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3 February 1968

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Information From Prisoners and Documents Which Indicate Possible VC/NVA Intentions During the Tet Period

1. The following information is based on Central Intelligence Agency reporting from the field as it has been received over the past four days and is, for the most part, uncollated and unevaluated information. This information should not be construed to be all the information that will become available to Agency reporters when the situation settles enough to permit a more favorable reporting atmosphere. The information received so far, including a few sketchy prisoner of war interrogations, permits some tentative generalizations concerning what the enemy hopes to accomplish by his attacks on urban centers.

2. Outside of Quang Tri and Thua Thien provinces, which the enemy has repeatedly promised to liberate, it appears that the enemy's main objective was to gain a psychological victory. Despite the call for a general uprising, there is little evidence to suggest that the VC leadership really expected an uprising to succeed all over South Vietnam. It also appears that the enemy did not expect to permanently seize control of some provincial capitals. The forces that were committed were expected to hold out as long as possible against Allied counter-attacks, in order to gain psychological victories and to cover the impending enemy offensive in northern I Corps.

3. Enemy objectives in attacking Quang Tri and Hue cities were undoubtedly tied in with the impending Communist offensive along the DMZ. Their attacks on other cities in the south indicate, however, that their over-all "winter-spring campaign" objectives are much broader and may, in fact, involve a continuing effort to put military pressure on urban areas during the coming week, pressure which has the political objective of collapsing the GVN as an effective governing institution.

4. A compendium of POW statements relating to enemy objectives follows:

I Corps1) Quang Tri

Agent reports, POW interrogations, Chieu Hoi statements and documents consistently stated that the enemy planned to take

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and occupy Quang Tri city.

2) Quang Nga

Based on POW interrogations and documents captured on 31 January, the VC were planning a five-day attack on Quang Nga province to begin on the evening of 30 January. One VC or NVA battalion was resting and preparing to attack on the night of 31 January/1 February.

3) Thua Thien

An FBIS Report (69) FOUO, indicates that a French press team captured in Hue were told by a NVA officer that "we are going to liberate all of South Vietnam in this offensive. We intend to keep what we hold in Hue. We have large stocks of food and arms hidden away over many months. Already we control 90 percent of the city, we will keep it."

II Corps

1) Nha Trang

According to PIC interrogations of POWS, NVA troops were told prior to the attack on Nha Trang that they would be able to take and hold the city because the VC organization within the city had organized the population to assist them. NVA officers, however, say they knew before launching the attack that it would fail, but they had to attack to support the nationwide effort and to make success possible elsewhere.

2) Pleiku

Prisoners have stated that they had orders to "take Pleiku city or not return. "

III Corps

Bien Hoa

After the attack by the VC 274th and 275th regiments on Bien Hoa city, prisoners stated that they were told that it would be easy to overrun Bien Hoa city. Plans captured from prisoners and ralliers indicate the VC had no withdrawal plan.

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A VC prisoner captured in Chau Doc city, Chau Doc province in IV CTZ reports, on interrogation, that he was informed of the Viet Cong Tet military operations on the night of 30-31 January. He was told by his chief that the future plans of the attack called for the creation of conditions which would bring the U.S. Government to negotiate in order to "proceed to peace." He was told that the attacks would be a departure from previous operational procedures.

The prisoner, Buu, stated that the VC realized they were committing everything and every person they had in this assault. He said it was obvious to all that it was a "go for broke" matter. He believes few of the participants expected success. He further mentioned that the VC expected a popular uprising in support of the Viet Cong and that the lack of all out popular commitment would probably have an adverse effect on morale.

He said that District Forces would attack District Headquarters and that ten cadre Party members were to establish a provisional government in Chau Doc.

The intention of the VC to occupy and stay in the city was indicated by evidence of camp beds, rice and personal effects left in occupied houses.

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