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Mandatory Review
Case # NLJ 95-239
Document # 84a

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SUBJECT: CIA Programs to Induce Desertions and
Defections in South Vietnam

1. CIA conducts unilaterally or in cooperation with other agencies in Vietnam a wide gamut of defector inducement programs which range from the pin-pointed approach to high-level VC cadre to broad propaganda appeals to enemy troops of all categories.

Inducement of Desertions

2. CIA and MACV jointly conduct a sizable program designed to induce desertion by VC and NVA soldiers. Through black radio and leaflets continuing efforts are made to lower the morale of the individual enemy soldier to the point where he realizes the futility of his situation and begins to seek an alternative to inevitable death. Radio and leaflet output emphasizes the endless sacrifice these soldiers are required to make, the awesome fire power they must face and the heavy casualties their units endure. The privation caused by lack of sufficient food and medicine, the dissension between Northerner and Southerner, the failure of the people of South Vietnam to support them except when forced to do so, and the failures and inadequacies of their own command and support structure are additional themes. Publicity is given to defections, particularly those involving high ranking officers and groups, and defectors are used in a variety of ways to attempt to induce the defection of their comrades.

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Date 22 AUG 1996

Rewards Program

3. The Station has also worked closely with MACV in the development of a program of awards utilized by both U.S. forces and the GVN to encourage defectors and to obtain information leading to the capture of VC/NVA leaders. Under the code name BORN FREE, a comprehensive program of rewards has been instituted to encourage defectors and stimulate the flow of voluntary information. Other programs providing related incentives include awards to ralliers for weapons turned in and monetary awards to RD cadre for capture of VC. The GVN Ministry of the Interior has a pacification fund separate from the Chieu Hoi Program which provides rewards for capturing or killing VC cadre.

Contributions of PHOENIX

4. The PHOENIX Program, formerly called ICEX (Intelligence Coordination and Exploitation), has now expanded sufficiently to permit its district centers scattered throughout South Vietnam to proceed with some effectiveness in the defection field. The following order of priority has been established: Defection in place, inducement to rally, capture, destruction of infrastructure elements. In some areas the PHOENIX Program has progressed to the point where the province PHOENIX representative [REDACTED] selects a province level VC political or military leader of significant stature for concentrated attention to achieve his neutralization according to the foregoing order of priorities. This is designed to supplement the day-to-day endeavor to capitalize on intelligence to eliminate the infrastructure.

1.5(c)
3.4(b)(1)

Operational Support

5. In addition to operational endeavors, the intelligence capabilities of the CIA Station provide a steady flow of useful information and analysis which

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3.4(b)(1)



is utilized by the various components involved in the inducement of deserters and defectors. For example, the [redacted] National Interrogation Center (NIC) provides a considerable volume of comment from prisoners and ralliers concerning the effectiveness of radio and leaflet operations. This data provides insights useful for refining the content of these psychological operations to increase their effectiveness. The Station has provided a variety of papers on the character and life of the NVA soldier in South Vietnam and on his strengths and vulnerabilities which have been used in the planning of psychological operations.

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3.4(b)(1)

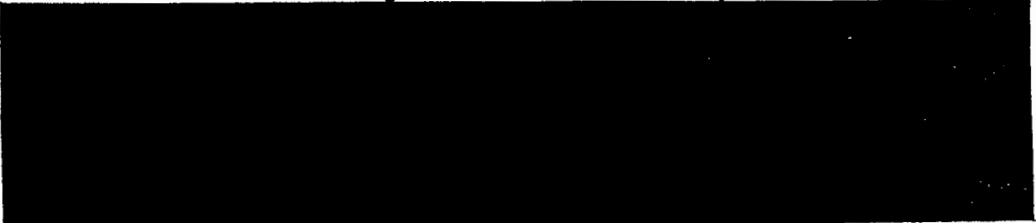


1.5(c)
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1.5(c)
3.4(b)(1)

7. The intense military pressures on VC and NVA military units resulting in part from changed and more aggressive enemy military operations has created new operational opportunities and a somewhat increased flow of higher level military defectors.



1.5(c)
3.4(b)(1)



[REDACTED]

1.5(c)
3.4(b)(1)

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

1.5(c)
3.4(b)(1)

Intelligence Operations

9. In 1966, the CIA Station revamped its program to gain access for intelligence purposes to strategic level leadership in the VC and to encourage defections from that leadership. Since that time, our efforts have resulted in vastly expanding CIA knowledge of the top enemy leadership.

[REDACTED]

1.5(c)
3.4(b)(1)

Enemy Response

10. The variety and extent of these various programs resulted in 1967 in counter-action by enemy forces to reduce the desertion rate through more stringent controls over their personnel and through intensified political indoctrination. One cause for the drop in Chieu Hoi rate in late 1967 appears to have been this enemy effort for greater indoctrination and tighter control.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Problems and Proposals

11. Although the various programs to induce defections and desertions are extensive, there remain many opportunities for improvement both in organization and tactics. The complexity of the problem creates difficulties in organization and coordination which are not currently adequately met by existing procedures. Two mission council committees have responsibilities relating to this problem. One group, the Psychological Operations Committee (chaired by the JUSPAO director) has not met for a year. The Prisoners and Detainees Committee confines itself almost exclusively to U.S. POW problems. An ad hoc psychological operations committee, consisting of representatives from the Embassy, MACV, JUSPAO and CIA has been useful in discussing the exploitation of specific opportunities

[REDACTED] It would appear desirable to establish a Vietnamese-American working group to concentrate on defection inducement and to insure that appropriate techniques and procedures for handling high level ralliers are developed. There is a continuing problem in insuring that new techniques in this field are reported to all echelons for implementation (a problem complicated by the rapid turnover in personnel). Various opportunities for action in this field by the GVN have not been aggressively exploited. President Thieu, for example, could give personal publicity to recent ralliers and could increase public attention and GVN support for the National Reconciliation Program by establishing a "Council on National Reconciliation". Opportunities available to enemy cadres who rally need to be publicized more vigorously since, despite considerable effort, recent evidence indicates that enemy personnel are not well-informed concerning these programs. Enemy indoctrination to the effect that capture will result in torture and death is apparently effective and must be neutralized not only by counter-propaganda but by practical improvements in GVN structure and practices to eliminate excesses which substantiate this indoctrination. CIA has cooperated in an effort

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to develop more systematic procedures for processing and adjudicating prisoners as one effort to this end.

Summary

12. In summary, the CIA contribution to defector and deserter inducement falls into two broad areas: (1) a selective effort organized and implemented essentially by CIA to induce individual high level defectors, and (2) a broad variety of actions to support programs of other agencies in this field. Problems of coordination and management exist to some degree on the American side but there is a continuing and intensive search for new ideas and operational initiatives which is achieving some success. On the GVN side, at senior levels, there is a pattern of apathy and some opposition to programs which involve acceptance of enemy personnel back into the Vietnamese community without retribution. On lower levels there is a spotty but in general a cooperative attitude in pushing the various programs forward.

IV. 3 Nov 70

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SOUTH VIETNAM

RADIO URGES VIGILANCE, UNITY AGAINST 'U.S.-PUPPET CLIQUE'

Liberation Radio (Clandestine) in Vietnamese to South Vietnam 0930 GMT 30 Oct 70 S

[Article: "Let us heighten our vigilance, unite closely, step up our struggle, and resolutely smash the U.S.-Thieu-Ky-Khiem clique's special pacification plans"]

[Text] Recently, under the label of the for-the-people campaign, along with intensively terrorizing and repressing the urbanites and grabbing their human and material resources, Vietnamese traitor Nguyen Van Thieu convened a meeting at Vung Tau with his province chiefs and generals to discuss what he called regional community development and regional collective security plans aimed at restoring peace, and so forth.

The U.S.-puppets' propaganda agencies emulated in publicizing his community development and collective security plan, trying to make public opinion believe that with this plan Thieu would bring security and peace to the people. However, all these propaganda words could not cover up the Thieu clique's dark design to be effected through this meeting at Vung Tau. Dealing with this meeting, AFP on 22 October plainly said that it aimed at further stepping up the pacification program, a criminal program, in the eyes of our people and world public opinion. The U.S.-puppets' rural pacification, accelerated pacification, and special pacification programs, although decorated with grandiloquent terms, such as community development, collective security, and so forth, have been for a long time actually aimed at intensively terrorizing, massacring, and robbing the people in an attempt to implement the U.S. Vietnamization-of-the-war plan.

The U.S.-puppets' bloody crimes in Son My, Ba Lang An, Kon Horing, and Binh Duong, and the present so-called for-the-people campaign of the Thieu-Ky-Khiem clique are part of its criminal scheme. Faced with increasingly heavier defeats on all battlefields, with the rural compatriots' uprising movement against the special pacification program, and with the urbanites' increasingly strong struggle movement to demand a better life, democracy, U.S. withdrawal, restoration of peace, the formation of a coalition government, and so forth, the U.S.-Thieu-Ky-Khiem clique is panic-stricken. Like a horde of gravely wounded wild beasts, the U.S.-Thieu-Ky-Khiem clique has frenziedly terrorized our compatriots with the cruellest tricks. It has indiscriminately terrorized people from all strata, including even the Saigon National Assembly deputies.

It was not fortuitous, as AP disclosed on 21 October, that prior to the 23 October Vung Tau meeting, Thieu directed his subordinates to effectively eliminate any Viet Cong or any Viet Cong sympathizers, that is, the progressives. Meanwhile, the U.S. puppets' psychological warfare propaganda agencies spread the rumour that as many as 30,000 Viet Cong cadres had infiltrated the ranks of the puppet administrative machinery. This is a trick aimed at preparing public opinion for a new, fiercer wave of terrorization, repression, and internal purge.

Our people and the various strata of urbanites, including those who approve peace or who do not side with the Thieu clique, must heighten their vigilance in the face of the extremely cruel new scheme of the U.S.-Thieu-Ky-Khiem clique in its death throes. It is obvious that, with the so-called community development and collective security plans, which were approved at the Vung Tau meeting, the U.S.-Thieu-Ky-Khiem clique will continue to pile up many more bloody crimes against our people in the rural areas as well as in the cities.

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SOUTH VIETNAM

U.S. bombs, shells, and poisonous chemicals will continue to sow destruction and death over the villages and hamlets. Meanwhile, the so-called "Phoenix" hooligan teams will search for and attack our people at an increased tempo. Moreover, the U.S.-Thieu-Ky-Khiem clique will intensively draft people and increase its military strength on a large scale. It will intensively control the people, along with grabbing the compatriots' property and belongings through brazen, open piratical tricks and unpopular tax laws. At the same time, the U.S.-Thieu-Ky-Khiem clique will step up an internal purge in a more wicked and fierce fashion.

Our armed forces and people deeply realize that so long as the Americans prolong their aggressive war and do not take home all their troops, and so long as the Thieu-Ky-Khiem clique continues to survive, their crimes will continue to mount. As long as the U.S.-Thieu-Ky-Khiem clique exists, there can be no true peace, even for a day.

Our people in the rural areas as well as in the cities will resolutely struggle against the enemy to the end. The rural compatriots' strong uprising movement to frustrate the pacification plan, to annihilate hooligans, to smash their bondage, and to gain mastery, combined with the urban compatriots' movement to demand rice, clothes, peace, and the formation of a Saigon government without Thieu, Ky, and Khiem that will approve peace, independence, and neutrality and the improvement of the people's living conditions, is surging vigorously and broadly, effectively isolating the enemy and driving him into a quagmire. The enemy is merely a cornered wild beast. Our people's strength is invincible. With this great strength of unity, our armed forces and people are determined to smash all new pacification schemes of the enemy, to doom the U.S.-puppets' Vietnamization-of-the-war plan, and to advance toward complete victory.

PLAF DEALS HEAVY BLOWS TO PACIFICATION PROGRAM

LIBERATION PRESS AGENCY (Clandestine) in English to East Europe and the Far East 1538
GMT 31 Oct 70 B

[Text] South Viet Nam October 31 GPA--Despite the enemy's fierce attacks on the liberated areas, the South Viet Nam armed forces and people in this month overcame all difficulties and hardships to step up their fight and dealt another heavy blow on the enemy "special pacification" program. The enemy was driven into a defensive position on all battlefronts.

In the first days of October, the P.L.A.F. [in] Ca Mau, An Giang, Rach Gia and Can Tho provinces inflicted heavy losses on many puppet battalions in their raids in the areas of U Minh jungle, Nui Dai, Ba Chuc, Nui Cam, Mo So and Cai Cao. The liberation armed forces in Quang Tri and Thua Thien provinces repeatedly attacked the puppet troops in the Coc Bai area and on October 7 forced all the puppet troops to withdraw completely from this area.

Thus, after 60 days and nights of relentless fighting, the liberation forces totally defeated all the four battalions of the 1st Regiment of the puppet 1st Division, put out of action more than 1,800 puppet troops, shot down or destroyed on the ground 71 aircraft and wrecked 14 heavy howitzers and a large number of war means.

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The following is a brief summary of PHUNG HOANG activities/developments in South Vietnam as reflected in reports made to the 2nd Quarterly PHOENIX Conference held 25 July 1970:

A. All provinces in MR-1 reported some progress made in the application of specific targeting techniques against the VCI; neutralizations as a result of specific targeting remain low, however, due principally to the inaccessibility of the VCI. Other factors impeding PHUNG HOANG progress in MR-1 are: lack of trained personnel and difficulty of launching specific targeting due to relatively sophisticated intelligence techniques required. The following districts are currently engaging in specific targeting:

- (1) Quang Tri: Hai Lang, Trieu Phong
- (2) Quang Nam: Hoa Vang, Dien Ban
- (3) Thua Thien: Vinh Loc, Phu Thu
- (4) Quang Ngai: Son Tinh, Tu Nghia
- (5) District III (Danang City)

Other districts vary in their efforts from "ineffective but improving" to "no effort at all". The pace of judicial processing in the provinces of MR-1 has increased, largely due to the emphasis placed on judicial processing by Lieutenant General LAM, Commanding General, MR-1. Thua Thien and Quang Nam Provinces appear to have the strongest psychological operations programs in support of PHUNG HOANG efforts; overall the PsyOps effort in PHUNG HOANG for MR-1 has been on the increase. A general consensus of opinion in MR-1 holds that personnel who have attended the PHUNG HOANG Training School are more efficient in their work than those who have not attended. In all MR-1 provinces, more than 50% of the personnel in the PH program are school-trained. At the present time, a program of instruction for classes in specific targeting and for the training of operations officers is being drawn up by the MR-1 PHOENIX office.

B. During the quarter, MR-2 PHUNG HOANG operations accounted for 939 VCI killed, captured or rallied, which constitutes a slight improvement over the previous quarter. The most significant improvement in the program occurred in the area of legal processing of VCI detainees, thus helping to reduce the backlog of VCI cases being handled by the Province

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Security Committees. Binh Dinh Province continues to be the most effective province in MR-2, compiling totals for neutralizations and captures which comprised 46% and 55%, respectively, of the MR-2 totals. The PHUNG HOANG programs of Quang Duc Province and Cam Ranh Special Sector have failed to produce any positive results during both the first and second quarters of 1970. Overall, MR-2 has a long way to go in the development of specific targeting practices, and the development of the will on the part of GVN officials to employ them. The integration of the PHUNG HOANG program into the DGNP had no unusual impacts on the program at region, province or district levels, although the Regional National Police director was expected to exert a firm and useful hand over future PHUNG HOANG activities. The U.S. Army 8th PsyOps Battalion and the Regional Joint PsyOps Center will help the PHUNG HOANG Regional Office implement a regionwide publicity campaign designed to inform the general populace of the existence and mission of the PHUNG HOANG program. The 14th class of the regional PHUNG HOANG School was graduated on 18 July 1970 and brings the total number of P/DIOCC personnel who have received training at the school to 529. The region reports rather disappointing results with respect to GVN follow-up programs at insuring continued effectiveness in PIOCCs and DIOCCs, although the regional PHUNG HOANG coordinator believed things would improve in this area over the next quarter.

C. In MR-3, 1,207 VCI were neutralized against an objective of 1,200 during 2nd quarter activities, a significant increase over 1st Quarter results. Improvement resulted from the operations into Cambodia and the orders of the MR-3 ARVN Commander, LTG Do Cao TRI, directing full coordination and cooperation of all agencies associated with the PHUNG HOANG program in a concerted effort to exploit the successes of the Cambodian operations. The regional PHUNG HOANG school graduated 267 students, bringing the percentage of PHUNG HOANG-trained personnel in MR-3 to approximately 80%. Courses are designed not only for PIOCC/DIOCC personnel but also to acquaint National Police personnel with the program, in anticipation of their ultimate takeover. Command emphasis from Region level for the PHUNG HOANG program continues to strengthen the program, particularly in the processing of VCI detainees. However, such processing still continues at an uncertain pace in MR-3. The arrest accountability system has been partially implemented but is not yet fully effective; some detainees are released at district level, almost immediately after capture. Others are never brought before the PSC so that their eventual disposition is unknown. The Vietnamese are being encouraged to more closely supervise PHUNG HOANG post-apprehension processing. As to impact on local programs of the integration of the PHUNG HOANG program into the National Police structure, the MR-3

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PHOENIX Office requested PSAs to determine whether qualified police were available to run the PIOCCs/DIOCCs. The ultimate move to NP control is favored in MR-3 but flexible timetables have been suggested so as to allow districts and provinces to properly manage the turnovers. Official recommendations made to LTG TRI were that the move to NP control be accomplished as NP assets become trained and available and that the end of Fiscal Year 1971 be established as the target date for complete turnover of the MR-3 PIOCCs and DIOCCs. During the 2nd Quarter, the MR-3 PHUNG HOANG publicity campaign was phased over to the RIOCC; 49 different posters identifying approximately 100 different personalities were produced. Mugbooks for two provinces have been published by the regional office in sufficient quantities for distribution to DIOCCs and VIOCCs; several other provinces have managed to produce mugbooks from their own resources. PHUNG HOANG-related television announcements have been made in the Gia Dinh and Bien Hoa areas. VCI organizational charts have been posted in at least one village in each province, with public appeals for information related to positions and/or personnel; responses have thus far been disappointing. The regional PHOENIX coordinator in MR-3 considers the cooperation between combat units and the PHOENIX/PHUNG HOANG program to be truly outstanding.

D. Total VCI neutralizations increased in MR-4 from 1581 for the first quarter to 2174 for the 2nd quarter; the percentage of total neutralizations by sentencing increased from 16% to 30%. The increase was, unfortunately, not due to increased targeting but was more likely attributable to two factors: (a) Decreased GVN activity in the 1st Quarter due to the Tet holidays; (b) Increase in 2nd Quarter activities because of Cambodian operations. Attempts to improve specific targeting occupied a large part of the overall effort during this period. Instructional training was centered on specific targeting, dossier preparation, and overt police-type investigativ techniques; emphasis has been on practical rather than theoretical techniques. Thus far, 192 personnel have been graduated from the course. For the first time, in many instances, these courses represented initial briefings for many DIOCC personnel on just what their responsibilities are and why they were assigned to their respective DIOCCs. Only one province (Kien Hoa) has been described as making no attempts towards specific targeting. The security situation in Kien Hoa necessitat almost a total dependence on regular tactical operations. One province, An Giang, reported that the majority of its anti-VCI operations are specifically targeted; three other provinces, Ba Zuyen, Go Cong, and Vinh Long, conduct specific targeted operations down to village-level. The other eleven provinces are all moving towards specific targeting in some degree.

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MR-4 emphasized that the results of such targeting, even where it does exist, are by no means achieving a high success rate; it is still the exception to actually neutralize the specifically targeted individual VCI member, although other results may be achieved from the operation. Command emphasis for the program on the part of GVN Province and District chiefs, and police chiefs at these levels, is still a primary problem. Far too often, this command emphasis can best be described as lip service only, with a complete lack of follow-up to what may be vocally expressed in front of an inspection team from higher headquarters. The PHUNG HOANG School in Can Tho graduated 221 students during the 2nd Quarter; a total of 835 students have been trained since October 1969. One of the most noticeable occurrences of the past three months has been the upgrading of the Regional PHUNG HOANG Center; what was once nothing more than an organization on paper has now become a viable, energetic control headquarters for the Delta PHUNG HOANG program. Finally, the question of GVN, U.S., and FWMAF tactical unit interest and participation in the PHUNG HOANG program must be commented on in a negative manner. Participation is usually non-existent and interest in the program noticeably lacking. Of the three ARVN divisions, the 9th is rated as cooperative in most cases. The 7th and 21st Divisions appear completely uncooperative. Their actions range from complete takeover of an area of operations, including physically taking over a DIOCC and moving the staff out, to a total lack of communication with PICCCs and DIOCCs. In the case of the 7th Division, even the American advisors appear to be uninterested in the PHUNG HOANG program. The U.S. tactical units, limited principally to U.S. Seal teams and gunship units also have exhibited limited interest in the program but it is expected that as they are educated, improvement will occur.

E. The thread woven throughout all the above reports, insofar as means whereby to measure PHUNG HOANG effectiveness are concerned, was that neutralizations themselves are no yardstick to determine overall effectiveness. Most of the PHUNG HOANG coordinators noted that only by measuring neutralizations against the effectiveness of the VCI in influencing and controlling the population was an appropriate method of evaluating the effectiveness of the PHUNG HOANG effort.

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Directorate of Intelligence
August 1970

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(CIA)

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

The Communist Infrastructure

Introduction

1. "Infrastructure" is a term the US began using in the early 1960s to characterize the extensive non-military portion of the Vietnamese Communist organization. Although its definition has never been fully resolved, it has usually been interpreted to include enemy civilian personnel in South Vietnam engaged in political, economic, propaganda, security, and other activities.* Its membership has ranged from executives of the Current Affairs Committee at the national level to low-level security personnel who serve in the hamlets. In territory under the control of the Communists, the infrastructure includes the overt government; in areas that are contested or under South Vietnamese control, it exists covertly and has the primary goal of subverting the authority and effectiveness of the South Vietnamese government.

2. The Phoenix/Phung Hoang organization -- the Allied effort targeted against the Communist civil cadre -- has defined the infrastructure as: "... the political and administrative organization through which the Vietnamese Communists seek control over the people of the Republic of Vietnam. It embodies the Communist Party control structure and the leadership and administration of front organizations from national through hamlet level. It includes individuals who are members or probationary members of the Vietnamese Communist Party and those non-Communist members who perform an enemy cadre function." The definition has been open to broad interpretation.

* The Appendix gives a short description of the Communist non-military organization.

Note: This memorandum was produced solely by CIA. It was prepared by the Office of Economic Research and coordinated with the Office of Current Intelligence, the Office of National Estimates, the Director's Special Assistant for Vietnamese Affairs, and the Clandestine Services.

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3. Some analysts have thought of the infrastructure in terms of a broad definition which would include all non-military personnel who serve the Communists in any capacity. An estimate based on such a definition would be considerably larger than those discussed below. Others have thought of the term as applying to the key, or "cadre," elements of the organization in order to exclude persons of lesser importance, most of whom are not Party members. In describing the extensiveness of the organized insurgency base, the former concept is in order. However, the Party or the narrower key personnel element is the more appropriate concept for most of our countersubversive activities. The Phoenix definition attempts to approximate the narrower definition.

Size

4. In addition to the conceptual problem, the complexity of the Viet Cong non-military structure and the widespread use of part-time workers have made it extremely difficult to arrive at estimates of the size of the infrastructure. Largely because of these difficulties, no consistent meaningful definition has been developed. US analysts and organizations have tended to use several different methodologies for estimating the infrastructure, depending on their purposes. All of these definitions have tended to exclude low-level and part-time non-Party personnel. They have also largely excluded the Communists' covert assets located in South Vietnamese territory.

5. The current Phoenix estimate of Viet Cong infrastructure (VCI) is 67,000. The primary purpose of the Phoenix working definition is as a management tool to "control" the quality of infrastructure eliminations reporting. To this end, Phoenix divides possible VCI into three categories -- A, B, and C - roughly according to their usefulness to the Communists' cause. The estimate excludes the C category. The estimate also excludes most of the subversive personnel operating in territory controlled by the South Vietnamese government.

6. The Phoenix estimate of 67,000 is largely based on reporting from the districts. Unfortunately,

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criteria for counting infrastructure personnel vary considerably by area. In one province in the Delta, for example, the local Phoenix estimator counts only security police. In others, there is considerable confusion as to what constitutes a "cadre." Furthermore, no province attempts to enumerate Viet Cong cadres who operate in territory controlled by the South Vietnamese government.

7. A CIA estimate of 80,000-100,000 was made in early 1968. This estimate, based on extrapolations from a limited number of captured documents, counted all full-time civilian workers at district level and above and large numbers of part-timers at the village and hamlet level. Like the Phoenix estimate, the CIA estimate did not attempt to enumerate Viet Cong cadres in GVN territory.

Trends in Strength

8. It is not possible to show numerically whether the strength of the infrastructure is going up or down. The main reason for the difficulty is that definitions and accounting procedures have changed so frequently that there is no compatible series of statistics over the past five years. Nor is there a relationship between overall infrastructure estimates and neutralization totals. A recent cable from the field pointed out that "even in those instances where the Special Police maintain sound basic files on the VCI, there is seldom any uniform arrangement for recording neutralizations, for cross-checking information with police in neighboring villages or districts, or for formally exchanging data with National Police headquarters in Saigon."

9. Phoenix neutralization statistics -- which show 19,500 VCI "killed, captured, or rallied" in 1969, as compared with 15,776 in 1968 -- are misleading for several reasons. The killed often include persons improperly identified. Many of the captured are frequently released after a short period of detention. Many listed as defectors are actually false ralliers sent by the Communists into Chieu Hoi centers in order to obtain legal GVN identification papers. On the other hand, the neutralization figures include many important Communist agents who are not by definition part of

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the infrastructure. Furthermore, large numbers of cadre who are killed or quit do not show up in the neutralization data. Nonetheless we believe that experienced analysts can use the neutralization data along with information from captured documents, prisoners, and defectors to gain insight into the magnitude and quality of personnel being lost by the Communists.

10. These materials provide an adequate body of evidence which makes it possible to draw some general conclusions about non-military strength trends during the past several years. According to captured documents and prisoner reports, some elements of the infrastructure underwent expansion prior to the 1968 Tet offensive but incurred heavy losses through exposure during and after Tet. The accelerated pacification and Phoenix programs, which went into high gear in late 1968, placed increasing pressure on the infrastructure. All factors considered, there is general agreement that the overall strength of the non-military portion of the VCI has declined in the past two or more years. Although most of the decline appears to have occurred at the village and hamlet echelons, there is also evidence of attrition at the district and province levels.

11. The most persuasive evidence comes from the Communists themselves in the form of captured documents, prisoners, and defector reports. A recent report, purportedly reflecting the views of COSVN, indicated that the Communists regard the Phoenix and the accelerated pacification programs as the most effective threat to the infrastructure the Allies have mounted so far. This same report, covering the period from Tet 1968 to September 1969, stated that great numbers of cadres had been killed and captured, and an especially large number had defected to the GVN.

12. The documents indicate the Communists are hurting worse in some areas than in others. They have been hit hardest in Saigon itself. From October 1968 to April 1969, six of Saigon's nine Precinct Party Committees were rolled up by the Special Police. Recently captured documents indicate that the Saigon operations of COSVN's Strategic Intelligence Office (SIO) -- which runs high-level

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penetrations in the South Vietnamese government -- were seriously curtailed last year. A document of early 1970, for example, stated that a fifth of the SIO's assets in Saigon "were arrested or had defected" during 1969, that two-fifths were withdrawn from the city because of compromise or improper papers, and that only two-fifths continued to operate as before. Among those arrested were at least one member of the National Assembly, two South Vietnamese Army majors who had served in the National Police Special Branch, an ex-deputy police chief of Hue, the ex-assistant head of the counter-intelligence branch of ARVN's Military Security Service (MSS), and a special assistant in the office of President Thieu. The buffeting the Communist structure has received in Saigon is apparently reflected in the decline in the rate of terrorist incidents there. The incident rate in the city is now the lowest it has been for several years. Evidence of a similar decline in fortunes has been received from Da Nang.

13. Although the government probably has done better in cities than in the countryside in wrapping up cadres, there is considerable evidence that the infrastructure has been hurt in many rural areas. Reports put out by Communist Security Sections in several provinces have complained of GVN inroads. For example, a security report of January 1970 from Viet Cong Can Tho Province in the Delta stated that the GVN had obtained "significant pacification results" in the province in the last three months of 1969 and that large numbers of cadres as well as guerrillas had defected.

14. To help make up for VCI personnel losses, Hanoi has continued to send civilian personnel to South Vietnam, and the share of northerners in the VCI has grown.* According to Phoenix reporting,

** There is a tendency to conclude that the use of North Vietnamese in Communist infrastructure is a sign of weakness because northerners cannot be as effective in the south because of regional animosities. There is evidence, however, that a large North Vietnamese presence in the infrastructure does not necessarily diminish the proselyting potential of the local apparatus. Many northern cadres perform important technical and political functions which do not entail much public exposure.*

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between 20% and 30% of cadre slots in Phu Yen are now filled by northerners. A recent high-level defector estimated early this year that as of late 1969 some 30,000 civilians had come south. Other information lends credence to his claim.

15. Local recruiting of Party members has clearly fallen off in most regions, yet reports indicate that it is still going on, even in areas under nominal government control. A report from III Corps claimed that in one pacified village, where every hamlet contained a GVN outpost, the Party recently recruited 55 Party members. The same report alleged that the Party has not lowered its membership standards; however, there is some evidence that standards may have slipped in the effort to staff depleted ranks.

16. In any case, the true strength of the enemy's infrastructure is less a matter of gross numbers than the quality of these personnel and the environment in which they operate. For example, of the estimated 20,000 military proselyting agents, only about 10%-20% are Party members. Of the total, about one-half are carried on the Communist roles as "sympathizers." These personnel will be greatly affected by trends in the overall situation.

✓ 17. The damage inflicted on the infrastructure in the past two years should not be exaggerated. Many developments counted as gains also have negative implications which should be weighed in a final assessment. Although several important penetration agents have been arrested in Saigon, their very presence demonstrates the effectiveness of the enemy's espionage and subversive systems. Furthermore, the gains of the pacification program remain highly perishable in many areas, as evidenced from recent experiences in Binh Dinh and Phu Yen Provinces, where the Communists appear to have reversed positive trends almost overnight. The pacification program may in fact contain seeds of its own weakness. As large numbers of people come under GVN control, many inevitably are vulnerable to the underground "legal" network that the Communists are attempting to enlarge.

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~~SECRET~~Prospects for the Future

18. The Communists' ability to maintain or expand their structure depends on a number of factors, of which the overall course of the war is primary. When things go well for the Communists, replacements are easier to come by; when the opposite is true, they are harder to find. Whether the Viet Cong structure grows or contracts also depends on the enemy's strategy for fighting the war. When the Communists stress main force warfare, battlefield losses are high, and the non-military as well as the military organizations suffer for competent cadres. When the enemy assumes a low battlefield profile, as he has done for the past year and a half, the Communists have greater freedom to shift trusted personnel from the military to the political arenas of the conflict. Finally, the size and quality of the Communists' non-military structure depends in part on the level of civilian infiltration from North Vietnam. The future viability of the Communist Party structure in the south over the next year is discussed below in terms of a number of alternative assumptions.

Case I

19. *This case assumes that ceasefire occurs and both NVA and US troops regroup or withdraw. Both sides are free to use political action programs to improve their relative positions. During this period, pacification at least holds its own or makes some slow progress; economic and political conditions remain serious, but no worse than they are today.*

Discussion

20. Under these circumstances the Allies' greatest asset -- its offensive military force -- would be neutralized while the Communists would have their subversive structure intact. The relaxation of Allied military pressure would make it easier for the enemy to mount operations in GVN territory. It would also encourage large numbers of persons to return to their homes in Viet Cong territory where they would be prime targets for enemy proselyting efforts. Because the Communists would be able to transfer large numbers of cadres from their

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military forces, the infrastructure would probably expand in size and quality. The Military Proselyting Section, Security Section, the Political Struggle Apparatus, and components of the Civilian Proselyting bureaucracy would almost certainly expand the most. In addition, there would be a tendency to send increasing numbers of cadres into GVN territory.

21. At the same time the various components of the Party structure operating in GVN territory would probably become more vulnerable as the exposure of Communist cadres increased. The extent to which the GVN could take advantage of the increased vulnerability is difficult to predict, however. Assuming the most optimistic of plausible assumptions -- as this case does -- there might be some further attrition of the structure a year after the ceasefire. Even so, the hard core would certainly remain intact and reasonably effective. As one moves away from the most optimistic set of assumptions, the prospects for the enemy's infrastructure greatly improve. Furthermore, there is the psychological effect of a US withdrawal from South Vietnam. Unless the GVN is able to maintain momentum and improve its image, the Communists' claim that they had forced the withdrawal of the foreign army might well be regarded as credible by the population. In this case, the Party structure would almost certainly be larger, more aggressive, and more highly motivated than it is today.

Case II

22. *This case assumes that there is no ceasefire but that US troops continue to withdraw. As under Case I, it is assumed that pacification at least holds its own or makes some slow progress; economic and political conditions remain serious, but no worse than they are today.*

Discussion

23. The principal difference between this Case and Case I -- which assumes a ceasefire -- is that the Allies would have the continued use of their strongest asset, their main forces. These would continue to be used to support pacification by providing a shield against enemy main forces.

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24. The assumption that pacification at least holds its own or makes some slow progress is a critical one, not only in terms of the situation in general, but also in terms of the continued strength and viability of the infrastructure. In the VSSG paper, *The Situation In The Countryside*, 13 May 1970, it was concluded that the presence of the US maneuver units was a critical factor in the control situation and that as a result of US troop reductions over the next year, GVN control losses were almost certainly to take place in several heavily populated key provinces. Overall, we were not optimistic that the GVN could significantly increase its control over the countryside during 1970.

25. Two developments since these conclusions were reached seem significant. First, the Communists' local assets (Local Forces, Guerrillas, and infrastructure) have been successful in maintaining high levels of terrorism, harassment, and propaganda in many contested and nominally GVN-controlled areas. Evidence of a determined effort to maintain and augment these local assets with main force personnel continues to come in. This suggests that the Party structure may be holding its own.

26. The second development is the Cambodian situation -- both the Communist effort to topple the Lon Nol government and the Allied operation which has upset or impeded Communist plans. The situation in Cambodia not only has diverted substantial numbers of VC/NVA main force troops from operations in South Vietnam, but also has resulted in some unanticipated levies for financial, material, and personnel resources. Thus the immediate effect of the changed situation in Cambodia has been to reduce the capabilities of the Party structure at least in the short term. What effect Cambodia will have on the infrastructure over a longer period is impossible to predict. Much will depend on the ability of the GVN to overcome its fundamental shortcomings and on the viability of the Lon Nol government.

27. Another difference between this Case and Case I is the continued requirement by the Communists to maintain military forces in order to counter the Allied armies. The Communists would

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be unable to augment the infrastructure freely with cadre from the military. Second, the threat posed by Allied offensive activities against base areas would make it more difficult for them to mount political, subversive, and terrorist activity. Finally, refugees -- and, for that matter, ARVN soldiers -- would be less prone to return to their homes in Viet Cong territory. All of these aspects would make it difficult for the Communists to expand the infrastructure.

28. If one assumes that GVN security forces improve and that no major dislocation occurs -- such as a coup, or a Communist takeover in Cambodia -- one could imagine a situation in which the Communist Party structure would continue to find itself with many of the same problems it has now: attrition of its cadres and a reluctance on the part of the South Vietnamese people to cooperate with it actively. Even under this assumption, it is likely that the hard-core of the Communist infrastructure, including a large part of the subversive apparatus within the government, would continue to operate, although not as effectively as before.

29. However, the continuing withdrawal of US troops makes the Allied main forces a dwindling asset. It is probable that in those areas where US maneuver units leave, the infrastructure will be able either to maintain the status quo or to improve its prospects. These prospects would be heightened if US withdrawals were accompanied by political turmoil in South Vietnam, a collapse of the present regime in Cambodia, or a worsening of South Vietnamese economic problems.

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APPENDIX

Communist Non-Military Organization

In running the Communist organization, the Hanoi Politburo sees Vietnam as a single country, the area south of the 17th Parallel being as much its responsibility as the Vietnamese provinces north of the DMZ. However, because of the difficulty in exercising its authority over the southern reaches of South Vietnam, Hanoi in late 1960 created an advance headquarters which US analysts call the "Central Office of South Vietnam" (COSVN).* COSVN directly controls operations in the southern half of South Vietnam (that is, everything south of the southern border of VC Region V). Hanoi maintains more direct control of operations in the northern half of the country. Whether under the direct control of Hanoi or of COSVN, the Communist structure is generally the same both in its vertical and horizontal organization.

There are six echelons in the Communists' organizational structure: (1) national, (2) region, (3) province/subregion, (4) district/city, (5) village, and (6) hamlet. At each echelon of command, there is a Viet Cong structure responsible for the performance of all the functions of government, ranging from public health to internal security. At district level and above, the agencies are formal, highly structured, and manned by full-time personnel. In the villages and hamlets, the organization is relatively loose, is staffed mostly by part-timers, and does not always include all components.

Within the structure, orders are transmitted from upper to lower echelons through two channels. The first is the Party channel which starts at the Politburo in Hanoi and extends through the Party Current Affairs Committees of the lower echelons. A directive decreeing a major policy change would

* "Central Office of South Vietnam" is a mistranslation of a Vietnamese phrase meaning "Central Office of the Southern Area."

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move through the Party channel. The second command channel is administrative. Each specialized bureaucracy uses its own administrative channel to give instructions to and exert control over its subordinates. An example of an administrative order would be a police directive traversing the security apparatus chain of command from the Ministry of Public Security in Hanoi to regional or provincial security sections.

At each echelon, the Communist organization consists of a number of agencies. In Hanoi, they are called Ministries and Departments. At COSVN and other echelons in the south, they are most often called "Sections." A typical Communist organization at the province level consists of the following elements (see the chart):

- a. The Current Affairs Committee, which directs the province's day-to-day activities. It is made up of about half a dozen senior cadres, including the Party Secretary, the head of the Security Section, and the chief of the echelon's military forces.
- b. The Administrative Office, which handles the Current Affairs Committee's correspondence.
- c. The Organization Section, which is the Party personnel office.
- d. The Finance and Economy Section, which controls the Viet Cong economy, collects taxes, and deals with other financial matters.
- e. The Forward Supply Council, which oversees the recruitment and deployment of civilian laborers and related logistic problems within the province.
- f. The Civil Health Section, which supervises civilian clinics and health services.

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g. The Political Struggle Section, which tries to foment disorders in territory controlled by the South Vietnamese government.*

h. The Propaganda and Training Section, which controls the school system, publishes newspapers and pamphlets, and runs propaganda campaigns.

i. The Security Section, which runs the Viet Cong police and controls a counter-intelligence espionage network within South Vietnamese security and intelligence organs.

j. The Military Proselyting Section, which runs the subversive effort against South Vietnamese military and security organizations.

k. The Civilian Proselyting bureaucracy, which tries to persuade South Vietnamese citizens to support the Viet Cong cause. It does so through such organizations as the National Liberation Front and the Alliance of National, Democratic, and Peace Forces.

All but three of the above components operate in both Viet Cong and GVN territory. The exceptions are the Current Affairs Committee, its Administrative Office, and the Organization Section. These components almost invariably stay in territory under Viet Cong control. The headquarters elements of the other components are also stationed in Viet Cong territory.

Obviously, some components of the infrastructure are more threatening to the South Vietnamese

* *Not all areas have formal Political Struggle Sections. In areas where they do not exist, their functions are performed by other elements. They are more common in the northern half of the country than in the south.*

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government than others. Of those listed above, the most dangerous are the Security Section,* which contains some of the Viet Cong's most efficient and ruthless cadres, and the Military Proselyting Section, which has an extensive agent network within the South Vietnamese armed forces and security agencies.

** The Security Section provides a typical example of the problems in defining the VCI. The Security Sections maintain quasi-military armed Security units which could reasonably be counted as part of the enemy combat forces.*

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16 December 1968

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Assessment of the PHOENIX Program

I. SUMMARY

A. The attack on the Viet Cong infrastructure (VCI) has made encouraging progress, but has not yet produced a significant reduction of the Communists' ability to carry out essential activities. VCI operations have been disrupted in several geographic areas; an increasing Chieu Hoi rate points to morale problems -- at least among lower ranking personnel; and a noticeable attrition has resulted from a combination of losses in combat and from anti-infrastructure activities.

B. VCI attempts to revitalize and strengthen their organizations in the major cities often have been disrupted by aggressive police work. But government intelligence on the VCI and targeted operations against their activities diminish significantly as one gets further from the secure urban areas. What losses the VCI has suffered apparently have not unduly hampered its functioning. Recent moves have been made to streamline the infrastructure by reclassifying cadres according to their effectiveness and by transferring numbers of low level or inefficient cadres into military units. It seems that VCI personnel losses are not approaching the critical stage, nor do they appear likely to do so in the near future.

II. BACKGROUND

A. Communist Political Activity

1. At least since the initiation of the 1967-68 winter-spring campaign, but more noticeably since the advent of US/NVN negotiations in Paris, Communist political activity in South Vietnam has received greater emphasis. Current indications portend an

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even more intensive Communist political effort designed to give the appearance of legitimacy to their position in South Vietnam, to disrupt US/GVN pacification programs, and to undermine and displace the GVN political structure.

2. Generally speaking, Communist political activity is concentrated in four major fields:

a) The organization of Liberation Committees and councils throughout South Vietnam;

b) A re-emphasis of the major importance of the guerrilla and militia role in Peoples Revolutionary warfare, and reconstitution of guerrilla forces depleted or upgraded to regular status in support of the Tet and subsequent military offensives;

c) Improving the security and streamlining the organization of the infrastructure (VCI) from district level down; this is supported by an increasing VC espionage and counterintelligence effort directed against US/GVN operations which focus on the infrastructure plus the purge, reclassification, or transfer to military status of unreliable, ineffective, and poorly motivated political cadre; and

d) Allaying "illusions of peace" by emphasizing the proximity of victory and the need to prepare for a (decisive) 1968-69 winter-spring offensive.

B. Liberation Committees

1. Liberation Committees deserve special attention. The Communists are continuing their push to create Liberation Committees and councils throughout South Vietnam. As of 7 December 1968, 1,835 Liberation Committees had been reported by various sources. Of these, 1,069 were reported by specific location and 376 were identifiable in the COMUSMACV Hamlet Evaluation Survey (HES). Countrywide, the identified hamlets and villages reported as having Liberation Committees are rated by HES criteria as: 65 percent in VC controlled areas, 15 percent in contested, and 15 percent in relatively secure areas; unevaluated or abandoned hamlets constitute the remaining five percent.

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2. Liberation Committees represent the final step in the VCI take over of villages and hamlets; they bridge the gap between covert and overt government. It is through these bodies that the Communists intend to claim control of the countryside.

C. Phung Hoang (PHOENIX) 1968 Goals

1. The three stated goals of the Phung Hoang program for 1968 were:

a) To establish permanent offices or Province Intelligence and Operations Coordination Centers (PIOCCS) in each of South Vietnam's 44 provinces (and three autonomous cities).

b) To establish 200 District Intelligence and Operations Coordination Centers (DIOCCS).

c) To neutralize 12,000 VCI members.

2. As of 5 December 1968, 41 permanent offices/PIOCCS, three CIOCCS (City Intelligence Operations Coordination Centers) and 217 DIOCCS -- 173 of the last with U.S. advisors -- had been established. Moreover, during the period 1 January - 31 October 1968 (November data is not yet available) 11,066 identified members of the VCI were neutralized. In terms of organizational goals, progress has been satisfactory. However, it cannot be determined whether the number of VC neutralized reflects an accurate picture of losses to the VCI, especially in view of the lack of data on the final disposition of those who were apprehended.

3. A significant accomplishment of the Phung Hoang program is the degree of cooperation and coordination which has been generated at all levels, often where little or none previously existed. This includes disparate GVN officials, agencies and military units, and U.S. and allied agencies and military forces. This includes also the establishment of a country-wide system of province, autonomous city and district Intelligence and Operations Coordinating Centers becoming increasingly capable of support to military and territorial security as well as to anti-VCI operations.

III. CURRENT SITUATION

A. Implementation of Phung Hoang

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1. The Presidential Decree of 1 July 1968, which made explicit the GVN sanction for the attack on the VCI, gave the Phung Hoang program a much needed boost. It took approximately two months for the decree to permeate through GVN channels down to province and district operational levels, and therefore, it was not until late August that its influence began to be felt on a nationwide basis.

2. Although there are still some instances of obstructionism and lack of cooperation by local officials and agencies responsible for conducting the attack against the VCI, there has been an overall and continuing trend toward improved coordination within PIOCSS and DIOCCS. There also has been an increase in number and improvement in quality of operations conducted against the VCI. For example, October reports show that allied and ARVN tactical military units unilaterally accounted for 159 VCI neutralizations (11 percent of the monthly total), exceeding their previous accomplishments and attesting to their heightened awareness of the importance of attacking the Communist political organization. This favorable trend is expected to improve further as a result of strong COMUSMACV and GVN command attention to and heavy emphasis on Phung Hoang (and on Peoples Self-Defense). President Thieu in visits to III and IV Corps in early December and Interior Minister Khiem in a continuing series of visits to regions beginning late November have exhorted Corps commanders, province chiefs and senior police officers to press the attack on the VCI, recognizing especially the political challenge of the VC Liberation Committees. Khiem's trips have included inspections of DIOCCS.

B. VCI Neutralizations

1. Despite the reported neutralizations, the U.S. intelligence community estimates the current personnel strength of the VCI at roughly 82,000. Of the 11,066 VCI members reported killed, captured or rallied between 1 January and 31 October 1968, 16.5 percent were reported as serving in district or higher positions; the remaining 83.5 percent served at village or hamlet level -- most being functionaries that the VCI can easily replace. Through September, the attrition rate of the VCI ran at a fairly static 1.5 percent per month. In October the attrition rate rose to 1.8 percent.

2. A review of the reports submitted during the seven-month period April through October, shows that 583 VCI security service cadre and 1,387 finance/economy personnel were neutralized. Of these totals, 171 of the security service cadre and 177 of the

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finance/economy personnel held leadership positions and cannot easily be replaced. Within the context of the entire Communist infrastructure, security cadres are considered to rank in importance behind current affairs section secretaries and deputy secretaries and thus are highly important targets. With the vital support role played by finance/economy cadre, any eliminations in this category are harmful to VCI operations. Also, in October, for the first time, VCI Liberation Committees were classified as a top priority target and 71 committeemen, including 30 in leadership positions, were neutralized.

3. Understandably, reports from the field continue to include large numbers of individuals only vaguely identified. The U.S. PHOENIX advisory staff rejects between 30 and 40 percent of the names submitted because the lack of descriptive detail does not substantiate the individual's status in the VCI. In October, for instance, 766 names were not accepted as neutralized VCI; 202 were guerrillas, 50 were VC/NVA soldiers, and 514 were classified as having provided some service for the VCI; of the latter category 228 were potential VCI, but were not so counted due to lack of detail concerning their actual duties. On the brighter side, in many instances the increased pace of anti-VCI operations has resulted also in increased contacts with VC armed elements and attrition of both VC irregulars and VC support elements not carried as VCI.

C. Defining VCI

1. A variety of problems continue to hamper anti-VCI operations. Two of the most serious are:

a) Lack of knowledge of who and what comprises the VCI organization by the majority of field personnel operating below province level; and

b) The uneven enforcement and administration of existing GVN laws covering Communist insurgent activities and personnel. GVN authorities often feel that they do not have sufficient evidence to prosecute many of the VCI suspects apprehended. And local officials in some areas are reluctant to approve operations against VCI suspects.

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2. To help reduce these obstacles, U.S. officials developed a listing of VCI executive and significant cadre functions which was coordinated with the GVN on 5 December. This document will be printed bilingually and disseminated through PHOENIX/Phung Hoang channels to field elements in the near future. Besides helping to eliminate the existing confusion over who and what comprises the VCI organization, the document will provide a uniform basis for assigning priorities and selecting targets for neutralization.

3. Equally important, the list will serve as a basis for proposed procedural changes regarding the processing of civilian detainees. PHOENIX staff/CORDS legal advisors have drafted a procedural guideline for the use of the local security committees, which would provide for uniform, mandatory sentencing of an accused detainee, if he is determined to be a PRP member, holds a position in the VCI, performs a cadre function, or supports the VC. This classification guideline is being coordinated with the Ministry of Interior for instructions to the local security committees, and will be proposed to the Directorate of Military Justice, for instructions to the various military courts. It is hoped that it will improve administrative-judicial handling of civil detainees by standardizing sentencing and simplifying judicial processing.

D. Judicial Processing

1. Judicial processing is one of the weakest links in the overall attack on the VCI. This is highlighted by the number of persons under detention who have not been judicially processed, estimated to be as high as 21,000. It is apparent that numbers of innocent persons, or at least persons also have been forced to perform tasks for the VC, have been arrested and held, sometimes for extensive periods, without a hearing. Justifiably concerned, the Office of the Prime Minister established special screening committees throughout the country to review the cases of a large number of civil detainees, and many have been released. On the other hand, real VCI and VC supporters are being released as a result of insufficiently severe sentences, usually on the grounds of lack of sufficient evidence.

2. Although some VC civil defendants are brought to trial before the military or military field courts, the vast majority are judicially processed by the provincial security committees,

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which are the responsibility of province chiefs and are under the overall supervision of the Minister of Interior. The latter has ordered these committees to meet weekly, rather than biweekly, to speed up the hearing of new cases and reduce the backlog of pending cases. Improved procedures and programmed increases in the numbers of trained special police interrogators and investigators should further enhance the efficiency of the provincial security committees.

E. Detention Facilities

1. Interrogation and detention facilities are inadequate in many areas. At the end of November 1968, there were a total of 38,700 civilian confinement spaces in Vietnam, and the total incarcerated population was reported by GVN officials to be 37,689. These figures, based on the best data available, are considered to be accurate only for the national prison system which holds 32,689 prisoners and detainees. The remaining 5,000 said to be held in national police detention facilities is an unverifiable estimate. There are four national prisons, 37 provincial prisons and 50 existing or planned detention centers. Although these figures indicate that there are sufficient confinement spaces on a nation-wide basis, overcrowding still exists in some provinces and poor prisoner accounting procedures are universal.

2. A large number of VCI suspects who were detained during a recent operation in Quang Duc Province were allowed to commingle with other prisoners because of the poor detention facilities in Gia Nghia. Less excusable, the same thing happened when the prisoners were transferred to Ban Me Thuot, Darlac Province, where adequate facilities do exist. Before proper interrogation could be conducted, the suspects had changed their stories, and little valid evidence could be garnered to establish their true VCI positions or to prepare a good case for the courts or province security committees.

3. The National Police and Minister of Interior are cognizant of these problems. The Director of Corrections has been authorized to transfer sentenced prisoners from one institution to another; this authority had been reserved to province chiefs. Space available at Con Son Island is being expanded, and sentenced VCI and other VC political prisoners with more than one year to serve can be moved there from mainland jails. The criterion may be reduced to more than six months to serve. These

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measures permit more efficient use of facilities.

F. Prisoner Accounting System

1. Another problem area is the lack of an effective accounting and control procedure for keeping track of detainees and prisoners from arrest, through trial, sentencing, detention and release. The need for developing a control system is recognized, and work on the solution to this problem is underway.

2. In most cases the final disposition of captured VCI is not known. During the first ten months of 1968, there were 8,275 VCI captured (of the total 11,066 neutralized). There is no way to determine which of those were brought to trial, which were released or sentenced, or the place of detention of those who were sentenced. On 24 October, a list was obtained of 127 VCI, district level or higher, who were apprehended during August and September, and an investigation was launched by the GVN to determine their location. As of early December, only five had been located, and those, apparently, by accident. The monthly neutralization reports include, at best, the last reported location of the captured VCI. A recent analysis of the monthly Phung Hoang neutralization reports only, on a country-wide basis, showed that as of the time the reports were prepared the last known place of detention of apprehended VCI was in the following facilities: 29 percent in Provincial Interrogation Centers, 24 percent held by National Police, 15 percent in provincial prisons, 13 percent in sector (military) facilities, eight percent in sub-sector facilities, and four percent in military POW facilities. The location of the remaining seven percent was undeterminable.

3. Other prisoners and detainees have been granted amnesty on various religious and national holidays. For example, on National Day, President Thieu reduced the sentences of 783 prisoners, many of whom were being held for political action. There is no evidence that VCI cadres have been released in this manner; however, there is justifiable concern that inadequate investigation or slipshod screening may allow important VCI figures to slip back into operation.

4. There are also indications that VCI cadres with sufficient influence can prevent local officials from taking action against them, avoid apprehension, or gain easy release after capture. In Vinh Binh Province, local authorities prohibited a planned operation against some important VCI suspects because

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of the latter's supposed connections at high GVN levels; similar problems are reported in other areas.

5. Both U.S. and GVN agencies have submitted reports on VCI suspects who are caught more than once, having somehow slipped back into freedom. Needless to say, the government security forces operating against the VCI are somewhat shy of taking risks to capture VCI suspects alive, especially for the second time. They have expressed their concern directly to the Minister of Interior.

G. GVN Intelligence Capability

1. The effectiveness of the attack on the VCI is further hampered by the limited professional capability of many GVN personnel. Personnel in those agencies tasked with gathering intelligence on the VCI and running operations against it, such as the Police Special Branch and Military Security Service, simply have not had the training and background for sophisticated intelligence work. This is especially true at the district level and below where the responsible GVN personnel may barely be able to read and write. Many have difficulty understanding the requirements sent down to them, let alone fulfilling them.

2. Although the Phung Hoang program is geared primarily to the district level, most of the talent, intelligence information and reaction capability is at present found at province level. Information available at province level is often not fully disseminated down to the districts, moreover most of the districts are still in the process of developing the data base needed to operate effectively against the VCI. For this reason, to a great extent, operations targeted against specific individuals are not yet too common. Most VCI personnel are picked up in sweeps, cordon and search operations, or in ambushes on likely communication routes.

H. Blacklists

1. Specific targeting is the ideal goal of the anti-VCI campaign, and fruitful results have been obtained from a number of cordon and search operations using blacklists for identification. However, specific information is usually difficult to obtain from areas of poor security; therefore, there is often insufficient intelligence to target against an individual. Also, security conditions in many areas simply do not permit small operations

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against a specific individual. VCI cadres, particularly important ones, often live in isolated regions or in base camps which have strong guerrilla or regular force protection, and large military operations are the only feasible method of attacking them.

2. A possible drawback to the large dragnets is the unreliability of some of the blacklists. It must be assumed that the lists do not include many key VCI figures, and at the same time inadvertently involve innocent people. Therefore other means are used, such as Hoi Chanh, when possible, for on-the-spot identification.

IV. FUTURE OUTLOOK

A. Special Phung Hoang Campaign

1. A special national Phung Hoang campaign (Phung Hoang Dong Tien) was launched on 20 October to run through 15 February 1969. Quotas have been established for each province, and all agencies connected with the campaign have been directed to turn their full attention to eliminating the VCI. Military commanders are instructed to give anti-VCI operations support equal to that given to other combat operations. Quick reaction forces are to be made more readily available.

2. An example of the cooperation of tactical forces in anti-VCI operations is shown in Operation MEADE RIVER, the largest operation of this type conducted to date, which commenced on 20 November in Quang Nam Province, I Corps. A 15 mile cordon was set up by six USMC battalions, three ARVN battalions, and elements of the National Police Field Force (NPFF) and a battalion of ROK Marines. When the cordon was secure, a sweep was undertaken by ARVN and NPFF forces. Residents within the cordon area were taken to a collection point for screening. The committee at the collection point included representatives from Chieu Hoi Psyops, Armed Propaganda Teams, Civil Affairs, Static Census Grievance, Revolutionary Development, Public Health, Provincial Reconnaissance Unit, NPFF and Special Police, as well as province and district officials, province and district Phung Hoang representatives and U.S. advisors. As of 1 December the results of this operation were 71 VCI and 34 VC captured and 334 enemy killed, including many North Vietnamese troops and some known significant members of the VCI.

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3. Considering that the special campaign did not begin until 20 October, it is encouraging to note that six provinces fulfilled or exceeded their monthly quotas within the last ten days of the month. Overall, nearly one third more VCI were neutralized in October (1,459) than in September (1,121).

4. The outlook for November, based on reports from the provinces, is brighter. To date reports have been received from 35 provinces plus Saigon and Danang City. Audited, they show an increase of about 64 percent over October. If this trend is maintained by the thirteen provinces not yet heard from, the total real VCI neutralizations rate for November should exceed 2,000, or about two thirds of the deliberately high monthly goal (3,000) set forth in the special campaign plan.

5. According to tentative pacification planning for 1969, the special campaign goals for Phung Hoang will be extended throughout the year. If the monthly goal of 3,000 can be attained and sustained, together with the upward trend toward neutralization of a great proportion of key leaders and cadres, and if other, concomitant pacification and people-oriented programs, such as self-defense, also move ahead energetically, then the VCI will be hurt, and its political efforts blunted.

6. The setting of goals and quotas is not the whole answer, however, for there must necessarily be an upgrading of GVN intelligence and reaction forces both in number and quality. Significant improvements are being carried out in training of the Special Police, National Police Field forces and PRU, for example, emphasizing intelligence and leadership skills. A 10,000-man proposed augmentation to the National Police (especially to the Special Police) awaits National Assembly approval. Where National Police resources are limited, province and district chiefs are being told to use other, available assets (RF-PF) or to call upon help from RVNAF, U.S. or other free world military forces. Far greater exploitation is required, too, of allied psychological operations resources at all levels in support of Phung Hoang.

B. Communist Reaction

1. The VCI definitely is beset by serious problems. Most of these are related to the pressures of the war. However, an encouragingly increasing number of them can be attributed directly to the anti-VCI effort. A notebook recently captured in Thua Thien Province in I Corps described the considerable losses among both

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guerrillas and infrastructure personnel caused by ARVN and allied sweep operations. Similarly, the CMD continues to be a difficult operational area for the VCI. The strong security situation makes traveling dangerous for VCI personnel, who must move about lightly guarded to avoid attention, leaving them more vulnerable. A captured report from VC Sub-Region 4 dated 29 June, complained about the shortage of personnel -- stating that more than one third of the hamlets in the sub-region had no party members, while the quality of existing party chapters was below par. The chapters were described as weakened by factionalism and lack of determination. A source in Binh Chanh District in Gia Dinh reported in early October that a VC guerrilla platoon had been brought in, broken down, and assigned to four villages to help rebuild the infrastructure. There has also been a series of captured documents which label the PHOENIX operation as a cunning, wicked plot and exhort all Liberation Armed Forces to be wary of and strive to wipe out the "cruel die-hard agents of aggression."

2. Perhaps more telling is the increasing amount of broadcast time Radio Hanoi and Liberation Radio devote to denouncement of the allied accelerated pacification campaign. (APC). A Liberation Radio commentary of 3 December called for the implementation of the Peoples Liberation Armed Force (PLAF) command's order to "crush the head of the venomous snake PHOENIX." The Communists have ordered all Peoples Liberation Armed Forces (PLAF) "to resolutely smash the U.S. -puppet rural pacification scheme, annihilate and completely disintegrate enemy pacification teams and to annihilate PHOENIX teams," which are composed of spies and intelligence agents.

3. VC concern is further evidenced in an order for a guerrilla and terrorist campaign to "seek out, eliminate and utterly destroy" South Vietnamese central, district and local officials, American-South Vietnamese pacification teams working in rural and village areas, and allied search-and-destroy units. Even the 27 November 1968 issue of Red Star has picked up the theme noting that accelerated pacification is actually an American escalation of the war.

C. VCI Residual Capability

1. Nonetheless, the VCI continue to exercise control of varying degrees of effectiveness over large segments of the population and to use this control to marshal support for their

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combat and political operations. Their traditional activities of tax collecting, proselyting and propaganda, intelligence, and guerrilla and labor force recruitment are continuing at acceptable levels, and they have undertaken a widespread aggressive campaign to establish Liberation Committees and councils.

2. The Communists place a high priority on reconstituting their infrastructure losses and appear able to do so -- at least to the point that thus far their problems are not approaching the critical stage. Nor at this time does this seem likely to occur in the near future. For, despite the number of lower-level VCI neutralized, the hard core command cadres remain largely unhurt and inadequately identified for effective action against them.

V. CONCLUSION

A. Are there, then, steps which can be taken to improve our combined effort to destroy or neutralize the VCI. The answer is "yes," and of course some of these already are under way.

1. We must continue the present strategy of combined, coordinated action to destroy or drive back VC/NVA Main Forces, to extend and consolidate territorial security and pacification, and to destroy or neutralize the VCI. These actions are interdependent.

2. We need still further GVN command emphasis on Phung Hoang operations, particularly to insure the assignment and allocation of top-flight personnel and reaction forces to exploit intelligence against selected targets.

3. Concurrently with increased emphasis on targeted operations (as opposed to programming, organization and facilities), the GVN must, with our assistance, provide stepped-up training and indoctrination of personnel earmarked for Phung Hoang roles.

4. Concurrently, we must somehow see to it that both civilian and military U.S. personnel designated as PHOENIX advisors are qualified intelligence officers with backgrounds in counterintelligence, positive intelligence collection, or police intelligence investigation operations. A maximum number of these individuals should be trained in the Vietnamese language.

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The absence of language ability, particularly at the DIOCC level, is the greatest single bar to effectiveness.

5. We must give greater heed to providing necessary, flexible support to operations at district and province level, in terms of temporary or short-term detention facilities adjacent to DIOCCS or district police offices; of intelligence and support contingency funds; of assignment of additional intelligence NCOS in priority areas of heaviest operational activity; and of additional helicopter support for sustained operations.

6. We must take and are taking urgent measures to instruct and orient Vietnamese, U.S. and other free world personnel in the identification and modus operandi of the VCI, and in the roles which our various forces and agencies can best play, and in the techniques found by current experience to be most productive in VCI neutralizations.

7. Finally, and possibly most important, the lessons learned by all GVN agencies participating in the Phung Hoang program now may serve as the glue to hold them together when they are forced to fight the political machinations of the VCI in the post hostilities period.

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