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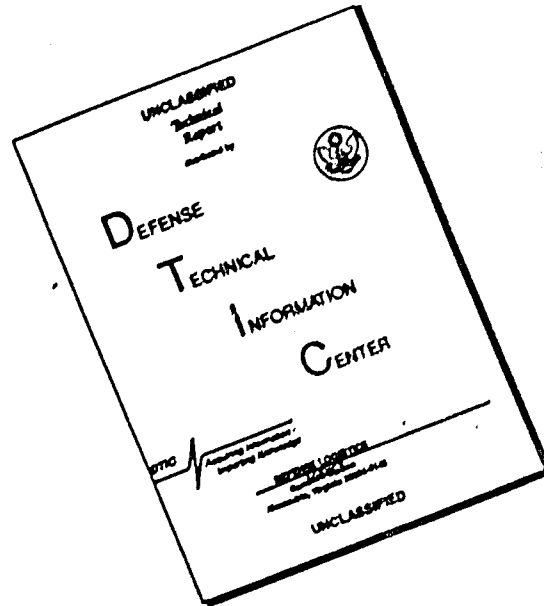
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13 April 1973

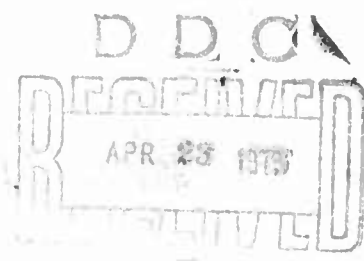
SUBJECT: Senior Officer Debriefing Report: Major General Thomas  
M. Tarpley, Commander, Delta Regional Assistance Command,  
15 Jan 72 - 13 Jan 73 (U)

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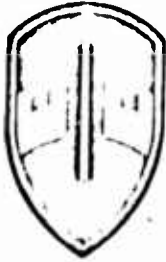
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MACDR-CG

13 JAN 1973

**SUBJECT:** Senior Officer Debriefing Report of Major General Thomas M. Tarpley, RCS CSFOR-74 (U)

**THRU:** COMUSMACV  
APO San Francisco 96222

**TO:** Assistant Chief of Staff for Force Development  
ATTN: FOR OT UT  
Department of the Army  
Washington, D. C. 20310

**Country:** Republic of Vietnam

**Debriefing Report by Major General Thomas M. Tarpley**

**Duty Assignment:** Commander  
Delta Regional Assistance Command

**Inclusive Dates:** 15 January 1972 - 13 January 1973

**Date of Report:** 13 January 1973

**I. (U) PURPOSE.**

This report summarizes the substantive advisory issues faced by this command during my tenure as Commander, Delta Regional Assistance Command (DRAC).

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### 2. (C) MISSION.

DRAC had the mission of providing military advice and assistance to the Vietnamese IV Corps and support of the Vietnam Government's Pacification Program in Military Region 4.

### 3. (C) MAJOR GOALS.

Shortly after my assumption of command in the Delta, six areas were established as the major goals of the advisory effort in MR4. These areas are discussed below. The remainder of the report provides additional background information on these goals and other issues worthy of attention.

#### a. ARVN AND REGIONAL FORCE (RF) BATTALIONS MOBILE OPERATIONS.

Frequently over the past several years, ARVN and territorial units have been observed reacting slowly to tactical emergencies and opportunities on the battlefield. On a number of occasions, the inability to quickly reinforce units in tactical trouble resulted in unnecessarily heavy losses to friendly units versus relatively light enemy casualties. In particular, RVN Armed Forces have demonstrated a propensity to return to the security of their operating bases (OB's) prior to darkness rather than remain in-field positions overnight to exploit the capabilities of night operations. Both of my counterparts, LTG Truong and MG Nghi, provided strong command emphasis in this area. We believe some progress has been achieved. The concept of employing RF battalions out of the more pacified provinces into provinces where a greater need existed for mobile forces has been helpful in pursuing this goal. Additionally, General Nghi made great use of mobility to counter VC/NVA threats during June in the Elephant's Foot area of the Cambodian Border, in Dinh Tuong Province in August, and at Cao Lanh City and Hong Ngu Island in Kien Phong Province. However, much remains to be done before success can be claimed in this area. In this connection, our continued efforts to encourage Vietnamese units to adopt a mobile defensive posture, especially at night, have produced only marginal results. The ability to entice the enemy into the battle at a time and place of our choosing is still too rarely demonstrated by mobile field forces. Recognizing this tendency, General Nghi has pushed hard to induce all units to leave static positions and go after the enemy. Mobility at all levels, to include platoon, is a key factor in his pre- and post-cease fire plans -- the object of which is to blanket the population with mobile forces.

#### b. COMBINED ARMS COORDINATION AND EFFECTIVENESS.

Coordination between the ground, naval, and air forces as well as



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the ability to effectively orchestrate infantry, armored cavalry, and artillery into an integrated application of combat power were recognized from the outset as lucrative areas for advisory attention. Difficulties in synchronizing armored cavalry-infantry-artillery and Tac Air which manifested themselves during the Battle of Kampong Trach, Cambodia (described in paragraph 6a below) were surmounted during later battles in which the 44th Special Tactical Zone (STZ) forces successfully defeated enemy units in and around Kampong Trabek. Similarly, the 7th Division operating in Upper Kien Tuong Province and Cambodia skillfully employed combined arms task forces consisting of reconnaissance elements, armored cavalry and infantry units with artillery towed by cavalry APC's. Noticeable improvement in coordination of joint VNN/ARVN operations has been accomplished by relocating naval headquarters, including their advisory teams, to coincide with ARVN divisional headquarters. VNAF Tac Air support has presented few problems. However, assisting our counterparts in improving the management of their helicopter assets remains one of the unfinished tasks facing advisors in MR4.

### c. TRAINING.

In view of the intensity of the enemy offensive in Spring 1972, it was difficult to keep our counterparts from relegating training to a low priority. We found it especially gratifying when General Nghi agreed to expand the two-week Battalion Refinement Training Program, which had been designed mainly for the returning 21st Division units from MR3, to include all ARVN and ranger battalions. He subsequently went a step further and enlarged the scope of this program to include RF battalions as well, and he approved the establishment of four special 12 week leadership courses for NCO candidates at Chi Lang National Training Center, a program which by February 1973 is expected to have produced 1,000 badly needed NCO's for the territorial forces. One aspect of training in which only slight progress has been noticeable is unit training in place. We found it difficult to convince unit commanders of the need for this important prerequisite for battle effectiveness. Much of this has resulted from the pressure placed upon commanders to conduct continuous operations.

### d. ARVN LOGISTICAL SYSTEM.

The ARVN logistics system was functioning adequately at the beginning of this period. However, the adequacy of the system was based more on the abundance of supplies and low standards of maintenance and supply than on the efficiency of the system. The April offensive reinforced this observation in that under the stress of tactical requirements, the deterioration of maintenance, poor ammunition storage, breakdown of the requisitioning and issue procedures, and the lack of supply economy became highly visible. One of the major weaknesses of the advisory effort initially was the dual role performed by the DRAC G4 section. The demands for

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supporting approximately 4,000 US personnel in the Delta required constant attention. The logistical advisory effort was almost by default relegated to a secondary function. This major hurdle was solved by the establishment of an Army Support Element, MR4 (ASE). ASE assumed US support functions and the DRAC G4 section became free to concentrate on the advisory effort (See paragraph 3e below). As the war slowed down, we were able to make an assessment of the Vietnamese logistical system. It was obvious that more competence and expertise had to be developed by ARVN. From this assessment grew the Trail Blazer Program. Trail Blazer was initially an integrated inspection program whereby advisors from DRAC G4 section and the 4th Area Logistics Command teamed up with their ARVN counterparts to scrutinize the logistical capability of major ARVN units. Starting with the 21st Infantry Division, Trail Blazer was subsequently expanded to include ARVN regiments, ranger groups and the 4th Armored Brigade. The success of the Trail Blazer concept was significant in that initial steps were taken to give the Corps Commander data on which to base a resource management program. General Nghi used this program to evaluate the supply and maintenance in the Corps and to establish a basis from which to work in improving the Corps logistical posture. This program was so successful that it was used as a prototype by the Combined Logistics Command, JGS, and a directive was issued to all Vietnamese units to initiate a similar program.

### e. CONCENTRATE ADMINISTRATIVE AND LOGISTICAL SUPPORT OF US UNITS UNDER A SEPARATE STAFF.

As mentioned above, prior to April 1972, the primary staff of DRAC had the dual function of supervising support of US units and advising the Vietnamese. These two roles competed with each other for the time of staff officers and, more often than not, the daily demands of US support won out over the more time-consuming, reflective type effort of advising. The MR4 ASE was provisionally organized on 1 April 1972 at Can Tho Installation with a nucleus of key personnel drawn from the DRAC staff, and on 8 May 1972 it was officially organized with a staff of 61 officers and men. More specific information concerning the adoption of the ASE concept is discussed in paragraph 5a (3) below, but the overall results of the change were greatly improved administrative/logistical support to advisory elements in the field and more efficacious advising in these two fields.

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### f. LONG RANGE PLANNING.

On 1 March 1972, the GVN commenced the 1972-1975 Community Defense and Local Development (CD&LD) Plan. This four year plan represents a major step towards placing pacification on an adequate planning basis, rather than a year-to-year effort that in the past has proved inadequate for the problems at hand. The CORDS staff, provincial and district advisory teams devoted a major effort to this plan by monitoring its progress and developing supplementary and complementary plans as the needs arose. A major thrust connected with this plan and planning in general was directed toward establishment and attainment of goals and measurement of progress. While ARVN and GVN officials have demonstrated a capability for planning, there exists a marked deficiency in follow-up action to insure that the details of a plan (or directive) are carried out and in establishing criteria by which progress can be measured. General Nghi has recognized this shortcoming and has personally taken steps toward correcting the deficiency. During the December 1972 preparation for anticipated cease-fire, General Nghi gave specific and detailed instructions to his commanders and province chiefs. Then he carefully followed up his instructions by visiting all of the provinces and many districts to ascertain if his guidance was being followed. This form of supervision was effective in not only finding out who was carrying out his instructions, but, more importantly, it was a teaching vehicle by which he could show his subordinate commanders how he expected them to follow through on instructions to their subordinates.

### 4. (C) INTELLIGENCE.

a. US intelligence assets in the Delta were limited. The 574th Military Intelligence Detachment, 525th MI Group (US), relied heavily upon its counterpart intelligence organization for information. The amount of intelligence available that did not have its root somewhere within the ARVN intelligence community was minimal. Special intelligence was the only asset that could be considered a purely independent source of information.

b. ARVN operates a highly professional intelligence system. While there are basic shortcomings within the system, the intelligence network generally accomplished its mission as defined by the ARVN commanding general. The largest shortcoming was the lack of estimative intelligence. Due to the methods of operation of the ARVN staff system, the

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intelligence community served primarily to report current enemy activity with little analysis and with few in-depth estimates of future enemy courses of action. This stemmed from the extreme centralization of power within the ARVN system. Other shortcomings were poor coordination between Corps and the provinces and a reliance on past experience in evaluating present enemy initiatives. These problems were inherent in the intelligence community and changes were slow in materializing.

### 5. (C) ORGANIZATION.

#### a. US Organization.

(1) As of 15 January 1972 the Delta Regional Assistance Command was structured to provide military assistance to ARVN command and staff tactical elements at all levels down to and including the regiments. In addition to its advisory role, the headquarters performed command, staff, and support functions for all MACV and FWMAF advisors in MR4. Inclosure 1 is a chart depicting the 15 January organization.

(2) The redeployment of US forces which became effective on 1 May 1972 resulted in a major reorganization of DRAC. The tactical unit advisors and CORDS military advisors were organized under a single Joint Table of Distribution of 730 military spaces where previously they had been organized by separate JTD's. This redeployment increment resulted in a 44% reduction in the advisory authorization of January.

(3) Occurring simultaneously with this consolidation was the organization of the Army Support Element MR4 (ASE). ASE was tasked as the primary support unit for all US units relieving DRAC of its administrative and logistical support functions of advisory teams throughout the Delta, thereby freeing most of the DRAC staff to devote its time primarily to advising. The only administrative and logistical support functions retained by DRAC were limited personnel administration and the upkeep of Eakin Compound (a billeting and messing facility), neither of which was supervised by primary staff members. The ASE was directed by a colonel who was deputy commander to the dual position CDR, DRAC/CDR, ASE. The ASE deputy commander was additionally commander of the Can Tho Installation. Since its inception, the ASE has absorbed all Zone Coordinator functions and was instrumental in directing the improvement of the safety, security, and support of all United States forces in the region. Some of the

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more significant accomplishments and contributions of the ASE have been:

(a) A complete upgrade and overhaul of all installation defensive positions.

(b) An inspection and review of the defensive posture of all US Army activities in the region.

(c) Consolidation of MACV property books, under the ASE, with resultant savings of manpower and workload.

(d) Opening a commissary to support mess operations of over 60 advisory elements.

(e) Converting virtually all field ration messes to Other Sundry Fund operations with resultant improved messing and cost standards for the advisory elements.

(f) Centralization of all support activities under a single headquarters dedicated to providing adequate support. This support ranged from engineer construction of bunkers and teamhouses to expert assistance in the administration of non-appropriated funds.

(4) Fulfillment of operations and intelligence functions were continued by the DRAC staff as a result of the enemy offensive, increased availability of US air assets, and operational reporting requirements.

(5) The continued drawdown between May and October proved to be minor; authorized strength during this period was reduced from 730 to 639 military spaces. Advisor representation was retained in all primary staffs at Corps/MR4, all divisions/Special Tactical Zone, regiments, provinces and 49 districts. The reduction of 205 military spaces between 1 October and 1 December had a significant impact on the DRAC advisory effort. In order to continue performing the required operational and intelligence missions, further reductions in tactical unit and province teams were effected and six district teams deleted. The DRAC organization of 1 May depicted in the chart at Inclosure 2 remains unchanged except for numerical reductions.

b. ARVN Organization.

(1) The ARVN IV Corps did not undergo significant reorganization during the period of this report. Inclosure 3 is a chart depicting this organization.

(2) The structural organization of IV Corps, coupled with the general proficiency of commanders and staff elements in the mechanical aspects of their functions, provided the materials necessary to build a strong, efficient force. However, highly autocratic control was one characteristic weakness prevalent throughout most ARVN commands which often hindered effectiveness. Subordinate commanders and staff elements were often unwilling to take the initiative and offer suggestions which differed from command guidance. The tendency was to wait for specific instructions and, as a result, reaction to rapidly changing situations left considerable room for improvement. Attempting to help ARVN in this area was a major goal of our operational advisory effort.

c. Territorial Forces.

The organization of provincial forces is addressed in paragraph 13b of this report.

d. Lessons Learned and Recommendation.

The development of the ASE concept was a major step forward in the streamlining of the DRAC advisory organization. This concept is worthy of study for possible use in similar advisory/stability type operations of the future.

6. (C) TACTICAL SITUATION AND OPERATIONS.

Prior to the initiation of the enemy offensive in April 1972, enemy activity was light throughout the Delta and was characterized by small unit operations and harassing attacks against OB's. During this period enemy forces were concentrating on replenishing supply levels in their base areas--particularly the U-Minh Forest and Base Area 470 in Dinh Tuong--and preparing for the soon-to-come offensive. There were six enemy main force units (regiments) in the Delta, all located in their traditional strongholds (Inclosure 4). The 18B and 95A Regiments were located in the U-Minh Base Area; the D1 and the D2 Regiments were located in lower Chuong Thien Province; the D3 Regiment was spread along the common border of Vinh Long and Vinh Binh; and Dong Thap 1 Regiment was located south of QL4 in central Dinh Tuong Province.

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Reinforcements available in Cambodia included the 1st NVA Division to the north of Chau Doc and Kien Giang Provinces and the Z15 Regiment north of Kien Tuong Province. ARVN forces were disposed with the 44th STZ, consisting of ranger and armored cavalry units, screening the entire Cambodian border from the Parrot's Beak to the Gulf of Thailand. The 9th ARVN Division was operating in the northern U-Minh Forest and Chuong Thien Province while the 21st ARVN Division operated in the southern portion of the U-Minh and the lower Delta. The 7th ARVN Division's TAOR encompassed the contested provinces Dinh Tuong and Kien Hoa, as well as the remaining provinces between the Bassac and Mekong Rivers. The tactical situation and operations during the reporting period will be covered by discussing the most significant operations/battles which took place since January 1972.

a. Battle of Kampong Trach.

This action will be discussed in considerably more detail than subsequent battles primarily because it was the first major action in MR4 since November 1971 and clearly identified the weaknesses in command, tactics, and support. Correcting these faults became the framework for advisory efforts in the operational area.

(1) Battle Chronology.

Following a period of relative quiet during the TET holiday and early March, the quietness was broken by the Battle of Kampong Trach, which lasted from 22 March until 30 April. This battle, the results of which were to affect significantly the fighting in the Delta for the remainder of the year, began as a meeting engagement between the 42nd Ranger Group and elements of the 101D NVA Regiment.

(a) Kampong Trach is a road junction. And while it is adjacent to one of the major enemy commo-liasion routes out of Cambodia into South Vietnam, the enemy certainly had the option not to do battle at this time and place. However, once the battle started, Kampong Trach developed its own kinetics with each side reinforcing until at the termination of the battle, RVNAF had committed four armored cavalry squadrons, one ranger group, six ranger battalions, plus supporting artillery. The enemy had committed three regiments of the 1st NVA Division - 52nd, 101D and the E 44th.

(b) Looking at the battle in retrospect, RVNAF weaknesses stand out:

1. Their reluctance to close with and destroy the enemy-- to obtain decisive results.

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2. Their cutting edge was dulled by the tendency to rely too much on the use of artillery and Tac Air.

3. Lack of ARVN commanders to take charge and intervene when decisive leadership was necessary.

4. Because of the lack of mission orientation, commanders were not mentally alert to react to tactical opportunities.

5. Inability to orchestrate US and VNAF Tac Air, artillery and gunship support.

(c) However, a closer look at Kampong Trach disclosed a number of plusses for RVNAF:

1. Their generalship was good. LTG Truong was quick to deploy his forces and react to intelligence.

2. Demonstrated an outstanding ability to move forces great distances over short periods of time. Armored cavalry squadrons and ranger battalions were moved by road and water LOC's from the eastern edge of MR4 to Kampong Trach and placed into battle within a few days.

3. Resupply was good although air drops proved costly as many of the bundles missed their mark and were either destroyed or retrieved by the enemy.

4. Demonstrated an ability to fight when in position and attacked by the enemy. Additionally, ARVN reacted well to real and apparent danger.

5. The 1st NVA Division committed a serious tactical error by throwing its regiments piecemeal into the battle. The rangers and armored cavalry task forces were able, by operating on interior lines, to cope with each regiment in turn.

(2) The sum total of Kampong Trach was a defeat for the 1st NVA. This unit was kept out of South Vietnam where it was sorely needed in the Easter Offensive. Moreover, the casualties suffered by the 1st NVA rendered it virtually ineffective as a major unit for the



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remainder of the year. ARVN had clearly withstood the test of a major NVA onslaught.

### b. Opening of Enemy Offensive in the Delta.

(1) While the Battle of Kampong Trach was being fully developed, the enemy offensive began in the Delta on the night of 6-7 April. Spearheaded by the 18B and 95A Regiments, the offensive was initially centered in Chuong Thien Province. The attacks were directed against OB's astride and adjacent to the enemy infiltration route that runs roughly between Kien Thien and Long My line toward Phung Hiep in Phong Dinh Province. During early April, US Tac Air returned to the Delta. Later in the month, B-52 capability returned with the first two strikes directed against NVA elements in the Kampong Trach area. These vital assets were to weigh heavily on the outcome of the offensive.

(2) Coincidental with the opening of the offensive in the Delta on 7 April, the 21st Division was alerted for deployment to MR3, and three days later, the initial elements of the division were deployed along Highway 13. To further thin the ranks, on 12 May the 15th Regiment, 9th Division, was deployed to An Loc. However, this was partially offset when the 4th Ranger Group with three ranger battalions returned from MRI where they had been since early April. As a result of these deployments, adjustment in TAOR's became necessary. The 44th Special Tactical Zone (STZ), with four ranger groups and 12 ranger battalions, was given the responsibility for the entire Cambodian border; the 9th Division (-) assumed control of the southern Delta; and the 7th Division took the area north of the Bassac just below the 44th STZ.

(3) Meanwhile, in Chuong Thien Province many sharp engagements took place between 7 May and 19 June. Nineteen B-52 strikes were flown against the 18B, 95A, D1, and D2 Regiments who continued to attack OB's, re-establish the commo-liaison routes, and disrupt pacification in general.

### c. Battle of Kien Luong District Town.

On 18 May, elements of the 52nd and 101D Regiments, 1st NVA Division, attacked Kien Luong District Town in northern Kien Giang Province. This was the first incursion by any sizable element of the 1st NVA Division into South Vietnam since leaving the Seven Mountains Area in April 1971. The focus of the battle occurred around a nearby cement plant and the town market place. Rangers and armored cavalry, reinforced by territorial forces from Kien Giang Province, defeated the NVA and after 10 days of fighting he withdrew back into Cambodia and began attacking Cambodian towns in FANK MR2. He expanded his control

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over the area east to Takeo, north to Highway 4, west to Kampot, and south to the RVN border.

d. Battle North of Cai Cai.

On 23 May a minor battle developed between ranger and armored cavalry units from the 44th STZ and the 207th NVA Regiment in an area across the Cambodian border about 15 kilometers north of Cai Cai (near junction of Kien Tuong, Kien Phong, and Cambodian borders). The battle's chief significance comes from two important intelligence events which evolved from the fighting:

(1) Documents were captured that outlined enemy plans for infiltration of NVA units into Kien Tuong Province and a subsequent attack on the province capitol, Moc Hoa.

(2) On 10 June, prisoners were captured who indicated that the 5th NVA Division had deployed from the An Loc area of MR3 to the "Elephant's Foot" area of Cambodia and the unit was planning to infiltrate into Base Area 470 at the junction of Kien Phong, Kien Tuong, and Dinh Tuong Provinces.

e. Battle in the "Elephant's Foot", Cambodia (10-30 June)

(1) Reacting to this intelligence, General Nghi deployed two-thirds of the 7th Division into the "Elephant's Foot" within 48 hours. The rest of the division followed soon thereafter. This battle was significant because it blocked the enemy's unexpected attempts to infiltrate major forces into MR4 from the north and gave IV Corps time to reinforce Dinh Tuong Province. The enemy made effective use of his anti-aircraft capability; approximately 15 friendly aircraft were downed in a 45 day period. It was also during this battle that the SA7 anti-aircraft missile was first introduced into the Delta. Nevertheless, the border battles proved to be an unqualified success. Over 1900 enemy were killed within a 20 day period (many by B-52 and Tac Air strikes) while friendly losses were comparatively light. Scores of weapons of various types were captured. The ARVN 7th Division proved capable of rapid reaction to intelligence, thereby catching the enemy on the move and completely unprepared to fight a decisive engagement.

(2) To exploit this dramatic success, an offensive north from the "Elephant's Foot" toward Highway 1 was launched on 30 June. The

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operation resulted in an additional 800 enemy killed with light ARVN casualties.

(3) Despite such losses, by sliding west the enemy was able to successfully infiltrate the E1 and E3 Regiments (5th NVA Division), as well as the 24th and Z18 NVA Regiments, into the Tri-Border area of Kien Tuong, Kien Phong, and Dinh Tuong Provinces. These 4 regiments joined the Z15 Regiment which had been infiltrated in April and, together with the Dong Thap 1 Regiment, they accounted for six VC/NVA Regiments in the Dinh Tuong area in early July.

f. Battles for Kampong Trabek, Cambodia (2 July - 25 August).

Following the Spring Offensive, the enemy, consisting of Khmer Rouge and some NVA forces, had gradually expanded control of Highway 1 in Cambodia from the Parrot's Beak to Neak Luong on the Mekong River until by 2 July only Neak Luong and Svay Rieng remained in FANK hands. When FANK forces on their own proved unwilling to dislodge the enemy from Kampong Trabek, a combined operation was launched. The 22-day encounter resulted in the retaking of Kampong Trabek by ARVN combined arms task forces and the reopening of Highway 1 from the city west to Neak Luong. The enemy, soon after ARVN left the area to FANK, recaptured the town and the operation was repeated again with ARVN retaking the city on 25 August. However, the enemy showed the importance he placed on this strategic town, which sits between two of his major supply routes, by recapturing and holding Kampong Trabek for the third time after ARVN forces were again withdrawn from the area.

g. Battle of Dinh Tuong Province (8 July to 7 September). See enemy dispositions at Inclosure 5.

(1) The battle for Dinh Tuong Province began with enemy attacks on district towns, attempting to take advantage of the movement of the 7th ARVN Division to the Cambodian Border. The enemy, consisting primarily of the Dong Thap 1 and Z15 Regiments, launched a series of attacks against Sam Giang, Cai Be, and Cai Lay district towns during the period 17 May - 11 July. All of these attacks failed with heavy enemy losses. The enemy suffered over 800 killed during the battles, forcing him to withdraw into sanctuaries to refit. Friendly losses in the actions were relatively light.

(2) The continued enemy threat in Dinh Tuong, however, necessitated the bolstering of friendly forces in that province. Most of the 7th Division was eventually returned to the area leaving only a regiment to screen along the Cambodian Border. The 15th Regiment, returning from

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An Loc was immediately deployed into the province and the MR4 Ranger Command with two ranger groups was also introduced into the area. B-52 strikes were decisive during this campaign, as discussed in a later section of this report. On the average, three strikes per day were delivered in the province, during the height of the battle.

(3) The stabilizing of the situation in MR3 permitted the return of the 21st Division to the Delta and on 10 August the unit was assigned control of its former TAOR south of the Bassac River; the 9th Division was moved to operate north of the river concentrating most of its forces in Dinh Tuong, thereby relieving some more 7th Division battalions for duty outside the province. The 44th STZ was assigned a TAOR paralleling the Cambodian border west of the Mekong, plus Kien Phong Province east of the river, while the 7th Division had a similar TAOR along the Cambodian border encompassing Kien Tuong Province. To control all Vietnamese units located north of the Bassac River (including the 9th and 7th Divisions and especially all the units in Dinh Tuong) a Corps forward CP was established at Dong Tam, commanded by the Corps Deputy CG. This configuration facilitated the two primary missions which General Nghi assigned to ARVN forces: orient on and destroy VC/NVA main forces in the Delta; and prevent movement of enemy troops and supplies from Cambodia to South Vietnam. The rangers and the 9th Division, at times reinforced by the 7th Division's 10th and 12th Regiments, fought numerous sharp battles in Dinh Tuong and the tri-border area. In early August the 4th Ranger Command fought a major battle in the northwestern part of the province to relieve Hau My Fire Support Base. In connection with this action, outposts were reconstructed and reoccupied along the Thap Muoi Canal, returning GVN presence to a highly contested area. By the end of August, enemy initiatives in Dinh Tuong had been severely hampered by the concentrated use of over 100 B-52 strikes (almost all of which were exploited by ground follow-up), Tac Air and the aggressive reaction to intelligence on the part of both the ARVN and territorial forces in the province.

### h. Battles after Dinh Tuong.

(1) During the last week of August and early September, attention shifted to the Seven Mountains Area of Chau Doc Province, where evidence of infiltration by elements of the 1st NVA Division became apparent. General Nghi rapidly began shifting ranger forces west to Chau Doc and beyond the Cambodian border west of Nui-O Mountain. On 2 September the 7th Ranger Group was deployed to MR1, leaving the 44th STZ with

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three ranger groups and eight battalions and an armored brigade with two armored squadrons. On 22 September Kien Phong was placed in the 7th Division's FAOR and the 44th STZ Headquarters returned to Chi Lang to concentrate its attention on the 1st NVA Division.

(2) The situation in the Delta had become relatively quiet when on the night of 1 October a sharp rise in enemy-initiated incidents was reported. This pattern increased as VC/NVA forces attempted to increase their sphere of influence prior to an anticipated cease fire. The 1st NVA Division sent elements from two regiments, the 52d and 101D, as far south as An Giang and in the west through Ha Tien, to positions along the coast north of the Mosa Hills. East of the Mekong, elements of the 207th NVA Regiment and the E2 regiment which had been operating in the Kampong Trabek area and north of Cai Cai, infiltrated south into Kien Phong Province. South of the Bassac River, the 18B, 95A, D1, and D2 Regiments began shifting generally eastward, keying on LOC's and the more populous areas. Enemy activity built to a crescendo toward the end of October, but when the 31 October cease fire failed to materialize, enemy initiated activity slackened off considerably.

(3) During the last week of October and first half of November, sporadic successes were enjoyed by the 7th Division operating in Kien Phong Province as the unit reacted to intelligence that the NVA were infiltrating southward from Cambodia. In the Hong Ngu Island area where the Mekong crosses the Cambodian border, division elements combined with territorial forces to virtually eliminate one battalion of the 207th NVA regiment. In that action 73 PW's were captured over an eight day period, which was one of the biggest groups of PW's captured in the war. The prisoners were young, hungry, some without weapons, low on ammunition and equipment. Some of their leaders had deserted them when the going got tough. Along the Kien Phong/Kien Tuong Border (Sampan Alley), the 7th Division's 10th Regiment, aided by the US C/16th Air Cavalry Troop, experienced consecutively successful engagements against elements of infiltrating E2 Regiment (5th VC Division). Similarly, a brief attempt by NVA units to move against Kien Phong's capitol city of Cao Lanh was promptly thwarted by the rapid deployment of the 7th Division's 11th and 12th Regiments into that area.

(4) To the west in November and the first half of December, ranger units of the 44th STZ conducted some very successful operations

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in the Ha Tien, Tram Forest, and Seven Mountains Area, finding large cache sites and base areas, as well as destroying substantial numbers of the 52nd and 101D NVA Regiments, 1st NVA Division. In a spectacular development, one of the battalion commanders of the 52nd Regiment gave himself up, reporting that his battalion had been decimated by artillery, air strikes and ambushes until the unit was down to about 30 men.

(5) On 16 December, General Nghi ordered a boundary adjustment which enlarged the 7th Division's area of responsibility to include Dinh Tuong and Go Cong Provinces. The 9th Division was given responsibility for Sa Dec, Vinh Long, Vinh Binh, and Kien Hoa Provinces. One regiment with four battalions from the 9th Division was placed OPCON to the 7th Division for use in Dinh Tuong. This change produced the advantage of giving responsibility for Dinh Tuong Province, with the highly important Highway 4 and the inextricably associated Base Area 470 (Kien Phong, Kien Tuong and Dinh Tuong), to only one command.

(6) The closing days of 1972 were marked only by a combined FANK/ARVN operation designed to open Highway 2 from the Cambodian border to Takeo by repairing roads and bridges and out-posting with FANK. The operation, which commenced on 21 Dec, progressed smoothly with little resistance. See enemy dispositions at Inclosure 6.

(7) The lull of the Christmas and New Year's cease fire periods was broken on 3 January 1973 when MR4 experienced 79 enemy initiated incidents, followed the next day by 51 more. However, an evaluation of this high level of activity indicated that the enemy did not achieve any significant gains. Although the level of enemy activity was heavy, the intensity of his incidents was light and can be best described as "busy work" in regard to its total effectiveness. While this activity did provide the enemy with some increased visibility in the eyes of the local populace and provide a psychological stimulant for his troops, it has resulted only in some inconvenience and embarrassment for the GVN.

### L. Lessons Learned.

(1) At least as this reporting period drew to a close--and from a before-and-after snapshot of the Delta--with all the effort expended and loss of life experienced by the enemy, he has accomplished little from his offensive. Highway 4, one of his major objectives, remained

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open except for a few hours throughout the entire period; no district town was ever taken; although some regression in pacification was experienced, little additional population came under his control. Moreover, all major land and water LOC's remained for the most part open throughout the entire offensive. The RVN Armed Forces, on the other hand, improved continuously during 1972 and, although they did not succeed in their primary mission of eliminating the enemy from the Delta, they clearly were successful in preventing the enemy from achieving major gains. While they still have a long way to go before becoming top notch in every military area, they proved themselves considerably better than their opponents and, provided their will to continue the struggle does not falter, they are capable of eventually defeating the enemy. Specific lessons learned concerning the operations and tactics during this period are as follows.

(2) RVNAF in MR4 during 1972 proved themselves capable of meeting and defeating the mythically invincible VC/NVA guerrilla, provided they received Tac Air and B-52 support.

(3) The return of US B-52 and Tac Air capabilities to the Delta when the enemy opened his offensive had a dichotomous effect. These two assets were decisive in preventing the enemy from achieving major gains, bolstering RVNAF morale, and inducing an increase in their operations following a brief period of post-offensive lethargy. (For example, we insisted that all B-52 strikes be adequately exploited and over ninety percent of them were ground followed. This helped to get units moving in the offensive again.) However, the availability of these assets sometimes led to RVNAF's overreliance on them, often resulting in the failure to maneuver aggressively against the enemy and a correspondingly inadequate use of artillery and organic fire support means.

(4) The ability of ARVN to employ combined arms effectively improved appreciably during the year. Both the 44th STZ and the 7th Division effectively used combined arms teams consisting of armored cavalry, infantry/rangers, and artillery towed by APC's from the cavalry. These units were particularly effective in disrupting enemy lines of communication across the Cambodian border.

(5) From the outset of the enemy offensive ARVN showed an excellent capability of moving units over extended distances

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within relatively short time frames to influence the outcome of a battle or engagement and this capability improved as the year progressed. He increasingly became able to marry up his airmobile, waterborne, and ground forces at the proper time to accomplish a given objective. This ability to quickly concentrate forces and firepower was a key factor in some of the major victories enjoyed, such as the Battle of the "Elephant's Foot."

(6) Paralleling this was the willingness on the part of the ARVN Corps Commander to take calculated risks by depleting forces in one area to produce desired results in another. This tendency was illustrated both when General Nghi deployed the 7th Division from Dinh Tuong to the "Elephant's Foot," and again when he used economy of force tactics along the Cambodian border to permit a renewed concentration of forces in the tri-border area for the battle of Dinh Tuong.

(7) Despite ARVN's ability to deploy forces rapidly, there was room for considerable improvement in the overall management of VNAF helicopter assets. The desire to keep all commanders "content" with a small piece of the aviation pie daily hampered the rapid shifting of assets to the unit in most need for an immediate tactical operation. As 1972 closed, we witnessed some improvement in this area.

(8) The overall rigidity of the enemy plan for the conduct of the war in the Delta fastened enemy forces to specific objectives. Their persistency in following this plan to accomplish fixed objectives enabled friendly forces to anticipate and plan for future enemy activity.

(9) A key weakness which has contributed measurably to the demise of the enemy in MR4 has been his inability to overcome deficiencies of command and control. Not only was the enemy unable to consistently coordinate offensive activity among forces within MR4, but inter-MR coordination was also sorely lacking. This shortcoming helped prevent any truly consolidated offensive and, thus, any conclusive enemy victories.

(10) Enemy forces in MR4 displayed an obsessive desire to maintain their commo-liaison routes, in many cases at the expense of conducting decisive combat operations. As a result, friendly forces were able to deploy along these well-defined routes to thwart enemy initiatives.



(11) Propaganda played an all too important role in building the morale and confidence of enemy soldiers. Often told that ARVN forces would fall or run before their guns, and that the civilians were sympathetic with the VC/NVA cause, the enemy troops were demoralized to find the ARVN soldiers more than an equal match, and the population hostile to their efforts. Thus in many cases, this propaganda reversed itself and worked for the GVN cause by building doubts and fears rather than confidence and morale.

(12) With over-extended supply lines, the VC/NVA were forced to depend upon strategically located cache sites and local forces for support. Deprived of these by extensive friendly operations, his ability to conduct operations was seriously impaired and his very existence threatened.

(13) The enemy characteristically conducted stereotyped operations which involved sequential planning, rehearsal, critique, deployment, execution, and a final critique. If interrupted at any stage in this sequence prior to execution, he seemingly lacked the flexibility to adjust and continue with the operation. Instead, in almost all instances, the enemy would abort the plan and begin again, thus denying himself of the advantage of continued momentum and passing up possible lucrative targets.

(14) Predictability was another weakness which impaired enemy operations in MR4. Tied to lunar phases and seasonal offensives, the enemy telegraphed future activity, thus permitting friendly intelligence agencies, assisted by collateral information, to pinpoint places and times of planned VC/NVA operations.

(15) The enemy consistently displayed a lack of operational flexibility. Once committed to a tactical scheme of maneuver, the enemy would carry it through even though the situation might warrant a change in tactics. As a result, the enemy at times suffered unnecessary personnel losses when he possibly could have gained significant tactical advantage by adapting his attack plan to the situation.

## 7. (U) TRAINING.

a. The most significant accomplishment made in training during this past year was the convincing of the Corps Commander that training is an absolute necessity, even in a combat environment. It was repeatedly stressed that replacement of well-trained combat losses

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must be done on a systematic and continuing basis, and that the use of combat as a substitute for training was an expensive and often unproductive course of action. Favorable acceptance of these views was gained when General Nghi discovered for himself that casualties incurred by the 21st Infantry Division, while on operations along Highway 13, had basically created whole new units which were in obvious need of both individual and unit refresher training.

(1) Primarily as a result of advisory efforts, the Corps Commander fully supported a two week refresher training program for all infantry battalions of the 21st Division. This program had the following milestones:

(a) Battalions were brought to at least 85% of authorized strength prior to training.

(b) Battalions received a 100% weapons and equipment check prior to training, with damaged items either repaired or replaced on the spot.

(c) Battalion officers and NCO's were required to attend and participate in training commensurate with their normal duty positions.

A key factor in the success of this program was that all instruction was geared to the concept of "learning by doing." Heavy emphasis was given to the use of infantry crew served weapons, with special efforts made to develop mortar proficiency, since most ARVN fear VC mortar fire, but frequently fail to use their own. Leadership and technical classes were given at night to the officers, often in order to boost company leadership to where it could function at the next day's training. Results of this training effort have been most gratifying. The combat losses of trained battalions have fallen, while the Corps Commander has gained a respect for training which has allowed additional ARVN infantry and ranger battalions into the program. Since July, when the program began, a total of 26 battalions have received refresher training. This represents 81% of all ARVN division and ranger command battalions in MR4. If continued, these efforts will measurably help ARVN to develop a leadership depth which will be able to withstand reasonable combat losses without jeopardizing the entire unit.

(2) Other significant training programs started or maintained in MR4 during 1972 include an RF leadership training course, and a reconnaissance training program for territorial forces. Of these courses, the New Zealand Army sponsored leadership training program for RF company-level officers is considered to have been instrumental in the overall improvement of Regional Forces

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leadership. Since initiation in March of 1971, this program has graduated 1,259 officer students. Sponsorship of this program was taken over by ARVN in December of 1972, and there is every indication that the Corps Commander intends to continue using this leadership development tool in the future. Latest report is that 1973 classes will be changed to permit senior company NCO attendance.

(3) General Nghi's insistence, in October of 1972, for a reconnaissance refresher training program for 17 RF companies and 94 PF platoons is an ambitious project which exemplifies his current confidence in training results. This program, which advisors fully supported, was started in order to increase territorial forces mobility and related proficiencies. It provides for one RF reconnaissance company to each province, and one reconnaissance trained PF platoon to each district in MR4. Current plans call for the completion of this program in June of 1973.

b. The second most significant accomplishment made in training during the past year was the upgrading of MR4 training facilities and cadre. In these areas, advisors have repeatedly stressed that efficient training is best served when trainees are adequately cared for, and are taught by qualified instructors in a realistic environment. Highlights of tangible improvements include a reduction in the number of training centers; the completion of major funded construction projects; and the initiation of meaningful self-help improvement projects. Examples of this self-help effort include the construction of small arms firing ranges and training areas, the building of troop welfare facilities, the repair of roads, and the renovation of dependent quarters. The upgrading of the training center cadre, which was done concurrently with physical improvements, evolved as division advisors succeeded in convincing their counterparts that nominated training center instructors should be combat experienced, and MOI trained as quickly as possible. To date, 100% of all MR4 division training center instructors are combat experienced, and 50-60% have successfully completed a recognized MOI course.

c. **Lessons Learned and Recommendation.**

One of the more productive training concepts to evolve from the war has been the refresher training program, which provided a much needed two week period of basic unit and advanced unit type training to numerous MR4 infantry/ranger battalions. The

advantages of this proven concept, and the practical teaching techniques of the US Special Forces, should be studied for possible incorporation into the annual ARVN training program. It is also believed that significant progress has been made in the upgrading of division training center facilities in this military region.

8. (C) US ADVISOR EFFORT.

a. During the first quarter of 1972, light enemy activity enabled IV Corps/MR4 to concentrate on programs in support of pacification. The advisory effort at that time concentrated on elimination of VC base areas and infiltration routes, and expansion of GVN influence to control the territory and population. This was to be accomplished through sound planning and methodical execution, progressively eliminating remaining VC strongholds and mini-bases.

b. The enemy offensive in April, together with a sharply reduced advisory strength, required that the advisory effort be concentrated on security matters that would provide the greatest influence in countering the enemy threat.

c. The need to maintain an American overview of the situation through operational reporting and analysis of intelligence and a capability to manage the newly introduced US Tac Air and B-52 strikes placed a heavy operational requirement on IV Corps Headquarters advisory personnel. By year's end, for example, the number of advisors at division headquarters had dropped from 52 to 10.

d. The enemy offensive disrupted goals established to widen pacification and in some areas reversed former gains. Advisors at all levels were required to devote more time to the conduct of tactical operations. The additional advisory effort concentrated upon assisting ARVN in maintaining combat effectiveness through attention to administration, training, and logistics.

9. (C) CAMBODIAN RELATIONSHIP.

a. As Vietnamization progressed in the Delta, a concerted effort was made to maintain good Khmer-Vietnamese relations. The Nixon Doctrine was being tested; it was imperative that these Asian countries work together in their fight against communism. That each country needed the other to combat the common foe was obvious; however, these traditional enemies with centuries of ill-feeling and mistrust between them were reluctant to cooperate. As long as there existed

in the Delta a relatively large American presence assisting both FANK and ARVN, the two sides would cooperate--the Khmer because they were heavily dependent on US support, the Vietnamese because they did not want to incur our disfavor. As American combat power was drawn down, these reasons for working together no longer applied; it was apparent that new means were necessary to encourage closer cooperation between the two allies.

b. The existing agency which coordinated US support for FANK in the Khmer 2nd Military Region (MR) and 12th Tactical Zone (TZ)-- areas contiguous to the Delta--was the Special Operations Control Center (SOCC). The principal mission of the SOCC was to coordinate helicopter gunship support for FANK units of 2nd MR and the 12th TZ. Since it was located in South Vietnam, the SOCC had become a logical focal point for Khmer-Vietnamese cooperation. Originally established to coordinate gunship support for combined FANK-ARVN operations to clear the Pich Nil Pass on Khmer National Route 4, the SOCC proved so successful that the organization was expanded. By February 1972, SOCC had evolved to the point that it controlled daily helicopter gunship support for FANK; provided security for Mekong River convoys from Tan Chau to Phnom Penh; conducted week-long air-ground coordination and intelligence courses for Khmer officers; hosted weekly meetings in which current local situations were briefed, intelligence information exchanged, and matters of common interest discussed; and hosted periodic tripartite meetings at Corps level. By the end of March 1972, however, there were no longer sufficient US helicopter assets to continue SOCC operations, and it became clear that the organization would have to be phased out or altered.

c. The reasons why mutual cooperation between the Khmer and the Vietnamese was desirable, if not mandatory, were plainly evident. Intelligence as to troop locations, movements, etc, in Cambodia, collected by FANK, could be invaluable to ARVN. It would be advantageous to ARVN to be able to fight the NVA in Cambodia before they arrived in the Delta. The Khmers, on the other hand, needed military assistance in all areas, as their army was inexperienced and lacking in training, cadre, equipment, and supplies. With NVA troops engaged by ARVN, FANK would be able to concentrate on fighting the Khmer communists. Allied forces could even operate together to combat the common enemy. The agency which could promote this cooperation was a follow-on organization to the SOCC, the Combined Operations Intelligence Center (COIC)

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(See Inclosure 7, COIC, Organization and Functions). Through the COIC, intelligence information could be exchanged, and combined operations planned and monitored. The concept provided for the COIC to retain a limited capability to provide backseats for US helicopter gunship missions, and process requests for US Air Force Tac Air submitted by units of 2nd MR and 12th TZ. Other general liaison tasks could be performed as necessary, and the training programs begun by the SOCC would be continued. Weekly meetings would also be continued to exchange information, encourage cooperation, and promote good will between the two sides.

d. The COIC experienced many initial difficulties. The Vietnamese at first were reluctant to provide the agreed complement of personnel (Inclosure 7). At almost the same time the communist spring offensive struck, and the attention of both sides was drawn to operational requirements. At least a minimum of cooperation existed, however, and ARVN provided some air support for FANK troops; COIC backseats flew with Vietnamese Forward Air Controllers as well as US helicopters. On the ground, however, there was little combined or coordinated action. At Kampong Trach (22 Mar-20 Apr) FANK stood by and let ARVN do the majority of the fighting.

e. As enemy pressure eased, US advisors re-focused attention on the COIC. Relations at first were strained as the Vietnamese tended to look down on the Khmer, and Khmer pride was ruffled time and again. The Khmer inhibited progress in their own right by their inability to provide timely, accurate intelligence, and their apparent unwillingness to engage the enemy. Nevertheless, weekly meetings, the training programs, constant prodding by advisors, day to day contact, and the reality of the common enemy gradually overcame most antagonisms. Later, excellent cooperation was achieved during the battles at Kampong Trabek in July and August; however, the prompt loss of this town again by FANK in early September dealt a severe blow to the relations achieved up to that time. The Cambodian tactical situation worsened to a point where 2nd MR and 12th TZ units could no longer spare officers to attend the training programs, and classes were suspended indefinitely. Up to that time, 324 students had been trained in air-ground operations, and 84 had participated in the intelligence seminars. The COIC continued to function, providing information, requesting and coordinating air support, insuring daily ARVN-FANK contact, and accomplishing miscellaneous liaison tasks.

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f. Continuing efforts by ARVN, FANK, and US advisors resulted in renewed cooperation, and ARVN leadership increasingly accepted the necessity of working with and assisting FANK. Illustrative of this increased cooperation was the assistance rendered by IV Corps to 2nd MR during November and December providing fuel, ammunition, and miscellaneous equipment to FANK units isolated from Phnom Penh. They also provided artillery support whenever possible. By early January 1973, cooperation was at a high, in the form of a combined operation to reopen, repair, and secure Khmer National Route 2, in which FANK and ARVN units participated. The COIC has continued to function, not only in accomplishing the specific tasks it was designed for, but also, and more importantly, in promoting the spirit and rapport that are necessary for cooperation between these two nations.

### 10. (C) US AND ARVN COMBAT SUPPORT.

a. During the period 15 January - 31 August, MR4 experienced the withdrawal of all US naval air assets--which included both the "Black Pony" OV-10 aircraft and the night-flying helicopter gunships, the "Seawolves"--and the gradual drawdown of US Army aviation assets to a level which included one aviation company and one air cavalry troop. With these remaining assets, DRAC provided on a daily basis: (1) ten UH-1 and five light observation-type aircraft (later reduced to a combined total of 12 daily) for province, division advisory teams, and DRAC staff support; (2) two CH-47 Chinook aircraft for heavy lift; and (3) one air cavalry package to perform B-52 strike bomb damage assessment and armed reconnaissance missions. This reduction in assets forced VNAF to assume more and more of the aviation support role and resulted in close coordination between VNAF and US aviation. VNAF assumed the responsibility for medical evacuation, furnished gunship escort for the US Chinooks, and assumed 50% of the responsibility for providing firefly (night security) missions to support the Can Tho defense. With continued emphasis on developing sound management techniques and procedures, VNAF helicopter aviation is approaching the point of complete self-reliance.

b. Before the enemy Easter Offensive, VNAF Tac Air was supporting MR4 with an average of 40 close air support sorties each day to attack targets in MR4 and occasionally to support Khmer forces across the border. VNAF maintained this capability throughout the offensive and on occasion provided as many as 52 sorties in a 24-hour period.

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US Tac Air supported MR4 with an average of 43 daily sorties during April 1972, providing as many as 75 sorties during periods of heavy combat, and tapering off to the current average of 22 sorties per day. To simplify coordinating delivery of this added air support, USAF co-located a Tactical Air Control Party with the VNAF Direct Air Support Center at Can Tho. From this location, the air liaison officers controlled the US forward air controllers operating over the Delta, coordinating closely with VNAF representatives. Ground commanders used the existing parallel VN and US air strike request channels. Initially, there were some problems in educating commanders in the procedures for requesting and controlling US Tac Air and in the US rules of engagement. The two most frequent problems in the use of US Tac Air were: (1) coordination with VNAF to ensure only one FAC, either US or Vietnamese would operate in a given target area, and (2) failure to expend US sorties' ordnance on the desired target due to delays in obtaining political and tactical target clearance as required by the US rules of engagement. These problems were not major, however, and did not detract significantly from the overall effectiveness of the US Tac Air effort in the Delta. In many engagements Tac Air was the decisive factor. As a result of its effectiveness during the enemy offensive, VNAF Tac Air enjoyed an improved reputation. In many instances, VNAF FAC's controlled strikes made by US aircraft, and this practice was on the increase toward the end of 1972.

c. The return of B-52 strikes to MR4 in April brought a psychological and morale boost to friendly forces throughout the Delta. Partially as a result of the DRAC-IV Corps requirement for ground follow-up, friendly initiated contacts increased and the enemy-to-friendly kill ratio improved from 2.74 in April to over 5.8 in August-December. The B-52 strikes frequently served as spoiling attacks to prevent the enemy from achieving major gains, particularly in the hot spots of Chuong Thien and Dinh Tuong Provinces. There was some indication that the enemy was occasionally able to exploit both the rigid delivery times of the strikes and the requirement for a visual reconnaissance the day before a strike to reconfirm clearances. He took extra precautions, sought cover during delivery times, and moved the next night if he saw a helicopter searching his area in the daytime. The B-52 strikes delivered in MR4 since April are considered major factors in successful military operations throughout the period. Although many strikes proved to have meager results, a substantial number of them proved instrumental in rendering entire enemy units ineffective. For example, in August a series of three strikes in Dinh Tuong alone resulted in killing 155 enemy from VC MR2 Headquarters, the 514C Local Force Battalion, and an artillery battalion.



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### d. Use of Artillery.

(1) The deployment and employment of the artillery in MR4 has shown improvement in recent months. Under a program known as REARM-4 (Reorganization of the Artillery within MR4), which was nearing completion before the beginning of the current enemy offensive, artillery units in MR4 were redeployed to 115 selected artillery positions located to provide maximum territorial coverage for the Delta. This released the majority of the three divisional artilleries and the corps artillery with the 44th Special Tactical Zone for employment in a mobile role. This redeployment enabled commanders of major maneuver units to mass their artillery to support operations in the field. Massive artillery fire was used against the enemy with marked success during combat operations such as Kampong Trabek and in Dinh Tuong and Chuong Thien Provinces.

(2) A concurrent portion of the REARM-4 plan called for the reorganization of the artillery in the Delta into six sub-regions commanded by ARVN artillery battalion commanders. These sub-regions were planned to reduce the Corps Artillery Commander's span of control from 20 separate headquarters to 10, and to improve the responsiveness of the administrative and logistical chains. The sub-region plan was adopted, but proved to be somewhat inflexible as division and STZ boundaries changed. The original distribution of units has been modified and the sub-region organizational structure is still under study.

(3) The April move of the 21st Division Artillery to MR3 caused a major redeployment of artillery platoons in the Delta which was accomplished with minimal loss of territorial coverage and re-shuffling of artillery pieces. When the 21st Division returned to the Delta in late July, the division artillery battalions required only a short period for retraining and the assimilation of new replacements before they were absorbed into their former support missions. Throughout the offensive, artillery in MR4 remained responsive, flexible, and effective in defeating the enemy.

(4) The greatest handicap to maximum efficiency in the employment of artillery firepower stemmed from weaknesses at all levels of command in fire planning and fire support coordination. US advisors were applying maximum effort to correct these weaknesses. Other artillery training programs which have improved MR4 artillery performance include:

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(a) In-place training programs for both territorial and ARVN artillery platoons. These programs, still in their initial cycles, have already resulted in improved performance by the firing platoons.

(b) IV Corps Artillery completed two cycles of survey training to establish battalion survey control points along Highway 4.

(c) A Corps-wide continuous program of artillery adjustment training for RF officers, PF platoon leaders, villages/hamlet cadre, Popular Self-Defense Force (PSDF) cadres, and outpost personnel has been established along with programs to train navy and air force personnel in artillery techniques.

### e. Naval Operations.

(1) In early 1972, Vietnamese naval forces operated almost independently of IV Corps. There were four Tran Hung Dao (THD's) in MR4 that were tasked with the mission of providing waterborne combat support of the divisions/STZ. However, the headquarters elements were not co-located which resulted in difficulties in planning and coordinating joint operations.

(2) The main theme of advisory effort to General Nghi was to get all combat power of VNAF and VNN under the control of one commander. Initially, the commander in the Delta did not have control of all his forces. Through advisory efforts, naval representatives were added to the IV Corps staff and the staff of each division/STZ. Naval representatives then became available to participate in all planning sessions within IV Corps. This move was instrumental in producing a noticeable improvement in VNN and ARVN cooperation. A major milestone was when Admiral Hung and General Nghi were able to integrate and coordinate operations of naval and ARVN forces under a single operational commander.

(3) During 1972, considerable advisory effort was devoted to getting the ARVN, VNN, and VNAF to participate in joint operations. These efforts bore fruit as time went by. At present, the commanders of VNAF, VNN, and the four divisions/STZ hold frequent meetings with the CG IV Corps, to plan and coordinate joint operations. Although the situation has improved, more work needs to be done.

(4) During 1972, attention was given to the problem of coastal infiltration. In recent months the rules of engagement for coastal

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operations have been modified. The changes permit VNN coastal forces to take small craft in the no boat zones under fire if they do not respond when signaled by the VNN to submit to a search. The VNN have stationed additional boats off the Kien Giang Province coast to counteract infiltration. In addition, an experimental covert sampan operation has begun and produced successful results by operating in the enemy habitat. To provide advisory impetus to this critical area, DRAC staff liaison visits and meetings have been conducted to foster better joint force cooperation. More importantly anti-coastal infiltration planning conferences are held regularly by the ARVN, VNN, and province authorities involved. In all, however, we are a long way from completely denying this source of resupply to the enemy.

### f. Lessons Learned.

(1) The return of B-52 strikes and US Tac Air assets to MR4 in April had a profound psychological impact on friendly forces throughout the Delta and resulted in significantly higher enemy-to-friendly kill ratios.

(2) The REARM-4 program, which was nearly completed at the time of the enemy Easter Offensive, was instrumental in assuring responsive artillery fire for territorial forces as well as releasing the majority of divisional and corps artillery units for employment in a mobile role.

(3) The relocation of naval Tran Hung Dao's to coincide with division/STZ headquarters was instrumental in producing improved cooperation between VNN and ARVN.

## 11. (C) LOGISTICS.

a. Prior to the enemy offensive, the ARVN logistics support system was established and functioning adequately, primarily due to the abundance of supplies. As the offensive progressed, the logistics system was severely strained. When the 21st Infantry Division returned to MR4, the logistical problem became apparent to us and the ARVN. Required supplies and equipment were not always available when and where required, or, in some cases, in the quantity desired. Problems were not necessarily startling, but they represented root causes for some of the inherent weaknesses of the ARVN logistics system. A concentrated,

advisor effort was devoted to the management aspects of logistics, maintenance, and supply discipline. A major hurdle was crossed when we convinced the IV Corps Commander that US aid would not continue in unlimited amounts. He recognized that strict supply discipline had to be imposed to meet the inevitable drawdown of US support and the resultant severe reduction in the GVN budget to fight the war. The Trail Blazer inspection and assistance team was conceived to highlight the specific problems and to offer concrete recommendations to resolve the problems. Therefore, austerity was emphasized in all areas, especially in ammunition storage, handling, and use, and vehicle retrograde for fourth and fifth echelon maintenance with subsequent return to the supply system. The overall operation of the supply system within MR4 steadily improved. Supply and equipment levels from depot to user were excellent, particularly when viewed in conjunction with combat operations experienced during the period. Maintenance of equipment, though poor by desired standards, was improving.

b. The 4th ALC operated the wholesale logistics system for MR4. The MR4/IV Corps G4 was the logistical staff planning agency that controlled allocation of assets and critical items while 4th ALC operated the system and advised the Corps Commander and staff on logistical matters. Supported strength consisted of approximately 283,000 personnel plus weapons and ammo for another 300,000 PSDF. Maintenance support in MR4 was provided on an area support basis. Unit maintenance and material readiness was excellent in the cavalry squadrons. Unfortunately, unit maintenance standards throughout MR4 were not all of the same high caliber. The performance of unit maintenance in MR4 varied from good to poor. The ARVN preventive maintenance program was not fully enforced. The principal cause of this problem was the lack of sufficient command emphasis in maintenance discipline at all levels. After-the-fact maintenance was practiced over the philosophy of preventive maintenance. Failure to expedite retrograde of inoperable equipment led to cannibalization of parts which resulted in the hulk going to the property disposal yard rather than being repaired. Actions taken to improve the status of unit maintenance in MR4 were:

(1) The Corps Commander directed roadside spot inspections. This was a step in the right direction, but the inspection team lacked the necessary authority to deadline the vehicle on the spot until

deficiencies were corrected.

(2) The 4th ALC operated a mobile logistics assistance team that conducted assistance/inspection type visits to all provinces and non-divisional units.

(3) In the divisional units, a joint US/ARVN assistance inspection was conducted from the company level through the division logistics battalion. This was not only to assist the units but to determine problem areas and recommend solutions in the management of logistics, and to emphasize at all levels the necessity for maintenance of equipment, supply economy, and resource management.

c. In August, a joint ARVN/US study group was formed to conduct a detailed review of supply and maintenance systems in the major tactical units in order to determine the current logistics posture and improve logistics effectiveness. This logistics offensive was called Trail Blazer. The Trail Blazer team was composed of representatives from Corps G4, 4th ALC, and their counterparts. On-site visits were conducted at company supply operations, and requisitions for selected supplies and equipment were followed through each successive level of support to the direct support units and depots. This effort was phased on a continuing basis. The first phase was completed in late November. The second phase involved revisiting units to determine improvements. This effort continued in a repetitive manner until all major units were visited, i. e., all regiments of all divisions. The following are some of the specific problem areas in which corrective action was completed or instituted:

(1) In supply, many personnel did not know correct bookkeeping procedures. In many instances individual clothing records were not up-to-date. There was no evidence that clothing issues were being posted to the individual clothing records or that the clothing record was used as a basis to request clothing for direct exchange.

(2) The ration supplement program did not operate correctly. Personnel did not understand the latest procedures for requesting and reporting on ration supplement items. A contributing factor was that maneuver units were not located near supply areas and it is difficult to collect the ration supplement tickets and distribute ration supplement items. Further, units did not have required reserve stocks on hand.

(3) Reports of survey were not submitted in a timely manner through supply channels in order to drop equipment from accountable

supply records, thereby reducing on hand balances to reflect exactly how much was on hand. If this were not done, 4th ALC would not issue replacement equipment because their records showed that the division had the equipment on hand.

(4) There were inconsistencies in records maintained in all levels of supply, especially authorized and on hand figures maintained by the logistical battalions (Log Bn) and 4th ALC. There were discrepancies between authorized figures or on hand quantities of major end items, such as wheel and track vehicles. The Trail Blazer team noted instances where issues from the supporting DSU were not posted to supply records at the Log Bn and the supply records at regiment did not reflect issues from the Log Bn.

(5) Although medical supply was not a specific area of interest of the Trail Blazer Team, observations in this related area were noted. The medical supply system was established and functioning; however, medical supply personnel are hesitant to use the system and in many instances did not initiate requests for medical supplies. The success of supply advisors was often measured in terms of how much supplies and equipment could be obtained outside the supply system. Efforts were constantly applied to encourage use of the normal supply channels.

(6) The evacuation of unserviceable equipment to higher echelons of maintenance was slow. If unserviceable equipment was not evacuated, uncontrolled removal of parts took place. Before long there was very little left of the vehicle and it remained there for weeks or months. A special team from 4th ALC was formed to travel throughout MR4 with authority to classify and effect on the spot evacuation of all vehicles categorized for repair or rebuild.

(7) Some maintenance sections did not have a PLL for vehicles and personnel did not know how to compute or maintain demand data. As an example, spark plugs were requested as they were needed rather than maintaining a stock on hand based on prior demands. There was little evidence of a preventive maintenance program at unit levels. The failure of operations to properly clean or replace air filters on 2 1/2 ton and 5 ton trucks contributed to the high number of engines requiring replacement. On the other hand, chronic shortages of high demand repair parts caused a lack of confidence in the repair parts supply system. Increased

emphasis needed to be placed on operator maintenance to prevent failure before it occurred. The Trail Blazer Team was impressed with the attitude and knowledge of many supply and maintenance personnel. With few exceptions, signal and small arms repair sections were staffed with highly motivated and competent personnel. Other sections were not so fortunate and although the logistical support system was functioning, the required supplies did not always end up when and where required.

d. Lessons Learned.

(1) The commanders were not taking interest in the supply and maintenance area. This has been emphatically brought to their attention and the education of commanders in the logistics field must continue.

(2) Lack of school trained personnel contributed to supply and maintenance problems. The 4th ALC and Combined Logistics Command (CLC) conduct logistics courses and quotas are being filled with competent personnel. Supply assistance teams are being used to raise the skill levels of supply and parts clerks while at the same time helping units with problem areas. This should be a continuing process.

(3) IG inspection teams were not discovering and highlighting discrepancies and problems in division logistics. IG inspection teams are now being required to physically check logistics areas of interest such as maintenance of vehicles, supply procedures, and supply discipline.

(4) 4th ALC was not authorized to inspect tactical logistical elements. They now provide valuable assistance to tactical logistical elements by conducting periodic inspections under the supervision of the Corps G4. Follow-up action on higher supply activities is being emphasized. Further, higher supply activities are being encouraged to back-check on customer requests with that customer.

12. (C) COMMUNICATIONS.

a. The rapid development of military activities in Vietnam demanded the rapid expansion of both long distance and local communications facilities in an area where virtually no facilities existed. Extensive use was made of US military personnel and equipment, along with contractor support to provide communications services throughout Vietnam. Fixed

communications sites were developed and tactical equipment was used to expand the system from these sites to subscriber locations. A program was developed to transition communications equipment and system operation to the Vietnamese as trained personnel were made available. The objectives in the communications area were to turn over US communications facilities and circuits to the Vietnamese; to use Vietnamese circuits to meet US needs to the maximum extent possible; and to reduce as far as possible US communications facilities and personnel in MR4. There were 1200 US military communications personnel assigned in MR4 in 1971. These personnel comprised one signal battalion, two separate signal companies, six signal detachments and province advisory teams. In addition, contractor personnel operated or assisted in the operation of 11 Integrated Communications System (ICS) sites.

b. The transition program was developed for the communications area and approved by MACV J6 and Vietnamese authorities. This program was to be accomplished in three phases: Phase I - To be declared when the requisite personnel were assigned to each site and training started; Phase II - To be declared when sufficient personnel were site qualified to permit Vietnamese operation and maintenance with US assistance (military or civilian); and Phase III - To be declared when the Vietnamese could assume full operation and maintenance of the communications site. This program was established with goals for achieving the separate phases. However, the transition of phases was not to be made unless US personnel were confident the Vietnamese could successfully accomplish the new duties and responsibilities they would assume with the transition. The following lists of fixed communications radio sites and transition dates reflect the progress made in the program which began in late 1971.

<u>SITE</u>	<u>PHASE II</u>	<u>PHASE III</u>
Binh Thuy	NOV 1971	JUL 1972
Dong Tam	DEC 1971	JUN 1972
Ca Mau	MAR 1972	JUL 1972
Bac Lieu	APR 1972	AUG 1972
Rach Gia	APR 1972	AUG 1972
An Thoi	MAY 1972	SEP 1972
Long Xuyen	JUN 1972	AUG 1972
Soc Trang	JUL 1972	SEP 1972
Can Tho	SEP 1972	OCT 1972





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c. Advisory emphasis at provinces was placed on the Vietnamese assuming the operational and intelligence missions; thus, this type traffic could be transmitted through the Vietnamese communications network. The US advisors could now concentrate on analysis, evaluation, and management assistance, which could be done without real time traffic support. The elimination of this real time traffic permitted the deactivation of all small US operated communications centers and teletypewriter circuits within MR4. The final small communications center was deactivated in July 1972.

d. The 67th Signal Group (ARVN) assumed the operation and maintenance of the VHF multiple channel radio links within MR4. With the assumption of this primary mission from the 52nd Signal Battalion (ARVN), the battalion was removed from MR4 in October 1971. Reductions in military communications personnel continued during 1972. One signal company (550th) remained in MR4 to provide direct signal support to Headquarters, DRAC, until the drawdown. This company provided the following communications support:

- One dedicated voice switchboard.
- One area communications center.
- One FM radio DRAC Command Net Control Station.
- One AM HF/SSB radio DRAC Command Net Control Station.
- One AM HF/SSB radio in MACV Command Net.
- One dedicated teletype circuit (DRAC-MACV).
- One secure voice terminal (AUTOSEVCOM).

e. Lesson Learned.

An evaluation of the Vietnamization of communications reveals that the Vietnamese proved capable of accepting varied and complex communications responsibilities, thus relieving the US of these functions in MR4. Moreover, the Vietnamese have the capacity to learn the operations and maintenance of highly complex communications equipment and systems. Some areas of training were accelerated to determine possible changes to earlier transition dates than planned. The results of this training revealed that the rate of learning and comprehension in many areas was faster than had been envisioned.

### 13. (C) PACIFICATION.

#### a. Overall Status.

(1) As the year 1972 began, there were many reasons to be optimistic about pacification in the Delta. Security was at an all time high with over 81% of the people living in secure hamlets and 95.7% living in secure or marginally secure hamlets. The new 1972-1975 Community Defense and Local Development Plan which was instituted on 1 March represented a major accomplishment in long range pacification planning. National elections had been held and new local elections were in the process of being held. Agricultural output was on the rise with a significant rise in farm income. The large majority of the children of the Delta were in school and the key programs of Land to the Tiller and Village Self Development were making steady progress.

(2) With the arrival of the enemy's offensive in the Delta on the night of 6-7 April 1972, security began to regress and local government and key developmental programs were disrupted in the hardest hit areas, particularly Chuong Thien, Kien Giang, and Dinh Tuong. As of the 30 November 1972 Hamlet Evaluation System (HES) printout, the percentage of population living in secure hamlets had decreased over 8% to 73.4%. Nevertheless, the vast majority of the population (92.5%) continues to live in secure or marginally secure hamlets. In these relatively secure areas local government continues to function, and progress towards the accomplishment of the goals of the Community Defense and Local Development Plan continues to be made.

(3) In summation, the enemy's offensive has caused a limited amount of pacification regression in certain areas of MR4; however, MR4 appears to have weathered the worst of it and can look forward to progressing back to pre-offensive pacification levels. The enemy's prime objective of destroying pacification in the Delta has not, and from all indications, will not be attained.

#### b. Self-Defense.

(1) The major thrust of self-defense has been to shift the Territorial Forces from a static defensive posture, relying almost

entirely on operating bases, to a more mobile posture based on a consolidated operating base system and creating mobile forces at village, district, and province levels. In order to accomplish this, MG Nghi has emphasized moving the regional forces out of operating bases, converting popular force units to regional force units, and upgrading control headquarters to include the establishment of sector tactical command posts in each province to control the RF battalions in mobile operations. The ultimate objective of these changes has been to enable the territorial forces to handle local enemy elements, thereby freeing ARVN to pursue enemy main forces in base areas, along the border, and in Cambodia.

(2) The position we found ourselves in by early 1972 as a result of concerted efforts to push out into unpopulated areas of the countryside was that our territorial forces were tied down in numerous small operating bases. At the beginning of the offensive the enemy was able to eliminate, with relative ease, the newly created small bases astride his historic com-mo-liaison/infiltration routes.

(3) MG Nghi recognized the necessity of reorganizing the territorial forces into a more mobile posture capable of reacting to the enemy's thrusts. Despite the reservations of many subordinate commanders, he ordered the elimination of small operating bases and the consolidation of the remaining bases into posts with no fewer than 25 men. This would insure that our bases had the capability of defending themselves and resisting small enemy probes. Additionally, he directed that each village would have a mobile PF platoon, each district a mobile RF company, and the provinces two or more mobile RF battalions. Also, each province would have a sector tactical command post capable of controlling the territorial forces' mobile units in operations throughout the province. These changes required an extensive educational process on the part of MG Nghi. He personally visited all the provinces and most of the districts of MR4 to explain and clarify his concept.

(4) In order to support his mobile concept of territorial security, he emphasized the upgrading of Popular Forces to Regional Forces and the reorganization of the Regional units into battalions to provide larger, more flexible units. Additionally, these Regional Forces have been deployed out of their home provinces with increasing frequency, thereby allowing the CG, MR4, to mass his territorial troops in those provinces with the greatest enemy threat.

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(5) Due to the heavy losses suffered by the Territorials in the early months of the offensive, it became increasingly difficult to keep units up to strength. The provinces were hard pressed to produce the manpower required to replace losses, particularly in the less populated and least secure areas. In order to deal with this manpower crisis, MG Nghi ordered the redistribution of available RF and PF spaces from provinces unable to recruit and organize to provinces that had this capability. This new concept of manpower mobilization, called cross-leveling, is resulting in increased security as these units are recruited, trained, and redeployed throughout the military region wherever they are needed. The entire cross-leveling process should be completed in early 1973.

(6) Increased casualties during the offensive and a reduced capability to conduct unit refresher training combined to retard the combat effectiveness of the Territorials. In order to deal with this problem, the CG, MR4 promoted the establishment of fixed province training sites for PF platoon training, an RF battalion refresher training program, and the mine/booby trap training course discussed at paragraph 7a (3) above. Although the full impact of these programs has not been felt as yet, General Nghi's grasp of the importance of training has been clearly demonstrated, and this bodes well for the future.

(7) Another noteworthy development during the period of the enemy offensive was the transfer of responsibility for Phung Hoang operations to the National Police in July 1972. Although initially the number of VCI neutralizations dropped in June and July, in succeeding months the number of neutralizations has increased. In most of the Delta's provinces, the police appear to be making a serious effort to effectively operate this critical program. How successful they will be in the long run is difficult to assess at this time, but it has been repeatedly emphasized by advisors at all levels that the neutralization of the VCI is essential to the success of pacification.

### (8) Lessons Learned and Recommendations.

(a) Employment of Territorial Forces in numerous undermanned operating bases throughout the Delta inhibited mobility and caused them to be extremely vulnerable to the enemy offensive commencing in April. It is essential for the protection of the people to emphasize mobile offensive operations designed to seize the initiative from the enemy.

(b) The flexible employment of Territorial Forces out of their home provinces during the critical months of the enemy's offensive enabled the massing of Regional Forces in the hard-pressed provinces.

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This technique should continue to provide security for the more threatened provinces.

(c) The technique of cross-leveling helped solve the manpower crisis by redistributing available RF/PF allocations to the provinces which had the ability to recruit and organize them adequately. This new concept of manpower mobilization is recommended as a solution to territorial forces' strength problems.

(d) A vigorous and innovative refresher training program is the principal method of improving the combat effectiveness of Territorial Forces. Refresher training should continue to be emphasized.

(e) The neutralization of the VCI is essential to the success of the RVN in the protracted struggle and, consequently, should receive the highest priority in the months ahead.

### c. Self-Government.

(1) As a result of the offensive, local elections have been suspended under martial law since June. Subsequently, the village/hamlet government has been reorganized under Decree #120 with many positions being eliminated or combined, and elections at the hamlet level being eliminated. The reaction of the people to these developments has been one of indifference. On the other hand, the effect of the reorganization on administrative efficiency and economy, while initially disruptive, should be positive in the long run and result in a more efficient and economical government at the grass roots level.

(2) Two areas where the GVN must continue to make major efforts in the months ahead if the effectiveness of local government is to be improved are the protection of officials from assassination, and improved training for officials by the provinces. The enemy has made a major effort in recent months to eliminate GVN influence at the hamlet and village level by assassinating and intimidating low-level officials. Obviously, these enemy efforts must be frustrated in the future if the effectiveness of local government is to improve. The training of village/hamlet officials by the provinces has improved somewhat, but continuing emphasis needs to be placed on reducing the size of classes and upgrading the quality of the instructors.

(3) The accomplishment of village fiscal self-sufficiency goals has made excellent progress in recent months primarily because of the

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implementation of the agricultural development fee in most of the provinces of the Delta and vigorous collection efforts. With a new Land Tax Law going into effect next year, there will be an outstanding opportunity to make major progress towards total governmental fiscal self-sufficiency if officials will honestly and efficiently implement the Law.

## (4) Lessons Learned and Recommendations.

(a) Training of village/hamlet officials is the most effective way to improve the government at this level. Emphasis should be placed on smaller classes and better qualified instructors.

(b) The National Police must be strictly tasked with protection of low-level GVN officials if GVN influence is to be maintained and expanded in the countryside. Protection from assassination and intimidation must be the object of major command emphasis.

(c) Taxation successes in the Delta this year clearly demonstrate the viability of taxing the people in the countryside at the realistic levels of the new Land Tax Law. The Law must be vigorously and honestly implemented in the coming year in order to have continued progress in governmental fiscal self-sufficiency.

## d. Self-Development.

(1) Except for the areas hardest hit by the offensive, the key developmental programs have continued to make steady progress. Despite heightened enemy activity and poor weather, the rice production for this crop year is expected to equal last year, which was an all time high. Eight new private rural banks have been established in the provinces of MR4 this year, with eighteen of the thirty-five rural banks in South Vietnam now being located in the Delta. This increase in credit available to the farmer has been and will continue to be a major factor in increased productivity.

(2) Distribution of land under the Land-to-the-Tiller program continues to make good progress. Although it is not clear whether the ultimate goal for this program will be met by Farmer's Day next year, CORDS is confident that this program has been and will be a success. It has filled the countryside with small landowners instead of tenant farmers and taken away from the VC one of their strongest psychological appeals.

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(3) In the educational field, the repair of schools damaged by war action and storms is now under way. A continuing problem is the slowness of the Ministry of Education to approve the lists of daily paid teachers that are needed by the provinces to completely staff the available classrooms.

(4) The total number of displaced war victims (refugees) generated in the Delta since the start of the offensive is estimated at 130,000 to 150,000. The vast majority of these war victims have elected to move in with relatives or friends in nearby villages and have avoided entering Government camps. Since the Central Pacification and Development Council (CPDC) has insisted that relief benefits can be paid only to displaced war victims in camps, only approximately 25,000 of these people have received GVN relief allowances.

### (5) Lessons Learned and Recommendations.

(a) The best long-range method of providing credit for the farmers in adequate amounts is the private rural bank. These institutions provide the loans for fertilizers, insecticides, and equipment that result in greater productivity by the Delta's farmers. A major effort should be made in the years ahead to increase the number of rural banks.

(b) The procedures of the Ministry of Education for approving daily paid teachers are slow and cumbersome and result in many empty classrooms every year. Procedures should be streamlined so that these additional teachers are available at the beginning of the school year.

(c) The CPDC should change its policies to allow for the payment of relief allowances to MR4 displaced war victims who are not located in camps.

### 14. (C) EPILOGUE.

a. The year 1972 was a critical year for GVN and RVNAF in the Delta. 1972 saw the VC, heavily supported by NVA manpower, mount his heaviest offensive since the 1968 TET. 1972 saw US support dwindle to a mere 425 advisors, one air cavalry troop, and a commitment of 12 UH-1's and two CH-47's per day. And 1972 saw heavy expectations for a cease fire glow and dim with the corresponding psychological effect on advisors, civilians, and soldiers.


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b. The Delta land war has always been fought largely by RVNAF. Even so, the drawdown of US combat support became a traumatic experience, and as RVNAF became of age, we suffered with them in the anguish of their setbacks and applauded their victories. But, come of age they did, making great strides in the use of mobility and fire-power and not-so-great strides in the areas of supply, maintenance, and management of resources.

c. In September we were requested to comment on the future role of the advisor. In our comments, we outlined that future advisor effort should place emphasis on training, logistics, and resources management. The later months of 1972 have reinforced this view. While the management of resources remains a problem, during the closing months of 1972 we saw renewed interest in improving the supply and maintenance situation. The brightest spot, however, was the accomplishment of the corps directed training program.

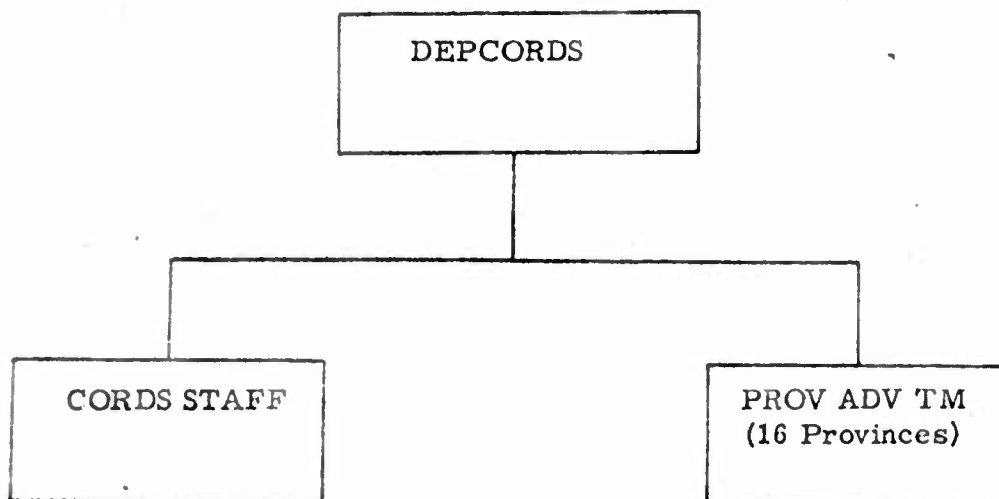
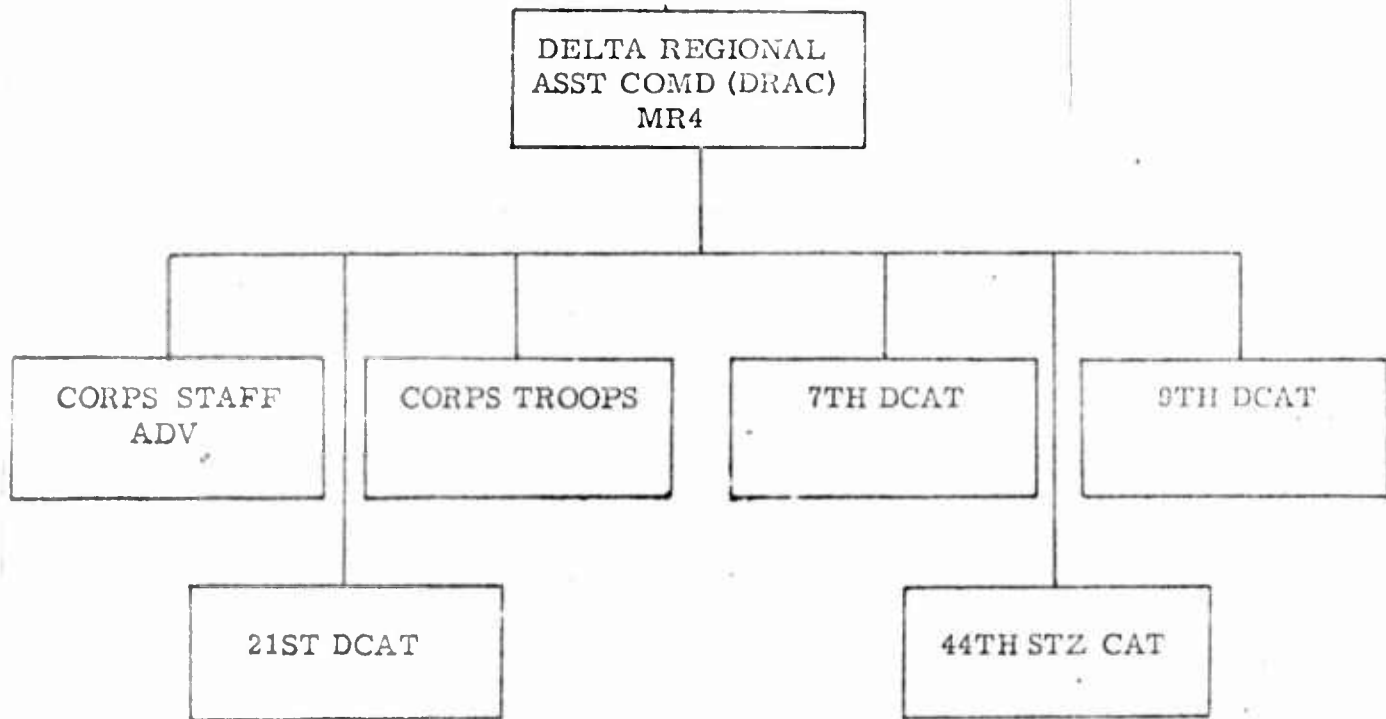
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1. DRAC Org prior to 1 May
2. DRAC Org after 1 May
3. ARVN Corps Org Chart
4. En Regt Disp (1 Apr 72)
5. En Regt Disp (31 Aug 72)
6. En Regt Disp (31 Dec 72)
7. COIC Org and Function Chart

  
THOMAS M. TARPLEY  
Major General, USA  
Commander



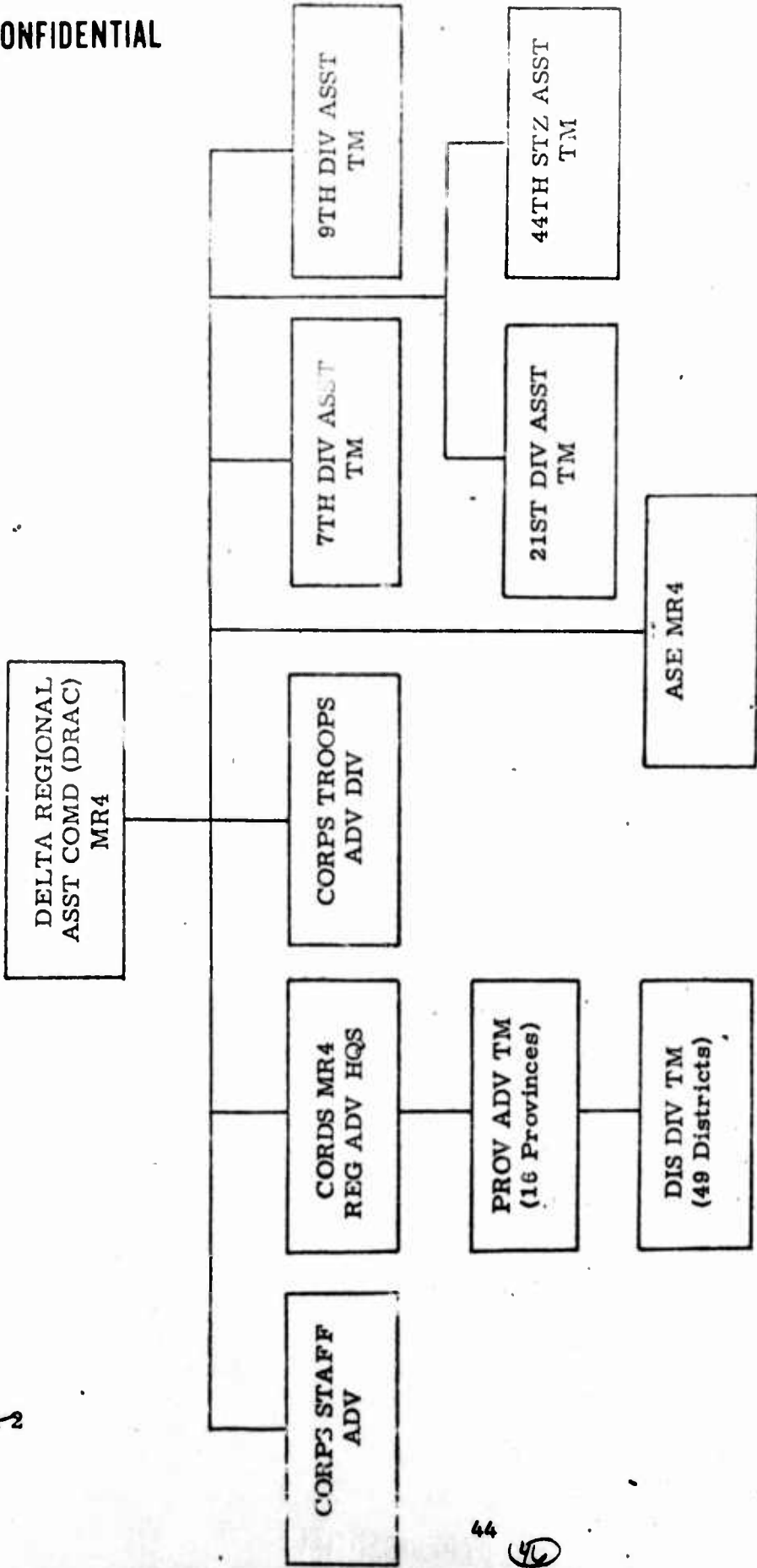
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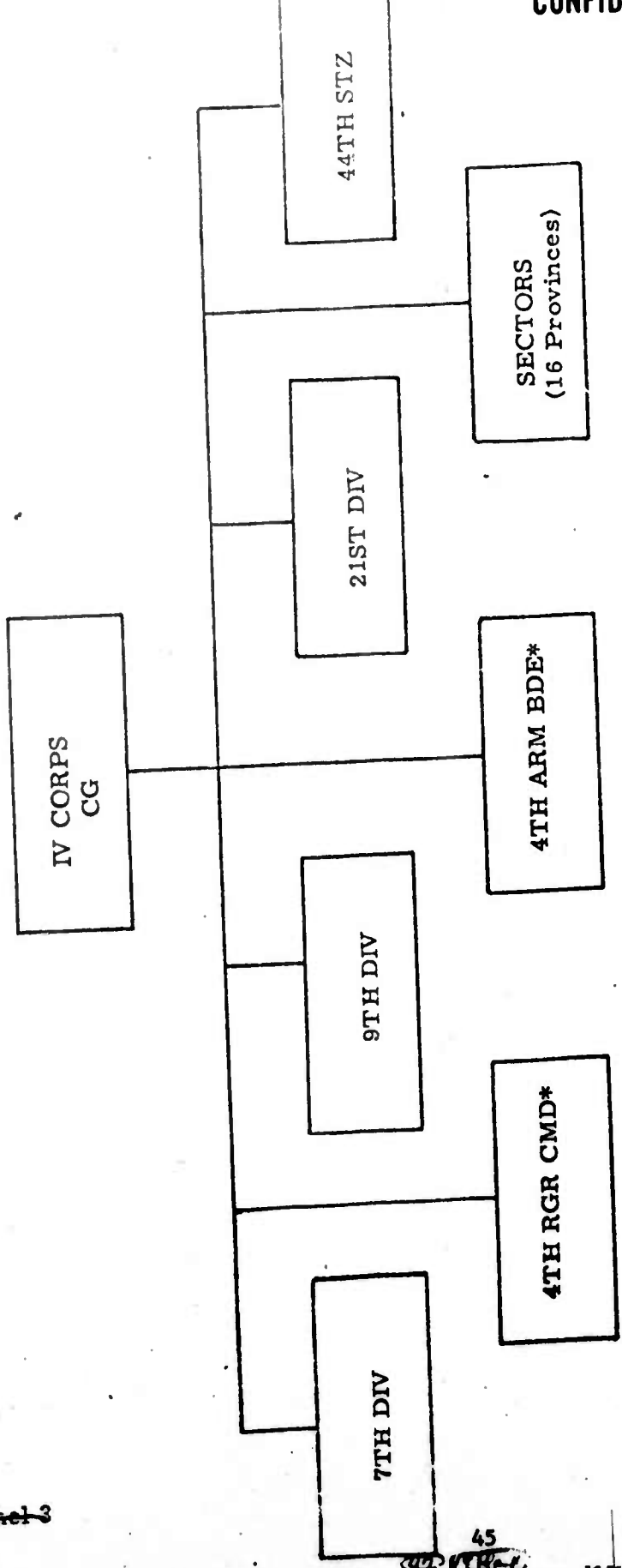
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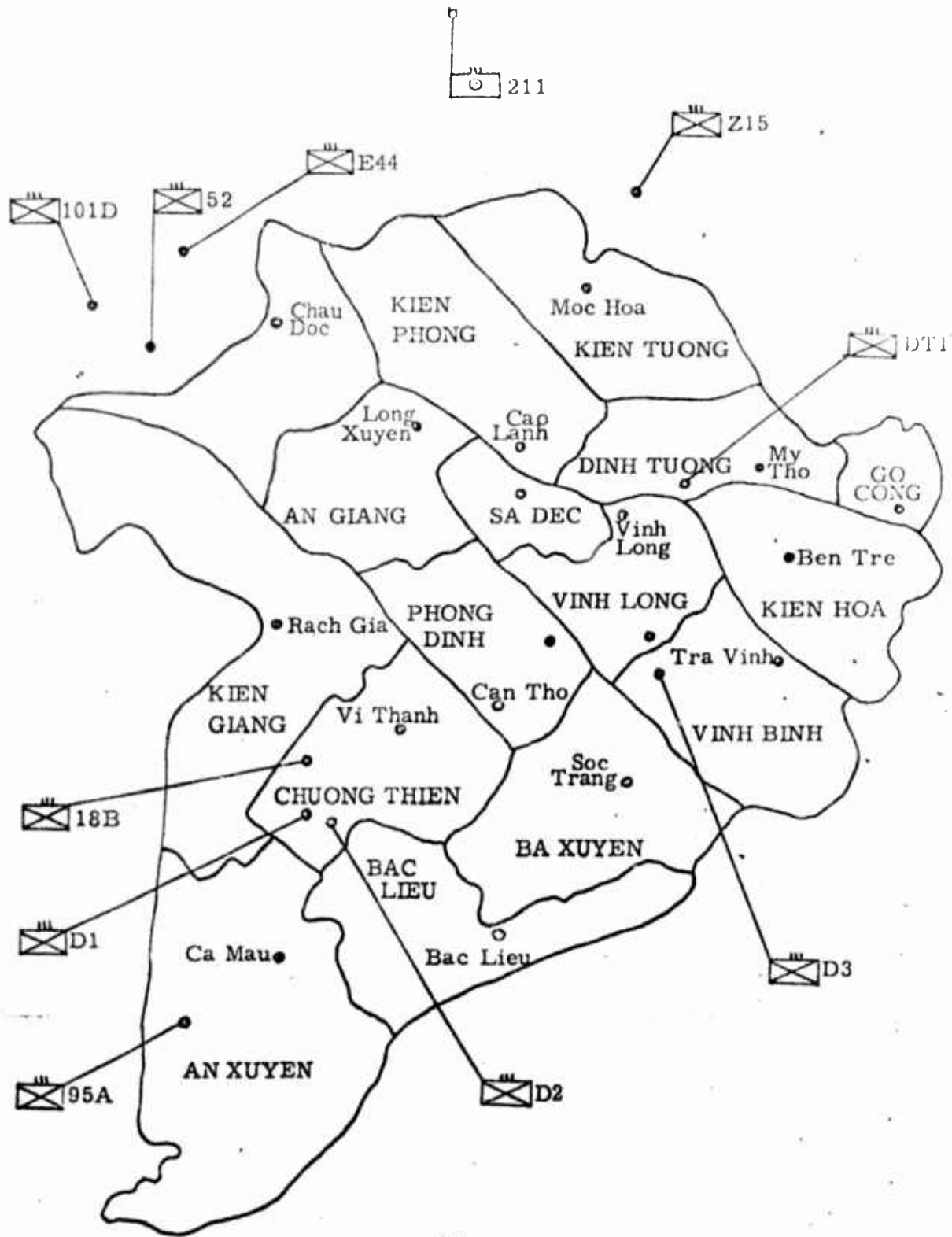
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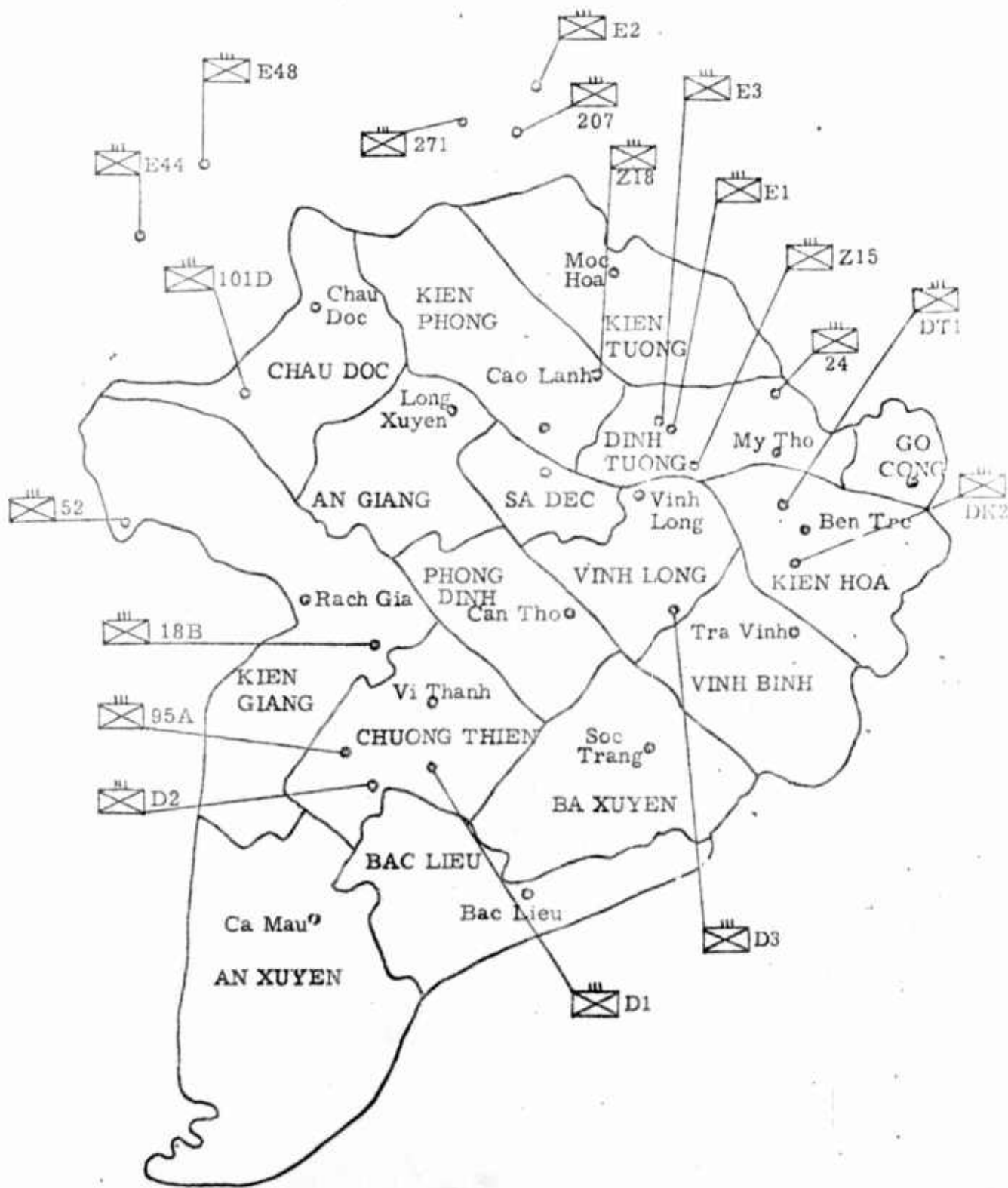
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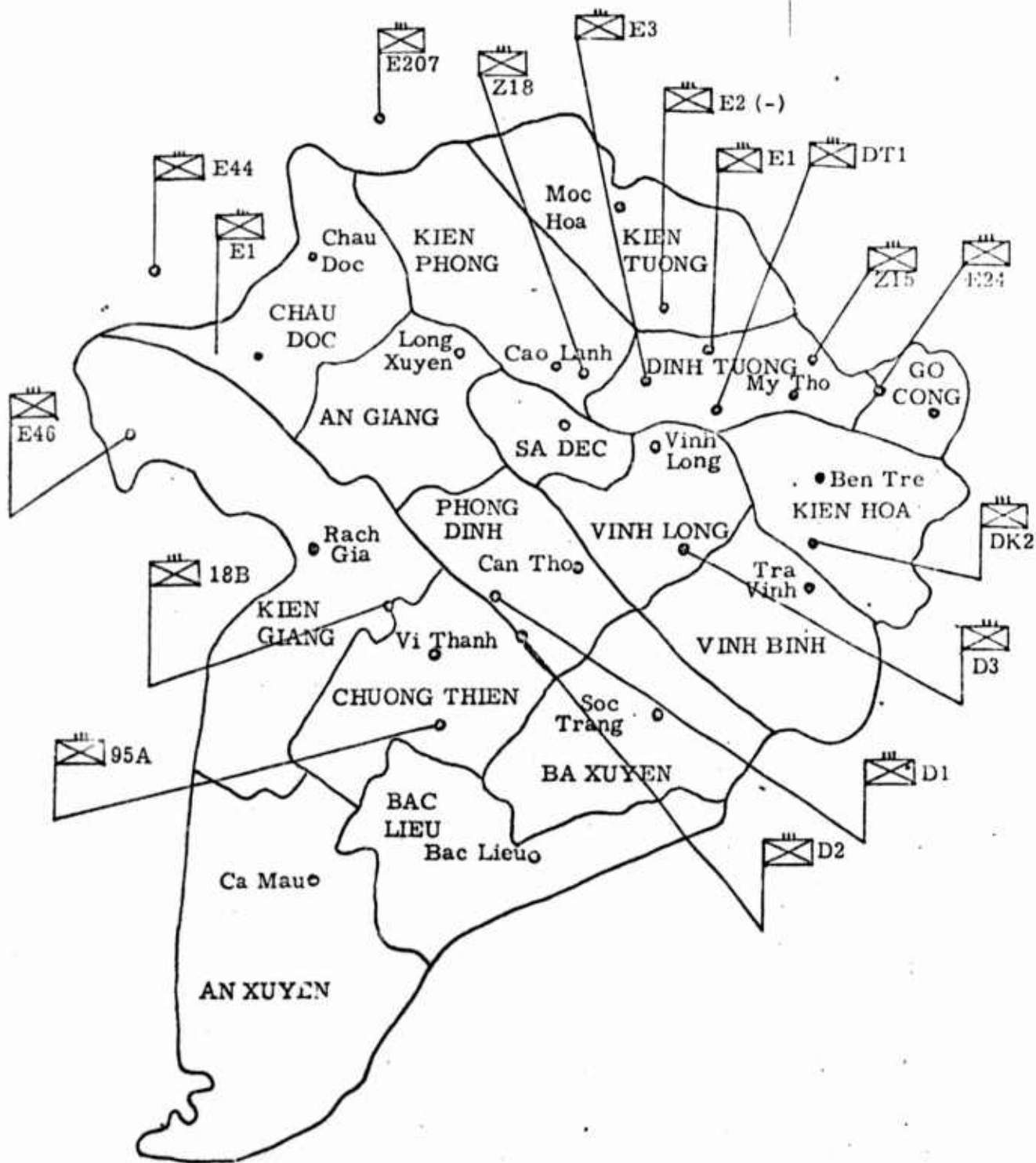
ENEMY REGIMENTAL DISPOSITION IN MR4 (01 APRIL 1972)



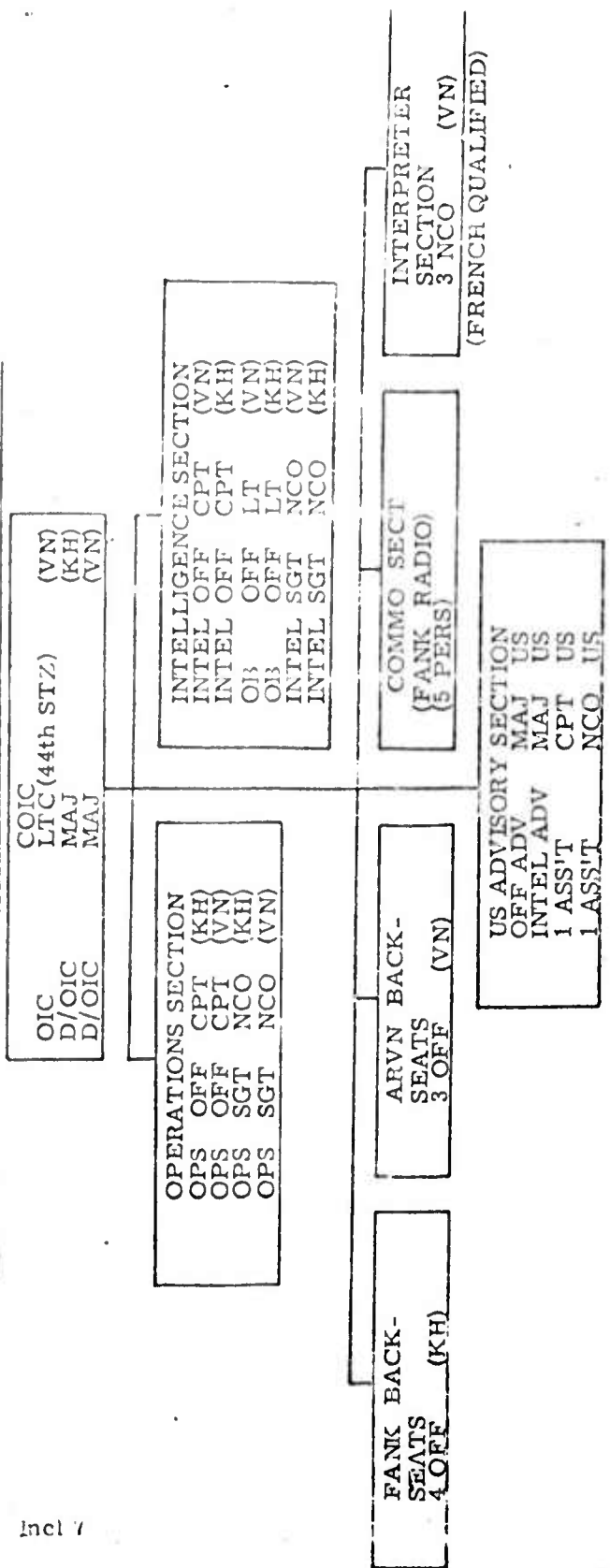
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ENEMY REGIMENTAL DISPOSITIONS IN MR4 (31 AUGUST 1972)





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**COMBINED OPERATIONS AND INTELLIGENCE CENTER (COIC)**



FUNCTIONS:

- (1) Serve as a coordination point for requesting tactical air support for FANK and ARVN forces operating in the MR4 area of operation within Cambodia.
- (2) Provide a FANK backseat capability for air support missions in Cambodia.
- (3) Provide a medium for exchange of operational information and intelligence between FANK and ARVN units operating in Cambodia.
- (4) Conduct training of FANK officers in military subjects which will assist them in improving their combat operational effectiveness.
- (5) Serve as combined planning group for FANK/ARVN operations in Cambodia.

Incl 7

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