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DIST 9 FEBRUARY 1968

COUNTRY SOUTH VIETNAM
DOI 29 JANUARY - 6 FEBRUARY 1968.
SUBJECT VIEWS OF VIETCONGPRIISONERS OF WAR IN PLEIKU
ON OBJECTIVES OF THE TET ATTACKS, THEIR
RESPONSIBILITIES HAD THE ATTACKS SUCCEEDED
IN PLEIKU, REACTION OF THE POPULACE TO THE
ATTACKS, PLANS FOR A COALITION GOVERNMENT,
FUTURE NFLSV PLANS, AND POSSIBLE REACTION
OF THE NFLSV TO POSSIBLE MILITARY DEFEAT.



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SOURCE

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A. PHAN VAN KINH (AKA KINH ANH), AN ETHNIC SOUTH
VIETNAMESE NATIVE OF HOAI MY VILLAGE, HOAI NHON DISTRICT,

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1. ASKED WHAT THEY WERE TOLD WAS THE OBJECTIVE OF THE TET COUNTRY-WIDE ATTACKS IN SOUTH VIETNAM, WHICH BEGAN ON 29 JANUARY 1968, THE PRISONERS ANSWERED AS FOLLOWS:

A.

[Redacted]

THE MISSION WAS TO

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(1) ATTACK AND DEFEAT THE GOVERNMENT OF VIETNAM (GVN) AND ALLIED ARMED FORCES; (2) ENCOURAGE TO JOIN THE REVOLUTION ALL THOSE ELEMENTS WHO HAVE NOT UP TO THIS POINT ACTIVELY PARTICIPATED IN THE REVOLUTION, SUCH AS THE LARGE CIVILIAN MASSES IN THE CITIES, AND ALL OTHER GROUPS WHO FOR ONE REASON OR ANOTHER HAVE BEEN LIMITED OR COMPLETELY RESTRICTED FROM ACTIVELY PARTICIPATING IN THE REVOLUTION; (3) ESTABLISH FAVORABLE POLITICAL CONDITIONS FOR ALL THOSE ELEMENTS WHO ACTIVELY SUPPORT THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A COALITION GOVERNMENT. IN THE PARTICULAR ATTACK ON PLEIKU THE OBJECTIVE WAS TO ENTER

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PLEIKU AND, AFTER SECURING THE AREA, ORGANIZE ALL ELEMENTS WITHIN THE CITY TO AGITATE ACTIVELY FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A COALITION GOVERNEMENT.

B. [Redacted] THE OBJECTIVE

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OF THE COUNTRY-WIDE ATTACKS WAS TO LIBERATE ALL OF SOUTH VIETNAM. IN THE CASE OF PLEIKU, THIS WOULD BE DONE BY THE LIBERATION ARMED FORCES ENTERING PLEIKU, STOPPING ALL TRAFFIC, AND STAGING MASS DEMONSTRATIONS.

C. [Redacted]

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[Redacted] AFTER THE INITIAL ATTACK, [Redacted] WAS TO PARTICIPATE IN DEMONSTRATIONS ALONG HIGHWAY 19 AND THAT HE WAS TO HELP LEAD THE PEOPLE INTO PLEIKU CITY. [Redacted] THE DEMONSTRATIONS WOULD OCCUR WHILE THE LIBERATION ARMED FORCES WERE LIBERATING PLEIKU AND ALL OF VIETNAM.

D. [Redacted] THE

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OBJECTIVE OF THE ATTACKS IN PLEIKU AND MANY OTHER PROVINCES WAS TO LIBERATE BOTH MILITARY REGION 5 AND ALL THE REST OF SOUTH VIETNAM.

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E. [REDACTED]

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THE OBJECT IN LAUNCHING SIMULTANEOUS ATTACKS THROUGHOUT VIETNAM WAS TO (1) LIBERATE ALL OF SOUTH VIETNAM; (2) UPSET THE THIEU-KY GOVERNMENT, AND (3) ESTABLISH A COALITION GOVERNMENT REPRESENTING ALL SECTIONS OF VIETNAM. A COALITION GOVERNMENT IS NECESSARY BECAUSE, ALTHOUGH NORTH VIETNAM AND SOUTH VIETNAM ARE VERY CLOSE, IT IS REQUIRED THAT SOUTH VIETNAM HAVE ITS OWN GOVERNMENT FOR THE PRESENT.

2. ASKED WHAT THEIR FUTURE CONTINUING RESPONSIBILITIES WERE BEYOND THE IMMEDIATE ATTACK ORDERS, THE PRISONERS REPLIED:

A. [REDACTED]

THE PARTICULAR MISSION

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OF THE H-15 BATTALION (BN) AFTER THE ATTACK WAS TO ENTER AND SECURE THE AREA IN PLEIKU WHERE THE GOVERNMENT OFFICES WERE LOCATED. THE H-15 BN, AFTER STATIONING ITSELF AND SECURING THE ADMINISTRATIVE AREA, WAS THEN TO CONDUCT A SEARCH FOR ANY REMAINING POCKETS OF RESISTANCE. KINH AND HIS BATTALION WERE THEN TO WAIT FOR FURTHER ORDERS OR UNTIL A COALITION GOVERNMENT COULD BE FORMED.

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[redacted] ON THE MORNING FOLLOWING THE
ATTACK, KY WAS TO PARTICIPATE IN BRINGING INTO PLEIKU CITY ALL
OF THE PEOPLE IN SURROUNDING, NEAR-BY AREAS AND SEND
THEM TO VARIOUS COLLECTION POINTS THROUGHOUT THE CITY WHERE
POLITICAL CADRES WOULD EXPLAIN TO THEM THE REASON FOR THEIR
LIBERATION. FOLLOWING THE POLITICAL LECTURES, THE COMMANDER
WOULD ARRIVE IN THE CITY TO ISSUE FURTHER ORDERS TO THE
LIBERATION FORCES AND THE PEOPLE.

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C. [redacted] INSTRUCTIONS WERE TO GO TO PROVINCE
HEADQUARTERS AFTER THE ATTACK AND INITIATE THE POLITICAL
STRUGGLE. CONCURRENTLY, HE WAS TO COORDINATE WITH THE
LIBERATION ARMED FORCES AND THE STAFF OF PLEIKU PROVINCE
HEADQUARTERS ON PLANS TO CELEBRATE THE LIBERATION.

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D. [redacted] FOLLOWING THE ATTACK, [redacted]
TO GO TO THE OUTLYING AREAS OF PLEIKU AND EXHORT
THE PEOPLE TO COME INTO PLEIKU, WHERE THEY WERE TO ATTEND
LECTURES.

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E. [REDACTED] FOLLOWING THE ATTACK 3.3(h)(2)
 WAS TO MEET WITH A NUMBER OF COMRADES AND PEOPLE TO ORGANIZE
 POLITICAL MEETINGS. HE WAS THEN TO ORGANIZE THE WOMAN'S,
 YOUTH, AND FARMERS' GROUPS AND INITIATE POLITICAL LECTURES
 FOR THEM IN WHICH IT WOULD BE EXPLAINED THAT THE PURPOSE
 OF THE REVOLUTION WAS TO ACHIEVE PEACE IN VIETNAM UNDER
 THE VIETNAMESE AND THE MONTAGNARDS, AND ESTABLISH A GOVERNMENT
 IN SOUTH VIETNAM WHICH WOULD EVENTUALLY BRING ABOUT
 REUNIFICATION WITH NORTH VIETNAM.

3. ASKED IF THEY WERE TOLD AND IF THEY BELIEVED THAT
 THE POPULATION WOULD JOIN ANY GENERAL UPRISING AGAINST THE
 GVN AND THE AMERICAN FORCES, THEY ANSWERED AS FOLLOWS:

A. [REDACTED] POLITICAL CADRES HAD 3.3(h)(2)
 TOLD HIM AND HE BELIEVED THAT AFTER LIBERATION ARMED FORCES
 HAD ENTERED THE CITY OF PLEIKU AND THE FIGHTING HAD ENDED, THE
 POPULACE WOULD EMERGE FROM THEIR HOUSES, STAGE MASS DEMONSTRATIONS,
 AND PARTICIPATE IN THE MEETINGS WHICH WERE TO BE HELD.

B. [REDACTED] HE 3.3(h)(2)
 WAS OF SIMILAR MIND PERSONALLY, THAT 90 PERCENT OF THE PEOPLE
 SINCERELY WISHED TO BE LIBERATED AND THAT WHEN A LARGE BODY

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OF LIBERATION FORCES WERE PRESENT, THESE 90 PERCENT WOULD JOIN THE REVOLUTION. AS TO WHY HE AND MANY SOLDIERS BELIEVED THE PEOPLE WOULD JOIN IN AN UPRISING, HE SAID MANY PEOPLE, EVEN THOUGH UNARMED, JOINED THE TROOPS MARCHING INTO THE CITY. THIS WAS BECAUSE THEY BELIEVED THAT THE LIBERATION ARMED FORCES WOULD SUCCEED.

C. [REDACTED] THE PEOPLE WOULD PARTICIPATE IN THE LIBERATION OF PLEIKU. AT THE TIME HE BEGAN HIS MARCH INTO THE CITY HE BELIEVED THAT IF THE BATTLE WAS INDECISIVE, THOSE PEOPLE MARCHING WITH THE TROOPS WOULD BE KILLED OR CAPTURED BY GOVERNMENT TROOPS.

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D. [REDACTED] FOLLOWING THE LIBERATION OF PLEIKU THE PEOPLE WERE TO ENTER THE CITY. HE HAD NO IDEA HOW MANY PEOPLE WOULD PARTICIPATE. HE BELIEVED, HOWEVER, THAT THE MAJORITY OF THE PEOPLE WANTED VERY MUCH TO BE LIBERATED.

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E. [REDACTED] WAS TOLD BY A POLITICAL CADRE THAT FOLLOWING THE LIBERATION OF PLEIKU THE POPULACE WOULD BE ORGANIZED FOR A "CELEBRATION" AND BROUGHT INTO THE CITY. IN HIS OPINION, THE SUPPORT OF THE POPULACE DEPENDED ON THE SUCCESS OF THE LIBERATION.

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4. ASKED WHAT ACTUAL SUPPORT THEY RECEIVED FROM THE POPULACE, THEY REPLIED:

A. [REDACTED] THE PEOPLE GAVE NO SUPPORT, ACTIVE OR PASSIVE, TO THE LIBERATION FORCES, INSOFAR AS HE WAS AWARE. HE BELIEVED THE PEOPLE STAYED IN THEIR HOUSES BECAUSE THEY WERE AFRAID OF ALLIED ARTILLERY AND AIRSTRIKES. HE DID NOT BELIEVE THEY WERE AFRAID OF THE LIBERATION FORCES.

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B. [REDACTED] FROM THE TIME [REDACTED] MARCHING TOWARD PLEIKU UNTIL THE TIME HE WAS CAPTURED, ABOUT A THREE-AND-ONE-HALF-HOUR PERIOD, NONE OF THE PEOPLE LEFT THEIR HOUSES UNLESS SPECIFICALLY CALLED UPON BY THE VC TO DO SO. EVEN THEN, THEY RETURNED TO THEIR HOUSES AS SOON AS THE LIBERATION FORCES HAD PASSED. THEY WERE POLITE, BUT THEY WERE ALSO VERY AFRAID OF BEING KILLED. [REDACTED] IT WAS NECESSARY FOR THE VC ARMED FORCES TO BE PRESENT IN A LARGE BODY TO GIVE THE PEOPLE CONFIDENCE. HIS GROUP OF ONLY FOUR OR FIVE PERSONS WAS OUTNUMBERED BY THE PEOPLE, SO IT COULD NOT FORCE THE PEOPLE TO JOIN THE DEMONSTRATIONS.

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C. [] THE PEOPLE WERE AFRAID OF LEAVING THEIR HOUSES. EVEN THOUGH THE CADRES THEMSELVES DID NOT KNOW WHETHER OR NOT VICTORY HAD BEEN WON, THEY EXHORTED THE PEOPLE TO LEAVE THEIR HOUSES BY SAYING THAT PLEIKU HAD BEEN LIBERATED. IF THAT DID NOT WORK, THE CADRES FORCED THE PEOPLE OUT TO JOIN DEMONSTRATIONS. DURING THE FOUR HOURS TROM WAS MARCHING, HE SAW FROM 150 TO 200 PEOPLE PARTICIPATE IN DEMONSTRATIONS. HE WAS AWARE THAT A NUMBER OF PEOPLE ESCAPED AND RETURNED TO THEIR HOMES BUT HE DID NOT KNOW HOW MANY.

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D. [] THE PEOPLE GAVE NO ASSISTANCE, BUT HE WAS SURE THAT FOLLOWING THE LIBERATION OF THE CITY, THE PEOPLE WOULD HAVE JOINED THE REVOLUTION AND GIVEN ANY ASSISTANCE REQUIRED.

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E. [] NO ONE GAVE HIS GROUP HELP. THE FIGHTING WAS STILL GOING ON, AND THE PEOPLE WERE AFRAID TO LEAVE THEIR HOMES.

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5. ASKED IF THEY WERE LED TO BELIEVE THAT CURRENT MILITARY ACTION WOULD BE SUPPLEMENTED BY A MAJOR OFFENSIVE IN THE NORTH AT KHE SANH OR THE DEMILITARIZED ZONE (DMZ), THE PRISONERS REPLIED:

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A. [REDACTED] HE KNEW THAT ALL OF SOUTH VIETNAM WAS TO BE ATTACKED, BUT HE HAD HEARD NOTHING CONCERNING SPECIFIC ATTACKS IN THE QUANG TRI-THUA THIEN (TRI-THIEN)/ DMZ AREA.

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B. [REDACTED] HE WAS TOLD THAT MAJOR ATTACKS WOULD BE LAUNCHED IN THE HUE AND DMZ AREAS WHILE PLEIKU WAS BEING ATTACKED. HE BELIEVED THAT THE TARGETS OF THE ATTACK IN THE PLEIKU AREA WERE THE U.S 4TH INFANTRY DIVISION AND II CORPS HEADQUARTERS AND THAT THE ATTACK WAS PLANNED TO PREVENT THESE FORCES IN THE WESTERN HIGHLANDS FROM REINFORCING THE NORTHERN AREA. IN HIS OPINION, THE FOOD AND SUPPLY SITUATION IN HUE WERE MORE FAVORABLE THEN IN PLEIKU AND THEREFORE THE NORTH MIGHT HAVE MORE IMPORTANCE THAN THE WEST IN THE EYES OF THE MILITARY REGION.

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C. [REDACTED] HE WAS AWARE THAT SIMULTANEOUS ATTACKS WOULD BE LAUNCHED NATIONWIDE, BUT HAD NOT HEARD THAT SPECIFIC ATTACKS WOULD BE LAUNCHED IN THE TRI-THIEN/DMZ AREA.

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D. [] HE WAS NOT AWARE, PRIOR TO BEING CAPTURED, OF ANY SPECIFIC LOCATIONS THAT WERE TO BE ATTACKED.

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E. [] HE WAS TOLD THAT ALL OF SOUTH VIETNAM WOULD BE ATTACKED; HOWEVER, THE TRI-THIEN AREAS OF THE DMZ WERE NOT SPECIFICALLY MENTIONED.

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6. ASKED IF THEY WERE AWARE OF ANY EFFORT TO ORGANIZE AN "ALLIANCE FOR PEACE AND DEMOCRACY" AS A COALITION MOVEMENT TO NEGOTIATE WITH THE NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT (NFLSV), THE PRISONERS REPLIED:

A. [] HE HAD NOT HEARD OF ANY PLAN FOR A COALITION GOVERNMENT, OR OF AN ALLIANCE ESTABLISHED TO ORGANIZE A COALITION GOVERNMENT.

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B. [] HE WAS TOLD BY CADRES THAT A COALITION GOVERNMENT MIGHT REPLACE THE NFLSV AND BECOME THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE GOVERNMENT.

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C. [] HE HAD HEARD THAT A POLITICAL COALITION OF SORTS WAS TO BE FORMED FOLLOWING THE FIGHTING BETWEEN THE LIBERATION ARMED FORCES AND NATIONALIST TROOPS. HE KNEW OF NO PLANS CONCERNING EITHER AN ALLIANCE OR A GOVERNMENT BY COALITION.

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D. [] HE HAD HEARD THAT THERE WOULD BE
 A COALITION GOVERNMENT WITHIN THE NEAR FUTURE WHICH WOULD
 COORDINATE WITH THE NFLSV TO SETTLE THE WAR.

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E. [] HE WAS TOLD BY POLITICAL CADRES
 THAT POSSIBLY, FOLLOWING VICTORY, A COALITION GOVERNMENT
 WOULD BE ORGANIZED IN ORDER TO CARRY ON DISCUSSIONS WITH THE
 NFLSV AND EVENTUALLY TO REUNIFY NORTH AND SOUTH VIETNAM. IN
 HIS OPINION A COALITION GOVERNMENT OR EVEN A FRONT WOULD BE
 IDEAL FOR ESTABLISHING PEACE AND INDEPENDENCE IN SOUTH VIETNAM.
 A COALITION GOVERNMENT OR FRONT WOULD HAVE THE PARTICULAR
 ADVANTAGE OF NOT BEING CONSIDERED AN ORGAN OF THE COMMUNIST
 PARTY AS THE NFLSV IS. A COALITION GOVERNMENT OR FRONT WOULD
 APPEAL PARTICULARLY TO THOSE ELEMENTS IN SOUTH VIETNAMESE
 SOCIETY WHO MOST STRONGLY OBJECT TO A COMMUNIST GOVERNMENT;
 A COALITION GOVERNMENT WOULD PERMIT THEM TO PARTICIPATE
 FREELY IN GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS.

3.3(h)(2)

7. ASKED IF THEY WERE AWARE OF ANY PLANS FOR FOLLOW-UP
 STEPS IN THE CURRENT STRATEGY, THE PRISONERS ANSWERED:

A. [] IN THE EVENT THAT SOUTH VIETNAM
 IS NOT COMPLETELY LIBERATED, THE OBJECTIVES OF THE NFLSV WILL

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REMAIN UNCHANGED AND WILL CONTINUE TO BE PURSUED BY METHODS USED PREVIOUSLY. THE NFLSV WILL NOT FADE AWAY, BUT, IF NECESSARY, WILL WITHDRAW TO ITS BASES AND CONTINUE THE STRUGGLE. ALL COMMANDERS AND SOLDIERS KNOW THAT IN ALL AREAS AND WITH ALL UNITS THERE WILL BE TIMES OF TOTAL VICTORY AND TIMES OF SMALL DEFEATS AND SOMETIMES THERE WILL EVEN BE LARGE DEFEATS. BUT TO ACCOMPLISH THE REVOLUTION ALL THAT IS NECESSARY IS THE DETERMINATION TO SUCCEED.

B. [REDACTED] ACCORDING TO HIS POLITICAL CADRE, STRATEGY WOULD CONTINUE TO BE THE SAME AS BEFORE THE ATTACKS IN THE EVENT SOUTH VIETNAM IS NOT COMPLETELY LIBERATED. THE POLITICAL CADRE SAID THAT THIS WAS POSSIBLE BECAUSE ONLY ONE-THIRD OF THE LIBERATION ARMED FORCES HAD BEEN COMMITTED AND THAT TWO-THIRDS WERE STILL IN RESERVE. IN ADDITION, LARGE AMOUNTS OF ASSISTANCE WERE BEING RECEIVED FROM FOREIGN COUNTRIES AND CONSEQUENTLY THE NFLSV WOULD HAVE AMPLE SUPPLIES. FOR EXAMPLE, THE ARMED FORCES ONCE HAD ONLY 60MM AND 81/82MM MORTARS FOR HEAVY-WEAPONS SUPPORT AND NOW WITH FOREIGN AID THEY HAVE ROCKETS AND VERY LARGE MORTARS EVEN AT BATTALLION LEVEL.

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C. [] OTHER THAN THE LIBERATION OF VIETNAM, HE
 HAD HEARD OF NO PLANS CONCERNING ALTERNATIVE OBJECTIVES. IN
 RESPONSE TO THE QUESTIONS OF SOME SOLDIERS REGARDING WHAT
 WOULD HAPPEN IF PLEIKU WERE NOT LIBERATED, A POLITICAL CADRE
 ANSWERED BY RIDICULING THE SOLDIERS. [] NO IDEA WHAT
 THE NFLSV WOULD DO IN THE EVENT PLEIKU WAS NOT LIBERATED.

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D. [] POLITICAL CADRES SAY THAT IN THE
 EVENT COMPLETE VICTORY IS NOT ACHIEVED, STRATEGY WILL CONTINUE
 TO BE ATTACKS ON THE CITY AND SABOTAGE ACTIVITIES IN ALL
 URBAN AREAS, AND THE CONTINUED REINFORCEMENT AND BUILD-UP
 OF THE LIBERATION ARMED FORCES SO THAT THEY CAN ANNIHILATE THE
 GVN/ALLIED ARMED FORCES.

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E. [] THE NFLSV CONSIDERS THAT IT
 CAN SUFFER LOSSES OR INDECISIVE BATTLES AT A LOCAL LEVEL
 WITHOUT LOSING GENERALLY. CONSEQUENTLY IT CONSIDERS THAT
 WHILE IT MAY BE POSSIBLE TO SUFFER A LOSS AT THE LOCAL
 LEVEL IN ONE PARTICULAR AREA, THIS WOULD NOT CONSTITUTE
 A LOSS OVER ALL, OR AT ALL, BECAUSE VICTORIES IN OTHER LOCAL
 AREAS MAY COMPENSATE.

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8. ASKED HOW THEY THOUGHT THE NFLSV OR HANOI WOULD EXPLAIN AN INDECISIVE MILITARY CONCLUSION TO CURRENT MILITARY ACTION, THE PRISONERS REPLIED AS FOLLOWS:

A. [REDACTED] WHETHER CURRENT MILITARY ACTION IS DECISIVE OR NOT, THE NFLSV, IF NOT ENTIRELY SUCCESSFUL, WILL MERELY CONTINUE ON WITH THE STRUGGLE NO EXPLANATIONS WILL BE NECESSARY.

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B. [REDACTED] REGARDLESS OF THE RESULTS OF THE RECENT ATTACKS THE NFLSV WILL NOT ADMIT TO LARGE LOSSES. THE FRONT HAS ALWAYS STATED THAT "TO FIGHT IS TO LOSE MEN". DESPITE LOSSES THE FRONT WILL CONTINUE TO FIGHT. EVEN IF THE FRONT HAS TO RESORT TO GUERRILLA WARFARE AND TO THE USE OF THE "THREE ARROWS" TACTIC, IT WILL CONTINUE TO FIGHT.

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C. [REDACTED] THE FRONT EXPECTED HEAVY LOSSES, BUT REGARDLESS OF WHETHER THE LOSSES WERE LARGE OR SMALL, THE FRONT WILL NOT DISSEMINATE THE RESULTS OF THE MISSIONS, ACHIEVED OR NOT. [REDACTED] THE FRONT WILL STATE THAT FIGHTING WILL CONTINUE AS BEFORE.

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D. [Redacted] IF CURRENT FIGHTING IS INDECISIVE
OR EVEN IF THERE IS A LOSS OF SOME KIND, THE FRONT WILL MERELY
REPEAT WHAT IT HAS SAID BEFORE: "AN EASY VICTORY COSTS LITTLE
BLOOD, A DIFFICULT VICTORY COSTS MUCH BLOOD, REGARDLESS, THE
RESULT WILL BE VICTORY."

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E. [Redacted] AN EXPLANATION BY THE FRONT
CONCERNING AN INDECISIVE OR EVEN A LOSING BATTLE WILL NOT
BE NECESSARY, BECAUSE, AS STATED BEFORE, A PARTICULAR LOSS
IN A LOCAL AREA DOES NOT CONSTITUTE AN OVER-ALL LOSS.

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