

CSM.

Sairad

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OFFENSIVE

Offense 1 (normass/deepe)

Saigon, May 5--Communist forces are expected to reach a record twelve combat divisions in South Vietnam by July when they launch their monsoon military offensive, intelligence sources report.

simultaneously, and far more significant, the ~~Communist~~ Vietnamese Communists are expected to initiate a political counter-offensive <sup>but</sup> both internally and internationally, these sources said. The Communists are predicted to ask for peace--on their terms--by restating and elaborating on their original five-point statement ~~which~~ defining their basis <sup>for</sup> of negotiations with the Allied side.

Sources said they do not expect the National Liberation Front for South Vietnam--the political backbone of the Viet Cong--to soften their position on negotiations, <sup>INSTEAD</sup> ~~but that~~ they would attempt to make their position more plausible and appealing as a means to undercut the success of the <sup>and Senate</sup> and legitimacy of the September Presidential elections to be held by the American-backed Vietnamese government.

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Offensive  
~~reference~~ 2 (normass/decpe) Saigon (normass/decpe)

On the military side, the Communist forces now have a total of ten combat divisions in South Vietnam, with each division thought estimated to average roughly ten thousand men. Of these ten divisions, seven are considered to be predominantly of North Vietnamese origin, two are ~~ex~~ largely recruited in the South by the Viet Cong and one is mixed, intelligence sources reported.

The Communist division strength is expected to rise to twelve as the annual northeast monsoon rains lash at the Laotian side of the northern highland mountains and the southern Mekong Delta, thus crippling the use of Allied airpower and armor.

~~Improvement~~  
Seven of the Communist divisions--six of them of North Vietnamese origin--are now roving through the northern half of South Vietnam, in an area called the First and Second military corps, where were only twelve or thirteen Allied division equivalents of grenade-line companies are opposing them. This 2 to 1 military ratio of maximum combat ground troops on the ground is still considered unsatisfactory and American commanders are not noticeably worried about the military situation there.

The gravity of the situation appears to be reflect reflected in General William C. Westmoreland's plea for more American troops and his prediction for fiercer, bloodier fighting in the coming months.

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Offensive 3 saigon (normass/deepe)

The steady, significant rise in Communist division strength is ~~and~~ considered one of several indices reflecting the Communist escalation in ~~their~~ <sup>ground</sup> war capabilities. On February 7, 1965,--at the time of the first American bombing raids on North Vietnam--there were no confirmed Communist division headquarters in South Vietnam, although the first North Vietnamese prisoners of war, captured in July, 1964, confirmed infiltration at the company-sized level.

Sources said the ~~it~~ expected Communist offensive would not repeat ~~the same~~ <sup>not</sup> entail spectacular division-sized attacks, <sup>but</sup> ~~the~~ main strategy appeared to intensify the war of attrition against American, <sup>and</sup> Korean and Australian forces while attempting to "smash" the already-weary Vietnamese troops and ~~also~~ to foil the important Revolutionary Development program by "annihilating" <sup>the</sup> ~~teams~~ <sup>annihilating the pacification teams</sup> working in the hamlets.

To prepare for this military thrust, the North Vietnamese ~~are~~ are confirmed to be using two transport battalions totalling 400 ~~1-V~~ soviet-made trucks to channel supplies and men from the Communist-held city of Attapeu in the southern Laotian panhandle directly ~~across~~ across the border into South Vietnam near the ruins of the former Ashau Special Forces camp west of the cold old imperial capital of Hue.

Sources said that American B-52 SAC raids regularly pour their ~~bombing~~ loads along the red <sup>only</sup> Ho Chi Minh trail in Laos, but Communist bulldozers succeed in filling the gigantic craters within 24 hours

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Offensive 4 Saigon (normass/deepe)

~~SECRET~~

The rise in Communist strength is also ~~refle~~ reflected in their <sup>ER</sup> small organized units since the 1965 bombing raids began. Intelligence sources said ~~at~~ in February, 1965, the Communists maintained five confirmed ~~auton~~ autonomous regiments in the ~~South~~ South; by July of this year they are expected to have forty five such regiments. By the end of this year they are expected to climb to at least fifty regiments, which operate at the corps level.

The Communist battalion strength is also ~~scars~~ <sup>ED</sup> soaring, indicating their whole pyramid/military structure is growing bigger and stronger. ~~In~~ In February, 1965, the Communists had formed roughly fifty autonomous mobile battalions; they are expected to have 200 by the time of their July offensive this year and 215 at the end of the year, intelligence sources report.

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Offensive 5 Saigon (normasa/deepe)

As significant and dramatic is the ~~the~~ increase in Communist heavy weapons battalions--which barrage strategic installations and shoot down American aircraft. In February, 1965, six Communist heavy weapons battalions had been officially confirmed ~~in~~ by intelligence sources; they are expected to have 105 ~~repeat~~ ~~estimated~~ 105 by ~~the~~ July and 135 by the end of the year, sources reported.

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Offensive 6 Saigon (normass/deepe)

Even more worrisome to American field commanders is the escalation in ~~Communist weaponry~~. sophisticated and lethal Communist weaponry. Two years ago, the standard long-range weapon used by the Communists was the mortar, with a range of ~~more than~~ two miles—and even then their supply of ammunition was limited. Today, however, ~~of~~ military officials have confirmed the use of Soviet-made rockets, which increased their radius of attack by two and half times. Their stocks of ammunition are much more plentiful. American pilots have confirmed shooting elephants carrying even longer-range artillery.

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Offensive 7 Saigon (normass/deepe)

American officials have said they would not repeat not be surprised to see the Communists ~~launch~~ launch rocket attacks on the heart of Saigon during their coordinated political-military offensive--possibly before the Presidential elections this September.

<sup>VAGUE</sup> Intelligence sources listed these communist divisions ~~are~~ and their ~~rough~~ locations in the northern half of South Vietnam, comprising the First and Second military corps areas:

The North Vietnamese ~~is~~ 2nd Division in Kontum-~~Pleiku~~ Pleiku-Phu Bon provinces in the central highlands near the Laos-Cambodian border; the North Vietnamese 3rd division in ~~Quang Nam~~ (Quang Nam-Quang Ngai-Quang Tin provinces ~~east~~ outside of Danang city along the South China Sea; North Vietnamese 5th Division from ~~South~~ southern Binh Dinh province ~~to~~ down the seacoast to Binh Thuan province; ~~is~~

In the two northernmost provinces along the demilitarized zone, the three North Vietnamese divisions are 324B, 325 and 341. The ~~is~~

Viet Cong 1st division is ~~considered to be located in an area known~~ <sup>180 m. 105</sup>

~~is~~ the "Three Frontiers" area near the Cambodian border, near Quang Duc ~~Province.~~  
NORTHWEST of SAIGON

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Offensive 8 saigon (Norman/deepe)

In the ~~the~~ <sup>2</sup> Third military corps area, ~~surrounding~~ <sup>3</sup> three Viet Cong divisions are located. The Viet Cong 9th and 10th division are northwest of the capital in their stronghold areas of War Zone <sup>5</sup> C and D; the <sup>4</sup> Viet Cong 7th Division--called the Capitol Division--encircles ~~the~~ <sup>SAIGON</sup> capital, intelligence sources said.

Communist strength in the Fourth Military corps, comprising the Mekong Delta, has yet to reach division strength. Eight Communist regiments have been confirmed in the Delta region.

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Offensive 9 Saigon (normass/deepe)

Intelligence sources said they were ~~was~~ keeping their eye on another North Vietnamese division—number 620—which appears to be poised for infiltration into South Vietnam through the "F" "Three Frontiers" mountain ~~area~~ <sup>BORDERING</sup> area, 180 miles northwest of Saigon, along the Cambodian ~~border~~ <sup>border</sup>.

~~SECRET~~  
(Note to Editor: I plan to write a separate story on ~~Minister~~ Communist political offensive for you. Do you publish on Sunday?)

End Reuter