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20 APR 75

20 April 1975

DCI BRIEFING FOR
20 APRIL WSAG MEETING

VIETNAM

- I. The basic conclusions and judgments of our briefing yesterday still hold, although in one specific instance -- which I will mention in a moment -- we are somewhat more pessimistic.
- II. The government's position in eastern Military Region 3 is deteriorating rapidly, and the Communists may already be in the initial phase of their three-pronged assault on the capital.
 - A. According to a late report from the Defense Attache Office in Vietnam, a large enemy force in southern Tay Ninh Province is moving toward Saigon. According to the same report, the Communists have also now taken the district town of Ben Luc, in Long An Province. Shelling of Bien Hoa and the nearby airbase has resumed, and the North Vietnamese are pushing westward along Routes 1 and 20.
 - B. The South Vietnamese have decided to withdraw

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their badly mauled forces from Xuan Loc -- the remaining two regiments of the 18th Division and one airborne brigade -- and abandon Long Khanh Province to the Communists.

1. The move will leave Bien Hoa extremely vulnerable. The city will be defended by only two newly-rebuilt marine brigades and some armor, plus whatever troops can be extracted from Xuan Loc.

a. We now believe that Bien Hoa will probably be lost in a few days.

(Yesterday we estimated that its fall was possible within a week.) Its loss would lead to the rapid collapse of other government forces.

b. The large supply depot at nearby Long Binh holds approximately 60 percent of all government munitions. The government has taken no action to remove these stocks.

c. Communist forces also are continuing their drive down Route 1 along the coast. They

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are now approaching Ham Tan, the capital of Binh Tuy Province.

1. The provincial capital is lightly defended by the remnants of the 22nd Division, and the Communists probably will take it in a matter of hours.
2. The fall of Ham Tan will put the Communists nearer to Vung Tau, and there already are signs that other Communist forces from the Xuan Loc area are moving toward Vung Tau from the north.
 - a. The town is guarded by a small force made up of remnants from the Marine and 3rd divisions and, as we indicated yesterday, will probably be lost in a few days.

III. Meanwhile, political opposition to President Thieu continues to mount in Saigon, and a coup attempt or major political crisis could occur at any time. Thieu, however, still shows every sign of intending to stay in office.

- A. Within the next week, he plans to deliver a speech which will make this intention clear

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and also challenge the US Congress to decide on future support to Saigon.

- B. Thieu intends to deny that he is an obstacle to peace, but will reiterate that he will never agree to a Communist takeover in the South.
- C. In this regard, Thieu will maintain that he would step down only if this would ensure quick and sufficient US assistance, and only if the US agrees to "react vigorously against Communist aggression."

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