MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD:

SUBJECT: Preliminary Views of the Office of Economic Research on the
Communist Organized Manpower Base in South Vietnam,
30 January 1968

1. A preliminary review of available evidence suggests that the
Communist organized manpower base as of 30 January 1968 probably numbered
between 515,000 to 580,000. This base would include estimates for main
and local forces, guerrillas, administrative services, self defense
militia (secret and overt) and political cadre (see Table 1).

2. The strength of VC/NVA main and local forces is believed to be
considerably greater than the 115,000 listed in MACV's Order of Battle
(OB) of 30 January 1968. Reasons why the MACV OB figure is low include:

(2) the omission of large numbers of small units subordinate to
Communist echelons above village level, and (3) MACV's acceptance
and rejection criteria for Communist units which tend to minimize the
number of units and soldiers listed for any point in time. The actual
number of main and local force troops probably are closer to 160,000.
(See Table 2).

3. Generally, OER concurs with the DIA briefing paper (22 February
1968) on units, but not carried in the OB. OER has
not listed those Communist units located out-of-country but identified
as involved in the insurgency. The overall estimated strength of small
units omitted from MACV's OB is broken down as follows:

a. Specialized units (sapper, engineer,
intel/recon, special action) subordinate
to districts. 4,000
b. Specialized units (same as above)
subordinate to provinces. 2,000
c. City units. 3,000
d. Small units subordinate to unusual
echelons (vumps, plantations, US
bases, etc.). 1,500

TOTAL 10,000

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Soldiers probably belonging to units listed in the OB but missing because of certain MACV accounting procedures include the following:

a. Unlisted service and support personnel probably integral to divisions and regiments. 5,000

b. Communist soldiers fit (at school or on TIP, for example) but not present for duty. 6,000

TOTAL 11,000

4. In addition to main and local forces, guerrillas and administrative services also are believed to be underestimated. While we are in accord with the DIA briefing paper on the approximate number of guerrillas, the figure for administrative services should be considerably higher. OER estimates their strength as of 30 January 1968 as follows:

Guerrillas 100,000

Administrative Services 75-100,000

175-200,000

5. OER believes that the Self Defense Militia (both Secret and Overt) and political cadre, which were dropped from the OB, should be reinstated. The Self Defense Militia probably numbers at least 100,000, while the figure for political cadre is estimated at between 30,000 to 120,000.
Table 1

Estimated Communist Organized manpower Base
as of 30 January 1968

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Estimated Size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>YU/NVA Main and Local</td>
<td>160,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guerrillas</td>
<td>100,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative Services</td>
<td>75-100,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self Defense Militia</td>
<td>100,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Cadre</td>
<td>80-120,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>515-580,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2

Estimated Strength of VC/NVA Main and Local Forces in South Vietnam
30 January 1968

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MACV's OB Base</td>
<td>115,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small Units Omitted from OB</td>
<td>24,000*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soldiers Probably Omitted from OB Due to MACV Accounting Procedures</td>
<td>10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>160,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Excludes about 6,000 NVA troops north of DMZ which are involved in the insurgency in South Vietnam.