

December 22, 1974

**General Staff Cable on the C3+C4 Campaign Desires
of the High Command, sent to the B3 Front**

Citation:

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Summary:

Cable from the General Staff detailing campaign plans of the Senior Leadership of the High Command to exploit an offensive posture and open up a strategic corridor to transform the balance of forces.

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Memo for the Record on Intentions for the Duc Lap-Gia Nghia Campaign

Passing along the campaign battle intentions [plan] of the Senior Leadership of the High Command (including the ideas expressed by Brother Van [Vo Nguyen Giap], Brother Dung [Van Tien Dung], and senior officers of the General Staff during discussion of the Duc Lap-Cheo Reo Campaign to be conducted in early 1975)

Memo prepared at the General Staff Headquarters on 13 December 1974:

This campaign will be one of our largest campaigns of 1975, so all of the senior officers have been very interested in it. Van [Vo Nguyen Giap], Dung [Van Tien Dung], and senior leaders of the Joint General Staff - Thanh, Tan [Le Trong Tan], and Hien [Le Ngoc Hien] met with Hai Manh [Chu Huy Man] and Hoang [Hoang Minh Thao] to affirm concrete details of the plan.

All participants in the meeting agreed on the following battle intentions:

1.-Goals and Significance:

As was stated in the guidance on implementing the resolution of Central Military Party Committee (message No. 288 of 12 November sent to the B3 Front Headquarters and Party Committee) on achieving the strategic goals set for 1975, this campaign is aimed at continuing to exploit our offensive posture by destroying the enemy and opening up the strategic corridor in order to create a dramatic transformation of the balance of forces and a new posture on the battlefield in preparation for the next strategic plan.

Specific goals of the campaign:

a)-Destroy an important portion of the forces of the puppet 2nd Corps and destroy many enemy regiments, with the focus being on crippling the 2nd Corps.

-Destroy many RF groups, battalions, and companies and many PF platoons, capture large numbers of prisoners, and capture large quantities of enemy heavy weapons and technical equipment which we can use to attack the enemy and to provide us with a reserve stockpile.

-Defeat the enemy's relief and clearing operations in order to prevent the enemy from retaking areas that we have just liberated.

b)-Liberate the corridor: expand our corridor along Route 14, meaning Route 14 down to Route 22 through Gia Nghia and Route 14 down to the three southern provinces of Military Region 5; liberate and hold the areas that we clear in order to create a new battle posture for the B3 battlefield, dividing and isolating the enemy while we open up and utilize the corridor.

c)-Train and hone our forces to improve their skills in organizing and commanding combat operations.

-Improve our ability to quickly and completely annihilate enemy forces operating in the field as well as enemy forces holding solid fortified defensive positions.

-Train and hone our forces to improve our ability to organize and command campaigns and battles; to move and mass troops quickly and secretly to achieve

surprise; to surround, outflank, and penetrate deep to destroy the enemy; to carry out siege operations, to avoid missing any opportunities, and to capture enemy weapons, ammunition, and equipment that we can use to fight the enemy or to store as a reserve stockpile for our forces.

-Improving our abilities in this manner will both have an immediate effect; it will help to meet our requirements for the next mission. Out of all of the above goals, we must firmly understand that the goals of annihilating truly large numbers of enemy personnel and of liberating and opening up the corridor are the two primary goals and that these two goals are intimately linked together.

d)-Consolidate, strengthen, and build up the liberated zone and expand our local forces, both guerrillas and local force troops, in order to firmly hold and defend the new areas we take and defeat all enemy efforts to retake the areas that we have just captured.

2.-Formulas:

a)-Carry out aggressive actions to annihilate truly large numbers of enemy personnel, either killing them or causing them to disintegrate, and at the same time place great focus on attacking enemy troops occupying solidly fortified defensive positions. When carrying out attacks, first ensure that victory in the attack is certain; carry out rapid attacks that totally annihilate the enemy and that create additional opportunities to develop and expand victories.

b)-Maneuver forces in a very flexible manner, make widespread use of the tactics of surrounding the enemy, outflanking the enemy, penetrating deep into the enemy's position, and dividing enemy forces. Always seize campaign, battle, and combat opportunities to quickly advance and expand our victories.

d)-You must constantly maintain and exploit the campaign, tactical, and battle initiative from the beginning right through to the end of the campaign, and you must achieve the goal of growing stronger as you fight.

e)-For that reason, in your tactics you need to make sure you pay attention to the following tactics:

-Secrecy, surprise, deception and tricking the enemy, suppressing and closing airfields, cutting roads and other ground lines of communications. Light the fuse by drawing enemy forces into our pre-selected battle areas so that we can first attack enemy forces in the field, when they are out in the open.

-You must alter the battlefield posture to create a posture in which you divide the enemy's forces at both the campaign and the tactical level; penetrate deep, outflank the enemy, surround him broadly, and attack continuously.

-You must resolutely mass your forces in a tight, focused manner in order to quickly shatter the enemy's posture so that you can annihilate enemy forces and liberate areas and corridors.

3.-Goals: You must cripple the enemy army's 2nd Corps regular army units. Specifically, you must:

-Destroy four to six infantry regiments or regimental-sized task forces or ranger groups and from two to three armored battalions.

-Destroy many RF groups, RF battalions, RF companies and PF platoons; shatter and disperse the enemy's forces of repression and PSDF forces in the campaign's battle area; capture large numbers of prisoners; and capture large quantities of heavy weapons and technical equipment to use to fight the enemy and to stockpile for our future use.

-In the B3 campaign area itself, you must destroy from three to five infantry regiments, one to two armored battalions, and large numbers of enemy transport vehicles [trucks].

-Open up and expand the corridor, liberate and hold the new areas, and liberate civilians.

4.-Campaign Plan:

The campaign will be divided into two phases, with the total time being approximately two months.

Phase 1, from twenty days to one month.

Phase 2, depending on the situation the length of this phase might be extended.

After the campaign you must have a plan to develop and expand your victory and to firmly hold and defend the corridor and the newly-liberated zone.

Plan:

Phase 1: Attack enemy forces moving in the area of Route 14 in southern Pleiku Province, on Route 19, on Route 14 between Ban Me Thuot and Duc Lap, and on Route 21 east of Ban Me Thuot; Annihilate enemy defensive forces in the Duc Lap-Gia Nghia-Kien Duc Area, and liberate [open] the corridor. Specifically:

-In the area of southern Pleiku, ensure mobility and mass forces to support the deployment of our campaign forces, at the start of the campaign create an immediate opportunity for the 320th Division to attack enemy forces in southern Pleiku while they are on the move and out in the open. The mission of the 320th Division is to destroy one or two infantry regiments and one or two armored squadrons [battalions]. If there is a favorable opportunity to do so, the division should strive to eliminate the enemy's network of small outposts and overrun and liberate Cam Ga without waiting for Phase 2.

-The Duc Lap-Gia Nghia-Kien Duc area is the area of responsibility of the 10th Division plus two infantry battalions and one sapper battalion from the B2 Front along with a sapper battalion subordinate to the High Command. Specifically:

+The 10th Division's mission is to overrun and liberate Duc Lap and Duc Song in two or three days.

+The Gia Nghia-Kien Duc area is the area of responsibility of the B2 units and the sapper battalion from the High Command. These forces will serve in the role of local forces. They will attack Duc Lap and Duc Song simultaneously. Their mission will be to assault and capture a number of dominant terrain features and the airfield in order to threaten and dominate the province capital, Gia Nghia, and the airfield. At the same time these forces will surround and besiege Kien Duc and will dominate and suppress air operations at the Nhan Co Airfield in order to create the proper battlefield posture

for the next step, but if conditions permit then they should strive to develop the attack to take these locations immediately.

-After Duc Lap and Dak Song are taken, you must quickly use one infantry regiment along with tanks and anti-aircraft guns, the campaign's reserve force, to strike deep to overrun Gia Nghia and Kien Duc and liberate Gia Nghia and Kien Duc. The anticipated time it should take to liberate the Duc Lap-Dak Song-Gia Nghia-Kien Duc area is from five to seven days to liberate the entire area. The decisions on the specific forces to be used to conduct the attack in the Duc Lap, Dak Song, Gia Nghia, and Kien Duc areas will be made by the Campaign Command Headquarters when they draw up their concrete campaign plan.

+The 316th Division (minus) will be responsible for the area of Route 14 between Ban Me Thuot and Duc Lap. The division's mission will be to annihilate enemy relief and reinforcement troops. The division's goal is to destroy approximately one regiment or regimental-sized task force, two infantry battalions and an armored battalion, and to seize, occupy, and liberate the area from the Serepoc Bridge to Duc Lap. If the enemy does not send reinforcements or relief forces, the 316th Division's mission will spread out its battalions to clear and liberate the territory and residents around the outskirts of Ban Me Thuot City.

+The attack area along Route 19 is an important supporting [secondary] sector of the campaign. This will be the area of responsibility of the 3rd Division (minus) and the 95th Regiment, with the 3rd Division Headquarters exercising overall command of forces in this area. These forces will be responsible for destroying one or two enemy infantry regiments or regimental-sized task forces and one armored squadron [battalion] (or a number of armored troops [companies] of the puppet 22nd Division) and for cutting enemy road traffic and keeping the road cut throughout the campaign.

+The Kontum area will be the area of responsibility of the 968th Division (minus). The 968th Division's mission will be to defend and hold the liberated zone, to aggressively pin down as many enemy forces as possible, and conduct deception operations to enable our forces in the primary attack sector to annihilate enemy forces.

+The Route 21 area will be the area of responsibility of the 25th Regiment and attached reinforcing elements. The regiment's mission will be to destroy supply convoys, RF groups, and regular army units sent to clear the road, and to cut all enemy ground traffic between Nha Trang and Ban Me Thuot.

Phase 2:

-This is the exploitation phase. The mission will be to attack and take Cam Ga and to attack, seize, occupy, and liberate Route 7 and the Cheo Reo rural areas. If an opportunity presents itself, our forces will liberate Cheo Reo City, the province capital. The forces to be used in this phase will be the massed forces of two divisions (the 10th and 320th Divisions) along with local forces.

-The 316th Division will continue to carry out its mission of annihilating enemy forces and maintaining firm control of the Duc Lap area and the area around Ban Me Thuot. Later, circa late April or early May, the division will be sent south and turned over to the B2 Front.

-In the event that the enemy's 2nd Corps regular army forces are crippled and the enemy's forces become frightened and begin to disintegrate, if the opportunity arises quickly attack, occupy, and liberate Ban Me Thuot City.

5.-Command Organization

The Central Military Party Committee and the General Staff will directly command and direct this campaign.

The Campaign Resolve [Campaign Party resolution] and the Campaign Plan will be reviewed and approved by the Standing Committee of the Central Military Party Committee and by the General Staff Headquarters.

The 3rd Division and the 95th Regiment will be commanded by Military Region 5 with guidance and direction provided by the Central Military Party Committee and the General Staff.

The Deputy Chief of the General Staff has read and approved these primary ideas.

Signed
Le Ngoc Hien