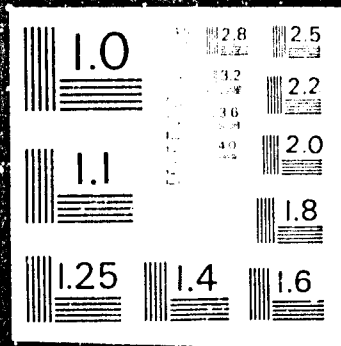


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MEMORANDUM
D-10047-IBA/ARPA
SEPTEMBER 1968

VOLUNTEERS FOR THE VIET CONG

Frank Denton

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PREPARED FOR:
THE OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY
OF DEFENSE/INTERNATIONAL SECURITY AFFAIRS
AND THE
ADVANCED RESEARCH PROJECTS AGENCY

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MEMORANDUM
RM-5647-ISA/ARPA
SEPTEMBER 1968

VOLUNTEERS FOR THE VIET CONG

Frank Denton

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PREFACE

The Advanced Research Projects Agency and the Assistant Secretary of Defense (International Security Affairs) have for several years supported a RAND Corporation study of the Viet Cong. During this time RAND has interviewed almost 2000 Vietnamese (largely captured or defected Viet Cong). The transcripts of these interviews provide a large general purpose data base which permits at least preliminary investigation of a number of topics.

The study reported here is an attempt to differentiate persons who volunteered for the VC during the Diem regime from those who did not, under the assumption that such knowledge can be of value in designing programs aimed at controlling insurgent recruitment. Thus, the analysis is designed to discover how these early "volunteers" for the VC differed from "VC draftees" in terms of their experiences before joining the Viet Cong. This analysis is based on the personal characteristics of the individuals involved. Another RAND Memorandum by Frank Denton, RM-5338-ISA/ARPA, Two Analytical Aids for Use with the RAND Interviews, March 1967, For Official Use Only, describes the data used in this analysis.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Between 1954 and 1963, the government of South Vietnam attempted to eliminate the remnants of the Viet Minh and to reduce to a minimum popular support for that organization. At the same time, the Viet Minh (later Viet Cong) were recruiting members who eventually filled a significant fraction of their cadre positions for the intensive uprising in 1964 and 1965. If conventional estimates are accurate, the VC recruits during this time can be measured in the thousands while there were hundreds of thousands of potential recruits (residents of the proper age) in rural Vietnam. This memorandum reports on an analysis aimed at determining how volunteers, in their personal histories before joining the VC, differed from those VCs who were nonvolunteers. In particular, it is aimed at determining what, if any, modifications in government policy might have changed the attitudes of these volunteers so that they would not have volunteered.

The basic question asked in initiating this analysis was: What characteristics and experiences differentiate the person who volunteered for the VC from the one who was eligible to volunteer but did not? That is, what experiences, social characteristics, capabilities, etc., differentiate volunteers from nonvolunteers? Those persons not volunteering can be broken into several categories: 1) persons joining the GVN forces, 2) persons not joining either side, and 3) persons drafted into the VC.

RAND has interviewed a large number of former VC (ralliers and prisoners). Each of these subjects was asked whether he volunteered for the VC or not. Those responding affirmatively provided a sample of persons who "volunteered." Only the third of the above categories -- VC "draftees" -- was available to form a sample of non-volunteers.*

These two types were first examined to determine how they differed in their characteristics and experiences before joining the VC. Secondly, an analysis was made of their stated reasons for joining the VC.

The important differences between volunteers and draftees ran as follows:

- 1) A complex relationship existed between the family owning land and volunteer rate. Land owning versus not owning groups volunteered at the same rate. But (for those subjects indicating amount of land owned) it was found that the highest volunteer rates occurred among those with zero holdings and among those with the largest holdings. Thus, the data on the importance of land ownership in encouraging or discouraging participation in the VC is rather ambiguous.

*The three groups not volunteering for the VC are to some degree different. The VC draftee, however, is a fairly varied individual. After 1964 almost all men between the ages of 18 and 35 living in the rural areas controlled by the VC were liable for induction. Excluded from this set were those persons moving to the cities or joining GVN service as well as certain classes of undesirables.

- 2) Those subjects with more education tended to volunteer more often than persons with less education. (Education levels typically ran from 0 to 7 years.)
- 3) Those subjects which the interviewers rated as of "low" intelligence tended to volunteer much less frequently than persons rated as having average or high intelligence.

Not at all surprisingly, subjects who had had "bad" experiences with the GVN tended to be volunteers.

- 4) Subjects who either had relatives killed as the result of action ascribed to the GVN or mentioned some mistreatment* showed an above average frequency of volunteering.

Two other variables, loosely termed indicators of "peer-group pressures," provided a significant capability for differentiating volunteers from draftees.

- 5) Persons with relatives in the VC or without relatives in the GVN tended to be volunteers.
- 6) Persons who had perceived that the local villagers predominately favored the VC tended to be volunteers.

Two indicators of personal frustration also provided some capability for defining persons susceptible to the blandishments of the Viet Cong.

- 7) Persons who stated that life was good versus those who indicated some complaints of life tended not to volunteer.
- 8) The few subjects who indicated that they had had trouble with society tended not to be draftees.

* Their charges varied from unjustified arrest and extortion to verbal insult.

A final parameter of broken homes provided some indication of propensity to volunteer.

- 9) Subjects who had lost one parent tended to volunteer more often than those who had not; subjects who were orphans had an even higher rate of volunteering.

No one of these parameters, however, gives a very high predictive capability of a subject's being a volunteer. A multivariate index was formulated based on the six best univariate predictors of volunteering.*

- 1) 81 percent of the subjects who had over 75 percent of their responses positively associated with volunteering were volunteers.
- 2) 74 percent of the subjects who had all responses negatively associated with volunteering were draftees.

The above analysis was an effort to define types of persons who on an empirical basis were susceptible to volunteering. An additional analysis was made to determine the primary reason (in some cases the "trigger") which led to the decision to volunteer.

A cluster of factors associated with personal social-economic frustration was mentioned by 32 percent of the volunteers.

*The six best predictors are: 1) relative killed by actions ascribed to the GVN, 2) relatives in VC, 3) personal grievance against GVN, 4) years of education, 5) personal life bad, 6) local villagers favor VC.

The next highest (28 percent of the total) frequency of response was a cluster centered on personal* experience of oppression by GVN representatives.

A third and somewhat less important cluster (11 percent) centered on abstract (as opposed to personal) issues of social justice.

A fourth set of volunteers (20 percent) appear to have been persuaded simply by VC recruitment devices -- the enthusiasm shown by, and shaming efforts of, the pretty girls, a chance for adventure, an opportunity to handle a gun, etc. Most of these subjects were very immature (17 and 18 years old) at the time of joining.

Six percent attributed their joining to pressure from family or friends and an even smaller percentage gave a few miscellaneous reasons.

CONCLUSIONS

Going somewhat beyond the immediate statistics, there appear to be two categories of volunteers who joined for very personal reasons over which the government could have exercised some control. These two groups constituted about 60 percent of all the volunteers in this sample. Conceivably, the government of Vietnam might have implemented policies which would have modified the experiences of these subjects to such an extent that they would not have been motivated to volunteer to fight against the established order. The implications are that a major pool of potential VC recruits might never have been

*Including the immediate family in the term "personal."

created. And insofar as these relationships hold in the future in Vietnam and in other areas, the findings suggest certain policies which can be applied to reduce an insurgent group's potential for recruiting.

The first category of volunteers is made up of persons who experienced insu^l or oppression at the hands of a representative of the government. Persons who were themselves or who had relatives falsely arrested^{*} as Viet Minh constitute a significant fraction of this group. The rest were those who had been exposed to thievery, brutality, extortion attempts, or, in a few cases, simple arrogance on the part of GVN officials or soldiers.^{**}

Any elimination of official misbehavior appears to be an unmitigated good. On the other hand, any program designed to apprehend insurgents will of necessity pick up some innocent persons. What is emphasized by these data is the importance of weighing the costs of creating new insurgents against the benefits of eliminating the existing insurgents. Great selectivity combined with awarding damages to those involved in the inevitable mistakes could perhaps reduce the probability of creating a new insurgent.

The second major group of volunteers was composed of those experiencing frustration because of their inability to achieve a secure and rewarding niche in life under the GVN system. A few very poor, landless peasants fell into this category. More typically, these

* Or, often, in the case of relatives, executed.

** The recipient did not question whether this was government policy or simply an unauthorized act by a

persons were orphans or were from broken families, were persons of above average ability and drive or were persons who had experienced a significant failure such as loss of job or failure in school. Programs designed to offer some escape and security for the ambitious peasant could have helped. Particularly, job opportunity and security for the persons moving from rural to urban areas would have changed the motivation of a number of volunteers. Government land reform* or other programs aimed at aiding the few peasants living on the edge of starvation would have reduced the recruiting pool. Similarly, an effort to provide care and education for those children made homeless by the war or by natural causes might have changed the attitudes of one type of person especially prone to join the VC.

A note of caution should be added. These personal frustrations, with a few exceptions, did not immediately cause these persons to volunteer for the Viet Cong. They still had to be recruited. The VC recruiter was typically a dedicated person attempting to exploit this underlying frustration. To this end, he might meet with a single individual a half dozen or more times. In marked contrast, the GVN appeared to be impersonal and unconcerned with the problems of the individual.

Moreover, the VC inherited the nationalist mantle of the Viet Minh. In many parts of the south they were

government representative. He typically saw the representative as a personification of the government.

*That is, there appears to have been one group of volunteers whose attitudes might have been modified if they had owned land.

considered as legitimate an organization as the government in Saigon. And in the minds of a significant fraction of the people, it would appear, the VC were a group espousing Vietnamese unity and nationalism. Thus, the person disaffected from the government or dissatisfied with life could "legitimately" escape into the VC.

That is, in the author's view, the above-noted frustrations, malpractices, etc., by themselves did not make revolutionaries. But given the presence of an organization with a considerable degree of legitimacy, a reputation of being patriotic, with ardent, persistent recruitment, such experiences did create persons who voluntarily dissented from the existing order.

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I. INTRODUCTION

This document reports on a study of the individual characteristics and experiences which differentiate volunteers for the VC from those persons who were drafted into the VC organization and on the reasons these volunteers gave for joining. It is written in the belief that many of the failures in the programs of the Diem and subsequent South Vietnamese governments were selective failures, that is, that they failed only with regard to certain persons. One of the ways of assaying these failures is to examine the experiences of those persons who actually volunteered to join the VC.

Examining these factors, it is hoped, may provide information for designing programs that will minimize insurgent recruitment in Vietnam and in other similar areas. It must be recognized that some of these parameters may well have been unique to Vietnam between 1954 and 1963. It seems equally true, on the other hand, that many of the problems faced then will be similar to those that must be faced in future pacification efforts. Similarly, governments around the world encountering insurgent control problems can probably learn much from the failures in Vietnam.

Thus, the main effort in this study is to differentiate the volunteer from the nonvolunteer,^{*} and to do so in terms of their earlier personal history, particularly

* Available data restricted the nonvolunteer sample to VC draftees. No significant samples of persons joining GVN organizations or not joining either side were available.

their experiences, beliefs, and socio-economic characteristics.

The general purpose RAND interviews (AG and DT) with former VC provide the basic data for this analysis. The interviews were not designed with this purpose specifically in mind; hence the analysis tends to take the form of analyzing what is empirically available as opposed to developing a project based on theoretically important factors.*

A sample of 491 subjects was available. The original raw interview transcripts, coded into a numerical form, provided the basic data. Simple statistics were employed, primarily contingency tables.

As a consequence of this analysis, a new questionnaire is being readied. In particular an effort will be made to interview some persons in the GVN's RF and PF.

DATA AND METHODS

Since mid-1964, The RAND Corporation has been interviewing former members of the Viet Cong. These interviews have been with different types of persons and have covered a wide variety of topics. Although not a primary goal some effort has been made toward obtaining descriptions of the subject's pre-VC life and the conditions under which he joined that organization. A sample of the 491 interviews that provided significant information on the why and conditions of joining form the basis for this analysis.

*RM-5338-ISA/ARPA provides a description of the available materials.

These interviews were carried out under highly varying conditions, oftentimes in prisoner of war camps and in other very undesirable circumstances.* They were conducted by Vietnamese working directly for The RAND Corporation and were subsequently translated into English. More often than not, sampling consisted of interviewing whoever was available or, in some instances, the candidate thought to be most knowledgeable about the VC.** About half the subjects were defectors from the VC and about half were persons captured by the United States or GVN.

Thus, it is not possible to say that the sample is representative of all VC recruits.*** But on the other hand neither is it possible to know how unrepresentative, if at all, it may be. There are a large number of hard-core revolutionaries in the sample as well as a large number of persons caught up in the circumstances of a war. An effort will be made to keep the reader informed about possible limitations of the sample when discussing the findings.

The original interviews were of a somewhat unstructured nature. Most of those interviewed were not well educated, and the interviewers were under pressure to cover a wide range of topics in a very limited period

* Often privacy could not be obtained, interruptions occurred, or the subject's captors occasionally intruded themselves into the scene.

** Usually defined by rank or length of service.

*** Patterns were examined separately for prisoners and defectors and the relationships discussed in this report existed in both categories.

of time.* The problem faced here was how to discern patterns in data that are unstructured with regard to content, involve the usual hazards of translation, are sparse in many cases with regard to topics of interest, and are highly varied in depth and breadth.

A two-step approach was chosen. First, the original material was coded for a variety of topics. This was usually done by the coder asking himself if the interviewee had answered yes or no to a given question.** For example:

Had the subject ever experienced personal mistreatment at the hands of a government representative?
Yes _____ No _____ Uncodable _____

This coded material provided the basis for a statistical analysis of relationships.***

The second step involved the author's reading a stratified random sample of the interviews. During the reading a further coding was made and, of course, impressions formed.

REASONS CITED FOR JOINING

Each subject provided his reason or reasons for joining. Of the recurring reasons coded, four were used

* Subject and transportation availability in the remote rural areas often limited the interview time to a few hours or less.

** Often the items were simply regarded as uncodable either because they were not asked or, if asked, were answered ambiguously or not at all (See Ref. 1).

*** The coding was multipurpose, being done for this research as well as others. Several coders were involved, and intercoder reliability was maintained above the 0.90 level (See RM-5338-ISA/ARPA for a description of the coding).

to construct a scale for distinguishing subjects as volunteers, mixed, or draftees. The four items used were:

- 1) Join because of general socio-political aims of the VC?
Yes _____ No _____ Uncodable _____
- 2) Join because of nationalism-reunification theme?
Yes _____ No _____ Uncodable _____
- 3) Join because of hoped-for personal benefit from VC -- education, land, future job?
Yes _____ No _____ Uncodable _____
- 4) Join because drafted, arrested, or coerced by VC?
Yes _____ No _____ Uncodable _____

These items are not mutually exclusive. Those subjects were classified as volunteers who showed:

- A) A "yes" coded on at least one of items 1) to 3).
- and B) The absence of any "no" codes on items 1) to 3).*
- and C) A "no" code for item 4).

Those were considered among the mixed group who showed:

- A) At least one "yes" coded on items 1) to 3).
- and B) A "yes" coded on item 4).

Draftees were those with:

- A) The absence of any "yes" coded on items 1) to 3).
- and B) A code of "yes" on item 4).

* A volunteer thus might be coded as follows: 1) Yes, 2) Unk., 3) Unk., 4) No. The requirement is at least one "yes" on 1) to 3) and one and only one "no" and that on 4).

There were certain pressures which might have induced these subjects to slant their stories about joining. In particular some might have felt a need to curry favor with the GVN by saying that they were forced into the VC. An effort was therefore made to obtain a validity check on all stated reasons.

It is more or less common opinion that prior to 1963 the VC were primarily a volunteer group and since that time have increasingly been obtaining new recruits through coercive induction. One validity check was to examine the distribution of draftees versus time of joining as in Figure 1.

The pattern of an increasing frequency of draftees over time is as expected.* The frequency of draftees prior to 1963 seems higher than one would suppose from the "folklore" about the VC.** Interviews for several of these early draftees were re-examined and with a few exceptions their stories sound plausible enough.

It would appear that the volunteer category is probably fairly pure. It may be that the draftee group has a few "false" members in it.

* It should be remembered that a decline in percentage of volunteers may result from a decrease in volunteers, an increase in draftees, or from a combination of both factors.

** This may be indicative of an unwillingness on the part of some to admit volunteering.

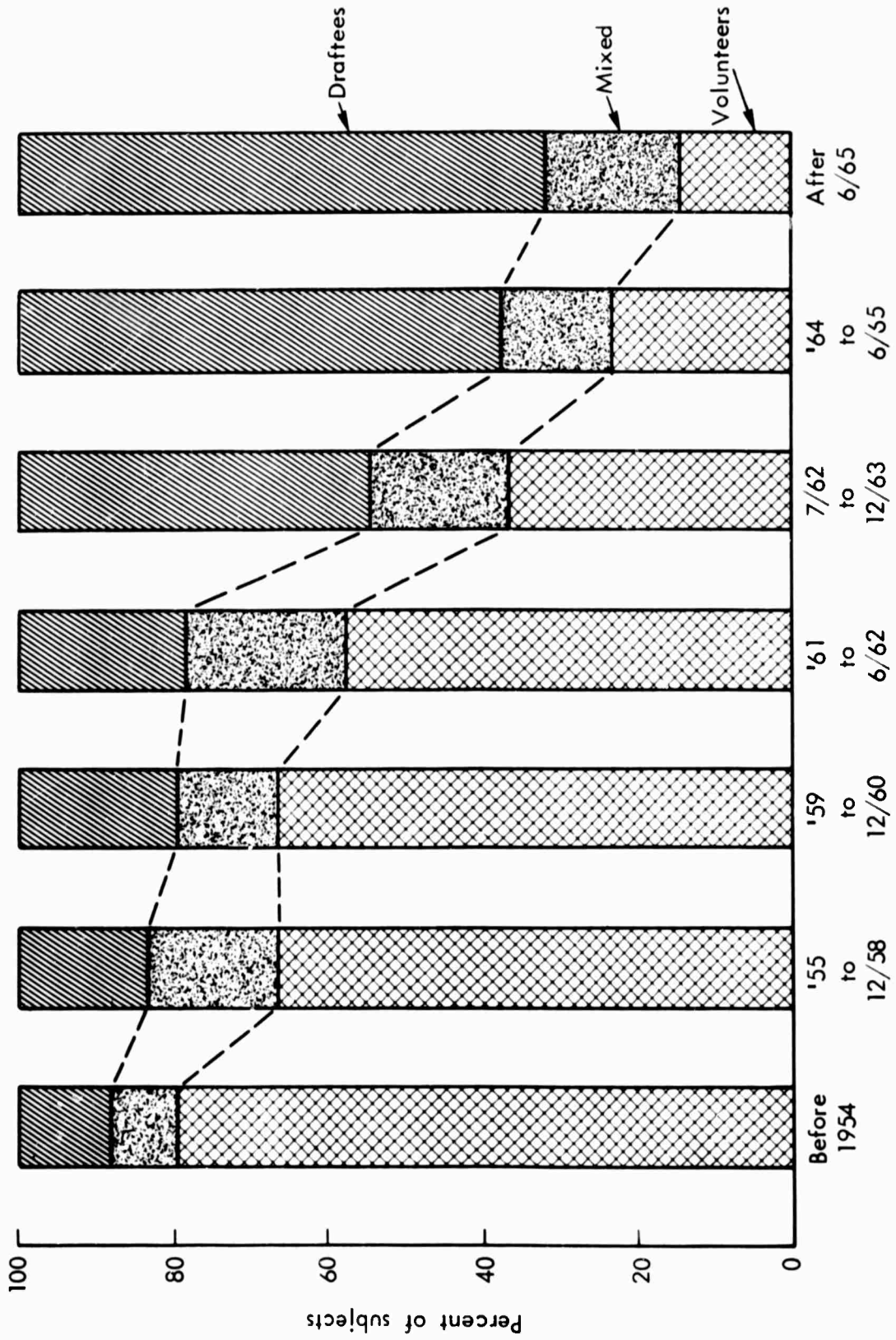


Fig. 1—Date of joining VC

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II. PREDICTIONS ABOUT VOLUNTEERING

The first step in the analysis was to determine which descriptors of pre-VC life were correlated with volunteering for the VC. To do this, contingency tables were constructed comparing the frequency of volunteers, mixed joiners, and draftees among those persons exhibiting a given characteristic or experience with the frequency of the same categories among those persons not exhibiting that characteristic or experience (See Table 1). The uncodable responses are not tabulated and account for the sample size variation in Table 1.

Several interesting relationships are apparent. First, although several variables correlate with volunteering, no single characteristic appears to define a subset of persons who are exclusively or close to being exclusively volunteers. For example, persons who had relatives killed as the result of actions ascribed to the GVN volunteer for the VC far more often than those who had not had relatives killed. However, among those prisoners and defectors with "relatives killed," only 37 percent were volunteers.*

Second, some variables seem to predict volunteers, others mixed joiners.** For example, the 23 persons

* Throughout these materials a significant fraction of the respondents do not provide an interpretable response to any question. It was felt that under the circumstances the most representative frequencies could be obtained by looking only at those providing a codable response. In the above case, 37 percent of those "sampled" on this question so responded. In effect it is assumed that the sample base is constantly varying and that the quoted percentages provide the best estimate of the population parameters.

** However, in several cases the samples are quite small.

indicating that they had some form of trouble with society show a much higher frequency of mixed joiners than those without trouble. However, the "trouble" group actually has a lower frequency of volunteers.

Except for religion and social class, each of these variables succeeds well in at least differentiating volunteers or mixed joiners from draftees. Perhaps somewhat surprising is the very strong relationship between indicators of higher capability (education and intelligence) and volunteering. One can think of two explanations for this, and both may well be operating.

1) There was little economic-social mobility in the GVN system for persons without a higher education. The Viet Cong promotion system was more flexible and at least in the early days offered a chance for advancement to positions of power and authority on what appeared to be the winning side. Thus it may well have been that many of the more capable peasants saw the VC as a way to a better future.

2) The volunteers in this sample are compared only with VC draftees. Many young men serve in the GVN armed forces or live in the cities and thus tend to be beyond the reach of the VC draft. The better educated and more intelligent, if they do not wish to serve in the VC, have a greater chance of finding an acceptable life in GVN service or in the city than do the uneducated and dull. Thus to a certain extent the almost universal conscription adopted by the VC after 1964 may have netted a large residue of uneducated "passive" peasants. It may just be that the more capable join (one side or the other).

Table 1
Predictions on Volunteering
Percent

| | <u>Volunteers</u> | <u>Mixed</u> | <u>Draftees</u> | <u>Sample Size</u> |
|-----------------------------|-------------------|--------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| Buddhist | 26 | 23 | 51 | 168 |
| Ancestor Worship | 27 | 33 | 40 | 133 |
| Social Class | | | | |
| Middle | 27 | 32 | 41 | 127 |
| Poor | 26 | 28 | 46 | 288 |
| Own Land | 26 | 30 | 44 | 150 |
| Education-Years | | | | |
| ≥ 6 | 38 | 39 | 23 | 44 |
| 4 or 5 | 28 | 37 | 35 | 124 |
| 1 to 3 | 22 | 26 | 52 | 135 |
| 0 | 18 | 22 | 60 | 32 |
| Rel. in VC - Yes | 26 | 43 | 31 | 67 |
| Rel. in VC - No | 22 | 27 | 51 | 51 |
| Rel. "killed by GVN" - Yes | 37 | 44 | 19 | 16 |
| Rel. "killed by GVN" - No | 0 | 56 | 44 | 9 |
| Villagers Favor VC - Yes | 32 | 55 | 13 | 64 |
| Villagers Favor VC - No | 19 | 23 | 58 | 164 |
| Life Before Join | | | | |
| Bad | 30 | 51 | 19 | 47 |
| Mixed | 38 | 27 | 35 | 60 |
| Good | 22 | 27 | 51 | 271 |
| Trouble w/Society - Yes | 14 | 69 | 17 | 23 |
| Trouble w/Society - No | 26 | 26 | 48 | 378 |
| Grievance re GVN - Yes | 34 | 47 | 19 | 68 |
| Grievance re GVN - No | 23 | 26 | 51 | 336 |
| Subject Intelligence | | | | |
| High | 32 | 35 | 33 | 132 |
| Average | 29 | 31 | 40 | 91 |
| Low | 11 | 21 | 68 | 80 |

Land ownership formed a complex pattern. A simple division of the data into those owning land versus those not owning land indicated identical volunteer rates for the two groups. Limited and not too reliable* data were available on the amount of land owned by the subject or his family. An examination of the volunteer rate as a function of the amount of land owned indicates a U-shaped curve. The highest rate of volunteering occurred among those with no land and among those with 6 cong or more.

| <u>Land Owned in Cong</u> | <u>% Volunteers</u> |
|---------------------------|---------------------|
| 0 | 37 |
| 0.1 - 4.0 | 22 |
| 4.1 - 6.0 | 24 |
| 6.1 - 12.0 | 42 |
| more than 12.0 | 43 |

The other relationships appear straightforward enough. "Peer ties" with the VC, personal difficulties in life, or bad experiences with the GVN can define persons who are relatively prone to volunteer.

MULTIVARIATE PREDICTION

The univariate predictions provide in some cases a reasonably good capability for defining those who at least

* Again a problem exists because of the use of available data. In Vietnam the actual area included in the traditional unit of measure varies considerably from locale to locale. At the time of this analysis it was not possible to go back and reconstruct how each of the interviewers translated land ownership statements into English. Thus, these data need to be treated very cautiously.

are mixed joiners; but usually a relatively weak capability for defining a high probability for unambiguous volunteering.

Another way of looking at the problem is to consider a cross-pressure model using multiple variables. That is, the person who has relatives in the VC, is in a pro-VC village, has lost a job, etcetera, can be considered to be subject to many consistent "personal pressures" making him prone to join the VC. A person with relatives in the VC, a good job, and living in a GVN-leaning village is faced with contradictory pressures, and so forth.

The assumptions were made 1) that a higher percentage of mixed joiners would be in those groups defined by contradictory pressures and 2) that those with consistent personal patterns would strongly tend to be either volunteers or draftees depending on the pattern.

The high frequency of missing values and the use of dichotomous data obviated the possibility of using relatively sophisticated multiple regression models. Rather a discrete index of the consistency of volunteering pressures was defined from the six "best" univariate predictors.*

The index is formed from the ratio of number of responses positively correlated with volunteering to the number of responses negatively correlated with volunteering. Thus a subject with relatives in the VC (+), relatives

*The six variables are: 1) relatives in VC; 2) relative killed through actions ascribed to the GVN; 3) grievance re GVN; 4) years of education; 5) pre-VC life; and 6) villager attitudes toward VC when joining.

killed by actions ascribed to the GVN (+) and a good life at home (-) would have 2 (+)'s and 1 (-) and an index value of 2/1.*

The values on the index of volunteer propensity were then grouped as shown on the horizontal axis of Figure 2. The pattern holds pretty much as expected, although there is a lesser tendency for those with contradictory pressures to be mixed joiners than anticipated.

| | <u>Mixed</u> | <u>Not Mixed</u> |
|----------------------------|--------------|----------------------|
| Contradictory Pressures | 30 | 171 |
| Consistent Pressures | 13 | 144 |

The large sample tends to make the difference fairly significant statistically; pragmatically the relationship is so weak as to not be of interest. On the other hand, those subjects with consistent pressures tend very consistently to be volunteers or draftees, depending on the direction of the pressures.

*It is assumed for this example that the remaining 3 indicators were uncodable.

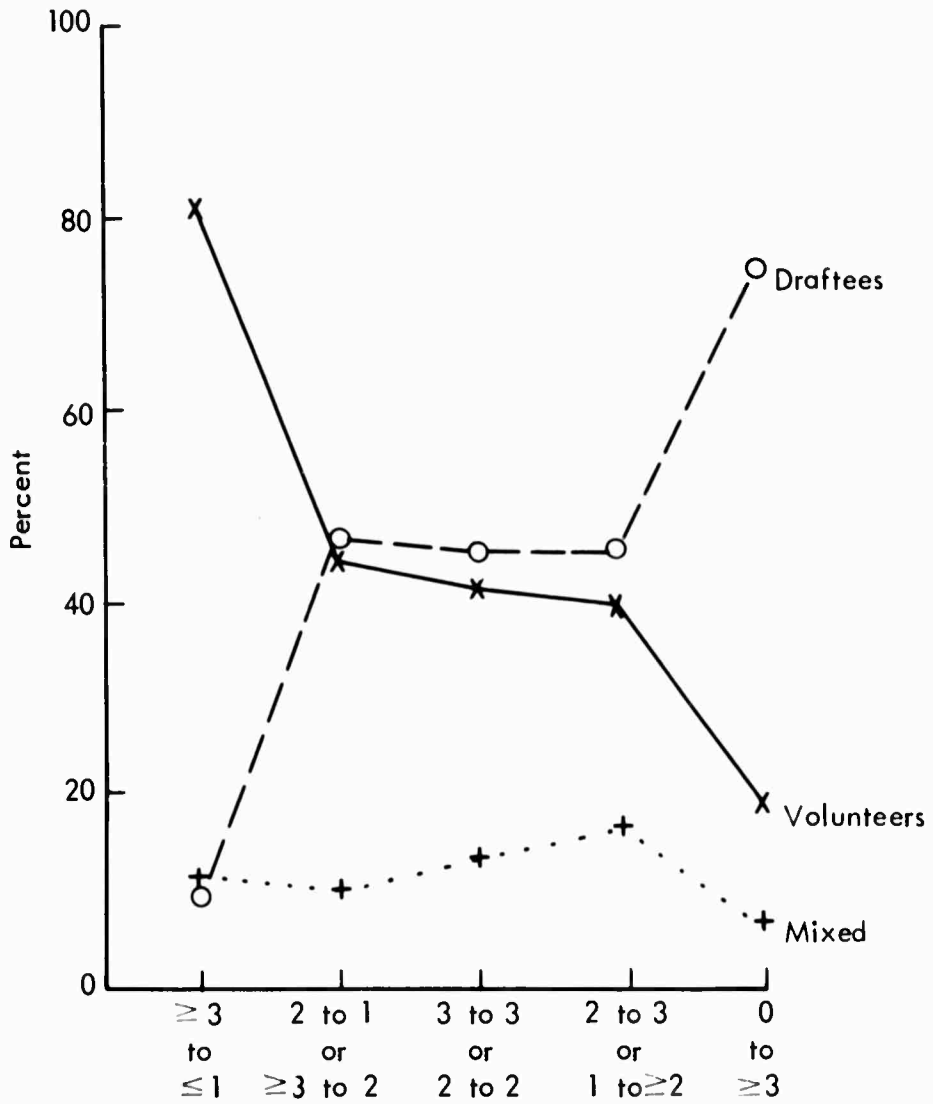


Fig. 2—Index of propensity to volunteer

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III. A REREADING OF SELECTED INTERVIEWS

The coded material used in the above statistical analysis was generated as a part of a general coding of the interview materials. It is not exhaustive of interview data nor does it involve an iterative attempt to incorporate knowledge gained from the analysis. The general coding of the total sample is a time-consuming process: In an effort to extract some further information from these interview materials, without recoding the entire sample with an improved code, the author reread a sample of interviews with volunteers and draftees to determine:

- 1) if the above relationships were borne out,
- 2) if any other differences between volunteers and draftees were apparent, and
- 3) what the primary reasons or factors were which the volunteers said influenced their decision to join.

Random samples of 55 volunteer and 45 draftee interviews were chosen from the total population of interviews. The volunteers were chosen first and the draftee sample was roughly age-matched to that of the volunteers.

CHECK ON ABOVE FINDINGS

None of the previously discussed relationships was contradicted; however, several new factors were suggested from items which had not been coded.

Broken Families

There was a definite tendency to volunteer among those subjects from homes in which one or both parents were dead.

Table 2

| | <u>% Volunteers</u> | <u>Sample Size</u> |
|--------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| Both Parents Alive | 46 | 48 |
| Father Dead | 65 | 40 |
| Mother Dead | 68 | 22 |
| Both Parents Dead | 75 | 16 |

Land

Relatively few of these subjects give the promise of land as a major reason for joining the VC. Only two of these 55 volunteers speak of it as a primary factor. The GVN has had a sporadic land-distribution program. It is interesting to note that the five subjects in this sample who had received land from the GVN were all draftees.

VC Oppression

The GVN did not have a monopoly on dysfunctional activities. Three of the draftees had relatives killed by the VC or Viet Minh and two had had property confiscated.

These factors which were not in the original code appear to add something to the knowledge about individual conditions creating a tendency to volunteer or not. The final task was to attempt to define for this sample of volunteers the distribution of primary causes of joining. Thus, it was hoped to obtain some feel for the "importance" of these factors in creating recruits for the Viet Cong.

Distribution of Primary Reasons for Volunteering

Fifty-three of the 55 volunteers gave a clear enough story so that the author felt he could determine the primary factor or factors in the decision to volunteer for the VC. Seven of these subjects gave two reasons that appeared to be equally strong. The following percentages, however, are based on the percent of subjects (a base of 53 not 60).

Economic-Social Frustration. The largest cluster of responses centered on what has been called economic-social frustration. Thirty-two percent expressed this as a factor. The range of responses ran from the dire straits -- unemployment and hunger -- to failing an important examination in the school system.

The most common complaint was a poor future in the GVN system and the promise of advancement in the VC system. This theme represented 48 percent of those items classed as expressing economic-social frustration. Next in frequency was unemployment, inabilities to support a family, etc., with this theme accounting for 29 percent of those in the economic-social frustration category.

Personal Oppression by GVN. Twenty-eight percent of this sample of volunteers attributed their decision to direct personal (including immediate family) oppression by representatives of the GVN. The most common theme discussed was that of being accused of being a VC or of having at one time worked for the Viet Minh or Viet Cong. Forty-five percent of this group mentioned such accusations as of dominant importance. The accusations and the personal oppression accompanying it ranged from apparently

careless acts of soldiers, such as the ARVN lieutenant who in public slapped one subject (a boy of 16 at the time) and accused him of distributing leaflets, to arrests for periods up to two years in another. At least, according to the stories given by these interviewees, these accusations were groundless, although they did in time become self-fulfilling.

The accusations themselves appeared to be the consequence of a systematic GVN effort to ferret out insurgents. Most of the remaining acts classified as personal oppression appeared to be based in the individual personalities of soldiers and officials who misused their authority. Stealing, rape, and extortion account for most of the incidents, which acts cannot be attributed to GVN policies, but only to the lack of discipline of its troops.

Social Justice. Two sets of reasons appear to be associated with a concern for social justice. Several subjects mentioned inequalities in wealth or that some families were starving in the midst of relative plenty as major reasons for joining the VC. Several others mentioned the brutality, arrogance or corruption of government soldiers and officials as important. This latter type did not discuss any personal oppression but rather expressed a general hatred for the GVN for oppressing the people. In all, 11 percent of the volunteers gave reasons of this type.

VC Recruitment. The prime reason for joining given by a number of subjects was what might be categorized as adroit VC recruitment. These subjects fell into two general types: 1) the very young who were enticed by the promise of excitement or adventure or who were swayed by the young

girls who cajoled and shamed them into joining; and 2) the naive and often young who were deliberately compromised to such an extent that they felt the GVN might look on them as VC and thus joined as an only out.

This latter category, along with that of personal oppression, typifies some of the counterproductive aspects of the use of repression when it is not used with great selectivity. In total, this "VC recruitment group" accounted for 20 percent of the volunteers.

Family-Peer Pressure. Another 6 percent attributed their decisions to the pressures of friends or families.

There were a few other specific reasons that do not appear to be general enough to bear discussing. Perhaps the important finding is the universality of some of the reasons. Real and imagined brutality by government representatives and personal economic-social frustration account for 60 percent of this sample of volunteers. These are apparently the themes of dissidents the world over.

DOCUMENT CONTROL DATA

| | | |
|---|--|--|
| 1. ORIGINATING ACTIVITY THE RAND CORPORATION | | 2a. REPORT SECURITY CLASSIFICATION UNCLASSIFIED |
| | | 2b. GROUP |
| 3. REPORT TITLE VOLUNTEERS FOR THE VIET CONG | | |
| 4. AUTHOR(S) (Last name, first name, initial) Denton, Frank | | |
| 5. REPORT DATE September 1968 | 6a. TOTAL No. OF PAGES 34 | 6b. No. OF REFS. --- |
| 7. CONTRACT OR GRANT No. DAHCl5 67 C 0143 | 8. ORIGINATOR'S REPORT No. RM-5647-ISA/ARPA | |
| 9a. AVAILABILITY/ LIMITATION NOTICES DDC-1 | | 9b. SPONSORING AGENCY Assistant Secretary of Defense/International Security Affairs/ Advanced Research Projects Agency |
| 10. ABSTRACT An analysis of RAND interviews with captured or defected Viet Cong to determine how early VC volunteers differed from draftees, based on their personal histories before joining the VC, and what, if any, modifications in government policy might have prevented them from volunteering. Volunteers were of several types: those who (1) had either large or zero land holdings; (2) were better educated; (3) had average or higher intelligence; (4) had experienced GVN mistreatment; (5) had relatives in VC units or none in GVN units; (6) lived in VC-favoring areas; (7) had complaints about life in general; (8) had trouble with society; (9) came from broken homes. The primary reasons for volunteering were, in order of importance, personal socio-economic frustration; GVN oppression; VC recruitment devices; issues of social justice; pressure of family or friends; miscellaneous reasons. The government could have exercised some control over those who suffered from GVN oppression and those unable to obtain security or satisfaction in life. The frustrations and malpractices did not in themselves create volunteers. But, given the presence of what was considered by some to be a legitimate and patriotic organization, which persistently recruited in the name of Vietnamese unity and nationalism, such experiences did help to create voluntary dissenters from the existing order. | | 11. KEY WORDS Viet Cong Counterinsurgency and insurgency Vietnam Communism Military organization Propaganda Statistical methods and processes |