again open. It had been closed for several hours following the crash of a KC-130. This plane, a tanker, was carrying kerosene fuel into Khe Sanh, and was hit by 12.7 machine gun fire on the last leg of its approach. The plane exploded just after landing. Two of the crew were killed, three are missing, and four were badly burned and evacuated. Three other planes, including two tankers, were able to land supplies at Khe Sanh successfully.

2. There was sporadic shelling of the Khe Sanh base throughout the night of 9-10 February. A Marine listening post 3 km. northwest of the base was attacked by an estimated 35 to 40 NVA. The marines withdrew to their company perimeter where the ensuing fight resulted in two Marines killed and three wounded. Enemy casualties are unknown.

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4. Sharp fighting continues in Hue. South Vietnamese forces were reinforced by three battalions of Vietnamese marines. MACV estimates that some three-fifths of the city is held by allied forces, but that there are some 2,000 Communist troops still in Hue. Press reports claim the Communists still hold about one-third of the two square mile Citadel north of the Perfume River, as well as much of the north bank of the river.

5. There are continuing indications [REDACTED] that at least one battalion of the 803rd NVA regiment is making attack preparations in coastal Quang Tri Province. The activity currently seems to be centered north of the Cua Viet river and involves the transport of supplies and the organization of the local populace into supporting armed units and transport elements.

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6. The target of the activity is not exactly specified, but it appears to involve allied military facilities and units in the Dong Ha - Gio Linh area and could involve an attack on these urban centers themselves.

II Corps

7. The situation in II Corps remained relatively quiet. In Darlac, elements of the NVA 33rd Regiment had been located about 20 kilometers southeast of Ban Me Thuot as of 8 February, indicating their interest in that city. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

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III Corps

8. Bien Hoa received approximately 20 rounds of 122-mm. rocket fire late on the night of 10 February. First reports indicate one American was killed and 39 wounded. Six aircraft were destroyed and 7 damaged, including both fixed wing and helicopters.

9. Saigon passed its quietest night since the beginning of the Tet offensive. There were small incidents in the 5th and 6th precincts, the largest

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being an engagement between friendly forces and an estimated 40 VC at the southern edge of the Phu Tho Race Track. A number of reports have been received of activity by VC units of various sizes, ranging up to battalion, in the Go Vap district of Gia Dinh province on the northern perimeter of Saigon.

10. A state of alertness in Saigon is being maintained in view of numerous unconfirmed reports that the VC may launch another attack. Reports on the timing of a new attack vary from the 10th to the 15th of February.

11. An ammunition bunker at Tan Son Nhut airbase was the scene of some rather spectacular fireworks on 10 February. Two rounds of Communist B-40 ammunition fired into the base started a brush fire which spread to the bunker. The bunker contained 2,000 rounds of 105 ammunition all of which apparently exploded; no casualties were reported.

IV Corps

12. An indication of the lingering impact of the Communist Tet offensive in some of the delta provincial capitals is contained in the description of the situation in My Tho, capital of Dinh Tuong Province, by an Embassy Provincial officer. He describes the city as unrecognizable, devastated by two days of fighting. An estimated 30 percent of this city of 50,000 was completely destroyed with almost 5,000 homes burned and some 25,000 - 30,000 persons homeless. Many people are still in a state of fear, dreading another attack, and kept on edge by almost daily VC mortaring and retaliatory shelling and air strikes by US/GVN forces. Despite heavy losses, an estimated three or four enemy battalions remain on the outskirts of the city, reportedly preparing for a new attack over the weekend.

13. ARVN performance during the crisis left bitter feelings in some quarters in My Tho. The ARVN 7th division was criticized for inadequate protection of the routes into the city, failure to close in battle with the Communists, and over-reliance on airpower which resulted in much of the city's devastation. On the other hand provincial performance in

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handling welfare and refugee problems is reported as impressive. The Province Chief appears to have taken a firm hand, food is being distributed, and prices are under control. The rubble is being cleared away and temporary structures are being erected on old foundations.

Rural Highway Situation

14. The current status of security along major roads outside the cities in South Vietnam is still far from clear, but it appears that little civil traffic is moving over any of them yet, and it is probable that many sections are out due to sabotage and/or Communist checkpoints or harassment.

15. Important Route 4 from Saigon south into the delta is the subject of conflicting information, but it is apparently closed to through traffic even between Saigon and My Tho. According to the US Embassy in Saigon, on 10 February, Route 1 was open to Phan Thiet, but civilian traffic was not moving. Route 11 between Phan Rang and Dalat was closed, and no traffic was operating over important Route 20 which runs through central III Corps to Da Lat.

16. Among other problems, the road security situation is contributing to a serious shortage of POL in many delta and III Corps Provinces.

DRV Aircraft on Bombing Mission

17. Further field analysis of the flight of two IL-14's to the southern portion of the DRV on the evening of 8 February (Vietnam time) reveals that the aircraft took part in an abortive bombing mission, apparently aimed at unspecified targets in the DMZ area.

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