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RECEIVED

BY

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THE VICE PRESIDENT
WASHINGTON

FEB 9 1968

February 8, 1968

REFERRED TO

Sen. Muskie

Dear Ed:

Here is a copy of a report based upon captured enemy documents concerning recent enemy activity in Vietnam.

I assure you it is an accurate portrayal.

Best wishes.

Sincerely,

Hubert H.

Hubert H. Humphrey

The Honorable Edmund S. Muskie
United States Senate
Washington, D. C.

MH 7-1-1

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Information concerning the battle for Bien Hoa city which began in the early morning of 31 January does not indicate that the attack was an act of desperation. Rather, it suggests that the enemy fully expected the troops that were committed to overrun vital U. S. and GVN positions to the north and east of Bien Hoa city and then, aided by a popular uprising, to win full control of the city. Then the enemy regiments, joined by troops which had, in theory, similarly overrun Phu Cugong, in Binh Duong Province, were to continue on a triumphal march into the capital, over a route thoroughly softened by paralyzing attacks in the Saigon/Cholon/Northern Gia Dinh area.

Captured documents and prisoner of Hoi Chanh interrogations indicate that the Viet Cong units had no orders covering a possible withdrawal. The well-equipped enemy troops (reportedly many of them were recently infiltrated NVA soldiers) had been promised that they would meet almost no resistance. They had been promised, some of them told interrogators, that they would be supported by "a revolutionary new weapon" (apparently a 240MM rocket, which the enemy could not maneuver into position in time). They had also been told that "the miserable, suffering masses of the cities and towns" would rise up against the GVN and greet the Viet Cong as brothers. The battered Viet Cong troops who fell back in disorder through Ho Nai Village told people there that they were thoroughly disillusioned, and some of them are said to have rallied to local priests. They had been shocked by the overwhelming firepower of the American units they assaulted. They were literally astounded, the villagers say, by the holiday affluence of Ho Nai and by the militant anti-Communism of its inhabitants.

If the enemy had not expected to overrun and hold Bien Hoa, there seems to be little justification for the infiltration of a battalion headquarters into the heart of the city. The unit apparently was to join enemy forces sweeping south across the air base in a pincers attack on the III Ctz military headquarters. In spite of the failure of the large-scale attacks on 31 January, the unit remained in its exposed position until it was shelled and overrun thirty hours later. There was little to hinder its exfiltration on the night of 31 January-1 February, but apparently it did not attempt to do so.

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Experience in Bien Hoa gives grounds for speculation that the nation-wide Viet Cong attacks on major towns and cities indicate not desperation, but a gross error of judgment on the part of enemy leaders. Possibly, they swallowed their own propaganda about the disaffection of the population in GVN-controlled areas and about "contradictions" between the USG and the GVN.

Whether or not the enemy high command expected to finish the war once and for all with this attack, it is increasingly well-documented that the Viet Cong and NVA troops which made the assault in the Bien Hoa area were led to believe that victory was within their grasp.

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