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SECRET

CITE TDFIR DB-315/0008-75

DIST 5 JANUARY 1975

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COUNTRY SOUTH VIETNAM

DOI 6 DECEMBER 1974 - 3 JANUARY 1975

SUBJECT GVN MR3 DEPUTY COMMANDING GENERAL HIEU'S ANALYSIS OF VC/NVA ACTIONS IN MR3 AND DISCUSSION OF COMMUNIST INTENTIONS

ACQ VIETNAM, BIEN HOA (3 JANUARY 1975) FIELD NO. FVP-4983

SOURCE AN AMERICAN OBSERVER FROM GVN MILITARY REGION 3 DEPUTY COMMANDING GENERAL MAJOR GENERAL NGUYEN VAN HIEU, WHO WAS AWARE THAT HIS REMARKS WOULD REACH U.S. OFFICIALS.

SUMMARY, MR3 DEPUTY COMMANDER FOR OPERATIONS MAJOR GENERAL NGUYEN VAN HIEU SAID ON 3 JANUARY 1975 THAT VC/NVA FORCES FAILED TO ACHIEVE THEIR OBJECTIVES IN RECENT ATTACKS NORTH OF TAY NINH CITY BECAUSE ARVN FORCES WERE ABLE TO BRING ADDITIONAL ARTILLERY TO BEAR ON ATTACKING FORCES. ARVN FORCES FAILED TO REACH HOAI DUC DISTRICT TOWN IN BINH TUY PROVINCE BECAUSE THE 33RD VC/NVA REGIMENT BLOCKED ROUTE 333 BETWEEN GIA RAY AND HOAI DUC; THE 7TH RANGER GROUP ATTACHED TO THE 48TH REGIMENT, 18TH ARVN DIVISION,

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PERFORMED POORLY. GVN STRENGTH IN HOAI DUC WILL SOON CONSIST OF TWO ARVN BATTALIONS AND ONE RF BATTALION, WITH TWO ADDITIONAL BATTALIONS APPROACHING ALONG ROUTE 333 FROM THE NORTH. GENERAL HIEU OPINED THAT AFTER ATTACKS ON THE PHUOC LONG PROVINCE CAPITAL OF SONG BE, THE 7TH NVA DIVISION WILL ADVANCE ALONG THE BINH DUONG-BIEN HOA PROVINCE BORDER TOWARD LAI THIEU AND GIA DINH. HE ALSO BELIEVES THAT PREVIOUS ATTACKS BY THE 9TH NVA DIVISION IN BEN CAT DISTRICT OF BINH DUONG WERE PART OF COMMUNIST INTENTIONS TO UPGRADE COMBAT CAPABILITY TO DIVISION-SIZED AND CORPS-SIZED COMBINED OPERATIONS. IN SEVERAL MONTHS, GENERAL HIEU ANTICIPATES THE 7TH AND 9TH NVA DIVISIONS TO ENGAGE IN A CORPS-SIZED OPERATION ALONG APPROACHES TO SAIGON WITH THE 5TH NVA DIVISION HAVING THE OBJECTIVE OF CUTTING COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN SAIGON AND THE DELTA. OVERALL COMMUNIST OBJECTIVES IN THE CURRENT CAMPAIGN ARE TO ISOLATE TAY NINH PROVINCE AND THEN CAPTURE ITS CAPITAL, CONSOLIDATE CONTROL OF THE BINH LONG-PHUOC LONG ENCLAVE AND EXTEND CONTROL INTO THE SAIGON CORRIDORS IN BINH DUONG, AND TO GAIN CONTROL OF BINH TUY PROVINCE, ESPECIALLY THE RICE BOWL AREA. END SUMMARY.

1. ON 3 JANUARY 1975, MAJOR GENERAL NGUYEN VAN HIEU,
DEPUTY GOVERNMENT OF VIETNAM MILITARY REGION 3 (GVN MR3)

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COMMANDER FOR OPERATIONS, ANALYZED VIET CONG/NORTH VIETNAMESE ARMY (VC/NVA) MILITARY ACTIVITY SINCE 6 DECEMBER AND DISCUSSED COMMUNIST INTENTIONS. IN TAY NINH PROVINCE, VC/NVA FORCES FAILED TO ACCOMPLISH THEIR OBJECTIVES OF OVERRUNNING THE OUTPOSTS OF BA DEN MOUNTAIN AND SUOI DA (XT335576) NORTHEAST OF TAY NINH CITY BECAUSE AFTER THE ARTILLERY OF VIETNAMESE ARMY (ARVN) FORCES WAS INITIALLY DESTROYED BY THE VC/NVA COUNTERBATTERY FIRE, THE ARVN FORCES WERE ABLE TO BRING ADDITIONAL ARTILLERY TO BEAR ON THE ATTACKING FORCES. THE 205TH VC/NVA INDEPENDENT REGIMENT LOST ABOUT ONE-THIRD OF ITS TROOPS, WHILE THE 101ST VC/NVA REGIMENT SUFFERED ABOUT 100 CASUALTIES. THE VC/NVA TACTICS ARE TO DESTROY THE ARVN ARTILLERY BY COUNTERBATTERY FIRE BASED ON INTELLIGENCE OF HOWITZER LOCATIONS AND THEN TO EMPLOY MASSIVE ARTILLERY ON THE DEFENDING FORCE. IN THE BATTLE FOR SUOI DA, THE GVN FORCES WERE ABLE TO MOVE ADDITIONAL ARTILLERY PIECES WITHIN RANGE OF THE ATTACKING FORCES WHICH VC/NVA UNITS WERE UNABLE TO FIND AND DESTROY. ACCORDING TO GENERAL HIEU, INTELLIGENCE INDICATES THAT THE TWO VC/NVA REGIMENTS WILL RENEW THE ATTACK IN TAY NINH PROVINCE AND EMPLOY ADDITIONAL ARTILLERY PIECES TO NEUTRALIZE ARVN ARTILLERY.

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2. CONCERNING THE FAILURE OF ARVN FORCES TO REACH HOAI DUC DISTRICT TOWN, BINH TUY PROVINCE, GENERAL HIEU SAID THAT THE 33RD VC/NVA REGIMENT BLOCKED ROUTE 333 BETWEEN GIA RAY AND HOAI DUC BY ESTABLISHING COMPANY-SIZED, WELL-FORTIFIED STRONG POINTS ALONG THE ROAD AND SUBJECTED ARVN UNITS TO CONSTANT INDIRECT ATTACKS BY FIRE. THE 7TH ARVN RANGER GROUP WAS ATTACHED TO THE 48TH REGIMENT, 18TH ARVN DIVISION, HOWEVER, THE RANGER GROUP WAS NOT EFFECTIVE BECAUSE IT IS WEAK FROM PREVIOUS CASUALTIES AND, ACCORDING TO GENERAL HIEU, THE RANGERS ARE NOT ACCUSTOMED TO OPERATING AS AN INTEGRAL PART OF A DIVISION AND THEREFORE PERFORMED POORLY. ONE BATTALION OF THE 43RD REGIMENT, 18TH ARVN DIVISION, HAS BEEN AIRLIFTED INTO HOAI DUC DISTRICT TOWN WHILE THE BALANCE OF THE REGIMENT IS ADVANCING FROM ROUTE 20 IN LONG KHANH PROVINCE SOUTH ALONG ROUTE 333 FROM THE NORTH. AN ADDITIONAL ARVN BATTALION WILL SOON BE AIRLIFTED INTO HOAI DUC FOR A TOTAL DEFENSE FORCE OF TWO ARVN BATTALIONS PLUS ONE REGIONAL FORCES (RF) BATTALION WHICH, ACCORDING TO GENERAL HIEU, SHOULD BE SUFFICIENT TO DEFEND HOAI DUC SUCCESSFULLY. HE REMARKED THAT THE 18TH ARVN DIVISION IS THE RESERVE DIVISION FOR MR3 BUT WITH TWO REGIMENTS COMMITTED IN EASTERN MR3, THE JOINT GENERAL STAFF DECIDED TO ESTABLISH A RESERVE FORCE

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AND TEMPORARILY TRANSFERRED THE 4TH RANGER GROUP TO THE SAIGON AREA FROM MR2.

3. ACCORDING TO GENERAL HIEU, THE 7TH NVA DIVISION WAS COMMITTED IN PHUOC LONG PROVINCE TO RAISE THE MORALE OF DIVISION TROOPS BY ASSIGNING THEM AN EASY OBJECTIVE AND A QUICK VICTORY AGAINST THE RF BEFORE COMMITTING THE DIVISION AGAINST ARVN MAIN FORCES IN SOUTHEASTERN BINH DUONG PROVINCE. IF PHUOC LONG CAPITAL IS QUICKLY OVERRUN, THE NEXT OBJECTIVE FOR THE 7TH DIVISION WILL BE TO ADVANCE ALONG THE BINH DUONG-BIEN HOA PROVINCE BORDER TOWARD LAI THIEU DISTRICT IN SOUTHERN BINH DUONG AND GIA DINH. IF VC/NVA FORCES FAIL TO OVERRUN PHUOC LONG, GENERAL HIEU EXPECTS THAT THE VC/NVA WILL CONTINUE THE SEIGE OF THE CITY WITH LESSER FORCES AND FREE THE 7TH DIVISION TO CONDUCT OPERATIONS TOWARD LAI THIEU.

4. GENERAL HIEU BELIEVES THAT THE 9TH NVA DIVISION IN THE SPRING AND SUMMER OF 1974 ATTACKED THE OUTPOSTS OF RACH BAP (XT673304), BASE 82 (XT700313), AND AN DIEN IN BEN CAT DISTRICT, BINH DUONG PROVINCE, FOR THE PURPOSE OF TESTING THE DIVISION'S CAPABILITY TO CONDUCT DIVISION-SIZED CONVENTIONAL OPERATIONS. THIS IS PART OF THE COMMUNIST INTENT TO UPGRADE ITS FORCES TO BE CAPABLE OF COORDINATED DIVISION-SIZED AND EVEN CORPS-SIZED

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COMBINED OPERATIONS. GENERAL HIEU BELIEVES THAT THE 9TH DIVISION SUFFERED CONSIDERABLE CASUALTIES AND MAY NOT BE COMBAT READY. HOWEVER, HE ANTICIPATES THAT IN SEVERAL MONTHS BOTH THE 9TH AND 7TH NVA DIVISIONS MAY BE ENGAGED IN A CORPS-SIZED OPERATION ADVANCING ALONG THE SAIGON CORRIDOR AND THE BINH DUONG-BIEN HOA BOUNDARY AXIS TOWARD SAIGON. HOWEVER, GENERAL HIEU IS NOT SURE IF THE COMMUNISTS HAVE THE LOGISTIC BUILD-UP TO SUPPORT A SUSTAINED CORPS OPERATION. HE ANTICIPATES THAT THE 5TH NVA DIVISION WILL HAVE THE MISSION AT THE SAME TIME OF ADVANCING ALONG THE MR3 AND MR4 BOUNDARY WITH THE OBJECTIVE OF CUTTING COMMUNICATION LINES FROM THE DELTA TO SAIGON. WHEN ASKED IF VC/NVA FORCES HAVE THE CAPABILITY TO EXECUTE THIS GRANDIOSE PLAN, HE RESPONDED THAT IT DEPENDS ON THE COMMUNIST SUPPLY BUILD-UP AND BATTLEFIELD PREPARATIONS. HE CLAIMED THAT THE VC/NVA CAN BRING SUPPLIES TO MR3 FROM NORTH VIETNAM IN 17 DAYS AND THAT THEY HAVE A RATIO OF TWO TO ONE IN

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THEIR FAVOR OF MAIN LINE REGULAR UNITS EXCLUDING RF AND POPULAR FORCES. HE MAINTAINED THAT THE NVA HAVE SUPERIORITY OF ARTILLERY FIRE AT THE POINT OF CONTACT AND EMPLOY MASSED FIRES. GENERAL HIEU SAID THAT ACCORDING TO CAPTURED DOCUMENTS, THE NVA PLAN TO COMMIT TANKS AS WELL AS ADDITIONAL ARTILLERY. HE NOTED THAT A CONSIDERABLE NUMBER OF T-54 TANKS ARE COMMITTED IN PHUOC LONG PROVINCE.

5. WHEN ASKED ABOUT ARVN'S CAPABILITY TO CONTAIN THE VC/NVA ATTACKS IN MR3 WITHOUT RECEIVING MORE U.S. MILITARY AID THAN IS CURRENTLY SCHEDULED, HE SAID IT IS DIFFICULT TO DETERMINE ARVN'S BREAKING POINT. THE PERIOD AHEAD WILL BE MOST DIFFICULT. SOME GVN UNITS HAVE DEMONSTRATED GOOD MORALE, ESPECIALLY THE RF IN TAY NINH; HOWEVER, MORALE IN GENERAL HAS DECLINED AND THERE IS A POSSIBILITY THAT ARVN MAY NOT SURVIVE WITHOUT CONSIDERABLY MORE U.S. MILITARY AID SUPPORT. THE SUPERIOR FIRE POWER AND MOBILITY THAT THE GVN FORCES HAVE FORMERLY ENJOYED HAVE SHIFTED TO THE VC/NVA SIDE.

6. THE VC/NVA OBJECTIVE, ACCORDING TO GENERAL HIEU, DURING THE CURRENT CAMPAIGN IS TO ISOLATE TAY NINH PROVINCE AND THEN CAPTURE TAY NINH CITY; SECOND, TO CONSOLIDATE THEIR CONTROL OF

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THE BINH LONG-PHUOC LONG ENCLAVE AND EXTEND CONTROL DEEP INTO THE SAIGON CORRIDORS IN BINH DUONG PROVINCE; AND THIRD, TO GAIN CONTROL OF BINH TUY PROVINCE, ESPECIALLY THE RICE BOWL WHICH PRODUCES SUFFICIENT RICE TO SUSTAIN THE POPULATIONS OF BINH TUY, PHUOC LONG, AND LONG KHANH PROVINCES. HE NOTED THAT IN BINH TUY THE COMMUNISTS ARE NOT PERMITTING THE POPULATION TO LEAVE AS THEY HAVE FORMERLY DONE. IN THE PAST THE COMMUNISTS ATTACKED AN AREA AND IF THE OBJECTIVE WAS CAPTURED THEY ONLY REMAINED FOR A FEW DAYS, HOWEVER, COMMUNIST STRENGTH NOW PERMITS THEM TO HOLD AND DEVELOP AN AREA AFTER ITS CAPTURE. THE OBJECTIVE OF THE COMMUNISTS IS TO CONTROL A MINIMUM OF 10 PERCENT OF THE POPULATION. THE METHOD TO ACHIEVE THEIR OBJECTIVE IS TO MAKE STRONG ATTACKS, SEIZE, HOLD AND CONSOLIDATE AND THEREBY OBTAIN A COEQUAL STATUS WITH THE GVN.

7. GENERAL HIEU COMMENTED THAT MR3 COMMANDER LIEUTENANT GENERAL DU QUOC D O N G HAS NOT HAD EXPERIENCE IN COMMANDING TERRITORIAL FORCES BUT THAT HE IS LEARNING FAST.

8. FIELD DISSEM: EMBASSY DEFENSE ATTACHE AT SAIGON;
CONSULATE GENERAL AT BIEN HOA; SENT TO CINCPAC IPAC CSG PACAF
PACFLT USSAG

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