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ANNEX A (Intelligence) to TET Offensive After Action Report (U)

1. (C) GENERAL: Captured documents as well as interrogations of PWs and ralliers clearly indicate that the enemy undertook the TET Offensive for the purpose of capturing and holding key installations in SAIGON as well as provincial capitals and for the subsidiary purpose of overrunning key RVN and US military headquarters and airbases, i.e., III Corps, II FFORCEV, BIEN HOA and TAN SON NHUT. Had the offensive succeeded, the VC intended to establish a revolutionary government or at least be in a position of strength from which to call for peace negotiations on their terms.

2. (C) BACKGROUND:

a. Map #2 depicts significant VC/NVA unit moves which were detected during December and January. These moves indicated a definite shift of forces throughout the III CTZ. In retrospect, it is possible that the enemy's repositioning of his forces and his attacks in late 1967 and early 1968 may have been designed to draw friendly troops away from the populated areas of the III CTZ setting the stage for the TET Offensive.

b. During the period November 1967 through January 1968, the VC/NVA elements subordinate to COSVN in the III CTZ conducted three phases in their DONG XUAN (Winter-Spring) Campaign, which is believed to have begun on 29 October with the multi-regimental size attack against the LOC NINH area in northern BINH LONG Province. The attacks were conducted primarily by major elements of the 9th VC Division, as well as elements of the 141st and the 165th NVA Regiments of the 7th NVA Division. The action was supported by the 69th VC Artillery Command. Although the action at LOC NINH was a massive military loss to the VC, it was nevertheless, a significant political victory in as much as the VC succeeded in dispersing the populace and in holding the village for a short time. The second phase of the campaign was oriented on the BU DOP - BO DUC area in northern PHUOC LONG Province. The third phase began as an apparent counter mission in eastern War Zone "C". On 31 January 1968, the emphasis changed radically as the enemy began large scale attacks in the SAIGON - BIEN HOA - LONG BINH areas coordinated with lesser attacks throughout the remainder of the II FFORCEV TAOI. It apparently signalled the beginning of the TET Offensive.

3. (C) MAJOR ENEMY INITIATED ACTIONS:

a. General.

(1) While the general counter-offensive plan in I and II CTZ was executed on or about 291800H Jan 68, it was not until 310300H Jan 68 that the VC counter-offensive was launched in III CTZ. The VC operational plan was apparently as follows (Map #4):

(a) 9th VC Div:

1. 271st Regt : Attack selected GVN/

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ARVN targets, QUANG TRUNG Training Center in the HOC MON area; block allied reaction by interdicting Route 1; on order reinforce and exploit success in the northern SAIGON area.

2. 272d Regt: Supported by local forces, to block reaction of the US 25th Div from the CU CHI - DAU THIENG area; on order, to reinforce to the northwest of SAIGON.

3. 273d Regt: 1st Bn - attack THU DUC District Office, construct defense works against reaction from BIEN HOA; 2d Bn - attack 2d VNMV Bn, reinforce 3d Bn; 3d Bn - intercept Allied reaction forces from DI AN; Sapper Co - blow up bridge at BINH LOI.

(b) 7th NVA Div:

1. 165th NVA Regt: Contain 1st US Inf Div in vicinity LAI KHE and interdict Hwy 13.

2. 141st NVA Regt: Although mission was unclear, it apparently was tasked to interdict Hwy 13 S of AN LOC.

3. 101st NVA Regt: The regiment, which had been resubordinated from the 7th NVA Division to Sub-Region 1, was to secure the area north of SAIGON in vicinity of GO VAP.

(c) DONG NAI Regt: Given Bn missions - 1st Bn to seize and hold TAN UYEN; other elements participated in the attack on PHU LOI - PHU CUONG, supported by PHU LOI I Bn. The former K3 Bn moved to LONG AN Province with the mission to seize TAN AN.

(d) 88th NVA Regt: Block Hwy 13 vicinity AN LOC - CHON THANH, possibly in conjunction with 141st NVA Regt.

(e) In the SAIGON - CHOLON - TAN SON NHUT area the attacks were conducted by the C-10 Sapper Bn, 2d Independent Bns, 2d, 5th, 6th Local Force Bns, 267th and 269th MF Bns, D-16 Bn, possibly the 3d Bn, 271st VC Regt, and supported by the 1st LF, 3d MF, and 4th LF Bns. Their missions were: To seize and hold TAN SON NHUT AB and possibly the adjacent Vice-Presidential Palace; to seize and hold the Presidential Palace; to seize and hold the US and Phillipine Embassies; to seize and hold or destroy selected objectives such as National Police Stations, power plants, and other GVN installations. The primary purpose was to disrupt the GVN and the city of SAIGON as much as possible, to cause the GVN and US Government to "lose face", and to force the GVN to the conference table with the NFLSVN and/or NVN where they could negotiate from a position of strength. These units were to have been reinforced within 48 hours, according to prisoner reports.

(f) Sub-Region 1: 7th LF Bn - seize and hold CU CHI.

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(g) Sub-Region 2: 506th LF Bn - seize and hold DUC HOA to include HQ, 25th ARVN Div.

(h) Sub-Region 3: Local forces - harass GVN installations by fire; assist in passage of forces attacking SAIGON; conduct harassing attacks by fire and provide security for command and control element conducting attacks on SAIGON.

(i) Sub-Region 4: Local forces - harass GVN installations by fire.

(j) Sub-Region 5: The DONG NAI Regt was to seize and hold PHU LOI - PHU CUONG - TAN UYEN.

(k) VC BA BIEN Province: D440 Bn - seize and hold XUAN LOC, 18th ARVN Div HQ; D445 - seize and hold BA RIA.

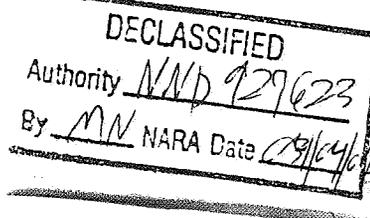
(l) VC MY THO Province: 261st, 263d MF Bns and 514th LF Bn seize and hold MY THO; 516th & 518th LF Bn - seize and hold BEN TRE.

(m) War Zone "C" and MR 10: Local forces supported by COSVN security units, rear service units, and artillery units, were to pin down Allied forces by conducting harassing attacks by fire against Allied installations and Fire Support Patrol Bases (FSPB).

(2) All these attacks were supported by local force units who probably had the mission of assisting the main attacks by providing guides and security forces, as well as conducting harassing attacks on either pre-planned targets or targets of opportunity. Although these attacks were apparently well planned and coordinated at the higher levels, in several instances, notably at BIEN HOA - LONG BINH, the participating units did a poor job in executing their assigned missions. Assault units were told to hold their objectives from 48 hours (SAIGON) to one week (BIEN HOA - LONG BINH). The 5th VC Div was told they would have an easy job. A unique feature of this offensive was that no unit was given a withdrawal route, although the 5th VC Div had rallying points, evidently in the expectation that the attack would be a complete success. One notable failure by the VC concerns the 273d Regiment whose plan was to attack in the THU DUC area and block Allied reaction forces. The 273d was evidently delayed in its move, prompting elements of the 1st and 2d Bns to get involved in the fighting at PHU LOI - PHU CUONG on 1 Feb and become trapped in the cordon and search of AN MY by the US 1st Division on 1 and 2 Feb. Only headquarters elements and the 3d Bn were identified in the vicinity of their objectives.

b. Major Actions 31 Jan 68: Enemy initiated actions on 31 Jan 68 are depicted on Map #5 (red arrows show ground attacks; red dots indicate attacks by fire). The primary attacks were those at LONG BINH, BIEN HOA, TAN SON NHUT, and SAIGON. In addition, not shown on the map was an attack on DUC HOA targeted against the HQ of the 25th ARVN Div, as well as heavy attacks at BEN CAT, BEN TRE, and MY THO. The major attack

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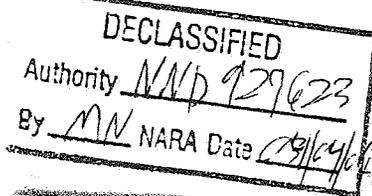


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by fire alone was at the 25th US Div base camp at CU CHI, which received 249 rounds of mortar fire between 0305 and 0635 hours, wounding 10 US personnel. The 1st US Div base camp at LAI KHE also received a heavy attack by fire. At 310300H Jan, Camp FRENZELL JONES (199th LIB) and the Plantation (HQ, II FFV) received an estimated 90-100 rounds of mixed 82mm mortar and 122mm rocket fire. At 0430H, two battalions of the 275th VC Regt launched a ground attack on the west and north perimeter of this installation while sapper units supported by the U-1 LF Bn harassed the eastern perimeter while attempting to penetrate and destroy the ammo storage area. At least one company of this force attempted to seize the PW compound. Also at 310300H Jan, BIEN HOA Air Base received an estimated 35 rounds of 122mm rocket fire followed by a ground attack conducted by two battalions of the 274th VC Regt. At 0300 hours the SAIGON - CHOLON - TAN SON NHUT area came under intensive ground attacks. The major objectives of this attack were: (1) seizure of TAN SON NHUT AB (including the JGS Compound and Vice Presidential Palace by the 267th, 269th, and 2d Ind Bns which were to have been supported by elements of the 271st and 272d VC Regts; (2) seizure or destruction of the US Embassy, Presidential Palace, and SAIGON Radio Station by elements of the C-10 Sapper Bn & 3d & 4th LF Bns; (3) seizure of the CHI HOA Prison and release of prisoners by the 6th LF Bn. These major attacks were supported by the 1st MF and 2d LF Bns attacking from the north; the D-16 Bn from the west; the 5th LF and 506th Bn from the south, and the 4th LF Bn from the east.

c. Major Actions, 1 Feb 68: Enemy initiated actions on 1 Feb 68 are depicted on Map #8. The primary attacks were those at PHU CUONG and CU CHI. In addition, not shown on the map were two attacks targeted against BA RIA and XUAN LOC. The major attack by fire above was again at the 25th US Div base camp at CU CHI, which received 180 rounds of mortar fire as well as 10 x 122mm rockets, killing 1 and wounding 28 US soldiers. LAI KHE also received another heavy attack by fire. At 010120H Feb, the 7th LF Bn with elements of the 8th Arty Bn in support, attacked the CU CHI Subsector compound with small arms, automatic weapons, and RPG fire. At times up to 50% of the compound was burning although it was never penetrated. The VC broke contact at the compound at 0410 hours while fighting continued in the town throughout the day. US and ARVN elements reacting to the attacks were engaged outside of town by VC blocking forces. These blocking forces were pushed aside and friendly elements were in town by 1000 hours. There were eight US WIA, three ARVN WIA and one APC damaged. There were 38 VC KIA, two PW's, nine individual and five crew-served weapons captured. At 010510H Feb, the city of PHU CUONG and the ARVN Engineer School were attacked by the 1st and 2d Bns, DONG NAI Regt, possibly supported by the PHU LOI I Bn and elements of the 273d VC Regt as well as local force units. The Engineer School was penetrated from the north and was partly occupied until 1100 hours when US and ARVN armor and infantry units regained control of the school. Fighting continued throughout the day, spreading to nearby AN MY and PHU LOI. The city of PHU CUONG was cleared by 1830 hours at a cost of three US KIA, 24 ARVN KIA, two US WIA, 10 ARVN WIA, one tank and two APC's destroyed and one tank damaged. There were 98 VC KIA,

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seven PW's, 19 individual and nine crew-served weapons captured. Heavy fighting continued in SAIGON and the HOC MON areas.

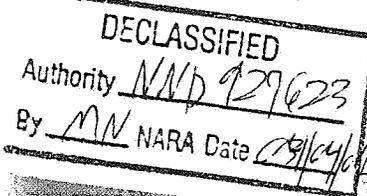
d. Major Actions, 2 Feb 68: Map #9 includes enemy initiated actions on 2 Feb. The major attack was at THU DUC by elements of the 273d VC Regt which had been badly hurt at AN MY by elements of the 1st US Inf Div on 1 Feb. The attack at THU DUC was promptly reacted to by elements of the 1st US Inf Div, 11th Armd Cav Regt, and VNMC. In addition, but not shown on the map, were heavy attacks on BAO TRAI, PHU GIAO, and DINH QUAN. The major attacks by fire were again at the US 25th Div base camp at CU CHI, which received 10 x 122mm rockets and 111 mixed 82mm mortar and 75mm recoilless rifle fire. During this attack, an ammo storage dump blew up, destroying or damaging 100% of the buildings in two battalions areas. The 1st US Inf Div base camp at LAI KHE also received another heavy attack by fire. Heavy fighting continued in SAIGON as the Allies cleaned out pockets of resistance and the VC continued to attempt to infiltrate small groups of men into the city in an apparent desperate effort to accomplish as much damage as possible. Fighting also continued in the areas of MY THO, BEN TRE, BA RIA, and XUAN LOC.

e. Major Actions, 3 Feb 68: (Refer to Map #9) The major attack was again at THU DUC by elements of the 273d VC Regt. This attack was promptly reacted to by elements of the 1st US Inf Div, 11th US Armd Cav Regt, and the VNMC. This action resulted in 108 VC KIA. Attacks by fire continued throughout the III CTZ. An example of the intensity of these attacks is the 1st US Inf Div base camp at LAI KHE which between 310300H Jan and 032400H Feb received 42 attacks by fire which included 141 x 122mm rockets, 169 rounds of 82mm mortars, 21 rounds of 75 RR, three rounds RPG, and six unidentified rounds; a total of 340 rounds resulting in one US KIA, 124 WIA and one VN civilian killed and 34 injured. Heavy fighting still continued in SAIGON as well as in the HOC MON area, although the VC attempted no major actions.

f. Major Actions 4 and 5 Feb 68: (Refer to Map #9). Although overall enemy activity decreased slightly, strong resistance to Allied sweep and clearing operations was demonstrated throughout the area. Enemy activity was highlighted by battalion size ground attacks at PHU HOA DONG (vic XT 7219) on 4 Feb, at BEN CAT on 4 Feb, and an estimated two VC companies attacked an RF OP at HOC MON (vic XT 7604) on 5 Feb. In VC Sub-Region 5, ground attacks were conducted against TAN UYEN on 4 Feb and PHU CUONG (XT 8114) on 5 Feb. Although not shown on the map a major contact occurred vic XS 473488 in VC MY THO Province on 4 Feb, where elements of the 7th ARVN Division contacted an estimated two VC battalions. In the SAIGON - CHOLON metropolitan area, enemy activity decreased to light contacts and sniping incidents primarily in CHOLON, PHU THO, and near the JGS Compound.

g. Major Actions From 6-18 Feb: The major enemy initiated actions are depicted on Map #10. Since 4 Feb, battalion sized ground attacks gradually decreased in the III CTZ. Enemy and friendly action centered on three main axes to SAIGON: GO DAU HA - TAN SON NHUT, PHU CUONG - THU DUC and BINH CHANH - CHOLON. The enemy attempted to maintain large

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numbers of organized troops in the GO MON - HOC MON area, principally the 271st and 272d VC Regiments, which vigorously resisted Allied sweeps. These units apparently retained the mission of reinforcing VC units in SAIGON. While the VC attempted to infiltrate small groups of men into SAIGON, enemy units and individuals within the city continued to resist Allied mop-up actions. Throughout this period the enemy continued to attack major installations such as LAI KHE, CU CHI, TAN SON NHUT Air Base and BIEN HOA Air Base by fire.

h. The Second Wave 17-18 Feb 68: On 17-18 Feb the enemy conducted an apparently coordinated series of attacks by fire and ground attacks throughout the III CTZ as depicted on Map #11. The coordinated harassing activities and the resumption of ground attacks, in conjunction with indications of heavy re-supply activity, indicated that the enemy had used the relative lull of the previous two weeks to attempt to re-establish his control structure and combat posture. His efforts proved abortive. VC ground activity in the second wave spread outward from the SAIGON area, and was apparently conducted by local force elements occasionally supported by main force elements. The VC command and control structure had been badly damaged as indicated by the numerous battalion commanders and political leaders killed during the initial phases of the campaign. There were other indicators, besides the large enemy casualties reported, that the VC suffered heavy losses. An example of this is a group of prisoners from the 273d VC Regiment captured near THU DUC who stated that they were sick but had been ordered from the hospital back to the 273d as replacements, indicating that the regiment had suffered heavy personnel losses, as was reported after the actions at AN MY and THU DUC where the 273d Regiment had been identified in contact.

4. (C) SUMMARY: The VC TET offensive, while successfully harassing US and GVN forces, failed to accomplish its military objectives. The VC propaganda machinery will emphasize the political and psychological aspects of the campaign to offset its military failures. Probably his only military success was the fact that he was able to mount an offensive on the scale he did. The major causes for his failure were:

a. Overestimation of his own offensive capabilities, coupled with the failure of several of his major units to accomplish their missions, notably the 7th NVA Division.

b. As a corollary to the above, his underestimation of the Allied reaction capability, especially that of the VNAF.

c. His overestimation of the peoples desire or willingness to rise against the GVN.

d. His underestimation of the stability of the GVN and its ability to not only withstand, but react to his pressure.

APPENDICIES:

- 1 - VC Order of Battle
- 2 - Special Tactics
- 3 - Invasion Routes

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