IN COMING WEEK, MAJOR COMMUNIST ATKS ARE EXPECTED ALONG MR-3/MR-4 BOUNDARY IN AN EFFORT TO ISOLATE SAIGON FROM MR-4. MAJOR ATKS IN TAY NINH AND NAU NHIA ALSO APPEAR TO BE IN OFFING. PROSPECTS FOR CENTRAL MR-3 ARE LESS CLEAR, ALTHOUGH ATKS IN SW BINH DUONG PROV ARE POSSIBLE. IN EASTERN MR-3, MAJOR FIGHTING IS EXPECTED TO CONTINUE. ABF'S ON BIEN HOA AIRBASE MAY ALSO INTENSIFY, AS COMMUNISTS ATTEMPT TO NEUTRALIZE VNAF AIR CAPABILITY. TIMING IS NOT CLEAR, BUT WE BELIEVE THAT MAJOR ATKS IN TAY NINH AND CENTRAL MR-3 WILL BE DELAYED UNTIL ADDITIONAL UNITS ARRIVE. THIS COULD TAKE ONE TO THREE WEEKS.
3. (S/NPD)  MR-4

A. (C) MILITARY ACTIVITY DOUBLED IN B. DELTA. VC/NVA SHORTENED THEIR USUAL LULL PHASE FROM 3 TO 2 WEEKS. COMMUNIST UNITS PULLED AWAY FROM NCO HOA TO MOVE TOWARDS OBJECTIVES IN WESTERN GVN MR-3. OTHER THREAT AREAS IN MR-4 ARE UNCHANGED, WITH RVNAF UNITS ABLE TO KEEP COMMUNIST UNITS OFF BALANCE AND TO EXACT A MODERATE TOLL OF VC/NVA CASUALTIES. INFILTRATION SHOULD ENABLE COMMUNISTS TO MAINTAIN TROOP STRENGTH DESPITE LOSSES AND KEEP PRESSURE ON GVN.

B. (C) KIEN PHONG PROV REPORTED A SHARP INCREASE IN COMMUNIST ATKS, MOST OF WHICH WERE BROADLY SCATTERED ABOUT SOUTHERN HALF OF PROV. ELEMENTS OF 502A, 502B, AND 502C BNS STRUCK OP'S AND RVNAF TROOP POSITIONS IN A PROBABLE EFFORT TO DEFEAT RVNAF IN OUTLYING AREAS AND ASSIST MOVEMENT DOWN RTE 1-A. PROB 512C BN BLOCKED OFF RTE 30 S OF HONG NGU DIST TOWN. TOWN IS STILL SHUT OFF. RTE 30 IS ALSO INTERDICTED SE OF CAO LAM, AS IS RTE 23 IN DA DEC PROV ACROSS KIEN RIVER. NEAR TERM OBJECTIVES ARE TO TIGHTEN AND MAINTAIN CONSTRUCTION, BUT ATKS AGAINST DIST TOWN AND PROV CAPITAL DO NOT APPEAR LIKELY. PROSPECTS FOR SUCCESS ARE
BETTER IN N; LIMITED COMMUNIST FORCE STRUCTURE IN S WILL PROBABLE PRECLUDE RAPID VC/NVA SUCCESS.

C. KIEN TUONG PROV UNEXPECTEDLY RECEIVED A REPRIEVE WITH PULL BACK OF 5TH AND 3RD NVA DIV ELEMENTS. THESE UNITS ARE SHIFTING TO OBJECTIVES IN WESTERN MR-3 AND ALONG GVN MR-3/4 IN DINH TUONG PROV. ELEMENTS OF 275TH AND E-6 REGTS/5TH NVA DIV AND PROBABLY 271ST REGT/3RD NVA DIV HAVE MOVED TO THESE AREAS.

HENCE, THREAT TO KIEN TUONG HAS ABATED SOMEWHAT, AND ATKS AGAINST MOO HOA MAY NOT TAKE PLACE IN IMMEDIATE FUTURE.

D. INCIDENTS IN DINH TUONG PROV DOUBLED AND WERE SPREAD THROUGHOUT PROV. UNDER INCREASED THREAT FROM VC/NVA UNITS DRIFTING DOWN TOWARDS DINH TUONG-LONG AN PROV BORDER, 12TH REGT/7TH ARVN DIV ELEMENTS STRUCK ELEMENTS OF 275TH REGT IN ADJACENT LONG AN AND ARE CONTINUING TO CONDUCT OPNS ALONG BORDER AREA. IN SE DINH TUONG, VC PROV BNS AND LF ELEMENTS STRUCK HARD ALONG CHO GAI CANAL, THE KEY WATERWAY BRINGING DELTA RICE TO SAIGON. NO DECISIVE ENGAGEMENTS WERE REPORTED, BUT CONTINUED HARASSMENT COULD JEOPARDIZE
FREE FLOW OF RICE BARGES. THIS, ALONG WITH PORTION OF QL-4 ON EITHER SIDE OF DINH TUONG-LONG AN BORDER, CONSTITUTES A KEY CHOKE POINT WHICH RVNAF MUST DEFEND AND HOLD. ELSEWHERE, Z.15 REGT/8TH NVA DIV STEPPED UP INITIATIVES ALONG RTE 29 N OF CAI LAY DIST TOWN, RESULTING IN ONGOING CLOSURE OF THIS HIGHWAY. OTHER ELEMENTS OF 8TH NVA DIV (24TH AND Z.18 REGTS) REMAIN SITUATED IN NW DINH TUONG AND 207TH REGT HAS BEEN FAIRLY QUIESCENT IN EXTREME WESTERN DINH TUONG. DEPARTURE OF 12TH REGT/7TH ARVN DIV HAS LEFT THIS AREA MORE SUSCEPTIBLE TO COMMUNIST ATKS, AND ADDITIONAL PRESSURE COULD BE APPLIED TO QL-4 IN GIAO DUC AND CAI BE DISTS. THIS WOULD BE IN KEEPING WITH VC/NVA GOALS TO FORCE AN OVEREXTENSION OF RVNAF AND PARTIALLY PARALYZE REACTION CAPABILITY, WEARING RVNAF DOWN AND EXPLOITING WEAK POINTS AS THEY DEVELOP. INCREASING COMMUNIST FORCE STRUCTURE IN DINH...
TUONG AND NEARBY AREAS STRONGLY SUGGESTS A PERIOD OF
HEIGHTENED HOSTILITIES IN COMING WEEK.

E. (S/NFD) LOWER DELTA REPORTED SHARP INCREASE IN MILITARY
ACTIVITY. BOTH COMMUNIST AND GVN ATTENTION IS STILL FOCUSED
IN AND AROUND ALPHA BELT AROUND CAN THO CITY. SEVERAL
OTHER PROVS WERE HIT HARD AS COMMUNIST UNITS CONTINUED TO
TARGET OP'S AND TROOP POSITIONS IN OUTLYING AREAS. OVERALL
THREAT APPEARS TO HAVE ABATED SOMEWHAT.

F. (C) VINH LONG PROV REPORTED A MODERATE INCREASE IN
VC/NVA INITIATIVES. PROBABLE D.3 REGT PUT STRONG PRESSURE
ON MINH DUC DIST TOWN AND DESTROYED MANG THIT BRIDGE
(XS1817) WHICH LIES ON RTE 7A, SOLE LAND LINE STILL OPEN
TO VINH BINH PROV. DONG THAP 1 REGT APPARENTLY SHIFTED OUT
OF CHO LACH AND INTO VUNG LIEM DIST. CURRENT LOCATION OF
D.1 REGT IS UNK. ITS LAST FIRM LOCATION WAS IN TRA ON DIST,
WHICH REPORTED VERY LIGHT ACTIVITY DURING WEEK. ARVN SOURCES
ARE CONCERNED THAT D.1 MAY CROSS HAU GIANG RIVER AND IN-
CREASE THREAT TO CAN THO AREA. VINH LONG REMAINS IN A
HAZARDOUS POSITION, WITH AT LEAST TWO AND POSSIBLY THREE NVA
REGTS IN PROV. RVNAF HAS ONLY TWO BNS OF 16TH REGT/9TH ARVN
DIV AND RF/PE. HAVE BEEN INEFFECTUAL IN STAVING OFF
COMMUNISTS ATKS.
G. (S/NFD) PHONG DINH PROV EXPERIENCED A HIGH LEVEL OF COMBAT INCIDENTS. MOST INCIDENTS WERE CENTERED ALONG A NW-SE AXIS THROUGH MIDDLE OF PROV, WHERE RVNAF CONTINUED EFFORTS TO DENY 4TH NVA DIV UNITS AND SUPPORTING ELEMENTS ANY ACCESS INTO OR THROUGH CAN THO ALPHA BELT. MOST COMBAT TOOK PLACE IN PHONG PHU AND PHONG DIEN DIST. WHERE RVNAF LOST 15 KIA AND 74 WIA WHILE KILLING 154 VC/NVA. AIR AND ARTY STRIKES MAY HAVE MADE FURTHER DENTS IN COMMUNIST MANNING LEVELS. DEPLOYMENT OF A-1'S TO BINH THUY HAS MET WITH FAVORABLE APPROVAL BY COMMANDERS. SIGNIFICANCE OF VC/NVA LOSSES IS UNDERCUT BY RECENT INFO REVEALING COMMUNIST RECEIPT OF ABOUT 690 FILLERS DURING FIRST WEEK IN APR. THIS PROBABLY REPRESENTS PART OF ONGOING FLOW AND INDICATES VC/NVA INTENTIONS TO CARRY ON FIGHT WITH UP-TO-STRENGTH UNITS. PRESENTLY, 4TH NVA DIV FORCES ARE BELIEVED TO HAVE PULLED BACK SOMEWHAT TO CONSERVE STRENGTH DURING CONTINUED PLANNING FOR AN ATK AGAINST CAN THO OR SURROUNDING AREAS. PHUNG HIEP DIST TOWN HAS ALSO BEEN MENTIONED AS A POSSIBLE OBJECTIVE, WHICH WOULD HAVE MORE ADVERSE EFFECTS FOR PROVS FURTHER S ALONG QL-4 THAN PERHAPS PHONG DINH ITSELF.
OVERALL, NO GREAT CHANGE IN CURRENT SITUATION NOTED OVER THE PAST WEEK. BOTH CONTESTANTS ARE HOLDING BACK IN ANTICIPATION OF MORE CRITICAL AND POTENTIALLY DECISIVE COMBAT AT SOME TIME IN FUTURE.

H. (S/NFD) LOWER COASTAL AREA REPORTED HIGH LEVELS OF ACTIVITY IN BA XUYEN AND BAC LIEU PROVS, WHILE AN XUYEN RECORDED ITS 7TH CONSECUTIVE WEEK OF SUBNORMAL COMBAT.

IN BA XUYEN, PROB PHU LOI 2 BN KEPT PRESSURE ON THUAN HOA DIST TOWN AND SURROUNDING AREAS, BUT HAS NOT ATTEMPTED ANY MORE GND ATKS AGAINST TOWN ITSELF. IN BAC LIEU, COMMUNIST FORCES ONCE AGAIN CONDUCTED WIDESPREAD SHELLINGS AND HARASSMENT ATKS IN PHUOC LONG AND GIA RAI DISTS. INCIDENTS IN GIA RAI HAVE BEEN SLOWLY CREEPING CLOSER TO QL-4, AS VC UNITS KEEP PRESSURING OP'S AND RVNAF RELIEF ELEMENTS. AN XUYEN WAS QUIET ONCE AGAIN, WITH SOLE EXCEPTION OF DAM DOI DIST TOWN WHICH RECEIVED SEVERAL HEAVY SHELLINGS. VC GND FIRE HAS SEALED OFF DAM DOI FROM RVNAF MEDEVACS AND SUPPLY SHIPS, LEAVING TOWN'S 233 DEFENDERS CUT OFF FOR YET ANOTHER SIEGE. SEVEN WEEK LULL IN AN XUYEN CAN PROBABLY BE ATTRIBUTED TO COMMUNIST EFFORTS TO IMPROVE LF AND DIST UNITS THROUGH
INTENSIVE TRAINING. THESE ELEMENTS, WHICH WILL PROBABLY HAVE MISSION OF CONDUCTING WIDESPREAD ATKS IN COMING WEEKS, HAVE NOT HELD FIRMLY WHEN ARVN REINFORCEMENTS ARRIVE OR WHEN UNDER HEAVY FIRE. AVAILABLE INFO INDICATES COMMUNIST MAY ATTEMPT TO TAKE AN XUYEN IN NEXT MONTH AND A HALF AND WILL REQUIRE WELL-RESTED AND WELL-TRAINED TROOPS.

I. (C) CHUONG THIEN PROV EXPERIENCED A SHARP INCREASE IN VC/NVA INITIATIVES, DESPITE ABSENCE OF 4TH NVA DIV FORCES. PROV AND LF ELEMENTS RELIED PRIMARILY ON ABFS. FOCUS OF SHELLINGS WAS IN KIEN HUNG DIST AND ALONG RTE 31 TO E. LACK OF MF UNITS MAY RULE OUT MORE SIGNIFICANT INITIATIVES, BUT CHUONG THIEN RF/PP HAVE DONE LITTLE TO COUNTER COMMUNISTS. SITUATION WILL PROBABLY REMAIN STAGNANT PENDING RETURN OF NVA MF TROOPS.

J. (C) KIEN GIANG PROV UNDERWENT MOST INTENSIVE PRESSURE SINCE DEC HIGHPOINT. NATURE AND LOCATION STRONGLY SUGGEST THAT AMPLE FILLERS ARE NOW MAKING THEIR WAY DOWN RTE 1-C. A FSB 10 KM NE OF HA TIEN DIST TOWN WAS SHELLED HEAVILY THROUGHOUT WEEK, WHILE 101D REGT ATTACKED ALONG HIGHWAY 8A IN KIEN LUONG AND KIEN THANH DISTS. LATTER AREA SAW HEAVIEST CONCENTRATION. WHILE RVNAF SCORED SOME SUCCESS (LOSING 10 KIA
AND 39 WIA AGAINST 101 VC/NVA KIA), LITTLE WAS DONE TO HALT PROBABLE FLOW OF FILLERS. ONE CONTACT INTERCEPTED PARTS OF INFILTRATION GROUP 2031 IN KIEN TAN (KILLING 36 OF AN ESTIMATED 200). AVAILABLE INFO INDICATES THAT VC/NVA MAY BE PLANNING TO TAKE OVER ALL OF KIEN GIANG IN NEXT MONTH AND A HALF. WHILE FORCE STRUCTURE MAY NOT BE SUFFICIENT TO GUARANTEE SUCCESS, IT APPEARS LIKELY THAT COMMUNISTS SEE THIS AS A CLEAR OPTION. INTENSIFIED INITIATIVES CAN BE EXPECTED DURING WEEKS TO COME.

K. (S/NFD) COMMUNIST THREAT REMAINS HIGH THROUGHOUT DELTA, WITH SHIFT TO DINH TUONG-LONG AN BORDER AND QL-4/CHO QIA CANAL CHKEPOINTS ADDING NEW FEATURE TO OVERALL SITUATION. SO FAR, RVNAF HAS BEEN HOLDING WELL. QUESTION MARK REMAINS IN WESTERN DINH TUONG, WHERE 3 REGTS (Z.18, 24TH, 207TH) COULD CUT THROUGH AND ATTEMPT TO SQUEEZE QL-4. RVNAF, RESPONDING WITH 10TH REGT/7TH ARVN DIV AND QUESTIONABLE RF/FF, WOULD BE PUT TO A STERN TEST, ESPECIALLY IF 12TH REGT REMAINS IN LONG AN FOR AN EXTENDED PERIOD. ATTENTION IN LOWER DELTA STILL REVOLVES AROUND CAN THO AREA. RVNAF HAS UNQUESTIONABLY STALLED 4TH NVA DIV TO SOME EXTENT, BUT IT DOES APPEAR LIKELY
THAT ANY CRIPPLING BLOWS HAVE BEEN DEALT. ALL INDICATIONS ARE THAT 4TH DIV INTENDS TO REMAIN IN PHONG DINH, BUT TIMING AND NATURE OF UPCOMING INITIATIVES REMAIN CONJECTURE. ALL OTHER PROVS ARE FACED WITH LESS OMINOUS SITUATION, BUT TERRITORIAL LOSSES ARE ALMOST A CERTAINTY IN EVENT OF AN ALL OUT PUSH. RVNAF MORALE APPEARS TO BE HOLDING, BUOYED UP BY REALIZATION THAT NOTHING ELSE CAN BE DONE DURING CURRENT PERIOD. RVNAF REORGANIZATION HAS CONTINUED, WITH ALL PF PLTS NOW AMALGAMATED INTO PF COS OR UPGRADED INTO RF UNITS. DRAFT DODGER/AWOL ROUNDUP CONTINUES, AS DOES STEPPED UP RECRUITMENT. FOR FIRST TIME IN SEVERAL MONTHS, RF ADDITIONS EXCEEDED LOSSES AND THIS, IF TIME ALLOWS, WILL ALLOW RVNAF TO FIRM UP ITS RANKS SOMewhat. IN SUM, RVNAF HAS WEATHERED THE WEEK WITHOUT CONCEDEING MAJOR TERRITORIAL LOSSES OR SUSTAINING CRITICAL DEFEATS. HOWEVER, INFUSION OF NVA FILLERS AND COMMUNIST EFFORTS TO CAPITALIZE ON A FAVORABLE SITUATION INDICATE THAT RVNAF MAY NOT BE GRANTED USUAL POST HIGHPOINT RESPITE. INSTEAD, IT MAY WELL BE CONFRONTED WITH EVEN MORE CRITICAL BATTLES TO PRESERVE SECURITY ALONG QL-4, HOLD VINH LONG AND CAN THO AND CRIPPLE VC/NVA MF UNITS. RVNAF MUST ACCOMPLISH THIS WITHOUT TAKING
HIGH CASUALTIES. IN ITS CURRENT STATE OF OVEREXTENSION,
DECISIVE DEFEAT OF EVEN ONE ARVN REGT WOULD BE EXTREMELY
CRITICAL AND HAVE DANGEROUS RAMIFICATIONS.
XGDS-2