CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Directorate of Intelligence
8 February 1968

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

The Situation in South Vietnam: No. 15
(AE of 1000 A.M. EST)

1. Allied forces appear to have regained the
    initiative in many of South Vietnam's urban areas.
    Most of the major provincial capitals were reported
    relatively quiet throughout the night of 4-5 Feb-
    ruary and into the morning. Bitter fighting still
    continues in Hue, however, as well as in isolated
    sections of Saigon and in several large cities
    and district towns. The Communists also hit at
    Khe Sanh after a long period of relative quiet.

2. There have been no significant political
developments since those reported in the 5 Febru-
yary Central Intelligence Bulletin.

Khe Sanh

3. Early on 6 February, US Marines drove back
    some 100 to 200 North Vietnamese regulars during an
    assault on the defensive position atop strategic
    Hill 881. The attack was staged in conjunction
    with a four-hour artillery, rocket, and mortar
    barrage on the main base camp of Khe Sanh.

4. Communist losses totaled 100 killed in
    contrast to American casualties of seven killed
    and 44 wounded. No major damage to the base was
    reported and the airstrip remains open.

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3 Corps

8. Bitter, door-to-door fighting was reported continuing in Hue as US and South Vietnamese soldiers exert increasing pressure on pockets of enemy resistance in several sectors of the city. Progress was slow, with determined Communist elements clinging to isolated strongpoints in the citadel and on the south bank of the Perfume River.

9. Heavy fighting erupted in the market place of Tri An Phong, a district capital just to the north of Quang Tri city, at mid-morning today. Additionally some four, possibly eight, Communist battalions are reported moving toward Quang Tri City from the south, and it is possible that a new attack is underway in this area, although there is no other confirmation of the report.

10. Other reports state the Communists are planning to strike the provincial capitals of Tan Ky and Quang Ninh city and several district towns sometime before 10 January. Although such reports of imminent enemy action may be part of a Communist scare campaign, the enemy still retains the potential to mount at least limited attacks, supported by mortar and rocket-forays throughout 1 Corps.

11. There are no developments on the missing of North Vietnamese forces, including the entire 2nd Division, in the Dong Ha Bong area reported in our Sitrep of 3 and 4 February.

4th Corps

12. During the night of 4-5 February and up to mid-morning today, there was relatively little enemy offensive activity throughout the central part of South Vietnam. Allied forces continue to flush out areas where small elements are held up in several cities such as Tuy Hoa, Ban Me Thuot, and Dujat. In Kontum and Pleiku, the situation was reported "very quiet." Sporadic, light mortar attacks were directed at a few cities last night but damage and casualties were reported light.
10. Communist military forces in the western highlands, under the direction of the B-3 Front, continue to pose a substantial threat to key cities and major allied outposts there. Three regiments of the North Vietnamese 1st Division have been relocating to the Dak To area in Central Kontum Province. This maneuver was further confirmed by two prisoners purportedly from the North Vietnamese 32nd Regiment which, according to the captives, is about to launch a three-pronged attack on Dak To, together with the 66th and 114th regiments. A rocket and mortar attack there on 3 February was reported earlier. Other Communist main force units remain active in the vicinity of Kontum and Pleiku cities, and another major round of fighting could develop there.

III Corps

11. No new attacks were reported in the III Corps area last night or early this morning.

Saigon

12. The heaviest fighting last night was in Cholon, the Chinese quarter in the southwest corner of the capital, but firing incidents have been reported in nearly every section.

13. US intelligence sources in Saigon feel that a relatively small number of Viet Cong are responsible for the most recent terrorist activities. At noon on 5 February (local Vietnam time) US officials estimated that less than 100 Viet Cong “action agents” remained in the city with probably three-four battalions on the boundaries of the western precincts.

14. Strong enemy main forces, in addition, still appear to be deployed within striking range of the capital. There is further evidence that the Viet Cong 9th Division has moved towards Saigon from northwest III Corps, a movement which was reported earlier based on captured documents.
The US Command disclosed last night that prisoners from all three regiments of the 9th Division have been captured in recent days in the general area north and west of Saigon.

15. Information has come in from a number of prisoner interrogations which tend to support the theory that, in general, the Communists may have believed that the people of Saigon and other urban areas were "ripe for revolution." Low level cadre, for example, apparently were not provided with withdrawal plans since their superiors told them there could be no question but that a "general uprising" would be sparked.

16. Nevertheless, the Communist high command was prudent enough not to commit all of their reserves to the first assault. Thus, it is possible that the viewpoints expressed by the prisoners mainly represent exhortative propaganda pumped into them by the hardcore cadre, and are not true representations of the real Communist estimates and intentions.

IV Corps

17. US forces remained in contact with an estimated 100 Viet Cong within the provincial capital of Vinh Long early this morning. Fighting also continued within or on the outskirts of a number of other provincial capitals and district towns in the delta.

18. At Go Cong a small Viet Cong force released over 100 prisoners from the provincial jail; Tra Vinh continues to be surrounded by some 2,000 of the enemy.