INFORMATION

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

Thursday, February 8, 1968

Mr. President:

Herewith Westy predicts:

1. Renewed attacks on Saigon, Danang, Dak To, and a determined attempt to hold Hue, based on hitherto uncommitted North Vietnamese forces.

2. The time for the second wave is now estimated for February 10 - 11.

3. The full scale attack at Khe Sanh and the DMZ area generally could come at any time.


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DECLASSIFIED
Authority OSD 10-25-73, MSc 8-14-80
By Jk (sig.), NARS, Date 8-35-80

SECRET
THE FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF CABLE FROM GENERAL WESTMORELAND

The following is my assessment of recent enemy activity and strategy:

The enemy's objectives in the recent phase of his Winter-Spring Campaign are now clear. They were primarily psychological and political. The enemy sought first, to destroy the Government of Vietnamese governmental apparatus; second, to intimidate the people; and third, to bring about large-scale defections from ARVN. All of these would add up to a "general uprising" in which the citizens would join the Viet Cong ranks and thus permit the enemy to take control of major cities and areas. The military objectives of this phase appear to be secondary. Here the attacks were directed primarily against Headquarters, air installations and aircraft with the view of injuring our control and our air power so as to hamper reinforcement and air support. Of course there was a secondary military objective to disperse and divert our forces throughout South Vietnam.

Since he hoped to obtain Vietnamese support from his "general uprising," the enemy used Viet Cong troops to the largest extent possible. Obviously these were more appropriate for use in this psychological thrust than North Vietnamese Army troops. Some North Vietnamese Army troops in First and Second Corps were used where Viet Cong strength was inadequate. He withheld large formations both North Vietnamese Army and Viet Cong, apparently to reinforce local success or to recycle his offensive at some later date.

As to the timing, attacks in southern First and Second Corps (Military Region 5) commenced in the early hours of 30 January. Attacks in the Second Corps, Fourth Corps, and Tri-Thien commenced 24 hours later. This is as close to simultaneity as the enemy has ever come in launching widespread attacks, and probably is a result of a high-level (Hanoi) decision to use the Tet Holidays for cover. In the Khe Sanh/DMZ and Duc Co are of the Western Highlands, the enemy appeared ready to attack concurrent with his Tet offensive, but he probably was delayed because of friendly operations.
In my opinion, the enemy tactical scheme for the urban areas was simple...well planned, and, up to a point, effective. Viet Cong local force and sapper troops infiltrated the urban areas under cover of Tet celebrations and mingled with the people. Units then assembled, armed themselves, and attacked their targets. At the same time, supporting units outside the city launched attacks on airfields and other installations. Numerous POW Interrogations indicate that the initial attacking forces were to seize key installations, paralyze Government of Vietnam installations, and start a general uprising—all within two to three days. Then heavier units were to reinforce to eliminate remaining resistance and exploit the situation.

There was no general uprising, and the enemy holds totally no cities, though his units remain in city environs and continue harassment he achieved his greatest success in Hue. Also, enemy forces lost heavily (22,000 - 23,000 killed and 5,000 detainees since the commencement of his Tet offensive). On the other hand, the enemy has scored a psychological blow, possibly greater, in Washington than in South Vietnam, since there are tentative signs that the populace is turning against the Viet Cong as a result of these attacks. In addition, the enemy has succeeded in temporarily disrupting the South Vietnam economy.

The enemy poses serious threats in the following areas:

A. Saigon: Remnants of the local force units are still in Saigon but the major threat consists now located a few kilometers North of Saigon. Although the evidence is thus far inconclusive, I anticipate that this attack will be supported by rockets into the Saigon area—possibly the 240MM Rocket which a POW has stated is in the area.

B. Khe Sanh/DMZ: The enemy deployment in the DMZ is well known and his recent attacks in the Khe Sanh area indicate he has surrounded that camp with two divisions. A major offensive is imminent.

C. 

D. deployed its three regiments in by mortars and rockets appears imminent.
E. Hue: The enemy occupies the southern portion of Hue and pockets of strong resistance exist in the Citadel Proper. Coupled with resupply activity indicates a possible attack recycle against the city. Certainly, the enemy will remain until forced to withdraw.

We have a number of indications as to the time frame for the next phase of the enemy's offensive. Two POWs in Third Corps indicate a new phase will begin on 10 and 11 February. In First and Second Corps, the new phase will begin on 8 and 9 February. Additionally, two North Vietnamese Army officers captured in Laos state that the date for the renewed offensive is 10 February.

I believe the enemy will continue to strain the will of the people by maintaining pressure on the populated areas with his forces already committed. He probably will attempt to coordinate major offensives indicated above and current intelligence points to a recycle of attacks in the Saigon area, probably to commence on 10 or 11 February.