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(b)(3) 10 U.S.C. 424;3.3(h)(2)

29 February 1968

(b)(3) 10 U.S.C.
424;3.3(h)(2)

PRESIDENTIAL OPERATIONAL/INTELLIGENCE BRIEF



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OPERATIONAL/INTELLIGENCE BRIEFS

SOUTHEAST ASIA

SUMMARY: Enemy-initiated ground activity in South Vietnam moderated yesterday. The most significant ground fighting took place to the north and northwest of Saigon as US and ARVN units continued operations to destroy enemy forces which threaten the Saigon area. To the east, a redistribution of major elements north of Hue is probably taking place. A number of enemy units have returned to their pre-Tet operational area from southeastern Quang Nam Province. The enemy is extending a road from southern Laos (east of Attoupeu) into South Vietnam which will connect with a road passing near Dak To.

SOUTH VIETNAM1ST CORPS

No significant enemy activity was reported in the vicinity of Khe Sanh. US Marine positions near the DMZ continued to be hit by sporadic enemy mortar, artillery, and rocket fire. Twenty-two US Marines were killed and one was injured when a Marine helicopter en route to Khe Sanh was hit by ground fire and crashed 10 miles northeast of Khe Sanh. More closely coordinated communications arrangements have been established between the headquarters of the North Vietnamese Army's 325C and 304th Divisions at Khe Sanh, probably to further facilitate command and control matters. To the east, there was a sharp decrease, beginning Tuesday, in the tactical communications of the North Vietnamese Army regiments operating in the coastal area between Hue and the DMZ. This could indicate that a significant change in the disposition of these major forces has been, and may still be, under way. The reason for this development is not known. It may portend renewed offensive activity, possibly related, in turn, to enemy planning respecting attacks in the Khe San area -- but there is as yet no firm evidence to support this.

(b)(3) 10 U.S.C. 424;3.3(h)(2) the North Vietnamese Army's 2nd Division headquarters and its subordinate elements have now withdrawn westward, at least temporarily, from southeastern Quang Nam Province to their areas of operations prior to the Tet offensive; also, unit communications are returning to normal. The reason for this movement is not clear, but may, in the near term at least, involve regrouping and resupply activities.

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MILITARY CASUALTIES IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

29 FEBRUARY 1968

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
	24 Hrs	Current Week	Cumula-	Cumula-	Cumula-
	Ending	11 AM EST	tive	tive	tive
	11 AM EST	24 FEB 68	From	From	From
	28 FEB 68	11 AM EST	1 Jan 68	1 Jan 67	1 Jan 61
	28 FEB 68	27 FEB 68			
UNITED STATES ^a					
Killed	20	265	2,952	12,117	18,974
Wounded Not Hosp	100	273	7,484	37,138	54,259
Wounded Hosp	108	296	8,466	40,837	61,454
Captured	0	1	8	143	239
Missing	1	3	309	580	956
SOUTH VIETNAM					
Killed	38	119	3,178	14,058	56,348
Wounded	70	490	9,671	39,119	124,461
Missing/Captured	41	37	1,141	3,481	28,485
OTHER ALLIED					
Killed	0	3	240	1,345	1,943
Wounded	4	22	514	2,832	4,562
Missing/Captured	0	0	2	5	22
VIET CONG/NVA					
Killed	564	2,647	48,878	136,959	296,112
Wounded	846	3,971	73,318	205,440	444,169
(estimate ^b)					

a. U.S. Casualties include Laos and Vietnam.

b. Estimate based on a 1.5 to 1 Wounded to Killed ratio.

c. The figures shown in column (1) are preliminary, unrefined battlefield reported casualties received from COMUSMACV daily.

d. The figures in columns (2) through (5) are verified figures representing casualties reported during the period indicated.

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Informants in Quang Ngai Province report that the Viet Cong are making a concerted retraining, recruitment, and propaganda effort among the villagers outside Quang Ngai City. The city folks are said to fear that the Viet Cong plan to attack the city again. Similar reports have been received from a number of other areas in South Vietnam.

2ND CORPS

Activity in 2nd Corps was light yesterday, though enemy probes around Phan Thiet in coastal Binh Thuan Province continued. There are indications that a North Vietnamese Regiment is deploying closer to Tuy Hoa City in Phu Yen Province; agents have reported the enemy intends to attack the city again.

The enemy's continued interest in the area west of Dak To is revealed by an intercept mentioning an "urgent mission" by a possible regimental-sized unit. There is no indication that this mission is to involve an attack on Dak To itself.

Of major significance is the continued southward movement into Darlac Province of the North Vietnamese Army's 32nd Regiment. Both this regiment and the 33rd Regiment are now located generally northwest of Ban Me Thuot. There are indications in communications intelligence that, for the last week, the 33rd Regiment has been making offensive preparations in the area.

A strong sign that the communists intend to maintain a capability for sustained military operations in the western highlands area is provided by recent aerial photographs which show a new road being build from Laos through the tri-border area to South Vietnam's Route 512 which runs close to Dak To. There are also newly occupied defensive positions along the road.

3RD CORPS

US Army units had 3 engagements with enemy forces near Saigon yesterday. In one action, 2 miles north of Bien Hoa, a US Cavalry unit reported 8 men wounded and 3 missing, and one tank and one armored personnel carrier destroyed following a 3-hour fight with an unknown-size enemy unit. Another US Cavalry unit lost 4 men killed in a 6-hour fight with an unknown number of enemy 10 miles northwest of Saigon. The third

engagement took place 22 miles northwest of Saigon yesterday morning when a US unit lost 4 killed, 5 wounded, and had an armored personnel carrier destroyed in an engagement with an unknown number of enemy. Enemy losses in these 3 engagements are unknown.

South Vietnamese Army units had 3 significant actions with the enemy near Saigon yesterday. In one engagement with an enemy company 15 miles west of Saigon, the ARVN units killed 93 enemy and detained six suspects. Five ARVN were killed and 28 wounded. Also one US advisor was wounded. Elements of an ARVN airborne battalion battled a reinforced enemy company 5 miles north of Tan Son Nhut for 10 hours yesterday. ARVN casualties were 5 killed and 18 wounded while the enemy lost 20 killed. Another enemy company was engaged by an ARVN battalion 20 miles north of Saigon. In an 8-hour fight, the ARVN unit lost 12 killed and 16 wounded. Seven enemy were killed and one was detained.

Detailed enemy reporting on allied positions at Lai Khe, 25 miles above Saigon, began early this month and is still continuing. The enemy may be preparing for attacks by fire at a time of his own choosing.

A Viet Cong regiment is believed to be assuming an alert posture in the Bien Hoa-Long Khanh Province border area. One of its battalions has been noted discussing plans for an artillery attack on allied facilities along Route 1.

4TH CORPS

Sporadic mortarings and harassing actions were conducted against a number of isolated outposts. 4th Corps headquarters at Can Tho was hit by a few rounds of 75-mm recoilless rifle fire. The Viet Cong are maintaining their presence around population centers.

ARC LIGHT OPERATIONS: USAF B-52s continued to bomb enemy positions near Khe Sanh. Yesterday 42 aircraft struck enemy troop concentrations, artillery positions, fortifications, and supply/storage areas.

Twenty-four other B-52s struck enemy troop concentrations, infiltration routes, fortifications, and tunnel systems near Pleiku, Qui Nhon, and Saigon.

NORTH VIETNAM

ROLLING THUNDER OPERATIONS: US tactical aircraft flew 120 sorties over North Vietnam. Yesterday morning one A-6 aircraft struck the Hanoi Radio Communication Receiver Station, south of Hanoi, and another A-6 attacked the Haiphong Railroad Yard (West). Radar release techniques were used on each of these strikes. Darkness precluded an assessment of damages.

Yesterday evening four F-4 aircraft, on a mission against the Ha Dong Army Barracks, southwest of Hanoi, were engaged by 12 surface-to-air missiles as they approached the target. Only the lead aircraft was able to strike the target, but the results were not visible because of a solid undercast. The rest of the flight could not release ordnance because of maneuvering required to avoid the missiles. None of the aircraft was damaged.

A Navy A-6A aircraft on a strike against the Bai Thuong Airfield, 78 miles south of Hanoi, is overdue and presumed down. The aircraft was last contacted early yesterday morning.

A USAF F-105F on an armed reconnaissance mission was downed by a possible surface-to-air missile six miles southwest of Hanoi at 3:05 AM EST this morning (4:05 PM 29 February, Saigon time). Two good chutes were sighted and electronic beepers were heard, but no rescue efforts will be made because of the hostile environment.

Non Responsive

REPORT OF NEW HEAVY WEAPONS: There is an as yet preliminary and unconfirmed report, from a Lao non-commissioned officer, to the effect that on 11-12 February he saw a total of 174 North Vietnamese artillery rocket launchers, assault guns, and tanks moving south along Route 92 in eastern Savannakhet Province. The alleged sightings included 240-mm rocket launchers, 122-mm assault guns, and PT-76 tanks. PT-76 tanks have, of course, been confirmed in the area. But the other two weapons are not currently carried in the North Vietnamese order of battle and this portion of the report will need to be checked out more closely. Assuming, however, the main thrust of this report to be essentially true, two of the more likely destinations for any such weapons would be Khe Sanh or the A Shau Valley area.

LATE ITEM

There were no significant enemy contacts in the Khe Sanh area yesterday as the enemy's activity was limited primarily to sporadic shelling of US Marine defensive positions. A total of 186 rounds of mixed artillery, mortar, and rocket fire impacted in the area, causing minor wounds to 9 Marines. Other US positions near the DMZ received a total of 113 rounds of enemy artillery fire which wounded one man. Favorable weather conditions permitted increased air activity. Tactical aircraft flew a total of 329 sorties in support of Khe Sanh. Pilots reported numerous secondary explosions and fires following strikes and 3 enemy trucks were destroyed. Thirty-nine aerial resupply sorties were flown into Khe Sanh by transport aircraft and helicopters; no enemy interference was reported.

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