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# INTERROGATION REPORT

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## SUMMARY

Realizing that the strategy employed by General NGUYEN CHI THANH had failed,

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General THANH was recalled to NVN and a new strategy was formulated. Factors considered in planning this new strategy were the loose coordination between Allied forces and GVN forces and the use of GVN troops in the rural reconstruction program. The strategy would limit attacks on rural areas and the holding of such areas by the VC. A general offensive would be launched against the cities to force the GVN forces to withdraw from the rural areas, leaving these areas to the VC. If the city offensive failed, the VC would retreat and surround the cities to exhaust the economy of SVN. U.S. forces would be decoyed into the KHE SANH area. Simultaneously with a demand for a coalition government in SVN, NVN would launch an offensive in either the KONTUM-PLEIKU or SAIGON areas.

1. During 1967 the VC acted as though they were weakening in order to mislead the GVN/Allies. In reality, men and weapons were moved into SVN in a considerable quantity during 1967. The VC predicted that in the summer of 1968 the U.S. would increase its strength in SVN, and wanted to increase their own strength first. The VC also planned to put full pressure on the U.S. during 1968 because of the U.S. presidential elections.

2.

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General NGUYEN CHI THANH had been recalled to NVN because of the failure of his strategy. General THANH was later reported as having died in NVN. HO PHUOC quoted General VO NGUYEN GIAP as saying that "The SVN battlefield must be re-considered, because General THANH had made a mistake in applying the strategy of occupying rural areas, establishing organizations in these areas, and trying to hold these liberated areas. This strategy resulted in our troops being eliminated by GVN troops and B-52 bombers". In addition, delegations from Communist China, North Korea and Cuba had visited the SVN battlefield, and upon returning to NVN had reported unfavorably on the situation there.

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General GIAP had also said, "Prior to negotiations, there must be an acid test". In planning the new strategy for SVN, the following factors were considered:

- a. The coordination between Allied and GVN troops was loose. Allied troops only tried to protect their bases. The KOREAN actions of wanton killing caused the people to lose confidence in the allied troops.
- b. GVN troops were employed scatteredly in the rural reconstruction program, and could therefore be easily separated and destroyed. The U.S. would not employ infantry troops to reinforce the GVN troops but would only provide air and artillery support.

4. Based on the above factors and General THANH's failure, the following three phase strategy was set up:

PHASE 1: Attacks on, and the protection of rural areas, would be limited. At an opportune time, a general offensive against the cities of SVN would be made. Only one half of the forces would be committed, and then only using local combat experienced units, except in important cities like SAIGON and HUE. The general offensive would cause the GVN troops to pull back to protect the cities, leaving the rural areas to the liberation troops. In this way the VC planned to achieve a complete victory in the rural areas without the necessity of fighting in these areas.

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PHASE 2: If the general offensive against the cities and townships were to fail, the liberation troops would retreat and surround the cities and townships in order to create an intense and serious situation and to exhaust the economy. Because of the lack of rural area resources in the cities, and inadequate food assistance, the SVN piastre would be devalued. At the same time the VC would use decoy tactics to lure as many U.S. troops as possible to protect the KHE SANH area to weaken U.S. strength in other areas.

PHASE 3: Because of the pressures generated by phase 2, the VC felt that SVN would accept a coalition government with the National Front for the Liberation of South Vietnam (NFLSV). Simultaneously with the demand for a coalition government, NVN would launch a decisive battle to provide political support to the NFLVN component in the coalition government. This decisive battle would either take place in the KONTUM/PLEIKU Area or in the area around SAIGON. [ ] was positive about the above two locations because during the indoctrination about the "Entire Regional Battle" (CHLEN TRUONG TOAN CUC) given by Colonel VO THU, during the November/December 1967 period, Colonel THU made the following comments, "The SAIGON area battle (actually the BINH LONG, PHUOC LONG, PHUOC TUY, BIEN HOA, TAY NINH, and GIA DINH Province areas) will be an important battlefield because the supply route from CAMBODIA is feasible, and is adjacent to SAIGON City. In confronting strong U.S. and GVN forces there, the VC can easily win prestige with a decisive battle. If the VC chooses B-3, they will only fight in KONTUM and PLEIKU Provinces because of the strong U.S./GVN forces in those areas, and because the NVN High Command can easily supply this area through the LAOTIAN/VIETNAMESE border".

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5. In order to carry out the new strategy, all activities in the southern part of LAOS would increase so that most NVA regular units could infiltrate SVN. Only coastal defense units, AAA units, and units guarding important installations would remain in NVN. All forces would be used to attack and to lure U.S. troops to KHE SANH and away from the decisive battle areas. [ ] emphasized that in the past the VC/NVA troops had fought against U.S. troops, but according to the new surprise attack strategy, they would try not to fight against U.S. troops, but only to besiege and hold them in defensive positions at their bases.

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6. HO PHUOC said during December 1967, that the U.S. Government had asked the GVN to accept a coalition government with the NFLVN and NVN, but that the GVN had refused. The U.S. wants to bring the war to an honorable end during 1968. In addition, NVN has captured almost 1,000 U.S. pilots, and the U.S. wants to resolve this problem with NVN; thus SVN is eventually concerned. Both the U.S. and NVN realize that neither side can win the war. Therefore, they both want a coalition government to end the war.

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