FEbruary Threat Assessment

1. (S) Over the past month the Communists have continued to increase their combat capability in the south. This month's Intelligence Summary and Threat Analysis addresses the following subjects:
   a. North Vietnam Mobilization
   b. North Vietnam Logistics
   c. Infiltration
      (1) Personnel
      (2) Armor
      (3) Artillery
   d. Exfiltration
   e. Air and Air Defense Developments
   f. Enemy Offensive Capabilities and Intentions
      (1) MR-1
      (2) MR-2
      (3) MR-3
      (4) MR-4
   g. Conclusion

2. (S) North Vietnam is apparently initiating its first major troop recruitment campaign in 1974. Hanoi radio broadcasts indicate that at least four provinces (Cao Bang, Ha Bac, Hai Hung and Nghe An) are preparing youths for inductions. It is uncertain what the overall intensity of this possible country-wide recruitment campaign will be, but recent emphasis by NVN news media on recruitment accomplishments in 1973 and the importance of motivating eligible youths to "enlist" in the Army suggest that the current recruitment drive will be a major one.

3. (S) Concerning infiltration, the NVA is ahead of its announced rate for the Lao dry season. Shown below is the total infiltration to date for 1974 compared with 1973.
In logistics activity, DIA estimates that 18 to 20,000 short tons of supplies were moved into SVN via the DMZ and Dong Ha Port Facility in February. In addition, it has apparently been infiltrating a substantial number of heavy items through S. Laos, of which material arrives about 30% at the Con Thien area. Although complete data is lacking, DAO feels there are about 100-150 tanks involved in this effort. These tanks probably are to be used as replacements for the NVA's current inventory of enemy armor assets.

Concerning artillery pieces, at least 30, of which 130MMs, are currently moving through S. Laos. Although the final destination of the guns is not known, they probably be given to existing artillery battalions. Shown below is DAO's estimate of enemy artillery assets in SVN:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>DMZ/MERRIT</th>
<th>COSVN</th>
<th>B-3 FRONT</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Artillery</td>
<td>50-60</td>
<td>100-120</td>
<td>25-30</td>
<td>175-245</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>130MMs</td>
<td>20-25</td>
<td>0-5</td>
<td>5-10</td>
<td>30-40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>152mm</td>
<td>20-25</td>
<td>0-5</td>
<td>5-10</td>
<td>30-40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>122mm</td>
<td>65-70</td>
<td>90-100</td>
<td>65-70</td>
<td>130-140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>105mm</td>
<td>5-10</td>
<td>90-100</td>
<td>65-70</td>
<td>130-140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80-100</td>
<td>90-100</td>
<td>65-70</td>
<td>130-140</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57mm</td>
<td>40-50</td>
<td>90-100</td>
<td>65-70</td>
<td>130-140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.36mm</td>
<td>70-80</td>
<td>90-100</td>
<td>65-70</td>
<td>130-140</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total infiltration:
- 130-140 pieces
- 295-320 130MMs
- 560-670 152mm
- 460-550 122mm
- 165-170 105mm
- 90-100 80-100
- 90-100 57mm
- 70-80 2.36mm

Total in-country:
- 100-120 pieces
- 60-65 130MMs
- 100-115 152mm
- 25-30 122mm
- 10-15 105mm
- 5-10 80-100
- 5-10 57mm
- 10-15 2.36mm

Infiltrated:
- 115-180 pieces
- 60-65 130MMs
- 100-115 152mm
- 25-30 122mm
- 10-15 105mm
- 5-10 80-100
- 5-10 57mm
- 10-15 2.36mm

In-country:
- 75-100 pieces
- 60-65 130MMs
- 100-120 152mm
- 25-30 122mm
- 10-15 105mm
- 5-10 80-100
- 5-10 57mm
- 10-15 2.36mm

Total:
- 100-120 pieces
- 60-65 130MMs
- 100-115 152mm
- 25-30 122mm
- 10-15 105mm
- 5-10 80-100
- 5-10 57mm
- 10-15 2.36mm

Concerning the equivalent of one armor and one artillery regiment to the south, although complete data is lacking, DAO feels that there are about 100-150 tanks, mostly T-54's, involved in this effort. These tanks probably are to be used as replacements for the NVA's current in-country armor assets.
it is estimated that 10,000 tons of supplies were moved into Laos from NVN. Eighty to ninety per cent of the tonnage delivered to Dong Ha is probably food and construction material. An agent report, however, has indicated that some weapons and ammunition are delivered to the port and photography of 15 January revealed possible weapons crates at the port's storage facilities. DIA has also revised its estimate of supplies moved in-country during January:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>OLD</th>
<th>NEW</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DMZ</td>
<td>2,200</td>
<td>8,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DONG HA</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>12,200</td>
<td>18,500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Food accounted for 8,200 tons of the supplies delivered across the DMZ.

7. (S) In air defense activity during the past month, the NVA has continued its improvements. During February, the 246th AAA Regiment moved into Quang Tri Province from NVN. Additionally, two new AAA regiments have been identified in MR-1. The 591st AAA which had been in Quang Tri prior to the Ceasefire was reported to be deployed along Route 9 on the RVN/Laos border. Scattered reporting has also identified a 571st AAA Regiment in the Que Son Valley. This unit was probably formed from the 572nd Artillery Regiment during late 1973 and supports the 711th Division in the area. These AAA deployments increase the MR-1 total to 24 air defense regiments comprising a total of 87 battalions with up to 1,400 guns ranging in size from 12.7MM to 100MM.

8. (S) DAO Saigon has recognized the need to define the levels of enemy offensive operations in South Vietnam. Our definitions are expressed in terms of scope and objective.

9. (S) A General Offensive is a coordinated country-wide offensive, the purpose of which is to force the capitulation of the GVN. Historically, only the offensive of Tet '68 seems to qualify. In scope, that offensive was country-wide and, in objective, it struck at the seat of the government.

10. (S) A Phased Offensive is one that seeks the same final objective as the general offensive but seeks to achieve it over a longer period of time through the attack and seizure of secondary objectives. The cumulative effect of a series of successful attacks would eventually cause the collapse of the...
military, economic and political structure of South Vietnam.

11. (S) Major attacks are defined as coordinated offensive operations within the framework of the phased offensive.

12. (S) Limited attacks are offensive operations to seize secondary military and political objectives in order to expand area, population, and resources control and to undermine GVN military, economic and political well-being. They are also important elements in the phased offensive.

13. (S) Small-scale attacks are offensive operations against minor objectives to create and maintain disorder and tension in GVN controlled and contested areas, support proselytizing, cover movement, tie down RVNAF and collect resources. These operations are the lowest level of offensive action within the framework of the phased offensive.

14. (C) Based upon these definitions, the following is a review of the enemy's military capability, his level of activity, and his near-term intentions by military region.

15. (S) During the past month, in MR-1, order of battle developments included the following:

   a. A new artillery regiment, the 16th, has been identified west of Hue. This new unit will probably be used to support elements of the 324B Division/Front in operations west of the city. Jointly the 16th and 78th Artillery Regiments are estimated to have over 70 guns of 122 and 130 MM.

   b. The 572nd Artillery Regiment, which was formed from the original 572nd Armor/Artillery Regiment, has apparently created an AAA Regiment from its assets. This new regiment, designated the 571st AAA Regiment, is apparently assigned to the 711th Division.

   c. In Quang Ngai, the 141st and 12th Regiments have moved into the former AO of the 2nd NVA Division. The division was reportedly disbanded in June 1973, with two of its subordinate regiments deployed: One to Quang Nam and one to Binh Dinh. The recent shift of the 141st back to Quang Ngai from Binh Dinh indicates that the NVA may plan to rebuild either the 2nd or another division in this area. The 52nd Regiment, which was upgraded to brigade following the disbanding of the 2nd Division, could be reformed, along with the 141st Regiment and filler personnel, into a full division.

   d. Although the 12th Regiment/3rd Division, which also moved into Quang Ngai during February, could be used in this
new divisional structure, we believe that its move is only temporary and the unit will remain subordinate to the 3rd Division.

16. (S) A re-evaluation of the organization of NVA armor units in MR-1 has resulted in increased armor strength estimates.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regiment</th>
<th>Previous</th>
<th>Present</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>201ST REGT (4 Bns)</td>
<td>100-140</td>
<td>135-145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>202ND REGT (3 Bns)</td>
<td>75-105</td>
<td>110-120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>574TH REGT (3 Bns)</td>
<td>75-85</td>
<td>110-120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>250-330</td>
<td>355-385</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While detailed reporting has been limited on both armor units and strengths, infiltration of armor from the north and recent reporting indicates that armor units are being upgraded to full strength.

17. (S) The current region-wide order of battle for MR-1 is as follows:

a. Divisions - 4 (Plus 1 AD)
b. Regiments - 32 (Plus 24 AD)
c. Combat Personnel - 95-105,000
d. Admin Personnel - 30-35,000
e. Total Personnel - 125-140,000
f. Armor - 355-385
g. Artillery - 288-324

18. (S) Throughout MR-1, enemy activity is presently confined to small scale attacks. North of the Hai Van Pass, military activity is virtually at a standstill as enemy forces continue in developing extensive logistical networks and buildings a formidable air defense capability. In Quang Tri Province, north of the Thach Han River and in the A Shau Valley in Thua Thien, there are now major logistic areas capable of supporting a general offensive.

19. (S) To the south in VC MR-5, activity is at a higher
level, particularly in contested areas adjacent to Route 1. Quang Ngai Province is the scene of the most significant activity. Front 4, its 711th Div. and MR-559's/471 Group are developing bases in the Que Son Valley and along the Song Giang River. MR-5 rear service elements and Group 471 are extending and improving LOC's into Quang Ngai and Binh Dinh Provinces.

20. (S) Should the enemy choose to launch limited attacks in MR-1, the Go Noi Island area of Quang Nam Province, Son Tinh and Binh Son Districts of Quang Ngai Province and the Song Bo Corridor in Thua Thien would be the most likely objectives.

a. A limited attack directed toward gaining control of the Go Noi Island area west of Hoi An would be aimed at developing illegal trade activities in areas to the east as well as facilitating access to Hoi An and Danang.

b. In Son Tinh and Binh Son Districts of Quang Ngai, the enemy would attempt to gain control of ARVN outposts to the west and pin down ARVN forces near QL-1. As in the Go Noi Island area, enemy success here would facilitate Communist economic development through control of fertile lowland areas and access routes to the east where illegal trade activities with GVN merchants could be fostered.

c. Enemy attacks in the Song Bo Corridor would be directed toward eliminating ARVN positions along an important enemy logistics corridor.

21. (S) In northern MR-1, the enemy has the capability to launch a major attack at any time. Moreover, he would not have to conduct limited attacks in the area preparatory to a major one.

a. A decision to attack from north and west of the present defense line would likely involve the commitment of most of his maneuver forces in northern Quang Tri in an effort to secure the lowlands of the province. Reserve forces currently stationed in NVN would probably be deployed southward in the event of major attacks. The enemy currently has elements of six divisions in NVN, three of which - the 308, 312th and 320B - have previously been deployed in the south.

b. A major attack designed to capture the city of Hue, would require at least one additional division.

c. An attack on Danang would require reinforcement of the 711th Division in the Que Son Valley by at least one more division. Collateral reporting suggests that various local
force units in VC Quang Da Province would be amalgamated into one or perhaps two regiments. To date, such a development has failed to materialize, but if it were to occur, it would be a significant indicator of possible intentions to conduct major attacks in the area.

d. A fourth objective in MR-1 for major enemy attack is southern Quang Ngai Province in the vicinity of Sa Huynh. The Communists would require at least a division in order to create a credible threat to the area.

22. (S) Available intelligence on enemy intentions in MR-1 indicates that for the near future the enemy will continue selective small-scale attacks. The virtual absence of offensive action north of the Hai Van Pass is not expected to change substantially in the near future. Nevertheless, the enemy is building a significantly reinforced offensive capability opposite Hue. The possible formation of a new front based on the 324B Division, the appearance of the new 16th Artillery Regiment, and the constant flow of ammunition trucks and other supplies into forward positions are all indicators of offensive intent. In VC MR-5, Quang Ngai Provincial units are reportedly under instructions to regain areas lost to the GVN since the Ceasefire, but at the same time they have been told to limit the level of hostilities to avoid possible renewed U.S. intervention. While Quang Ngai has seen a substantial level of activity recently, there is no concrete evidence of coordinated major attacks. Additionally, we have seen no evidence that NVN is planning the commitment of its reserve divisions. But should it decide to move any of them south, it could have elements in Quang Tri in less than a week. The most opportune time for the Communists to launch major attacks in MR-1 is after April when the rains begin in Laos and the coastal areas of MR-1 become dry.

23. (S) Our estimate of the enemy's short-term intentions throughout the region area as follows:

a. Continue building and streamlining of force structure.
b. Develop political and economic base in "liberated" areas.
c. Construct and upgrade LOC's.
d. Defend against ARVN incursions into "liberated" areas.
e. Establish logistics and fire support bases well forward to support future offensive operations.

24. (S) In MR-2, reporting during the past month has indicated a decrease in the enemy's order of battle despite an enemy
buildup in the Central Highlands.

25. (S) In Binh Dinh Province the move of the 141st Regiment/2nd Division and the 12th Regiment/3rd Division out of northern Binh Dinh into southern Ba To of Quang Ngai Province decreases the current threat. The 12th Regiment/3rd Division, which has maintained pressure on ARVN forces in the vicinity of Tam Quan for several months, has probably moved north to refit. This unit is expected to return to Binh Dinh in the near future. These recent redeployments leave only the 2nd Regiment/3rd Division committed in the vicinity of Bong Son and the 21st Regiment/3rd Division in Base Area 226.

26. (S) In Quang Duc Province there has been a draw-down of COSVN forces. The 174th Regiment/5th Division deployed back to Tay Ninh Province in early February. The move of the 174th and the low level of enemy activity during late February indicate that COSVN has either delayed or called off reported plans for an increase in activity designed to draw in and tie down ARVN forces.

27. (S) The current strength of enemy forces throughout the region are shown below:

a. Divisions - 3
b. Regiments - 15 (Plus 4 AA)
c. Combat Personnel - 40-45,000
d. Admin Personnel - 20-25,000
e. Total Personnel - 60-70,000
f. Armor - 115-135
g. Artillery - 60-75

28. (S) In MR-2 the enemy has conducted and will continue to conduct limited attacks in varying degrees throughout the region. The enemy has conducted limited attacks in all four major threat areas (Binh Dinh, Kontum, Pleiku and Quang Duc).

29. (S) The enemy is nearly prepared in the B-3 Front Area to conduct major attacks. The objectives of such attacks would be the following:

a. Major province capitals, particularly Kontum, Pleiku and Ban Me Thuot.

b. Cut and hold major national highways, particularly QL-1,
c. Disrupt GVN Governmental control and economic activities.

30. (S) The enemy still needs combat replacements which he will have by April. But his capability to sustain coordinated attacks on major GVN political/military objectives and to hold the objectives once seized, would probably require the introduction of additional force. The most likely candidate would be the remainder of the 968th Division from southern Laos. Major attacks in the Central Highlands would attract virtually all ARVN assets in MR-2 to the Pleiku/Kontum area, although the enemy would undoubtedly attempt to draw-off and tie-down GVN military assets in other areas of the region.

31. (S) The enemy currently does not possess the capability to conduct major attacks in Binh Dinh. Major reinforcements from southern MR-1 and the upgrading of the 3rd Division and Binh Dinh Province units would be necessary.

32. (S) The enemy buildup, major unit shifts, and reports on offensive preparations in the Central Highlands, point to enemy plans for major attacks in that area.

33. (S) Current enemy force structure in Military Region 3 is:

a. Divisions - 3
b. Regiments - 21 (Plus 2 AA)
c. Combat Personnel - 37-39,000
d. Admin Personnel - 28-33,000
e. Total Personnel - 65-72,000
f. Armor - 190-200
g. Artillery - 80-90

Some 16,000 infiltrators that are currently arriving in the COSVN area are not yet reflected in enemy strength estimates. Since mid-January, intelligence indicates that elements of the 5th NVA Division are deploying from Tay Ninh to GVN MR-4. At least three and possibly as many as seven Bn's are in the Delta or thought to be enroute. The objective is to reinforce understrength enemy units in MR-4 with combat experienced soldiers who are acquainted with the Delta environment.

34. (S) Although no additional artillery and armor has been
reported in the region, the current movement of armor and artillery through the infiltration system indicates that more will be arriving in the near future.

35. (S) Current Communist goals in MR-3 are believed to be as follows:

a. Expand and consolidate control of the "liberated areas."

b. Rebuild VC infrastructure.

c. Increase the number of people living under Communist control.

d. Increase military and civilian proselyting efforts.

e. Increase combat potential.

36. (S) To date in MR-3, the enemy has limited his combat actions to small-scale attacks and defense against RVNAF operations. In enemy rear areas, emphasis has been placed upon expanding storage facilities and base areas, improving roads, constructing defenses and rebuilding troop strengths. The Communists have also moved armor and long range artillery into forward areas. Reports indicate increased emphasis on combined infantry, armor and artillery tactics.

37. (S) Although the enemy has significantly upgraded his military capability in the region, he has shown little or no progress in the first four goals. The enemy's apparent lack of success may have prompted him to issue instructions for a "Strategic raids" campaign to be carried out in the spring. These raids could take the form of limited attacks using up to a division size force with tanks. Possible targets of limited attacks are Tong Le Cham, Suoi Da, Chi Linh, Rach Bap, Trang Bang and Trung Lap. The enemy has the ability to concentrate his forces to insure some degree of success, such as eliminating Tong Le Cham or eliminating specific objectives in contested areas. However, RVNAF's ability to resupply and reinforce most threatened areas casts doubt on the enemy's ability to achieve much long term success with limited attacks.

38. (S) Because of the sensitivity of the Saigon area, even limited attacks carry the threat of escalation. This realization may restrain the enemy from initiating any major operations until he is ready for a general offensive. It is highly doubtful that the enemy would make any serious effort to attack Saigon except as part of a general offensive since the GVN would reinforce Saigon with the maximum number of available forces.

39. (S) Whether the enemy were to initiate major attacks in
MR-3 or were impelled into major actions by the GVN, the most probable target areas would be the Phuoc Binh/Song Be area, An Loc, Don Luon, Chon Thanh, Tay Ninh, Tri Tam and Bien Hoa. Although some limited success is possible, the Communist could not take and hold Tay Ninh or Bien Hoa. Moderate gains in the Saigon River corridor or north of Bien Hoa, however, would allow enemy artillery to move within range of Saigon or the Bien Hoa Air Base. Tay Ninh is already within artillery range.

40. (S) In a general offensive, Saigon, Bien Hoa and Tay Ninh would be primary objectives. Currently arriving infiltrators could bring enemy forces up to desired levels by May and provide them with a reserve of some 15,000 men to replace initial losses. With only the 7th and 9th Divisions on hand, and given the uncertain status of the 5th NVA Division, the enemy does not currently have the force to take and hold major targets.

41. (S) In MR-4, the enemy force structure is as follows:

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DIVISIONS</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REGIMENTS</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMBAT PERSONNEL</td>
<td>19-21,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADMIN PERSONNEL</td>
<td>8-10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL PERSONNEL</td>
<td>27-31,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARMOR</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARTILLERY</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

42. (S) Current information regarding infiltration suggests that the enemy’s capability in VC MR-2 may be increased by the redeployment of the 5th Division elements. In VC MR-3, from 5,000 to 10,000 infiltrators may be enroute to beef up units which apparently lost approximately 7,000 men since June 1973. Communist forces could not conduct successful major attacks in the delta for the following reasons:

b. Lengthy unmechanized supply lines.
c. Expanse of contested areas.
d. Numerical and tactical superiority of RVNAF.
e. Lack of VC/NVA Armor and Artillery.
43. (S) Such an undertaking would stand only slim chances of success, and, if directed against any province capital, would almost certainly result in defeat. The Communists have lost the Seven Mountains as a secure Base Area, and Tri Phap, the most critical enclave in VC MR-2 is seriously threatened. Confronted with these setbacks and normal operational demands, the enemy is preoccupied with holding what he has.

44. (S) In the event NVN orders a general offensive, enemy forces in the delta would try to tie-down ARVN's three divisions to preclude their redeployment to other MR's. This would require an all-out enemy effort to hit the following:

- Troop positions and assembly points
- Airfields
- Major highways
- Major municipalities

45. (S) It is within his capability to conduct such attacks. The overall impact would be dependent upon the course of events on other battlefields. If ARVN deployments out of MR-4 were not made, Communist losses would be high, with no corresponding gains. On the other hand, the enemy could slow down ARVN's deployment, sustain high losses, but overall success would have to be evaluated against the gains in MR's 1, 2 and 3.

46. (S) Current information, along with the nature and level of activity, suggests that enemy forces will continue their small-scale attacks, as they have for the past year and try to defend their base areas and "liberated" zones.

47. (S) In conclusion, DAO Saigon sees no evidence indicating a general offensive before May, but we are not ready to write-off the possibility. We should avoid excessive reliance on the historical concept that general offensives occur during the Southern Laos dry season. Considering the facts that (1) the logistics are in place in South Vietnam, (2) that a reserve of six divisions in the north is available for rapid deployment during any season of the year, and (3) that a dual LOC system exists to support infiltration during any season of the year, we do not rule out the possibility of a general offensive beginning in the summer months. In addition, it is
apparent that some major attacks are planned by the enemy in the near future, specifically, in the B-3 Front Area. There is the inherent danger that these types of attacks or RVNARF operations to spoil them could escalate into a general offensive.