CEASEFIRE. TO SUPPORT THIS FORCE, THE COMMUNISTS HAVE ALSO DEPLOYED
REGIMENTAL AND BATTALION-SIZE HEADQUARTERS ELEMENTS THROUGHOUT
SOUTH VIETNAM. IN MR-1, WE ESTIMATE THAT THE NVA HAVE SOME 300
TANKS. THERE ARE 11 BATTALIONS AND 3 REGIMENTAL LEVEL ARNOR COM-
MANDS DEPLOYED IN THE REGION. IN MR-2, THERE ARE FOUR TANK BATTALION
HEADQUARTERS AND SOME 115-135 TANKS. FARTHER SOUTH IN MR-3, THERE
IS ONE REGIMENTAL-LEVEL COMMAND, FIVE TANK BATTALION HEADQUARTERS
AND APPROX 190-200 TANKS. NO ARMOR IS ACCEPTED IN GVN MR-4.

23. (S) ACCORDING TO NVA DOCTRINE, AN ARMOR REGIMENTAL HEADQUARTERS
IS NOT AN OPERATIONAL COMMAND. OPERATIONAL CONTROL OF ITS BATTALIONS
IS EXERCISED BY INFANTRY COMMANDERS OF SUPPORTED UNITS. THE STAFF
RESPONSIBILITIES OF AN ARMOR REGIMENTAL HQ INCLUDE STAFF ARMOR TACTI-
CIAN AND AN ARMOR CAPABILITIES ADVISOR. ADMINISTRATIVE FUNCTIONS
ARE TO TRAIN ARMOR PERSONNEL AND FORM UNITS. LOGISTICAL FUNCTIONS
ARE VEHICLE MAINTENANCE AND DISTRIBUTION OF LOGISTICAL RELATED ITEMS.
IT SHOULD BE EMPHASIZED THAT THE NVA HAS NEVER TRAINED IN MANEU-
VERING REGIMENTAL-SIZE ARMOR FORMATIONS. DURING THE NGUYEN HUE

DISTURB
24. (S) HUMINT REPORTING INDICATES THAT TRAINING AND MANEUVERING OF NVA ARMOR ELEMENTS CONTINUE TO BE FOCUSED ON COMPANY AND BATTALION LEVELS. EMPHASIS HAS BEEN PLACED ON COMBINED ARMS (ARTILLERY, INFANTRY AND ARMOR) TACTICS. FUTURE ARMOR-INFANTRY ATTACKS WILL INVOLVE TANK FORMATIONS OF COMPANY AND BATTALION ECHELONS UNDER THE TACTICAL CONTROL OF THE SENIOR INFANTRY COMMANDER IN THE OPERATION. RECENT ENEMY ARMOR OPERATIONS INDICATE THAT HE HAS IMPROVED HIS ARMOR TACTICS, AND SOME OF THE DEFICIENCIES NOTED DURING THE '72 OFFENSIVE MAY HAVE BEEN CORRECTED.

IN AIR DEFENSE DEVELOPMENTS, RECENT REPORTING INDICATES THAT THE NVA HAS EXPANDED ITS AIR DEFENSE NETWORK TO MR-3. PRIOR TO THE JANUARY CEASEFIRE, THE NVA HAD ONE AAA REGIMENT AND INDISTINCT TACTICAL UNITS.

26. (S) DAO SAIGON BELIEVES THAT HANOI HAS ALL THE ARMOR, ARTILLERY AND LOGISTICS IN SOUTH VIETNAM NECESSARY TO PURSUE ANY OF THE FOLLOWING COURSES OF ACTION:

DISTR:

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

SPECIAL DISTR.

DD 543210
POLITICAL: TO CREATE A RECOGNIZED GOVERNMENT WITHIN SVN CAPABLE OF COMPETING WITH GVN IN ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL STRUGGLES.

LIMITED MILITARY OFFENSIVE: A PHASED MILITARY OFFENSIVE DESIGNED TO GRADUALLY CREATE A MILITARY, ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL SITUATION BEYOND CAPABILITY OF GVN TO MANAGE.

MAJOR MILITARY OFFENSIVE: TO CAUSE THE IMMEDIATE COLLAPSE OF THE GOVERNMENT AND THE ARMED FORCES. FURTHER, WE BELIEVE THAT THE ENEMY IS BEGINNING TO COMMIT THE MANPOWER TO RAISE HIS COMBAT FORCES TO LEVELS THAT WILL PERMIT INITIATION OF EITHER OF THE MILITARY OPTIONS. WE BELIEVE THAT HANOI HAS DECIDED THAT A MILITARY SOLUTION TO THE VIETNAM PROBLEM IS NECESSARY.

27. (C) ALTHOUGH PUBLIC NVN STATEMENTS IN THE PAST HAVE REFLECTED GENERAL SATISFACTION WITH THE CEASEFIRE AGREEMENTS, RECENT DEVIATIONS FROM PAST PRONOUNCEMENTS HAVE BEEN NOTED. CEASEFIRE VIOLATION PROTESTS HAVE BEEN MADE THROUGH FORMAL MINISTRY STATEMENTS RATHER THAN THROUGH LOW-LEVEL SPOKESMEN. NOTES PROTESTING VIOLATIONS WERE RECENTLY SENT TO THE PARTS AGREEMENT SIGNATORIES FOR THE FIRST
TIME SINCE APRIL. Finally, the PLAF recently issued an unprecedented order in which ceasefire violations were assailed and communist counterattacks were threatened. In regard to the last point, the First Central Peoples' Liberation Armed Forces order issued on the subject of ceasefire violations protested specific GVN "nibbling" operations in Kontum, Pleiku, Ca Lay, and Chuong Thien, as well as air strikes in northern MR-3. The order stated the following: "As long as the Saigon administration continues its acts of war, the PLAF must resolutely counterattack its forces anywhere, in appropriate forces, and force the adversary to scrupulously and strictly implement the Paris Agreement..."

28. (c) In South Vietnam, Liberation Radio, in a commentary on this order, gave the following interpretation:

"If they attack us in an area, we will counterattack them in the same area and attack them in other places as well. If they send aircraft and artillery to bomb and shell our liberated areas, we will counterattack them in the same areas and also directly attack them there."

DISTR

[Redacted]
30. (C) IN ADDITION, HE HAS PLACED THE BLAME FOR THE "FAILURE" OF THE CEASEFIRE ON THE U.S. AND THE GVN IN ORDER TO JUSTIFY ANY FUTURE ACTIONS. THE DISSEMINATION OF THIS PROPAGANDA LINE TO COMBAT UNITS SEEMS DESIGNED TO PREPARE THE TROOPS PSYCHOLOGICALLY FOR RENEWED COMBAT.

31. (S) REPORTS FROM VARIOUS SOURCES IN SOUTH VIETNAM, PRIMARILY
HUMINT, also suggest that the communists are planning to increase
the tempo of military action. These reports have centered on two
basic time frames--late 1973 and early 1974, each with a specific
series of objectives. Generally, the guidance for military action
in late 1973 centers on an increased tempo of military activity at
various points throughout the Republic to achieve specific localized
objectives. Recent COSVN guidance has acknowledged that limited
country-wide operations would be undertaken, but emphasized that
these attacks were not to be interpreted as the commencement of a
major offensive. These limited operations are designed to
accomplish the following:

- Defend "liberated" areas against RVNAF encroachments
- Force RVNAF to comply with the parts agreements
- Contain RVNAF in bases and defensive positions
- Obtain the maximum amount of rice--a "live or death"
mission according to COSVN directives
- Prevent rice from reaching SVN markets
- Bring additional people under PCG control
TO: 

TEST KIWHN REACTIONS IN ORDER TO FACILITATE FUTURE CONTINGENCY PLANNING.

THE SUCCESS IN ACCOMPLISHING THESE NEAR-TERM MISSIONS, ESPECIALLY THE ACQUISITION OF THE RICE HARVEST, IS ALSO RELATED TO SETTING THE STAGE FOR LONGER-TERM OBJECTIVES. THE LONG-TERM OBJECTIVE MOST PROMINENTLY MENTIONED IS MAKING ADEQUATE PREPARATIONS FOR A GENERAL OFFENSIVE IN EARLY 1974. VARIOUS HUMINT SOURCES INDICATE THAT BOTH LOCAL AND MAIN FORCE UNITS HAVE RECEIVED INSTRUCTIONS TO BRING UNITS UP TO FULL STRENGTH, STOCKPILE PROVISIONS, AND INCREASE POLITICAL ACTIVITIES BY 25 NOVEMBER IN PREPARATION FOR A GENERAL OFFENSIVE EARLY NEXT YEAR. THE SHIFT IN PROPAGANDA AND RECENT ENEMY OPERATIONS PARTICULARLY IN QUANG NGAI, DINH TUONG AND CHUONG THIEN PROVINCES, DEMONSTRATE THAT THE ENEMY WILL INCREASE HIS MILITARY ACTIVITY.

32. (C) ONE OF THE MOST SERIOUS ENEMY THREATS DURING A PERIOD OF "LOW PROFILE" MILITARY OPERATIONS IS THAT OF THE SAPPER. THESE UNITS ARE ORGANIZED AND TRAINED FOR OPERATIONS AGAINST SUCH TARGETS AS MILITARY COMMAND CENTERS, OUTPOSTS, TROOP CONCENTRATIONS, NATIONAL
FROM:

TO:

POLICE COMMAND CENTERS AND POLICE STATIONS, POL AND AMMO DUMPS, INDUSTRIAL FACILITIES, BRIDGES, RAILROADS AND HEAVILY TRAVELLED LOCUS. SUCCESS AGAINST THESE TYPES OF TARGETS PROVIDES THE ENEMY WITH THE CAPABILITY TO CREATE WIDESPREAD DISRUPTION OF THE CVN ECONOMY, THE DOWN ARVN FORCES THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY, AND CREATE A HIGHLY-DISTORTED STRENGTH IMAGE WITH MINIMUM FORCES BEING COMMITTED. IN ADDITION TO THE PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT RESULTING FROM INCREASED SAPPER OPERATIONS, THE USE OF THESE FORCES SHOULD BE EXPECTED DURING A PHASED OFFENSIVE OR PRIOR TO A MAJOR OFFENSIVE.


34. (S) OVERALL, THE ENEMY WITHIN SOUTH VIETNAM HAS SOME 18,000-
TO:

20,000 TRAINED SAPPER PERSONNEL FORMED INTO TEAMS OF 5-10 MEN TARGETED AGAINST LOC'S AND FIXED KVNAF INSTALLATIONS. WE EXPECT AN UPLIFT OF ACTIVITY BY THESE UNITS DURING THE NEXT TWO MONTHS IN SUPPORT OF THE ENEMY'S LATEST DIRECTIVES.

35. (C) THE COMMUNIST RICE PROCUREMENT EFFORT BEGAN CONCURRENTLY WITH THE INITIAL PERIOD OF HARVEST DURING THE PAST MONTH, AND HAS TAKEN ON VARIOUS FORMS TO CAPITALIZE ON LOCAL CONDITIONS. IN MR'S 1 AND 2, THE VC AND NVA HAVE HELD ON SHIPMENTS FROM NVN, CULTIVATION WITHIN CONTROLLED AREAS, ACCOMMODATION ON THE PART OF FARMERS AND MERCHANTS AND TAXATION TO OBTAIN NEEDED RICE SUPPLIES. THESE SOURCES HAVE ENABLED THE ENEMY TO ACCUMULATE SUFFICIENT RICE FOR HIS MAIN FORCE UNITS IN THE NEAR-TERM FUTURE. DESPITE THE LOW AMOUNT OF COMBAT ACTIVITY WHICH MAY BE ATTRIBUTED TO RICE PROCUREMENT, IT MUST BE NOTED THAT THIS IS AN ON-GOING PROCESS, AND LOCALIZED CONTACTS CAN BE EXPECTED AS THE HARVEST DRIVES TO A CLOSE.

36. (S/NF) IN MR-3, THERE IS NO EVIDENCE THAT THE COMMUNISTS HAVE HAD TO RESORT TO COMBAT ACTIVITY IN ORDER TO OBTAIN RICE FOR
CURRENT CONSUMPTION. THIS ASSESSMENT FROM THE ARVN MILITARY SECURITY SERVICE (RSS) REVEALS THAT CVN SECURITY MEASURES HAVE NOT BEEN EFFECTIVE:

"HOWEVER, SATISFACTORY RESULTS HAVE NOT BEEN OBTAINED BECAUSE A NUMBER OF SERVICEMEN, BEING UNABLE TO SUPPORT THEIR FAMILIES ON THEIR LOW SALARIES, PERSONALLY OR THROUGH THEIR RELATIVES, DO BUSINESS WITH THE COMMUNISTS IN ORDER TO EARN A PROFIT. THEY TAKE THEIR RISK OF BEING JAILED FOR SUCH TRANSACTIONS. PARTICULARLY, A NUMBER OF RVNAF OFFICERS (INCLUDING FIELD GRADE OFFICERS), WHO CAN SUPPORT THEIR FAMILIES, ENTHUSIASTICALLY ENGAGE IN ACTIVITIES TO SUPPORT MERCHANTS WHO SELL ESSENTIAL SUPPLIES TO THE COMMUNISTS. THEY EVEN USE MAN POWER AND FACILITIES OF THEIR UNITS IN THEIR PERSONAL ACTIVITIES IN ORDER TO MAKE MORE MONEY."

WHILE ACCOMMODATION, DEPLETION OF STOCKS AND CONFISCATION IN CONTESTED AREAS HAVE BEEN ADEQUATE TO THIS POINT, FUTURE REQUIREMENTS WILL DEMAND MORE THAN THE ENEMY CURRENTLY IS ESTIMATED TO POSSESS.
37. (C) IN THE EVENT OF A MAJOR OFFENSIVE, LARGE STOCKPILES OF RICE WILL BE CRITICAL FOR THE FOLLOWING REASONS:

INfiltrators will increase food requirements.

Stockpiles required because combat conditions preclude the rapid and timely distribution of rice.

Prepositioned rice caches will be required for combat operations.

Cache losses due to RVNFP combat operations spoilage.

38. (C) IN MR.-N, A SHARP INCREASE IN ACTIVITY IN DINH TUONG MAY HAVE BEEN THE INITIAL PHASE OF AN IMPENDING RICE BATTLE. ELEMENTS OF THE Z.18 AND DT.1 REGIMENTS REPORTEDLY HAVE BEEN PROVIDING SECURITY AND CONDUCTING DIVERSIONARY ATTACKS TO PROTECT AND SCREEN LOCAL FORCES, ELEMENTS GATHERING RICE AND TAXES IN NEIGHBORING KIEN PHONG PROVINCE. MOBILE FORCE BATTALIONS REPORTEDLY HAVE BEEN PREVENTING SAMPANS FROM BRINGING RICE TO SELLING POINTS IN URBAN AREAS. THESE EFFORTS APPEAR TO BE ONLY PRELIMINARY MEASURES, WITH MUCH MORE VISIBLE AND AGGRESSIVE MEANS TO BE APPLIED THROUGHOUT THE AREA.
THE DELTA DURING THE NEXT TWO MONTHS.

39. (C) BEYOND MERELY FULFILLING HIS OWN RICE REQUIREMENTS THROUGHOUT SOUTH VIETNAM, THE ENEMY IS DISRUPTING THE HARVEST TO CREATE FOOD SHORTAGES FOR THE GVN. IN ADDITION, SUBSEQUENT INFLATION UNDOUBTEDLY WILL BE VIEWED AS HELPING TO CREATE A "NEUTRALIZED POPULACE" WITH DIMINISHED CONFIDENCE IN THE GVN. THIS TERMINOLOGY HAS BEEN VOICED IN COSVN PLANS AND REPRESENTS A DEPARTURE FROM PAST UNREALISTIC SCENARIOS OF AN ARMED UPRISING. IF FOOD PRICES CONTINUE TO CLimb, THERE WILL BE A CORRESPONDING INCREASE IN LOW LEVEL CORRUPTION, A FACTOR WHICH ALREADY DAMPENS THE ENTHUSIASM OF THE COMMON CITIZEN, AS WELL AS RVNAF SOLDIERS AND TERRITORIAL FORCES. THUS, ALTHOUGH OPEN COMBAT OVER THE HARVEST HAS BEEN MINIMAL AND LOCALIZED OVER THE PAST MONTH, IT APPEARS LIKELY THAT THIS WILL NOT BE THE CASE IN THE CRITICAL WEEKS TO COME.

40. (S) IN CONCLUSION, RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN ENEMY LOGISTICS, INFILTRATION, AND COMMUNIST PROPAGANDA INDICATE THAT HANOI HAS SHIFTED FROM THE POLITICAL STRUGGLE TO THE INITIAL STAGES OF A
FROM:

PHASED MILITARY OFFENSIVE WHICH WOULD INVOLVE THE FOLLOWING PHASES:

PHASE I - ELIMINATION OF OUTPOSTS
PHASE II - ATTACKS TO MAIN LOC'S
PHASE III - ATTACKS ON MAJOR PROVINCE CAPITALS
PHASE IV - MAJOR ATTACK IN MR-3

40. (S) WE BELIEVE THAT MILITARY ACTIVITY WILL CONTINUE TO INCREASE OVER THE NEXT TWO MONTHS. ADDITIONALLY, DURING THIS PERIOD, THE DRY SEASON INFILTRATION RATE AND THE ENEMY'S UNIT DEPLOYMENTS WILL BE KEYS AS TO WHETHER THE ENEMY WILL ESCALATE THE PHASED OFFENSIVE TO A MAJOR COUNTRY-WIDE EFFORT TO DEFEAT DECISIVELY THE ARMY FORCES OF THE REPUBLIC.

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