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FOREWORD

This report traces the 1968 Communist Winter-Spring campaign in the Saigon area. The three distinct phases of enemy attacks--the Tet Offensive, the rocket assaults beginning on 18 February, and the May Offensive--are examined in light of air response. Particular emphasis is placed on examining the resultant damage in the urban area plus the requirement for and the effectiveness of fixed wing aircraft in urban guerrilla warfare.

During the series of offensives on Saigon, command of U.S., FWMAF, and RVNAF forces was maintained by National Commanders. Combined operations involving the above forces were founded upon the principle of cooperation, coordination, mutual support, and close partnership at all echelons. The defense and security of Saigon was delegated by the Commanding General, III Corps, to the Commanding Officer of the Capital Military District (CMD), the area encompassing Saigon and its environs.^{1/}

To accomplish his assigned missions, the Commanding Officer (CO) of the CMD had operational control of all RVNAF units except designated General Reserve units stationed or deployed into the CMD. At the onset of the enemy Spring Offensive, command relationships in the CMD were not designed to facilitate conducting a major combined defensive campaign in Gia Dinh and Saigon.^{2/} The subsequent CMD reorganization and birth of the Capital Military Assistance Command (CMAC) will be discussed in a separate chapter.

All supporting fires, to include artillery, helicopter gunships, and tactical air in the CMD, were cleared first by the District Chief and, in

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Saigon, by the Precinct Chief and finally by the CO, CMD, through his Tactical Operations Center (TOC). Thus, both political and military clearances were required. These procedures were followed during the series of attacks on Saigon.^{3/}

During the Tet Offensive, the enemy discovered his inability to defeat US/RVNAF forces in either rural or urban areas. His forces which reached Saigon were not trained for city fighting. Accordingly, they were destroyed with relatively minor damage to Saigon. With his February defeat, he changed both his objectives and tactics. By selecting urban areas with emphasis on Saigon for the May attacks, he made it much more difficult for allied forces to repulse him without severely damaging the battleground.^{4/}

An enemy report captured in March 1968 provided information that there were three planned phases of the Saigon Offensive: phase one from 30 January to 20 February; phase two from 10 March to 10 April; phase three from 20 April until the end of May. Originally, the third phase was to begin between 4 and 9 March; however, the actual timing of the renewed offensive was, of course, dependent on resupply. This resupply, particularly in the city, was vigorously pursued. Weapons and explosives were brought into Saigon in three-wheeled vehicles and private cars. Quite often the weapons were hidden under articles of clothing and food, which the VC brought into the city under the guise of aiding victims of the Tet Offensive. An interesting sidelight to the pre-positioning of supplies was that, to insure against having their troops lost or misled while in the city, the VC sentenced to death the guides who were assigned the mission of leading units during the Tet attack.^{5/} The CHECO study,

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"Air Response to the Tet Offensive", pointed out that a large portion of the problems the enemy encountered during Tet were attributable to missed rally points, late timing, and other hindrances due to poor guides.

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CHAPTER I
TET OFFENSIVE

In November 1967, it appeared that the enemy in III Corps had decided to employ the majority of his main force units along the Cambodian border and, in particular, to strengthen and consolidate his hold over Military Region 10 (Binh Long, Phuoc Long, and Quang Duc Provinces). While intelligence information indicated that the enemy was preparing for a major dry season effort, it seemed he would probably launch the attacks after using the Tet truce period to massively resupply and reinforce across South Vietnamese borders.^{1/}

Force Posture

During late 1967, the planned II Field Force deployment posture stemmed from a COMUSMACV-directed strategy that had three basic features:^{2/}

- First, the undertaking of several offensive operations in the border areas which would have committed 22 of the 53 II Field Force maneuver battalions available along the northern border.
- Second, the implementing of a border sealing Tet posture in which Battalion Task Forces would block main VC infiltration routes during the Tet truce.
- Third, the continuing, by mutual US/RVNAF agreement, of the shift of responsibility for the security of the area around Saigon and the allied bases from U.S. to Vietnamese forces.

Had II Field Force fully pursued the strategy, the bulk of its forces, 39 battalions, would have been deployed outside the allied base area and up to 150 kilometers from Saigon. At that distance, redeployment would have been largely by fixed wing aircraft and only 14 maneuver battalions would have been available for quick redeployment and reaction to threats.^{3/}

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During December 1967 and January 1968, substantial evidence was received indicating VC intentions to attack the populated centers in III Corps. Battalion-sized units had attacked Tan Uyen, Buo Trni, and Trang Bang, while several main force regiments were detected moving toward Saigon. The VC had reequipped their forces with AK-47s and RPG-2s, plus NVA filler personnel were being put in local force battalions. Because of these actions, the Commander, II Field Force, with CCMUSMACV's approval, repositioned most of his forces within striking distance of Saigon. Of a total of 53 maneuver battalions at his disposal, 27 were within assault helicopter range of all the vital areas while only 26 battalions remained in the peripheral areas.

During this same period, there were no major shifts in ARVN forces. Men absent from their units for the Tet truce had lowered ARVN strength on 20 January to about 50 percent of their authorized manning. Although the Tet truce was cancelled at 0945 on 30 January, the inadequate Vietnamese communications system precluded the effective notification of the bulk of these soldiers. Therefore, the strength of the 46 ARVN battalions was still at about 50 percent when the VC attacks were launched.^{4/}

Of the 54 main and local force VC/NVA battalions in III Corps, 35 were committed to the initial assault. Their overall strategy was to launch simultaneous attacks on the government buildings in Saigon and on key U.S. and ARVN military installations with the objective of gathering support from the population and presenting the U.S. with an untenable situation when the government collapsed.^{5/} Figure 1 depicts the estimated combat effective VC/NVA maneuver battalions in III Corps on 29 January and their subsequent decline by early

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March.

Enemy local force units were to launch the initial attacks against Saigon, while main force units blocked reinforcements and prepared to exploit successes of the local forces. Of the eleven battalions, at a combined strength of 3,000-4,000, initially committed to the attack on Saigon, seven were units whose home grounds were already in and around the CMD. Consequently, they did not have long distances to infiltrate. The 5th VC/NVA Division was to hold U.S. forces in the peripheral area as long as possible to block reinforcements, but the VC failed to prevent reinforcements either overland or by air. By midnight of the 31st, the U.S. and ARVN had brought more maneuver battalions into the CMD than the VC had in their initial assault. The 9th VC Division was to interdict the road network and bolster local forces.^{6/}

The NVA units moved in close to Saigon through forced marches, some as long as 12 continuous hours on the last night. Arms had been smuggled in by produce-carrying vehicles over Highway 13. These weapons were cached in pre-positioned areas throughout the city.^{7/}

The Assault

The Tet Offensive in Saigon began at 0300 hours, 31 January 1968, with a rocket and mortar attack followed by a three-battalion ground assault on U.S. Army Headquarters at Long Binh, located just to the east of Saigon. The VC attack never reached the coordinated assault stage at Long Binh as it was broken by gunships, artillery, and heavy small arms fire from converging U.S. Army companies.^{8/}

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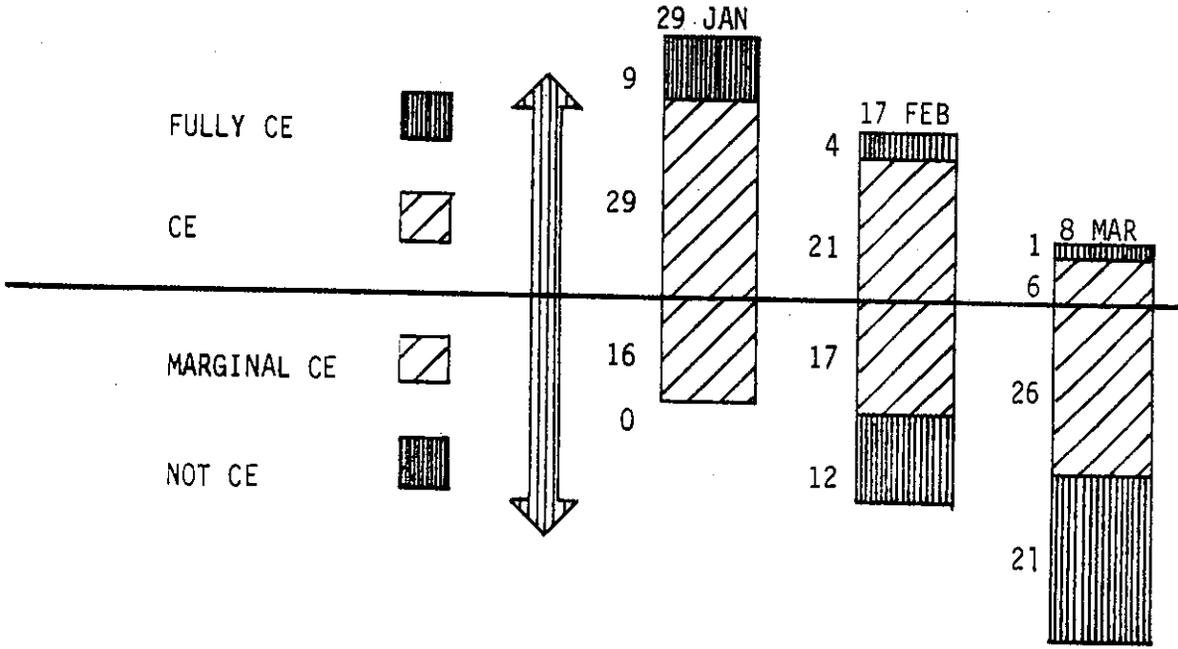
The C-10 Sapper Battalion attacked the U.S. Embassy at 0530 with a 19-man force, all of whom were killed. Other members of the unit assaulted the GVN Presidential Palace, the Saigon radio station, JGS (Joint General Staff) Headquarters, and a number of police stations and billets. At the same time, the VC 267th and 269th Main Force Battalions attacked Tan Son Nhut from the north and west while the 2d and 6th Local Force Battalions entered Cholon from the west. Heavy fighting ensued in these areas as U.S. and ARVN units organized reaction forces. As daylight arrived on 31 January, heavy gunfire was heard throughout the city as helicopter gunships, and VNAF and U.S. tactical fighters conducted strikes against enemy strong points.^{9/}

On 1 February, the An Quang Pagoda became the focus of heavy fighting when an ARVN unit discovered a VC headquarters established there. National Police and Vietnamese Marines encircled the pagoda by 1305, but were unable to force entrance. Airstrikes were called in on the complex and it was seized by 1705.^{10/}

Throughout the day on 2 February, there were many reports and sightings of VC units moving or attempting to mass, but they were constantly harassed by air and artillery strikes, helicopter gunships, and by US/GVN units reacting quickly to intelligence information and now conducting sweep operations in suspected VC locations. The major attempt to capture the city of Saigon appeared to be broken. Enemy forces still had the capability to initiate attacks against individual installations, but not with the magnitude of the first two days. Many reports indicated that VC units were becoming disorganized and disoriented as they were losing coordination and control from parent units

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ESTIMATED COMBAT EFFECTIVENESS (CE)
OF IDENTIFIED
VC/NVA MANEUVER BNS* IN III CTZ
ON 29 JAN 1968



* (INF) BNS

FIGURE 1

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and were attempting to extract themselves from the city. During the night, helicopter gunships, aircraft, and river patrol boats raked suspected or known crossing points along the Saigon River. Twenty sampans were spotted on the river and were engaged by aircraft firing rockets and miniguns. All vessels were sunk with secondary explosions occurring. ^{11/}

Early on 3 February, the Thu Duc District Police Headquarters was hit by a heavy ground attack by an estimated two battalions armed with automatic weapons, B-40 rockets, machineguns, and mortars. District forces, reinforced by elements of a U.S. company and three Popular Force platoons, repulsed the attack with the help of minigun-firing aircraft, gunships, and flareships. ^{12/} Forty VC bodies were found later in the morning.

Fighting raged in Gia Dinh and Cholon for the next few days, highlighted by a report from ARVN Intelligence that a large weapons cache was located in a factory west of Tan Son Nhut. U.S. tactical air took the building under fire, followed by a U.S. Army sweep of the building and area that revealed 162 enemy killed and over 100 individual and crew-served weapons destroyed or captured. There were no friendly losses.

Continuing reports from the Joint Defense Operations Center and other sources indicated that the VC were either digging in or withdrawing. A MACV summary of action in Saigon on 3 February was reported as generally quiet with indications that the VC were trying to withdraw. ^{13/}

On 5 February, the VC attempted to regain the initiative in Saigon. They attacked south Cholon, pushing northeast, but were stopped by ARVN units.

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Elements of the 1st, 9th, and 25th U.S. Divisions surrounded Saigon while ARVN units continued to sweep the city. There was further evidence that surviving VC, in fragmented groups, were beginning to exfiltrate. Also on 5 February, the ARVN initiated Operation TRAN HUNG DAO with five battalions to search and destroy enemy still in Saigon and its environs. On 6 February, elements of the 199th Infantry Brigade air assaulted into a hot landing zone near Saigon and met stiff resistance from an enemy company. Seven helicopters were downed in the engagement with two U.S. killed and nine wounded.^{14/}

During the following few days, VC actions were sharply reduced with the only sizable enemy force remaining at the Phu Tho Racetrack in west Cholon, where they continued to fight sporadically until 21 February.^{15/} The Phu Tho Racetrack, located on the western edge of the city in direct line of march, proved to be a rallying point for future assaults.

The VC seized and tried to hold the racetrack for several reasons:

- It was a good rallying point for VC unfamiliar with Saigon.
- It was at the center of a good road net.
- It had a large covered area, suitable for a hospital.
- It denied the U.S. forces a large LZ inside the city.
- It was within 82mm mortar range of Tan Son Nhut.

Approximately two kilometers west of the track, a U.S. element found the main VC command post in a pagoda. Surrounding it, they destroyed the VC defending force and captured the headquarters, taking three prisoners and

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killing 49, including General Tran Do, the commander of all VC forces attacking Saigon.

On 9 February, the Operational Intelligence Division of the VNAF reported that as of 1600 hours, there had been 3,560 enemy killed, 1,095 detained, and 1,262 weapons captured. Friendly casualties included 325 Free World Forces killed with 1,141 wounded and three missing. The VNAF had provided the bulk of the tactical air support for TRAN HUNG DAO, logging 46 A-1 and 15 F-5 sorties. The results of this air activity included: 65 VC killed by air, 95 structures destroyed, one AAA position destroyed, and 75 bunkers damaged.^{16/} (Fig. 2.)

There was no restraint to damage exercised by the enemy during the Tet attack and, as usual, the civilian populace was hit hardest. By 15 February, there were a total of 225,810 refugees reported within the city limits of Saigon, 564 civilians killed, 2,853 civilians wounded, and 17,886 homes destroyed.^{17/}

Quyét Thang/Toan Thang

After the VC Tet Offensive, III Corps started the Quyét Thang (Resolved to Win) Campaign. This operation aimed at regaining the initiative and widening the ring of security around the capital and the five surrounding provinces. By 29 March, the campaign had swept through Gia Dinh, Long An, Hau Nghia, Binh Duong, and Bien Hoa Provinces. At that date the enemy had lost 1,000 killed in action and large enemy caches continued to be found.^{18/}

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On 2 April, a large cache of munitions was found including 116 82mm rounds, further indicating the enemy's efforts to establish a supply of munitions near Saigon for use in attacking by fire and conducting harassing actions during the renewal of the offensive. Quyet Thang ended on 7 April and had accounted for 2,658 enemy killed and 427 detained.^{19/}

After the "Resolved to Win" Campaign came the Toan Thang (Complete Victory) Campaign. This campaign started on 1 April and, in addition to the same purpose as "Resolved to Win", was directed at hitting VC forces before they infiltrated the capital. This effort was to provide effective protection for the capital. The elements assigned to the campaign were impressive:^{20/}

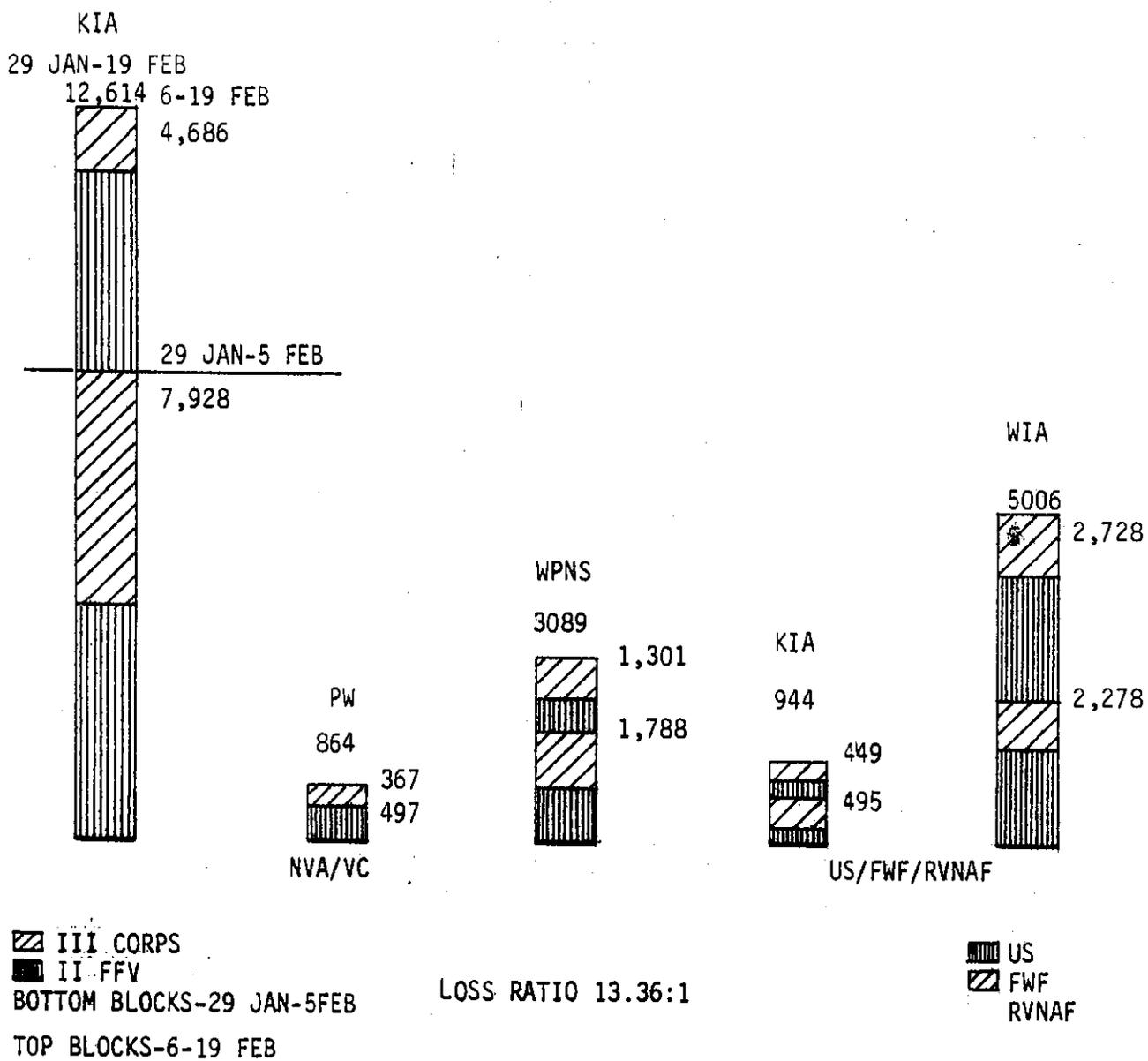
1st Infantry Division	ARVN 5th Division
25th Infantry Division	ARVN 25th Division
9th Infantry Division	5th ARVN Ranger Group
196th Light Infantry Brigade	199th Light Infantry Brigade
11th Air Cavalry	1st ARVN Task Force
3d Brigade, 101st Airborne Division	

There can be no doubt that Toan Thang had an extremely debilitating effect on the VC ability to maintain pressure on the CMD. The cumulative results by the end of April showed 7,645 enemy KIA and 1,708 detainees. Regardless of the losses, however, it was apparent that he intended to remain close to Saigon and "cling" to the city.^{21/} At 2400 hours on 31 May, the first phase of Toan Thang terminated with the following results:^{22/}

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BATTLE LOSSES III CTZ



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FIGURE 2

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Friendly KIA - 1,348 (564 U.S., 762 ARVN, 23 FWF)

Friendly WIA - 6,928 (3,620 U.S., 2,570 ARVN, 99 FWF)

Enemy KIA - 11,894 and 2,123 detained.

The second phase of Toan Thang was initiated on 1 June and continued as of late August.

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CHAPTER II

INTERLUDE

Characteristically, the Tet Offensive against Saigon did not have a definite termination date, but, after 9 February, only occasional engagements were reported by allied forces. The enemy had gradually withdrawn to regroup, reequip, and reevaluate his effort. There were definite intelligence indications that large enemy forces, though many were not combat effective, still ringed the sprawling city.

A captured enemy document assessing the Tet Offensive gave the usual platitudes. One was "The attack was conducted in a decisive manner with determination and bravery". But, commenting on the political actions aimed at fostering a general uprising, the document admitted the offensive had failed:^{1/}

"The political actions aimed at fostering a general uprising were not carried out in a concerted manner and were very weak. Although the political attitude of friendly troops was good and the people gave very favorable support, the General Uprising could not be instigated everywhere (in some places [the people] followed friendly troops [to stage an uprising]; at others, they did not)...The results obtained were not satisfactory."

The enemy assessment of the performance of allied troops and equipment was generally deprecatory, such as "Enemy tanks were not very effective, infantry troops were very poor". This general philosophy of praising their performance while playing down the other side lends more credence to the statement made by a member of the Communists' Central Executive Committee of

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NVN: "The enemy was effective in launching counterattacks by using helicopters and by strafing from the air."^{2/}

Further attesting to air effectiveness was another enemy document captured on 24 February:^{3/}

"After suffering heavy losses everywhere, the enemy has been using aircraft to drop bombs savagely on cities, towns, and densely populated areas. These bombs, including napalm and phosphorous bombs, caused heavy damage to a number of towns, including the houses and population. In some areas, our troops did not establish an air defense system in a timely manner directly after their occupation of the towns and as a result they suffered casualties inflicted on cadre and soldiers. To limit all above damages, it is requested that the various units:

"Take defensive action against enemy aircraft during their occupation of and bivouac in certain towns or areas and organize an anti-aircraft system among the troops and, to a larger extent, among the people. Observation and alert measures must be taken against enemy air activities.

"Send unnecessary forces out of the towns and areas where the people, especially aged ones and children, are crowded. Disperse these troops when stationing them.

"Be prepared to treat those who are wounded or burned."

Airstrikes and visual reconnaissance also disrupted the enemy efforts at resupplying and feeding his troops. This intense air activity kept him off balance and resulted in a delayed offensive timetable.^{4/} The document continued:

"According to your message, a fleet of our transportation boats was attacked by enemy aircraft on the night of 16 February [1968].

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"1. It is requested that this be reaffirmed since 23 sampans could hardly carry 100 gia (unit of measure equivalent to 36 kilos) (of rice). Specifically, how much and what type (of goods) was damaged or lost.

"2. It is necessary to supply the battlefield actively and promptly, but you should properly perform leadership, keep the transportation routes from being discovered, regularly popularize the regulations and have strict control. Every opportunity must be taken, but you must move continuously in small teams instead of large groups to prevent discovery by enemy aircraft equipped with searchlights.

" - Investigations must be made to change the movement route and the method of moving because the enemy has discovered this route.

"After being attacked on the night of 16 February, our men continued to move in large groups along the same route and, as a result, on the night of 18 February, they were attacked (by air) for the second time.

"3. Work out plans concerning escorts, camouflage, disguise, observation stations, etc. (sic) to ensure good results for transportation activities.

"4. Study should be made to activate a number of anti-aircraft cells.

"5. Reply as soon as possible because the comrades in the headquarters are very anxious. You are requested to reaffirm the above and report it immediately."

The Communists realized that one of the most effective weapons of war - the element of surprise - could no longer be employed against Saigon in future battles. This opinion was revealed by interrogating ralliers and examining captured papers. Speaking of advantages and disadvantages, an enemy document stated there would be no surprise factor exploited on any

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subsequent attacks on Saigon by the VC/NVA since Saigon was now on the defensive and the FWMAF/RVNAF therein were well prepared.^{5/}

In a resolution concerning the cities, another captured document clearly pointed out that the future strategy of the Communists would center around attacks on cities, particularly Saigon. They felt that the allied strategy had been completely upset. The capital was turned into a battlefield and had ceased to be a safe rear area. This formerly safe city had become a battle target and had no defense capability; therefore, "The enemy's political stand has collapsed or diminished in prestige, because no matter what they said, everybody saw that they were not able to hold the cities." Concerning future plans, the document outlined three principal requirements concerning the capital:^{6/}

"1. We should occupy as many sections of the city and destroy as many enemy troops as possible. We should bring about a situation where we can encircle the enemy from within the city. Since Q1 and Q2 (possibly the first and second precincts) are the enemy's lair, we should occupy them for many days, bringing war into the city.

"2. We should launch the movement of popular guerrilla warfare in the city, maintain our mastery of the people and coordinate the people's activity with other activities.

"3. We should rapidly develop our political and armed forces one step further in each phase in order to create conditions to eliminate enemy positions one by one."

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CHAPTER III

SECOND WAVE

On Sunday, 18 February, at 0115 hours, Tan Son Nhut came under attack by fire. The base received a total of 81 rounds of mixed 122mm rocket and 82-mm mortar fire resulting in 33 aircraft damaged and six destroyed. That same day, three rounds of 122mm rockets impacted in the vicinity of the C-130 ramp, the Civil Engineering area, and the helicopter pad. One round hit the old base exchange, killing one and wounding six. Early on 19 February, the Saigon Civilian Air Terminal was hit by a rocket round which killed one person and wounded many others. During these two days there were eight separate instances of rocket and mortar attacks which accounted for six killed and 151 wounded.^{1/}

The next attack of significance occurred on 24 February, when again Tan Son Nhut was subjected to a rocket attack. Early that morning, 20 rounds of mixed rockets and mortars hit the base causing damage to buildings on the base and killing four U.S. personnel and wounding 21.^{2/}

During this period, there were no major ground assaults on Saigon, but enemy units appeared to have again moved closer to the outskirts of the city, for, on 24 February, U.S. elements contacted an unknown sized enemy force just three kilometers northeast of Saigon. Reflecting a change in VC tactics from large ground assaults to harassment, VNAF Intelligence reported, on 27 February, that an unknown number of VC, disguised as civilians, were mixing with the residents in the heart of Saigon. They were urging the people, whose homes had been destroyed during early February, to rise up against the government.

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The VC claimed that the government troops had been ordered to open fire on the people's homes with the intent of destroying them so that the property could be used to construct buildings for high ranking officials and armed forces personnel.^{3/}

The rocket attacks on Tan Son Nhut and Saigon, accompanied by heavy propaganda and terrorism, heralded a new era of the Communist attempt to subvert the people of Vietnam. Such standoff attacks with heavy weapons decreased his casualties by permitting delivery from a relatively safe distance.

The 122mm Rocket

The 122mm rocket was the newest and most sophisticated in the Soviet arsenal and its employment by the VC provided them with a lightweight weapon which had the firepower equal to a 155mm howitzer. It was first introduced into South Vietnam in early March 1967 with an attack on Camp Carroll, a Marine base below the DMZ. From that time the rocket appeared further and further south until it was finally employed against Saigon in February 1968. Some of the statistics of the 122mm rocket were:^{4/}

Characteristics

Rocket-fin/spin stabilized
Length-6.2 feet
Weight-101 pounds
Range -11,000 meters
Warhead-15 pounds explosive
Fuze-instantaneous or delay

Launcher

Length-8.1 feet
Weight-55 pounds

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Emplacement time-2.5 minutes
Displacement time-2 minutes

No site preparation was necessary prior to the attack except for surveying the launch positions. Figures 3 and 4 show the rudimentary preparations. The short bamboo sticks were used for aiming stakes. Figure 5 typifies a 140mm rocket in place and ready to fire. Figure 6 depicts the size of a 122mm rocket and launcher.

Equipment and personnel were moved into the site under cover of darkness and preparations completed and the rockets readied for firing within three hours. Prior attacks suggest the enemy preferred a launch site between 9,000 and 11,000 meters from the target. The launchers and rockets were portable when disassembled into three or four parts and, consequently, launching positions were easily moved. The use of waterways, oxcarts, bicycles, and trucks to convey the weapon system increased the mobility and decreased porter requirements.^{5/}

Immediately following the missile barrage, an extensive operation was conducted to identify the locations of enemy rocket and mortar positions around Tan Son Nhut/Saigon. This operation was generated by the 7AF Deputy Chief of Staff for Intelligence. A massive intelligence collection effort was launched. Detailed analysis was made of enemy tactics from available intelligence data and new information was obtained by 7AF DIS from onsite Explosive Ordnance Disposal Teams, U.S. Army Ordnance Teams, PhotoInterpreters, and from Hand-Held Photos taken by Forward Air Controllers.^{6/}

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ENEMY ROCKET LAUNCH POSITION
Figure 3

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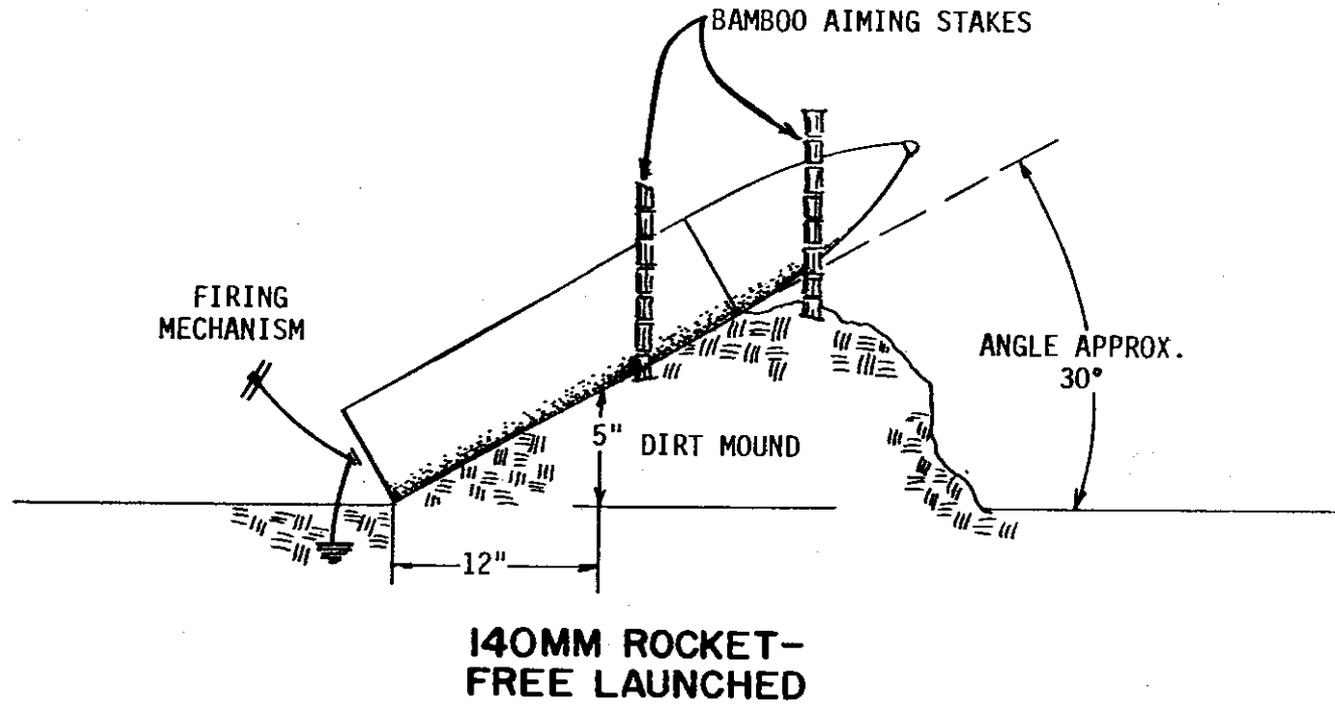


ENEMY ROCKET LAUNCH POSITION

Figure 4

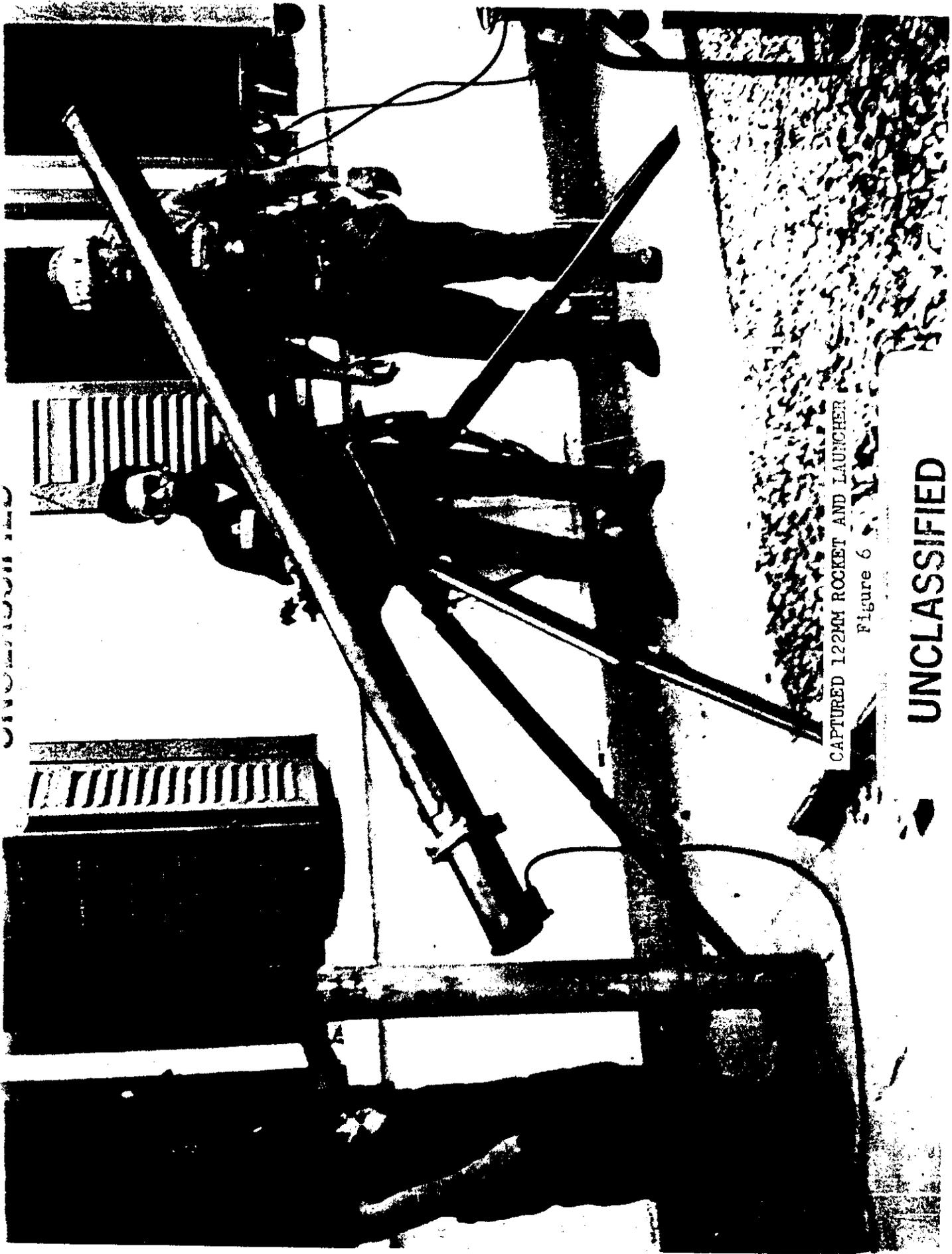
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FIGURE 5



CAPTURED 122MM ROCKET AND LAUNCHER

Figure 6

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The day after the first attack, 21 photo reconnaissance missions were flown around Tan Son Nhut to a distance of seven miles. The area was extended out to eleven miles the following day. A large processing and photo interpretation operation was initiated by the 12th Reconnaissance Intelligence Technical Squadron and the 460th Tactical Reconnaissance Wing. By 21 April 1968, 92 recce missions produced 43,440 feet of original negative film plus 140,876 feet of duplicate positive film which required detailed readout by a team of over 100 photo interpreters combined with the resources of the 460th RTS, 16th PPIF, 12th RITS, and CICV. The analysis of enemy tactics, coupled with interpretation of the film, identified 116 possible rocket positions, 60 mortar positions, 49 AW positions, numerous bunkers, 83 trenches, 21 storage areas, over 1,300 foxholes, 48 personnel, and four tunnel/cave entrances. Although verification later disclosed that some of the suspected sites were friendly locations, those that were enemy were brought under fire. The photo interpreters were briefed by 7AF analysts and many were sent on FAC flights to provide them with additional background to better identify rocket sites, and the presence of enemy in a particular area. The success of Operation TAN SON NHUT can be best illustrated by the capture of three primary rocket sites. Analysis of all available intelligence by 7AF DIS determined that the rockets launched on 24 February came from an area approximately nine kilometers due north of Tan Son Nhut. This analysis was based on the enemy tactics and took into consideration the following:^{7/}

- During the period 9 to 18 February, approximately 500 enemy sampans were sighted on both sides of the Cambodian border northwest of TSN. Many of these were brought under fire and destroyed by tactical airstrikes, but a number of

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them escaped and in all probability reached their destination. Analysis indicated that the rockets were brought in by sampan (due to their heavy weight) and concealed.

- Launch sites were chosen to provide camouflage particularly from aerial surveillance, but a fairly open field of fire was required due to the low launch trajectory. Analysis determined that the launch sites were due north of TSN between 7,000 and 11,000 meters and largely along tree-lined streams. The area was comparatively free of civilian huts or structures, had open fields of fire, and the streams meandering through the area were tree-lined.
- A detailed readout of film flown on 24 February 1968 identified at least four sampans, 8,000 meters north of the base, which could have been used to carry in the rockets. Two kilometers north of the sampans two large boats and 17 personnel were located by photo interpreters. They could not be identified as friendly. A FAC was briefed concerning the boats and a particularly suspicious ricefield containing long rows of rice straw piled high enough to easily hide rockets and their launchers. Hand-held photographs were taken which failed to reveal the actual rockets, but which further strengthened suspicion of the area. The results of the analysis and the "hot news" items were provided to 25th U.S. Infantry and other interested agencies.
- On 27 February 1968, U.S. forces fought their way into the enemy base camp located in the exact area that the intelligence data indicated would be lucrative. In the action the 14th Battalion/9th Infantry Regiment of the 25th Division located three rocket launcher sites and captured a significant amount of rockets and supporting supplies. At least six rocket launching positions were located in each site. Two of the sites were located along an east-west line of palm trees and foliage bordering a stream and swampy area. The suspect ricefield next to the stream contained one of the rocket sites. The third site was on dry ground, but less than a kilometer from the boats which had been discovered on photography. The rocket sites were difficult to spot from the air, but detailed photointerpretation, and close coordination with the Army greatly aided in the final location and destruction of these sites. Difficulties were encountered in the dissemination of "hot item" reports due to the number of involved commands in and around the Saigon area. This was resolved by the placement of direct liaison

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to/with 7AF/DI, 7AF/TACC, MACV-COC, MACV J-2,
II FFV, 25 Infantry Division, CICV, CIIB, and
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CHAPTER IV
MAY OFFENSIVE

The long anticipated second offensive of the Spring Campaign began on the night of 4-5 May 1968. An analysis of VC-initiated incidents since Tet revealed that, for the most part, activity had been low level harassment carried out by local forces and guerrillas. At the same time, the bulk of the enemy's main forces in III Corps moved into the Saigon area.^{1/}

The attack was not a surprise as was the Tet Offensive for there were many intelligence indicators of an impending resurgence of the Communist offensive. Early on 4 May, COMUSMACV was informed that a highly reliable agent, who had direct access to intelligence sources, reported that orders had been issued to subordinate units for the attack on Saigon, which was to take place early on 5 May. The agent also stated that one company-size unit had already been deployed to the edge of Saigon awaiting the attack signal.^{2/} Further enforcing friendly knowledge of an impending attack was an incident which occurred on 26 April when allied forces wounded and captured a VC doctor with the rank of captain in Bien Hoa Province. An entry in the detainee's diary indicated that the third phase of the general offensive was to start on 28 April.^{3/}

The Communist forces were also well aware that the principle of surprise would not be effective during their May Offensive. A captured enemy document entitled, "Mission and Requirements for the City" prescribed that during the forthcoming attack on Saigon there would be no surprise factor to be exploited

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by VC/NVA forces since Saigon was now on the defensive and FMAF/RVNAF forces were well prepared.^{4/}

Opposing Forces

Various U.S. and Republic of Vietnam units participated in the 5-12 May offensive:^{5/}

U.S. ARMY UNITS

Elements, 1st Infantry Division
Elements, 9th Infantry Division
Elements, 25th Infantry Division
Elements, 199th Light Infantry Brigade
Elements, 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment
120th Assault Helicopter Company
2/13th Artillery
2/40th Artillery

REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM UNITS

Marine Task Force
Airborne Task Force
ARVN Support Units
National Police
Regional Forces
5th Ranger Group
5th Airborne Battalion

The 5th ARVN Airborne Battalion engaged in some of the bitterest fighting near the battle-scarred Phu Tho Racetrack, which was also the scene of sharp encounters during the Tet Offensive.

The G-2 Section of the CMD identified the following enemy units which struck from all four cardinal points:^{6/}

EAST: 2d Mobile Force Battalion, 274th Regiment, 5th VC Division

WEST: Elements of 271st, 272d, and 273d Regiments, 9th VC Division

SOUTH: 2d Independent Local Force Battalion
506th Independent Local Force Battalion
Phu Loi Regiment

NORTH: 101st North Vietnamese Regiment

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All friendly units attached to or under operational control of Headquarters, CMD, had been operating in the outlying areas surrounding the city of Saigon since the start of the Tet Offensive. Based on intelligence reports, these forces were relocated in early May to the so-called "Inner Ring" of defense which was designed to prevent the enemy from seizing control.^{7/}

The Assault

The enemy initiated the offensive at 0400 on 5 May by attacking the Newport Bridge on the eastern edge of the city. At the same time, one enemy platoon wearing Vietnamese Marine uniforms assaulted Vietnamese Marine elements two kilometers west of the bridge. Approximately 30 minutes later, heavy fighting broke out west of the Phu Tho Racetrack with a VC force estimated at battalion-size transporting heavy weapons, including antiaircraft guns.^{8/}

By 1000 on the 5th, the ARVN Airborne Task Force was heavily engaged north of Tan Son Nhut and the 11th Airborne Battalion had encountered a reinforced enemy company. Two Vietnamese airstrikes, U.S. Light Fire Teams, and artillery supported the engagement.^{9/}

On 6 May, at approximately 0715, a CID FAC, during a visual reconnaissance mission, took two hits in the wing of his O-1 aircraft while flying at 1500 feet near the village of Ap Hoa Thanh on Saigon's western edge. Later that day, elements of the 3/4th Cavalry near that village sustained a number of casualties. ARVN CMD clearance was requested for airstrikes and granted by late afternoon. Before the strike, psychological warfare aircraft dropped leaflets and, through loudspeaker transmissions, warned all civilians to clear

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the area. The FAC reported no civilian activity in that locale. During the next four days and three nights, a total of 40 tactical air sorties were flown in support of 3/4th Cavalry activity. An ARVN Ranger sweep of the village on 10 May revealed a 130 VC body count. ^{10/}

On 6 May, the 30th ARVN Ranger Battalion joined a U.S. cavalry troop to assault a hamlet adjacent to the Phu Tho Racetrack which contained a heavy VC concentration. As the combined forces entered the hamlet, they received mortar/rocket fire and were beaten back. Unable to advance, the troop commander called in U.S. airstrikes and artillery that night. On 7 May, the cavalry troop moved into the bombarded hamlet, meeting little resistance and made a 200 VC body count. ^{11/}

Also on 6 May, the 33d ARVN Battalion was sent to relieve the pinned down 30th and immediately met stiff resistance. The battalion tried twice to push onward, but was beaten back each time by automatic weapons and mortar fire. The Senior U.S. Advisor of the ARVN battalion called in three U.S. airstrikes and one Light Fire Team. The air sorties came in with 500-pound bombs and napalm. The U.S. Advisor's counterpart requested and received Vietnamese artillery support and the Advisor requested U.S. artillery, but did not receive clearance from the Vietnamese. ^{12/}

On the same day, an element of the 3/4th Cavalry was ordered to clear and secure a hamlet west of Cholon. The ARVN Ranger Commander informed the Commander, 3/4th Cavalry, that he would not participate in the attack unless three buildings in the hamlet were first destroyed. The ARVN Commander had

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interviewed refugees the night before and received information pertaining to VC presence in those buildings. Accordingly, the 3/4th Cavalry Commander called in an airstrike on the buildings, which destroyed them with napalm, causing a large secondary explosion in one of the buildings and a fire that burned for two days.^{13/}

Another VC-held village in western Saigon was engaged by the U.S. 199th Light Infantry Brigade on 6 May, beginning three days of bitter fighting. A rifle company of the 199th performing a reconnaissance in force mission was pinned down by heavy RPG, automatic weapons, and AK-47 fire as it approached the village from the south. Another company was moved in from the east and passed through the eastern portion of the village unopposed, when it came under heavy fire. The civilian noncombatants had evacuated the area; therefore, the CO requested airstrikes. After four strikes, the VC fire seemed to subside and the company on the east began moving again. It had only moved a short distance when, once again, it was stopped by intensive VC fire. More airstrikes and artillery were called in, but as night fell, fire was still being received from the VC and it continued throughout the night.^{14/}

Early the next morning, the company in the south received a heavy volley of RPG fire. The company CO decided to put in six more airstrikes. The second day was almost a repeat of the first as, throughout the day, heavy VC fire greeted any effort to advance. Additional airstrikes and artillery were put in, but, once again as night fell, fire was still being received in volume from the enemy.^{15/}

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The morning of the third day, ten more airstrikes were cleared for 750-pound bombs with delayed fuzes, after which the company was finally able to complete the sweep. Once the western portion of the village was breeched, it became obvious why there had been so much trouble taking the position. Bunkers were built under the concrete slabs of houses with as many as eight tunnels radiating out like spokes of a wheel to ground level bunkers. "The only thing which knocked out these positions was the 750-pound fuze delay bombs."¹⁶

Meanwhile, the 35th ARVN Ranger Battalion was working primarily with the National Police and had formed a blocking line at the southwest corner of Colon. Initial contact was sporadic until 7 May, when they received orders to assault north. During the initial assault, the Rangers received B-40 rockets which were described by the U.S. Senior Advisor as "coming in like hail". The battalion withdrew 500 meters and, at 1100, called in airstrikes and Vietnamese artillery. Even though the VC were attempting to counter the effectiveness of air by using antiaircraft weapons, the U.S. Advisor stated that the airstrikes were on target with 250- and 500-pound bombs followed by recoilless mortar. The VC were routed by the heavy pounding and fled to the east and west.

At 1500 hours, the U.S. Advisor again requested airstrikes, but was denied and strongly advised to assault. The battalion struck, but immediately met a strong counter-assault and made no further advance the remainder of the day. Later that night, friendly forces noted a tall, substantial building which appeared to be used as a VC hospital or body collection point. Air-^{17/} strikes were requested, but no action was taken against the building.

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At least 79 tactical aircraft were scrambled in the Saigon area on 7 May in support of troops in contact. Further, approximately 50 percent of the reconnaissance sorties flown in-country were assigned targets in the Saigon area in an attempt to locate enemy positions.^{18/}

On 8 May, the 38th ARVN Ranger Battalion relieved the 35th and began a westward sweep. However, they made little progress until elements of a U.S. cavalry troop assaulted the entrenched VC positions, subsequently forcing the enemy to withdraw. Early on 9 May, the 38th continued to meet heavy resistance from an estimated VC battalion. An airstrike was called in at 1700 and a sweep of the area the following morning revealed 45 bodies.^{19/} The 38th remained in contact throughout the day and night of 9 May with a reinforced enemy company which appeared to be the last of the enemy's forces in the Phu Tho Racetrack area. It appeared the enemy was withdrawing.^{20/}

On 10 May, the 33d ARVN Ranger Battalion swept the area near Phu Tho which had received the airstrikes on 6 May. In this vicinity they found: three AK-47 rifles, one M-60 machinegun, one M-16 rifle, one B-40 rocket launcher, one B-41 rocket launcher, 100 grenades, a U.S. gas mask, assorted maps, and nine VC bodies. These results caused the U.S. Advisor to "consider the airstrikes of 6 May successful".^{21/}

Early on 11 May, the 38th ARVN battalion began a sweep northward, encountering stubborn resistance. The Advisor reported:^{22/}

"The Rangers were unable to advance during the day and airstrikes were called on coordinates XS795905 (approximately one kilometer west of Phu Tho) that

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night. The airstrikes consisted of 4 sorties dropping fragmentation bombs and napalm on the VC positions. A sweep of the area the following morning uncovered approximately 100 well fortified bunkers. The bunkers were well camouflaged and the position is believed to have been an enemy regimental headquarters. The airstrikes occurred shortly before darkness and the VC were able to police up the weapons of their fallen comrades. Consequently, very few enemy weapons were found, but approximately 100 VC were killed by the airstrikes. Captured prisoners indicated the light fire teams artillery had little effect against the fortified positions, but the napalm was extremely effective "

The 3/4th U.S. Cavalry was withdrawn on 11 May, and the ARVN Rangers assumed approximately the same area of operations which they had been assigned prior to the offensive. The second offensive against Saigon was considered terminated on 11 May as all enemy main force units were withdrawing from the area. ^{23/} However, operations continued on 12 May within the CMD as light sniper fire was encountered. Also on 12 May, the 33d Ranger Battalion swept a village north of Phu Tho which had been struck by air and artillery and uncovered 100 VC bodies in the rubble. ^{24/}

Reflecting the shock value of airstrikes in softening up enemy positions plus the need for rapid ground follow-up, one U.S. Advisor, in an after action report, stated: ^{25/}

"...the Rangers waited too long to assault after receiving air support. This delay would permit the VC to recover from the airstrike, artillery, etc., and brace themselves for the ground attack. Further, the Light Fire Teams and artillery are relatively ineffective for this type fighting and I much prefer airstrikes."

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Another Advisor commented on the VC bodies which were found when ARVN Airborne troops swept an area after an air and artillery barrage: "The ground was littered with VC bodies...noted that the bodies were mature, well-equipped, and well-fed soldiers."^{26/}

The enemy's final act of the May Offensive was to heavily damage the Newport River Bridge located on Saigon's eastern edge. In the early morning hours of 12 May, 82mm mortars and small arms were fired into the bridge area. A U.S. Advisor was located in the turret of a tank with an FM radio and his counterpart was inside the tank. The Advisor did not request Light Fire Teams, illumination, airstrikes, or artillery fire support. The only illumination provided by friendly ground sources - the ARVN Marine Task Force - was not continuous. In most cases, a few minutes elapsed between rounds, consequently allowing the enemy to move around boxes and buildings during the periods of darkness. At 0245, a loud explosion was heard. The enemy had placed explosives on two posts at the water level and, when detonated, caused 100 feet of the north lane to collapse, reducing the flow of traffic from four to two lanes. The enemy withdrew by 0400 and the exchange of fire ceased.^{27/}

Psywar

Prior to 5 May, the Psywar Program conducted recovery operations from the Tet Offensive which primarily consisted of civic action (humanitarian relief) projects. The long range programs were directed at the enemy forces, outlining their shortcomings during Tet and declaring the ideology of Communism invalid. At the outbreak on 5 May, the Psywar Teams had to discontinue long range programs, which had normal priority, and once again, as during Tet, concentrate

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on civic action projects. Also, loudspeaker missions and leaflet drops were flown in direct support of combat operations. The loudspeaker missions broadcast news and extended pleas to the people to support the government.^{28/}

Strike/Reconnaissance Effort

During the period 5-31 May, a total of 500 fixed wing sorties struck within a radius of eight kilometers from the center of Saigon. The VNAF A-1Hs and F-5s accounted for 185 of the sorties. USAF F-100s carried the bulk of the American effort with a total of 241 sorties, while the A-37s and F-4s had 50 and 24, respectively. The known results of the strikes are depicted below (destroyed and damaged bunkers and structures are grouped under one figure):^{29/}

<u>KBA</u>	<u>STRUCTURES</u>	<u>BUNKERS</u>	<u>SECONDARY EXPLOSIONS</u>
119	756	360	19

Not included in the structures damaged or destroyed column is a combat mission report by the flight leader of three VNAF A-1Hs which struck in the heart of Cholon on 7 May. He could only report, "Many destroyed". On 9 May, a flight of two F-100s reported 103 structures destroyed after a strike in a heavily populated area on the southern edge of the city.^{30/}

To illustrate the type ordnance delivered by tac air, gunships, and artillery during the period 5-13 May, the following list shows the fire support in Precinct 8 (south of the Saigon River):^{31/}

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<u>TACTICAL AIR</u>		<u>GUNSHIPS</u>		<u>ARTILLERY (US and VN)</u>	
<u>WEIGHT</u>	<u>NUMBER</u>	<u>CALIBER</u>	<u>ROUNDS</u>	<u>CALIBER</u>	<u>ROUNDS</u>
250 lbs	2	7.62mm	173,084	105mm	4,403
500 lbs	117	2.75in Rkts	1,447	155mm	83
750 lbs	14	40mm	761	8in	37
Napalm	80	TOTAL	175,292	TOTAL	4,523
TOTAL	213				

In III Corps, U.S. FAC missions controlling fighters rose by 192 over April's effort, while the VNAF FAC sorties rose dramatically from 33 in April to 73 in May. The visual reconnaissance sorties of the VNAF remained constant for both months; however, the USAF effort decreased by 72 in May, reflecting the increase of fighter control missions.^{32/}

The 7AF photo reconnaissance effort in the defense of Saigon was quite significant. In an area around the city bounded by UTM grids XS 600800 - XS 990800 - XT 990100 - XT 600100, which is approximately 1200 square kilometers, there were 79 reconnaissance sorties flown in a 30-day period between 15 May and 13 June 1968. A total of 87 targets were covered and film analysis showed that 56 of the targets received 85 percent or better coverage, for a 64 percent success rate. This total includes 47 reconnaissance plan missions (missions that are a result of a MACV J-2 once-a-month schedule on projected reconnaissance requirements), 10 Army, and 22 Air Force special add-ons. Reconnaissance plans and Army request missions had the objective of developing target base data and locating enemy defenses. Seventh Air Force, on its own initiative, generated and processed 22 photo missions for special coverage of the Saigon area. This coverage included 13 missions for the preparation of

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an uncontrolled 1:5000 scale mosaic for use by ground units in planning local security. Six special missions were flown to further develop significant findings on the above mosaics. The last three missions provided high acuity coverage of urban Saigon and the imagery, plots, traces, and interpretation reports were provided to the field commanders. Neither Infrared nor Side Looking Radar was used by 7AF reconnaissance aircraft ^{33/}

Of the targets covered, 27 significant intelligence items were found: twelve concentrations of foxholes, six bunkers, two bridges, four automatic weapons positions, and three communications sites. Seven of the significant items were targeted and struck. ^{34/} For a comparison, the photo reconnaissance sorties flown in May in III Corps increased by 145 over those flown in April, rising from 731 to 876. The bulk of the increase was absorbed by RF-4 aircraft, whose sortie effort rose from 292 to 439. ^{35/}

In the same 30-day period, 19 C-47 gunship (Spooky) missions expended 574 flares and 75,300 rounds of 7.62mm ordnance. Most of the expenditure was in support of 12 incidents of troops in contact. In addition, one rocket position was attacked and there was one attack against VC in the open. The C-47 flareships (Moonshine) expended 584 flares in support of seven ground attacks. ^{36/}

The sharply increased B-52 raids beginning in early May were credited with assisting in preventing the enemy from massing against Saigon. The VC were caught in a partial dilemma in that large forces and supplies were needed to penetrate friendly defenses, but these concentrations, in turn,

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were susceptible to heavy losses from airpower and artillery. In the period from 5 May until 30 June, a total of 997 B-52 sorties were flown within 40 kilometers of downtown Saigon. An example of the increased effort occurred during the period 14 to 21 June, when over 60 percent of the total ARC LIGHT effort was directed into the 40 kilometer box. Pre-strike intelligence identified numerous active rocket sites, ammunition supply points, base camps, storage areas, and heavy troop concentrations.^{37/}

For the most part, the Bomb Damage Assessment (BDA) in the jungle areas was not spectacular, except in those few cases where a ground sweep by an Army unit was conducted. On the rare occasions when this occurred, the results were most gratifying. If ground sweeps were not made, the enemy had a chance to "police up" the target area. FAC BDA was limited to what the FAC could see in the area cleared by the bomb blast, which generally was not apparent under the heavy jungle canopy. Furthermore, in areas of massive strikes - such as during the week of 14 to 21 June - BDA was next to impossible due to the churning effect of the ordnance.^{38/}

III Corps, as a whole, received sharply increased B-52 sorties during the first half of 1968. The following reflects a comparison of ARC LIGHT usage in III Corps:^{39/}

<u>1 August 1967-31 December 1967</u>		<u>1 January 1968-30 June 1968</u>	
<u>Targets Struck</u>	<u>Sorties</u>	<u>Targets Struck</u>	<u>Sorties</u>
88	531	299	1,797

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TOTAL RESULTS AS RECORDED BY
 HEADQUARTERS, CAPITAL MILITARY DISTRICT
 FOR THE PERIOD 050400-130600 MAY 1968

<u>UNIT</u>	<u>5th RGR GP</u>	<u>ARVN GEN RES BNS</u>	<u>US BNS</u>	<u>RF</u>	<u>PP</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
Killed in Action	23	59	76	5	3	166
Wounded in Action	132	190	338	37	27	724
Missing in Action	3	8	1	0	5	17
Ind Weapons Losses	3	11	1	0	0	15
VC KIA (Body Count)	510	535	1941	56	16	3058
VC KIA (Possible)	35	0	0	16	2	53
Prisoners of War	74	86	51	4	6	221
Detainees	8	137	6	23	0	174
Individual Weapons	78	152	224	8	8	470
Crew Served Weapons	56	45	7	3	1	112
Ammunition	605	18188	24500	1504	3	44800
Mines	3	0	0	0	0	3
Grenades	113	108	119	66	0	406
Bunkers	0	0	5	6	0	11
Sampans	0	0	10	1	2	13
Pounds of rice	0	0	800	800	0	1600
Chieu Hoi	0	0	0	2	3	5

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FIGURE 7

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The confirmed KBA for the time period of heightened activity from 3 to 9 May rose sharply in III Corps, reaching a total of 285 accredited to the USAF and VNAF, plus 437 more KBA were recorded by the end of the month. ^{40/}

These figures were over twice the normal KBA reached in the previous three months.

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CHAPTER V

DAMAGE

MACV field evaluators, after air and ground observation, estimated 10,000 houses destroyed in Saigon as a result of the May Offensive. Estimates from other sources went as high as 13,000 houses destroyed or damaged. The destruction was most severe in Precinct 8, in the southwestern corner of the city, and the neighboring Precincts 6 and 7.^{1/}

News media assigned the bulk of the destruction to airstrikes, artillery, and fires, creating a controversy over whether the military success of the fire support compensated for the inevitable anger generated in the civilian populace. Residents of the precincts suffering the heaviest losses were interviewed by newsmen and credited the pilots with deadly accuracy. "They fired very precisely against the Viet Cong, they kill a lot of them, I saw them die. The American bombs were also very precise. They landed right where the VC were hiding."^{2/}

The VC chose, in many cases, the better constructed homes for refuge or for launching attacks. For example, an entire street of 115 cement block homes in the Cholon section had been recently built with American supplied material. The difference between those houses and ones adjacent was quite pronounced. The new houses had better walls and the floors were thicker. The VC occupied these structures early in the fighting and, less than an hour after the initial bombing started, every home was uninhabitable, with many completely destroyed and the rest badly damaged.^{3/}

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The latest scars on Cholon could not be blamed totally on fire supporting arms. If unable to provoke destruction by allied forces, the enemy initiated conflagrations. Eye witnesses who owned houses in many of the burned out areas reported they saw the enemy move in carrying rags and tins of kerosene and deliberately set fire to the houses. They would set fire to one of the more flimsily-built structures, the fire would spread and, in some cases, a hundred houses burned down.^{4/}

An uncontrollable factor that added significantly to the heavy destruction in the city was the unusually high winds, which greatly enlarged damage by fire. For example, the VC were embedded in a particular building south of the Saigon River and could not be dislodged. An airstrike directed by the Chief of Police was brought in and the resulting fire was spread across the street by high winds, burning out houses not occupied by the enemy. The Chief of Police said the airstrike was "absolutely necessary" because of the thick walls of the buildings, which were resistant to other types of supporting arms.^{5/}

Certainly contributing to the adverse reaction to aerial-delivered ordnance was the short round incident which occurred on 2 June 1968. In Cholon, four and one-half kilometers southwest of the Saigon Presidential Palace, a group of high-ranking Vietnamese officials were visiting the scene of a small VC assault to personally observe the action. A rocket round, fired by a helicopter assigned to the U.S. Army 120th Assault Helicopter Company, impacted on the group. When the rubble was cleared, six of the officials were dead and four wounded.^{6/} Among those killed was

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Lt Col Nguyen Van Luan, the Police Chief of Saigon, an able and highly respected officer.

In a U.S. Army analysis of the May Offensive, the use of Light Fire Teams was, more often than not, ineffective for support in built-up or populated areas. The Army report concluded that the most effective support for urban fighting was the utilization of tactical fixed wing aircraft delivering large bombs and napalm. Also, it stated, that tactical air was not utilized to the extent available as the Vietnamese were reluctant to permit the destruction of homes, factories, and public buildings.^{7/}

Further emphasizing the requirement for air-delivered ordnance, in an After Action Report, the 3d Brigade, 9th Infantry Division, reported that:^{8/}

"In the application of firepower, all elements of the Division, the U.S. Air Force, and supporting aviation showed maximum restraint. The tactical movement of troops was such that the Commanding General, 9th Infantry Division, himself observed on two occasions that the maneuver employed actually was done in a manner which may have caused more U.S. casualties rather than allow weapons fire to enter the city of Saigon. During the period of the battle, the U.S. Air Force dropped 202 bombs, of which 33% were napalm. The bombing was limited to the outskirts of the built-up area, and to areas where the VC were dug in and U.S. troops were receiving mortar, small arms, and machinegun fire. When VC fire could not be countered with divisional resources, it was necessary to call on the use of the Air Force. The Air Force support in many cases was the key to breaking down the resistance of the enemy, and without this support the loss of lives would have been much greater."

Testifying to the need for heavy ordnance and to the ability of fixed wing aircraft to operate in an urban environment, a FAC in the CMD, who

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