UN

SECURITY CLAS

AD-A955 097

1. REPORT NUMBER: Volume I, HQ USMACV COMMAND HISTORY, 1968	2. GOVT ACCESSION NO. / 3. RECIPIENT'S CATALOG NUMBER
4. TITLE (and Subtitle): Command History, 1968, Volume I	5. TYPE OF REPORT & PERIOD COVERED: Final - 1968
	6. PERFORMING ORG. REPORT NUMBER: None
7. AUTHOR(s): History Branch, Office of the Secretary, Joint Staff, MACV	8. CONTRACT OR GRANT NUMBER(s): --
9. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME AND ADDRESS	10. PROGRAM ELEMENT, PROJECT, TASK AREA & WORK UNIT NUMBERS: None
11. CONTROLLING OFFICE NAME AND ADDRESS: Hq Department of the Army (DAIM-FAR-AD) Information Management Support Agency Alexandria, VA 22331-0301	12. REPORT DATE: 1968
	13. NUMBER OF PAGES: 568 & 15 Index pages (of 1120)
14. MONITORING AGENCY NAME & ADDRESS (if different from Controlling Office): Records Access & Release Division Information Access Branch (DAIM-FAR-AI) Alexandria, VA 22331-0301	15. SECURITY CLASS. (of this report): UNCLASSIFIED
	15a. DECLASSIFICATION/DOWNGRADING SCHEDULE: None

16. DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT (of this Report)

Approved for public release. Distribution unlimited.
A Classified Version of this document has been accessioned into DTIC under AD #

DTIC ELECTE JUN 3 1986 S A

17. DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT (of the abstract entered in block 20, if different from Report)

Approved for public release. Distribution unlimited.

18. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES

This is the first volume of the 1968 USMACV Annual Command History, fifth in a series of Histories covering the years 1964 thru March 1973, prepared in accordance with CINCPAC Instructions for Unified Commands.

19. KEY WORDS (Continue on reverse side if necessary and identify by block number)

Policy objectives, Strategy, NVN Infiltration, NVN Political Infrastructure, US, RVN, Friendly Forces, Ground, Air, Navy Operations, Pacification, Psychological Operations, GVN Leadership, Outlook for 1969

DTIC FILE COPY

20. ABSTRACT (Continue on reverse side if necessary and identify by block number)

This Volume I, Command History, 1968, Military Assistance Command, Vietnam contains Letter of Promulgation, Title Page, Preface, Table of Contents, List of Illustrations., (15 Index Pages). Following are:

Chapter I - Introduction (Page 1-4),
Chapter II - The Strategy and the Goals (Page 5-36),
Chapter III - The Enemy (Page 37-216),
Chapter IV - Friendly Forces (Page 217-370),
Chapter V - Operations in the Republic of Vietnam (Page 371-518),

DD FORM 1 JAN 73 1473 EDITION OF 1 NOV 65 IS OBSOLETE

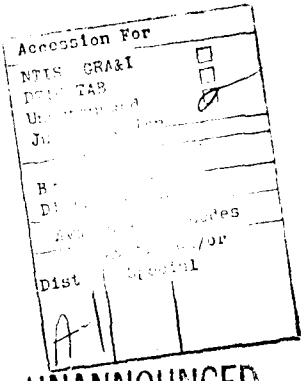
UNCLASSIFIED

SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE (When Data Entered)

Chapter VI - Pacification and Nation Building - (Page 519 - 568).

Immediately following each Chapter are numbered footnotes to the information contained, indicating the sources of information.

RE: Distribution Unlimited, Command History, Sanitized Version
Statement A is correct for these reports per DD Form 1473
Per Mr. Abb, HQDA, ATTN: DAIM-FAR-AD



UNANNOUNCED

SANITIZED COPY

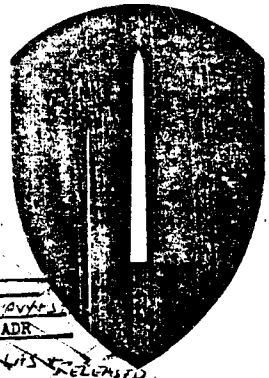
MACV-68
V I
cy 3

[redacted] NOFORN

HEADQUARTERS
UNITED STATES MILITARY ASSISTANCE COMMAND, VIETNAM
APO SAN FRANCISCO 96222

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~
~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

8 0 6 2



PAGE 1 MAY
PAGES 3 4 5 SAME
REVIEW DATE 3 SEP 84
CLASSIFICATION CONTINUED BY: MACVR 1
DECLASSIFY ON: OADR
ALL OTHER PAGES DECLASSIFIED

COMMAND HISTORY
1968

DTIC
S
JUN 3 1986

DEGRADED UNCLASSIFIED BY
HQ DA ARMY BY TAG PER

VOLUME I

This document has been approved for public release and sale; its distribution is unlimited.

DAMH 79-15A

EXCLUDED FROM AUTOMATIC REGRADING DOD DIR 5200.10 DOES NOT APPLY

SPECIAL HANDLING REQUIRED NOT RELEASABLE TO FOREIGN NATIONALS BY AUTHORITY OF COMUSMACV

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

[redacted]
DAAG-ZXS-TS# 21-83

COPY No. 66 OF 120 COPIES
MACV TS 000 1764 69

HQ USARPAC
TS-67-495

[redacted] NOFORN

CONFIDENTIAL

HEADQUARTERS
UNITED STATES MILITARY ASSISTANCE COMMAND, VIETNAM
APO SAN FRANCISCO 96222

MACJ031

30 April 1969

SUBJECT: Promulgation of the USMAC 1968 Command History (Volume I)
(RCS CINCPAC 5000-4)

SEE DISTRIBUTION

1. The USMACV 1968 Command History (Volume I) is promulgated in response to CINCPAC Instruction 5000.5A, 10 August 1967, subject: Historical Reports from Unified Commands in the Pacific Command.

2. This document contains information affecting the security of the United States within the meaning of the Espionage Laws, Title 18, U.S. Code Sections 793 and 794. Transmission or revelation of its contents in any manner to an unauthorized person is prohibited by law. The material contained within this document is to be treated with the utmost discretion. Under no circumstances shall possession thereof be transferred, or the information contained therein be imparted to personnel other than those whose duties specifically require knowledge thereof. Information provided any individual will be the minimum required in the performance of his duties. The overall classification of the Command History is TOP SECRET - NOT RELEASABLE TO FOREIGN NATIONALS.

3. This document will be transported, stored, safeguarded, and accounted for in accordance with instructions contained in the current edition of the security regulations for handling classified matter of the service of the holder. Reproduction of TOP SECRET portions of the 1968 USMACV Command History (Volume I) is prohibited except with the permission of COMUSMACV or higher authority.

FOR THE COMMANDER:

ELIAS C. TOWNSEND
Major General, USA
Chief of Staff

DISTRIBUTION:
See following pages

CONFIDENTIAL
DOWNGRADED
830624

REGRADED UNCLASSIFIED
ORDER SEC ARMY BY TAG PER
830621

CONFIDENTIAL

MACJ031
SUBJECT: Promulgation of the USMACV 1968 Command History Volume I

	COPY NUMBER(S)	
DISTRIBUTION:	Command History	Annex F
CINCPAC	1 thru 20	16 thru 20
JCS		1 thru 5
OSD		8 & 9
DEPT OF THE ARMY	21 thru 30	12 & 13
DEPT OF THE NAVY	31 thru 40	6 & 7
DEPT OF THE AIR FORCE	41 thru 50	14 & 15
COMMANDANT, USMC	51 thru 55	10 & 11
COMMANDANT, USCG	56 & 57	
CINCEUR	58	
CINCSO	59	
CINCAL	60	
CINCSTRIKE	61	
CINCSAC	62	
COMUS JAPAN	63	
COMUS KOREA	64	
COMUSMACTHAI	65	
CINCUSARPAC	66 & 67	
CINCPACFLT	68	
CINCPACAF	69	
CG, FMFPAC	70	
COMSEVENTH	71	
CG, USACDC	72	
NATIONAL WAR COLLEGE	73	
INDUSTRIAL COLLEGE OF THE ARMED FORCES	74	
US ARMY WAR COLLEGE	75	
US NAVAL WAR COLLEGE	76	
AIR UNIVERSITY	77	
ARMED FORCES STAFF COLLEGE	78	
USA CGSC	79	
USMC C&SC	80	
USMA	81	
USNA	82	
USAFA	83	
AMEMB, SAIGON	84	
CDR, 7TH AF	85	
CG, USARV	86 thru 89	
COMNAVFORV	90	
CG, III MAF	91	
CG, I FFORCEV	92	

Continued

MACJ031
SUBJECT: Promulgation of the USMACV 1968 Command History Volume I

	COPY NUMBER(S)	
DISTRIBUTION:	Command History	Annex F
CG, II FFORCEV	93	
CG, DMAC	94	
CG, I LOG COMD	95	
CG, XXIV CORPS	96	
MACV STAFF:		
MACJ03	97	
MACJ2	98 & 99	
MACJ3	100, 101, 102	
MACJ4	103	
MACJ5	104	21
MACJ6	105	
MACCORDS	106	
MACMD	107	
MACSOG	108	23 thru 34
MACJ031 (Military History Branch)	109 thru 120	22

COMMANDER

UNITED STATES MILITARY ASSISTANCE COMMAND, VIETNAM

COMMAND HISTORY
VOLUME I
1968

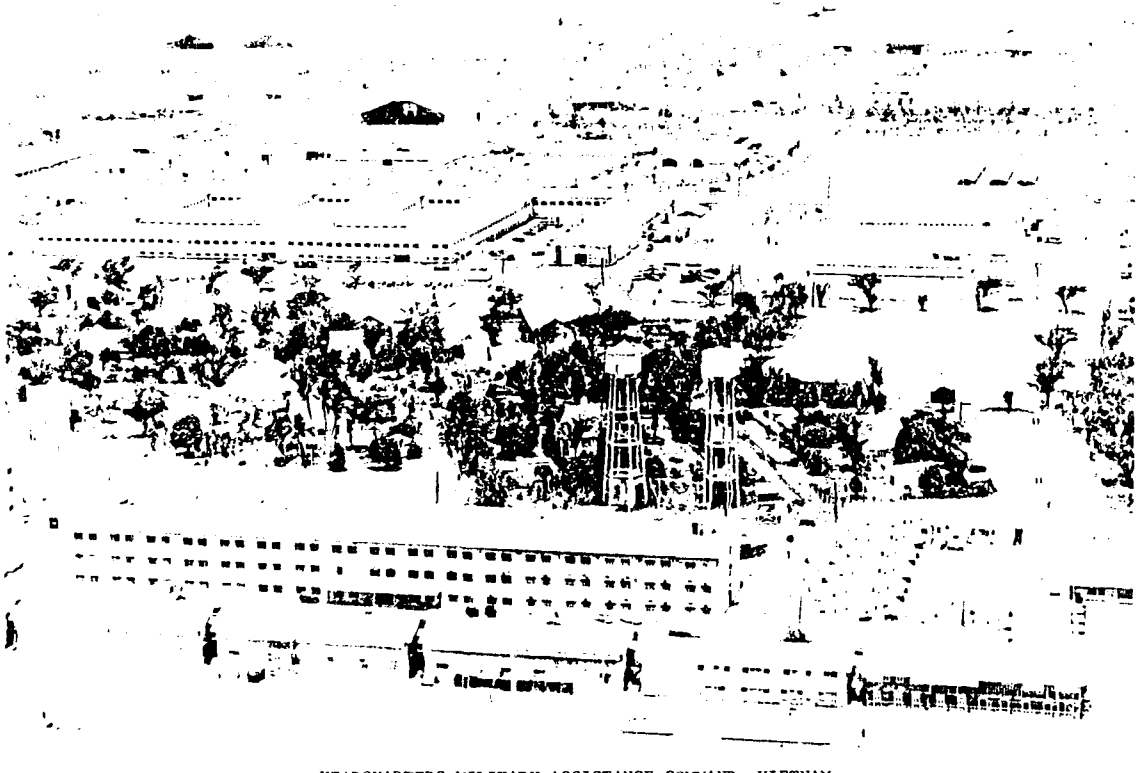
Prepared by the Military History Branch
Office of the Secretary, Joint Staff
Headquarters, USMACV, APO San Francisco 96222
Saigon, Vietnam

GENERAL WILLIAM C. WESTMORELAND

COMUSMACV 20 JUN 64 - 3 JUL 68

GENERAL CREIGHTON W. ABRAMS

COMUSMACV 3 JUL 68 -



HEADQUARTERS MILITARY ASSISTANCE COMMAND, VIETNAM

HEADQUARTERS
UNITED STATES MILITARY ASSISTANCE COMMAND, VIETNAM
APO SAN FRANCISCO 96222

PREFACE

The MACV Command History for 1968 is the fifth in the Command History series which was initiated in 1964. The objective of this history is to provide a comprehensive official record of operations and status of the command to include its many facets of activity viewed from the level of the commander with an account of the problems he faced and the decisions he made in solving them. Although it is not intended to duplicate unnecessarily the official histories of the component commanders, those operational matters as well as administrative and logistical problems have been covered which required the attention of COMUSMACV in his capacity as the US operational commander and senior US military commander in the Republic of Vietnam.

The purpose of this history is to serve as a prime authoritative source for future research and reference purposes.

While the scope of this history is basically restricted to the calendar year 1968, such summary accounts of earlier events that have been deemed appropriate to provide continuity and understanding have been included. Certain accounts of events concerning the earlier years of this command, which for various reasons were not covered in prior histories, have also been incorporated.

Individuals using this history who encounter gaps in the coverage or insufficient material to meet their requirements are invited to forward recommendations to this headquarters (Attention: Military History Branch).

Robert J. Parr

ROBERT J. PARR
Colonel, USA
Command Historian

TABLE OF CONTENTS

(Volume I)

	Page
Letter of Promulgation	i
Title Page	v
Preface	ix
Table of Contents	xi
List of Illustrations	xiv
Chapter	
I. INTRODUCTION	1
II. THE STRATEGY AND THE GOALS	
US Policy and Objectives	5
Combined US/RVN Strategy	13
III. THE ENEMY	
Introduction	37
The Role of North Vietnam	39
NVN Infiltration into RVN	56
VC Political Infrastructure	59
Enemy Support Operations	96
Enemy Operations in RVN	128
Conclusion	195
IV. FRIENDLY FORCES	
Command and Control Structure	217
United States Forces	223
Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces	240
Free World Military Assistance Forces	345
V. OPERATIONS IN THE REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM	
Ground Operations	371
Air Operations	402
Naval Operations	441

Chapter | Page

V. PACIFICATION AND NATION BUILDING

Introduction 519
Summary 519
Pacification 523
Territorial Security Forces 530
Project RECOVERY 536
Attack on the VC Infrastructure 544
Chieu Hoi 549
Economic Revival 552
Revolutionary Development People's Groups and Urban Self-Defense Groups 554
Revolutionary Development Cadre and Song Tan RD 556
New Life Development 557
Psychological Operations 560
GVN Leadership 561
Outlook for 1969 564

(Volume II)

Chapter

VII. INTELLIGENCE

General 569
The 1968 Collection Program 581

VIII. PSYCHOLOGICAL OPERATIONS

Organization 591
PSYOP Media 597
PSYOP Programs 604

IX. LOGISTICS

General 615
Classes of Supply 624
Services 639
Maintenance 641
Transportation and Lines of Communications (LOC) 646
Construction 670
Port Development and Operations in RVN 680
Medical 699
Military Assistance Service Funding Program 706
Communications 713

Chapter Page

X. RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

Organization and Policy 743
Finding the Enemy 747
Search and Attack Systems 752
Mobility 756
Artillery/Mortar/Rocket/Countermeasures 759
Munitions and Weapons Systems 763
Communications 770

XI. CONTINGENCY PLANS AND SPECIAL STUDIES

Contingency Plans 777
Special Studies 782

XII. SPECIAL PROBLEM AREAS AND SELECTED TOPICS

Morale and Welfare 799
Discipline, Law, and Order 836
Prisoners of War 841
Security 860
The Tax Problem 866
Project MACONOMY 869

Annexes

A. TET OFFENSIVE IN RETROSPECT 881

B. ANTI-INFILTRATION BARRIER 911

C. OFFICE OF INFORMATION AND PRESS RELATIONS AND PROBLEMS 935

D. LIST OF GROUND OPERATIONS BY CORPS TACTICAL ZONE 997

E. COMMANDERS AND PRINCIPAL STAFF OFFICERS 1017

F. SOG (LIMDIS) DISTRIBUTED SEPARATELY

CHRONOLOGY 1025

GLOSSARY 1067

INDEX 1083

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

(Volume I)

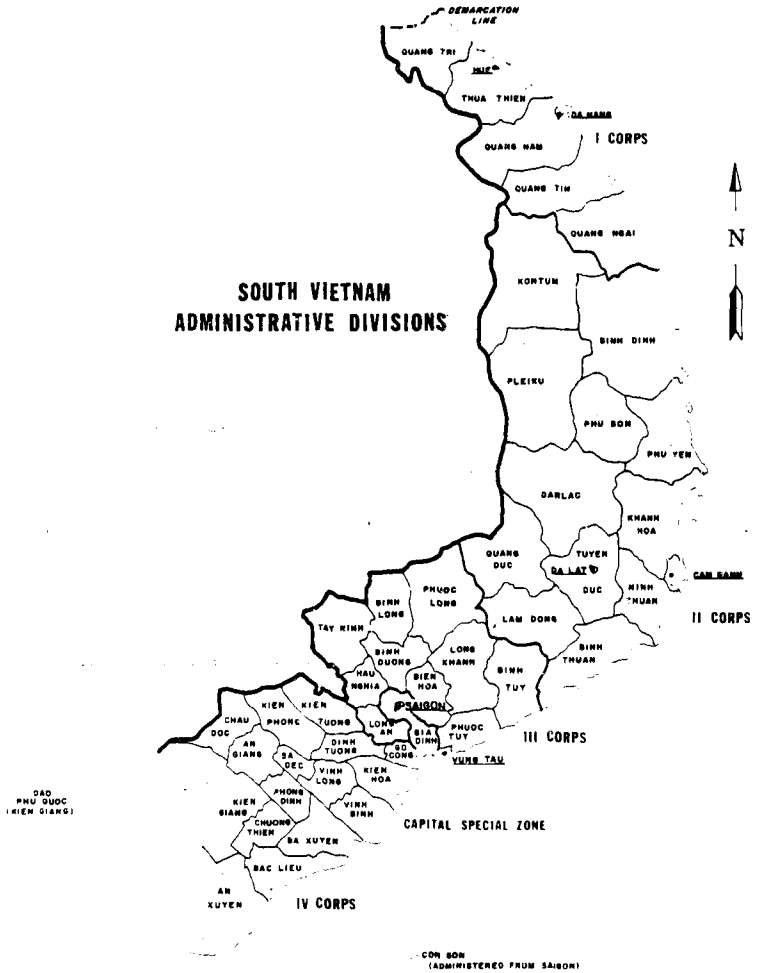
NO.	TITLE	PAGE
Intro-1	GENERAL WILLIAM C. WESTMORELAND, COMUSMACV 20 Jun 64 - 3 Jul 68	vi
Intro-2	GENERAL CREIGHTON W. ABRAMS, COMUSMACV 3 Jul 68 -	vii
Intro-3	HEADQUARTERS MACV	viii
Intro-4	SOUTH VIETNAM ADMINISTRATIVE REGIONS	xviii
III-1	NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT FIVE POINTS	42
III-2	INFILTRATION ROUTES	58
III-3	VC POLITICAL BOUNDARIES OF SOUTH VIETNAM	63
III-4	PROVINCE PARTY COMMITTEE	64
III-5	TRI-THIEN-HUE MILITARY REGION	68
III-6	I CTZ ORDER OF BATTLE - NORTHERN HALF	90
III-7	I CTZ ORDER OF BATTLE - SOUTHERN HALF	91
III-8	II CTZ ORDER OF BATTLE - NORTHERN HALF	92
III-9	II CTZ ORDER OF BATTLE - SOUTHERN HALF	93
III-10	III CTZ ORDER OF BATTLE	94
III-11	IV CTZ ORDER OF BATTLE	95
III-12	I CTZ VC/NVA BASE AREAS AS OF 31 Dec 68	97
III-13	II CTZ VC/NVA BASE AREAS AS OF 31 Dec 68	98
III-14	III CTZ VC/NVA BASE AREAS AS OF 31 Dec 68	99
III-15	IV CTZ VC/NVA BASE AREAS AS OF 31 Dec 68	100
III-16	NVN/LAOS/VC/NVA BASE AREAS AS OF 31 Dec 68	101
III-17	CAMBODIA/VC/NVA BASE AREAS AS OF 31 Dec 68	102
III-18	VC/NVA SUPPLY SYSTEM--CHAIN OF CONTROL	103
III-19	DISTRICT WORKSHOP	107
III-20	1968 INCIDENTS OF TERROR	144
III-21	ENEMY WEAPONS CAPTURED DURING 1968	198
III-22	ENEMY KILLED IN ACTION	199
IV-1	MACV COMMAND RELATIONSHIPS (11 Dec 68)	218
IV-2	FRIENDLY FORCES STRENGTH BUILDUP 1964-1968	224
IV-3	COMPARISON OF RVN/US PROMOTION CRITERIA	287
IV-4	RVN COASTAL ZONES	310
IV-5	VIETNAMESE NAVY COMMAND STRUCTURE	312
IV-6	PATROL SHIP ORGANIZATION CHART	313
IV-7	LOGISTIC SHIPS ORGANIZATION CHART	314
IV-8	VNN RIVER ASSAULT GROUP BASES	315
IV-9	ORGANIZATION CHART OF THE SAIGON NAVAL SHIP YARD	319
IV-10	VNN STATISTICAL SUMMARY - 1968 CRAFT AND PEOPLE SEARCHED	324
V-1	ARRIVAL, LOCATION AND SIGNIFICANT MOVES OF MAJOR US/FW UNITS 1968	372
V-2	I CORPS	377
V-3	II CORPS	385

NO.	TITLE	PAGE
V-4	III CORPS	389
V-5	IV	398
V-6	INTE[illegible]TION AREAS IN LAOS	410
V-7	ROU[illegible]ACKAGES IN NORTH VIETNAM	413
V-8	ROLLING THUNDER SORTIES	417
V-9	ARC LIGHT STRIKES AND SORTIES	422
V-10	FIXED-WING TRANSPORTATION SORTIES, SVN, 1968	428
V-11	TACTICAL RECONNAISSANCE SORTIES	432
V-12	COMBAT-MANEUVER BATTALIONS	435
V-13	ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE AND COMMAND RELATIONSHIPS - I CORPS: March 1968	438
V-14	MARKET TIME ACTIVITY	454
V-15	GAME WARDEN ACTIVITY	464
V-16	USS GARRETT COUNTY (LST-786) MOBILE SUPPORT BASE FOR PBR	465
V-17	USS BENEWAH (APB-35) MOBILE BASE FOR MOBILE RIVERINE FORCE	473
V-18	NAVY CONSTRUCTION FORCES	477
V-19	SEABEE TEAMS	478
V-20	I CORPS	482
V-21	II CORPS	483
V-22	III CORPS	484
V-23	IV CORPS	485
V-24	USS NEW JERSEY (BB-62)	496

(Volume II)

VII-1	COMBINED INTELLIGENCE CENTER, VIETNAM	573
VII-2	DOCUMENT EXPLOITATION PROCESS	575
VII-3	FLOW OF CAPTURED DOCUMENTS TO CDEC	576
VII-4	DOCUMENT EXPLOITATION AT CDEC 1968	577
VII-5	1968 PRIORITIES & OTHER INTELLIGENCE REQUIREMENTS	583
VII-6	EXAMPLES, PRIORITIES, EEI, INDICATORS, & SOR	584
VII-7	INTELLIGENCE COLLECTION AGENCIES	585
VIII-1	PSYWAR AERIAL OPERATIONS	603
IX-1	SUPPLY CLASS III	632
IX-2	US ARMY MORTUARY - TSN	642
IX-3	US ARMY MORTUARY - DA NANG	643
IX-4	SECURITY STATUS ESSENTIAL MILITARY ROADS AS OF 31 Dec 68	654
IX-5	SECURITY STATUS RAILROADS AS OF 31 Dec 68	661
IX-6	PORTS, LAND LOCS AND MAJOR LOGISTIC COMMANDS	682
IX-7	439L AND IWCS THRU PHASE 3	714
IX-8	DIAL CENTRAL OFFICES	717
IX-9	AUTODIN	719
IX-10	AUTOSEVOCOM	722

NO.	TITLE	PAGE
IX-11	MARS STATIONS TRAFFIC - 1968	725
XII-1	AMERICAN RED CROSS LOCATIONS IN SOUTH VIETNAM	831
A-1	ENEMY TET OFFENSIVE 29 Jan - 4 Feb 68	882
B-1	ORIGINAL DYE MARKER CONCEPT	913
B-2	ANTI-INFILTRATION SUBSYSTEMS	920
C-1	MACV OFFICE OF INFORMATION	936
D-1	TIME FRAME OF GROUND OPERATIONS IN I CTZ	998
D-2	TIME FRAME OF GROUND OPERATIONS IN II CTZ	1005
D-3	TIME FRAME OF GROUND OPERATIONS IN III CTZ	1009
D-4	TIME FRAME OF GROUND OPERATIONS IN IV CTZ	1012


SOUTH VIETNAM
ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISIONS
DEMARCATION LINE
QUANG TRI
HUE
THUA THIEN
DA NANG
QUANG NAM
I CORPS
QUANG TIN
QUANG NGAI
N
KONTUM
BINH DINH
PLEIKU
PHU BON
PHU YEN
DARLAC
KHANH HOA
QUANG DUC
TUYEN DUC
DA LAT
CAM RANH
NINH THUAN
PHUOC LONG
BINH LONG
LAM DONG
II CORPS
TAY NINH
BINH DUONG
LONG KHANH
BINH THUAN
HAU NGHIA
BIEN HOA
BINH TUY
SAIGON
KIEN HOA
CHAU DOC
PHONG DINH
TUONG AN
LONG AN
BA DINH
PHUOC TUY
III CORPS
AN GIANG
SA DEC
DINH TUONG
GO CONG
VUNG TAU
VINH LONG
KIEN GIANG
VINH BINH
CHUONG THIEN
CAPITAL SPECIAL ZONE
BA XUYEN
BAC LIEU
AN XUYEN
IV CORPS
DAO PHU QUOC (KIEN GIANG)
CON SON (ADMINISTERED FROM SAIGON)

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

(U) In 1968, the third year of US combat operations in SEASIA, the basic issues of the war remained largely unchanged. The Viet Cong (VC), supported by regular North Vietnamese troops (NVA), sought to gain control over South Vietnam (SVN) by destroying the existing politico-socio-military structure and substituting in its place one of Communist domination. On the other hand, the Government of Vietnam (GVN) sought to check the VC/NVA assaults by building a viable nation immune to Communist overthrow. To accomplish this, however, GVN needed US economic and military support, particularly the manpower, mobility, and firepower of US armed forces. The GVN also needed that vital asset of a nation which could only come from within, i.e., the integrity and moral fibre of responsible leadership that alone could make any gains permanent.

(U) In keeping with insurgent doctrine as laid down by Mao Tse Tung, the VC/NVA capitalized on the terrain cover, the population mix, the propaganda value of "foreign invaders," terrorism, various levels of military and para-military operations, etc. to achieve their political goals. The US, in support of the GVN, responded with the type resources available only to the strongest, most industrialized nation in the world. Mobility and firepower were utilized to protect and reinforce threatened areas. Ground, air, and naval operations were launched, singly and in combination, to destroy enemy personnel, supplies, base camps, lines of communication (LOC), and to seize and keep, if possible, the initiative. The US utilized its scientific know-how to overcome the major problems of finding the enemy and destroying him in his guarded sanctuaries. US forces utilized the latest PSYOP techniques and, perhaps most important, worked in various ways to build a strong, viable government, capable of properly protecting, pacifying, and leading the people of SVN.

(U) While overall the year was a good one for US, Free World (FW), and GVN forces, the insurgents showed surprising initiative from time to time. In January, the enemy massed his forces against the Marine outpost at Khe Sanh, attempting thereby to gain a military and psychological victory while opening the way to an assault on Quang Tri City. Also in January, he launched what has become known as the Tet Offensive, which consisted of attacks against every major city in SVN. The purpose here, apparently, was to capture many of the cities and generate a popular uprising. The anticipated results would be massive defection of Vietnamese armed forces, eventual withdrawal of US troops, and reunification of SVN to the Communist dominated North.

(U) The Tet Offensive, like Khe Sanh, was a costly military failure. In most cities, the VC were pushed out within two or three days; however, the battles in Saigon and Hue were longer and more intense. By the end of February, the enemy had lost an estimated 37,000 KIA. Nevertheless, he was quick to claim a psychological victory by virtue of his "show of strength," and in many areas of the world, where the people had been led to believe he was incapable of such action, the psychological effect was noticeable.

Page 441-NAVY
Pages 346-350-STATE
5 C 4 EO
NAVY STATE
ALL OTHER PAGES DECLAS
& REGRADED

REGRADED UNCLASSIFIED
ORDER SEC ARMY BY TAG PER
830621

UNCLASSIFIED

SECRET
8306

(U) To relieve the plight of the thousands of homeless refugees created by the Tet attacks, Project Recovery was instituted to provide emergency assistance in the form of food, supplies, and building materials. In all, over one million refugees were assisted through this program, without which the GVN might have had an unmanageable urban evacuee burden, economic chaos, and serious political problems in the cities. In spite of many mistakes under the stress of combat, the overall US, FW, and GVN performance in reestablishing over a million urban evacuees and renewing urban viability was one of the bright spots of 1968.

(U) Despite the enemy's set-backs of Tet, he attempted a minor follow-on to Tet on 18 February. This effort also failed and the enemy indicated a willingness to enter diplomatic negotiations. Nevertheless, in May, he twice struck Saigon. These attacks were supposedly the second wave of his Winter/Spring Campaign, but if so, they were a weak replica of Tet. The battles, mostly in the Cholon area of Saigon, ended with the enemy claiming the usual psychological gains, but suffering heavy military losses.

(U) The January-February and May assaults (Tet and the May Offensive) strongly affected US/GVN programs and strategy. The vital pacification campaign was arrested as outlying posts were temporarily left unprotected in order to save the cities. This proved a serious but unavoidable loss, although resurgent efforts in pacification, especially the Accelerated Pacification Campaign (APC) which began in November, brought the year to a close with an estimated 76 percent of the people living in relative security from the VC.

(U) On 9 June, General William C. Westmoreland left his position as COMUSMACV and returned to Washington to become Chief of Staff of the Army. General Creighton W. Abrams, his former Deputy, became COMUSMACV effective 3 July.

(U) A change in U.S. strategy, worked out in Washington and Saigon, roughly coincided with the change in command. Under the new concept, U.S. forces no longer regularly engaged in large, multi-battalion operations. Rather, the decision was made to protect Saigon as the nerve center of the Republic and, by maintaining constant pressure on the enemy, to seize the initiative from him and preempt offensive operations by keeping him continually off balance. Flexibility, mobility and firepower increased in importance as American and Republic of Vietnam (RVN) units sought out the enemy, destroyed him when possible, and uncovered his stockpiled material of war.

(U) The value of this strategy became apparent when, in August, the enemy again attempted to seize the initiative in operations against Da Nang, Ban Me Thuot, Tay Ninh, and other cities. The Ban Me Thuot drive was shifted to a small CIDG camp at Duc Lap where a small but furious battle was fought. The overall offensive was such that it is still questionable whether this was indeed the beginning of the enemy's announced "Third Offensive."

(U) Despite Ho Chi Minh's fantastic year-end statement that 1968 was a year of "glorious victories" wherein "we and our Allies killed 165,555 enemy troops on the battlefield, captured 20,685 others, seized 59,505 weapons, welcomed 17,826 defectors, and wiped out most of the American aircraft," it was clear that militarily, at least, the insurgent forces had been hurt badly. The latter part of the year witnessed a withdrawal of the major NVA units into base sanctuaries in North Vietnam (NVN) and Cambodia. The blustering continued, and there was much talk of new offensives, particularly against Saigon, but enemy leaders seemed more anxious than ever to get to the conference table. There was ample evidence that many of his troops were licking their wounds in sanctuaries.

(U) While it was unreasonable at year's end to attempt to properly evaluate the many attitudes and activities that contributed to the year's evident progress, some of the more conspicuous gains were too obvious to miss. For one thing, the Communist offensives, whatever their effect on war weary onlookers the world over, proved to be a catalyst in South Vietnam. The realization that the enemy had this aggressive capability led to increased determination and emphasis on meaningful programs, such as pacification, stable government, and a military strategy designed to seize the initiative from the enemy. The key to this strategy was broad offensive operations utilizing to the fullest the mobility and firepower of US ground, air, and naval forces, supported by vast logistical and scientific efforts.

(U) While the history of MACV was inherently tied more closely to military operations than to civic action, the mililitary objectives and means were in keeping with the maxim that military objectives are determined by political objectives. Throughout the year, the overall outlook was towards a responsible and stable GVN, a responsive and secure population aware of the threats of Communism, and a Republic of Vietnam Armed Force (RVNAF) of sufficient size and strength to protect the people against foreign military domination.

(U) At year's end, there was strong feeling in MACV that 1968 had indeed been what a local paper called it, "A Year of Progress." This claim was still a far cry from "victory" and one had to qualify success as "limited." Major problems, such as corruption in GVN, and serious apprehensions, such as NVN's logistical buildup, remained. Nevertheless, the outlook for 1969 was bright compared to the dark days of the Tet Offensive in early 1968. In particular, the Paris peace talks and the retreat of NVA regular units into North Vietnam and Cambodia were strong indicators of effective US strategy and tactics. Even more impressive, however, was the growing evidence that, barring some unforeseen crisis, 1969 would bring emphasis on certain political objectives for which some military success would be a necessary prelude, i.e., pacification ("nation building") and RVNAF growth, development, and modernization.

THIS PAGE NOT USED

CHAPTER II

THE STRATEGY AND THE GOALS

US POLICY AND OBJECTIVES

The View from Washington

(U) ". . . Our goal is peace -- and peace at the earliest possible moment," so stated President Johnson in his State of the Union message of January 1968. However, the President continued to make clear, it was not a matter of peace at any price. We were in Vietnam and would see that struggle through to a successful conclusion because it was in the best interest of our nation that we did so. Three US presidents had confirmed this basic position. President Eisenhower said in 1959:

> Strategically South Vietnam's capture by the Communists would bring their power several hundred miles into a hitherto free region. The remaining countries in Southeast Asia would be menaced by a great flanking movement. The freedom of 12 million people would be lost immediately and that of 150 million in adjacent lands would be seriously endangered. The loss of South Vietnam would set in motion a crumbling process that could, as it progressed, have grave consequences for us and for freedom.

President Kennedy stated in 1963:

> We are not going to withdraw from that effort. In my opinion, for us to withdraw from that effort would mean a collapse not only of South Vietnam, but Southeast Asia. So we are going to stay there.

President Johnson stated in September 1967:

> . . . I am convinced that by seeing this struggle through now we are greatly reducing the chances of a much larger war -- perhaps a nuclear war. I would rather stand in Vietnam in our time, and by meeting this danger now and facing up to it, thereby reduce the danger to our children and for our grandchildren.

(U) The President, in his State of the Union message of January 1968 offered no new concessions to Hanoi as an incentive for starting peace talks. Rather, he reiterated the position taken when he addressed the National Legislative Conference at San Antonio, Texas on 29 September 1967. This position, known as the San Antonio Formula, was as follows:

> The bombing (of NVN) would stop if talks would take place promptly and with reasonable hopes they would be productive. And the other side must not take advantage of our restraint as they have in the past. This nation simply cannot accept anything less without jeopardizing the lives of our men and our allies.

(U) On 31 March 1968, the US took a major step toward de-escalation of the war when President Johnson ordered a ceasefire of the bombardment of NVN by aircraft and naval ships north of the 20th parallel:

> Tonight, I renew the offer I made last August: to stop the bombardment of North Vietnam. We ask that talks begin promptly, that they be serious talks on the substance of peace. We assume that during those talks Hanoi will not take advantage of our restraint.
>
> We are prepared to move immediately toward peace through negotiations. So tonight in the hope that this action will lead to early talks, I am taking the first step to de-escalate the conflict. We are reducing -- substantially reducing -- the present level of hostilities, and we are doing so unilaterally and at once. Tonight I have ordered our aircraft and our naval vessels to make no attacks on North Vietnam except in the area north of the demilitarized zone where the continuing enemy buildup directly threatens allied forward positions and where the movement of their troops and supplies are clearly related to that threat. The area in which we are stopping our attacks includes almost 90 percent of North Vietnam's population, and most of its territory. Thus, there will be no attacks around the principal populated areas, or in the food-producing areas of North Vietnam.
>
> Even this every limited bombing of the North could come to an early end -- if our restraint is matched by restraint in Hanoi. But I cannot in good conscience stop all bombing so long as to do so would immediately and directly endanger the lives of our men and our allies. Whether a complete bombing halt becomes possible in the future will be determined by events. Our purpose in this action is to bring about a reduction in the level of violence that now exists. It is to save the lives of brave men -- and to save the lives of

innocent women and children. It is to permit the contending forces to move closer to a political settlement. Now, as in the past, the United States is ready to send its representatives to any forum, at any time, to discuss the means of bringing this ugly war to an end. I call upon President Ho Chi Minh to respond positively, and favorably, to this new step toward peace. But if peace does not come now through negotiations, it will come when Hanoi understands that our common resolve is unshakable, and our common strength is invincible.[1]

(U) On 19 August 1968, the President again reiterated, in a speech to the annual Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars at Detroit, Michigan, the United States' policy for peace in Vietnam:

First, our objective in Southeast Asia is peace, and the essentials of what we mean by peace for a long time have been quite clear. I am going to repeat them briefly.
-- Reinstall the Demilitarized Zone at the 17th parallel, as the Geneva Accords of 1954 require and let the matter of Vietnam's unity be decided by the people of North Vietnam and the people of South Vietnam in the future;
-- Remove all foreign forces from Laos and reinstall and make fully effective the Geneva Accords of 1962 on Laos;
-- Withdraw US forces from South Vietnam under the circumstances described in the Manila Communique;
-- Encourage the people of South Vietnam to exercise their rights of determination. It is for them to decide in peace without any coercion of any kind -- from anyone -- their own political future on a one-by-one vote basis in a free election -- in the spirit of reconciliation reaffirmed by President Thieu at Honolulu. He said there that all can vote in Vietnam and all can run for office, if they will forsake violence and live by the Constitution. We of the United States agree.
. . . . . .
Second, the US took a major initiative toward peace on March 31. We not only made an offer, but we immediately acted. We took a first dramatic step to deescalate the conflict. Immediately ordered our aircraft and our naval vessels to make no attacks on North Vietnam north of the 20th parallel. This excluded from bombing almost 90 percent of the North Vietnamese population and almost 80 percent of the North Vietnamese territory . . .
. . . . . .

Thus far Hanoi's response has been:
-- To reject every single suggestion made by ourselves or others to de-escalate the conflict.
-- To proceed since March 31 with the highest level of infiltration that we have observed during the war in Vietnam; the highest level of southward movement of military supplies; and the highest level of preparation for a major wave of attacks of 1968.

. . . . . .

We have made a reasonable offer and we have taken a major first step. That offer has not been accepted. This administration does not intend to move further until it has good reason to believe that the other side intends seriously to join us in de-escalating the war and moving seriously toward peace. We are willing to take chances for peace but we cannot make foolhardy gestures for which our fighting men will pay the price by giving their lives.

. . . . . .

I can tell you that I believe peace is going to come -- that is, if we are steady and it is going to come, if I have anything to do with it, on honorable terms. I cannot tell you precisely when it will come, but I believe that it will come because:
-- I believe military victory is beyond the enemy's grasp.
-- Because the South Vietnamese are gathering military and political strength and confidence day by day.
-- And finally because I believe in America. However great our anxiety for peace; however great our concern for the war in Vietnam; however great our passionate desire that the killing shall stop, I do not believe that the American people are going to walk away from this struggle unless they can walk away with it on honorable terms. [2]

(U) Upon the termination of the seige of Khe Sanh and the relief of the Marine forces by Operation PEGASUS, the President of the US sent the following message to COMUSMACV:

The relief of the forces which have held the base at Khe Sanh is an occasion for me to express the pride and confidence I feel in those who are carrying forward the nation's struggle against aggression in SE-ASIA

Side by side with your South Vietnamese comrades -- and our other fighting allies -- you have taken the full initial weight of the enemy's Winter/Spring Offensive; and you have now seized the initiative.

The enemy intended to destroy the constitutional government of South Vietnam and its armed forces. In this he failed. The enemy intended to over-run the base at Khe Sanh. For this purpose he employed around that base at least two divisions of North Vietnamese Regulars. Less than 6,000 US Marines and South Vietnamese Rangers -- backed by our tremendous air capacity -- pinned them down, kept them away from the populated areas at the peak of the Winter/Spring Offensive: and imposed heavy casualties. Now the seige of Khe Sanh is lifted. But clearly the fighting in South Vietnam is not yet at an end. The enemy may throw new forces into the battle. You, I know, intend to continue to move forward. But by your gallant and skillful support for the brave people and Armed Forces of South Vietnam, you have brought nearer the time of peace in that suffering land and in all Southeast Asia.

As we seek now to find through negotiations an honorable peace in Vietnam, I wish you to know that we are grateful for what you have already accomplished and will be counting on you more than ever, until the blessed day when the guns fall silent. [3]

(U) A break in the Paris peace negotiations was evident in November when the President informed the American people of the confirmation of the essential understanding that had been sought with the NVN on the critical issues between our governments. As a result of these developments, the President ordered that all air, naval, and artillery bombardment of North Vietnam cease as of 0800, 1 November 1968, Washington time:

We have been engaged in discussions with the North Vietnamese in Paris since last May. The discussions began after I announced on the evening of March 31st in a television speech to the nation that the United States -- in an effort to get talks started on a settlement of the Vietnam war -- had stopped the bombing of North Vietnam in the area where 90 percent of the people live. When our representatives -- Ambassador Harriman and Ambassador Vance -- were sent to Paris, they were instructed to insist throughout the discussions that the legitimate elected government of South Vietnam must take its place in any serious negotiations affecting the future of South Vietnam.

Therefore our Ambassadors Harriman and Vance made it abundantly clear to the representatives of North Vietnam in the beginning that -- as I had indicated on the evening of March 31st -- we would stop the bombing of North Vietnamese territory entirely when that would lead to prompt and productive talks, meaning by that -- talks in which the government of Vietnam was

free to participate.
Our ambassadors also stressed that we could not stop the bombing so long as by doing so we would endanger the lives and the safety of our troops.
For a good many weeks, there was no movement in the talks at all. The talks appeared to really be deadlocked.
Then a few weeks ago, they entered a new and a very much more hopeful phase.

. . . . . .

Last Sunday evening, and throughout Monday, we began to get confirmation of the essential understanding that we had been seeking with the North Vietnamese on the critical issues between us for some time. I spent most of all day Tuesday reviewing every single detail of this matter with our field commander, General Abrams, whom I had ordered home, and who arrived here at the White House at 2:30 in the morning and went into immediate conference with the President and the appropriate members of his cabinet. We received General Abrams' judgement and we heard his recommendations at some length.
Now, as a result of all of these developments, I have now ordered that all air, naval and artillery bombardment of North Vietnam cease as of 8:00 AM, Washington time, Friday morning. I have reached this decision on the basis of the developments in the Paris talks.
And I have reached it in the belief that this action can lead to progress toward a peaceful settlement of the Vietnamese war.

. . . . . .

The Joint Chiefs of Staff, all military men -- have assured me -- and General Abrams firmly asserted to me on Tuesday in that early, 2:30 AM meeting -- that in their military judgement this action would not result in any increase in American casualties.
A regular session of the Paris talks will take place on Wednesday, November 6th, at which the representatives of the Government of South Vietnam are free to participate. We are informed by the representatives of the Hanoi government that the representatives of the National Liberation Front will also be present. I emphasize that their attendance in no way involves recognition of the National Liberation Front in any form. Yet, it conforms to the statements that we have made many times over the years that the NLF would have no difficulty making its views known.
What we now expect--what we have a right to expect--are prompt, productive, serious and intensive negotiations in an atmosphere that is conducive to progress.

CONFIDENTIAL
TOP SECRET

We have reached the stage where productive talks can begin. We have made clear to the other side that such talks cannot continue if they take military advantage of them. We cannot have productive talks in an atmosphere where the cities are being shelled and where the Demilitarized Zone is being abused.

. . . . . .

I have finally decided to take this step now and to really determine the good faith of those who have assured us that progress will result when bombing ceases and to try to ascertain if an early peace is possible. The overriding consideration that governs us that this hour is the chance and the opportunity that we might have to save human lives, save human lives on both sides of the conflict. Therefore, I have concluded that we should see if they are acting in good faith.

. . . . . .

But it should be clear to all of us that the new phase of negotiations which opens on November 6th does not, repeat, does not mean that a stable peace has yet come to Southeast Asia. There may well be very hard fighting ahead. Certainly, there is going to be some very hard negotiating, because many difficult and critically important issues are still facing these negotiators. I hope with good will we can solve them. We know that negotiations can move swiftly if the common intent of the negotiators is peace in the world.[4]

Strategic Guidance from JCS and CINCPAC

(TS) During September 1966, CINCPAC reiterated the general policy guidance provided by the Joint Chiefs of Staff by promulgating the unilateral US concept for Vietnam which envisaged the employment of military forces of the United States, the Republic of Vietnam, and Free World nations in the war for South Vietnam. The purpose of the concept was to provide strategic guidance and direction to subordinate commanders of the Pacific Command for planning and conducting operations. Included in this guidance was the mission to be accomplished, military strategy to be followed, and military tasks to be executed with respect to the Republic of Vietnam, North Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, and Thailand. This concept had superseded the concept promulgated in June 1966 and continued to be the basic guidance provided by JCS in 1968. The Pacific Command mission, simply stated, continued to be to assist the Government of South Vietnam (GVN) and its armed forces to defeat externally directed and supported Communist subversion and aggression and attain an independent non-Communist government in South Vietnam functioning in a secure environment.

CONFIDENTIAL
REGRADED
SECRET
830624
UNCLASSIFIED

TOP SECRET
CONFIDENTIAL

(TS) The US military strategy for Vietnam, as enunciated by CINCPAC, involved three interdependent undertakings which together constituted an integrated concept for the conduct of military operations against North Vietnam, in Laos and the Republic of Vietnam. In the north, the strategy would be:

> . . . to take the war to the enemy by unremittent but selective application of United States air and naval power. Military installations and those industrial facilities that generate support for the aggression will be attacked. Movement within, into, and out of North Vietnam will be impeded. The enemy will be denied the great psychological and national advantage of conducting an aggression from a sanctuary. This relentless application of force is designed progressively to curtail North Vietnam's war-making capacity. It seeks to force upon him major replenishment, repair, and construction efforts. North Vietnam support and direction of the Pathet Lao and the insurgency in Thailand will be impaired. The movement of men and material through Laos and over all land and water lines of communication into South Vietnam will be disrupted. Hanoi's capability to support military operations in South Vietnam and to direct those operations will be progressively reduced.

(TS) In the south the strategy would be:

> . . . to seek out and destroy Communist forces and infrastructure by expanded, offensive military operations. United States and Free World Military Forces in coordination with the RVNAF, will take the fight to the enemy by attacking his main force and interdicting his lines of communication on land, along the coast, and on inland waterways. In accomplishing this objective, the existing system of military bases will be extended as necessary. Secure areas will be enlarged with emphasis on the National Priority Areas. Reconnaissance operations into enemy areas will be increased. Intelligence collection will be improved. Bombardment of enemy base areas will be intensified with increased ground follow-up. These operations will result in progressive destruction of enemy forces and infrastructure. Area control will be wrested from the Communists. Enemy forces will be broken up into small bands whose chief concern will be their existence.[5]

(~~TS~~) CINCPAC believed that complimentary actions were required elsewhere to enhance our ability to prosecute the war and stated that the capabilities of friendly Laotian forces should be supported to suppress Communist insurgency. Continuing efforts would be made within the constraints of national policy to inhibit Viet Cong and North Vietnamese use of Laotian and Cambodian territory.

(~~TS~~) The success of the US military strategy in the Republic of Vietnam would be dependent upon coordinated and persistent effort embracing the three military undertakings:

1. To destroy the war-supporting capability of North Vietnam.

2. To seek out and destroy Communist forces and infrastructure.

3. To get ahead with building the South Vietnamese nation.

(~~TS~~) CINCPAC established three main objectives to be accomplished in achieving the desired goal and listed the tasks to support each objective. The first objective was to make it as difficult and as costly as possible for North Vietnam to continue effective support of the Viet Cong and to cause North Vietnam to cease its direction and support of the Viet Cong insurgency.

(~~TS~~) The second objective was to defeat decisively the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese armed forces in the Republic of Vietnam and force their withdrawal.

(~~TS~~) The third objective was to extend the Government of Vietnam's dominion, direction, and control over South Vietnam. [6]

COMBINED US/RVN STRATEGY

Combined Campaign Plan 1968

(~~S~~) The Combined Campaign Plan (CCP) for 1968 was promulgated in November 1967 and provided initial guidance for conduct of ground operations by US/FWM forces and RVNAF in RVN during 1968. The concept of operations was to apply the military offensive power and related resources of RVN, US, and FWM forces to priority areas considered critical to the successful accomplishment of the overall mission: to defeat the VC/NVA forces and assist the GVN to extend control throughout RVN. [7]

(~~S~~) US/FWM forces were assigned the primary responsibility for destroying the VC/NVA main forces, base areas, and resources; conducting containment operations along the DMZ and adjacent border sanctuary areas to deny the enemy use of the infiltration and invasion routes; assisting and reinforcing RVNAF as necessary in opening and securing LOCs, providing security for selected priority areas, and protecting national resources.

(S) RVNAF was assigned the primary responsibility of participating in and supporting pacification with priority of effort directed towards providing territorial security for the selected priority areas. ARVN regular forces not assigned to Revolutionary Development (RD) support and the territorial security mission were to be assigned to divisional mobile strike forces which were to conduct coordinated and combined operations against VC/NVA main forces, reaction operations in support of pacification, and other missions as directed by their respective Corps Commanders.

(S) Although RVNAF was assigned the primary responsibility of supporting pacification and the US/FWMAF the primary responsibility of destroying the main VC/NVA forces and bases, this was only a general division of responsibilities. Overlaps or shifts would occur depending on the situation, contingencies, or opportunities to exploit enemy intelligence.

(S) Naval Forces would continue maximum coastal surveillance to deny the enemy use of the sea and inland waterways for infiltration. Naval gunfire would be employed to interdict, support friendly coastal operations, and destroy enemy facilities and forces. Riverine operations would continue.

(S) Air forces would continue to provide maximum close air support to US/FWM, and RVN forces. Tactical air forces would be reinforced by heavy strike forces with increased emphasis on "quick reaction" capabilities. Aerial reconnaissance efforts would be intensified.

(S) CIDG forces would operate from strategically located fighting camps with the purpose of maintaining border surveillance; interdicting enemy infiltration; and providing patrol, fire, and logistical bases.

(S) Psychological operations would be intensified against the VC/NVA, the civilians under VC influence, and those personnel living in areas under friendly control to persuade them to actively support the GVN. Stress was placed on disciplined, well behaved military forces showing a friendly, sincere interest in the people and respect for their rights and property. Civic action programs of US/FWM forces and GVN were to be coordinated at the province level. The people were recognized as the greatest asset to the GVN and the active commitment of the people continued to be the goal of the GVN. With control of the people, the enemy would have most of the ingredients for success: food, supplies, money, manpower, concealment, and intelligence. These assets were to be denied to the enemy.

(S) The majority of the population and major food producing centers and other resources were in territory that was designated by CCP 1968 as the area for priority of military offensive operations. The enemy was to be destroyed or driven from this area into sparsely populated, food-scarce regions so as to permit the GVN to protect the population, control resources, and provide unrestricted use of the major LOCs.

(S) Coordinated military/civilian efforts to identify elements and members of the infrastructure would be intensified and followed up by rapid and incisive reaction to exploit intelligence. Military forces were to participate in the attack on the VC political infrastructure through intelligence collection and by assisting the police in the exploitation phase.

(S) Emphasis would continue to be placed on combined integrated operations based on principles of cooperation, coordination, and close partnership at all echelons. Enhancement of RVNAF, with emphasis on RF/PF, would be sought through force structure revisions, improved logistical support, optimum employment of forces, and combined planning and operations.

(S) In the execution of CCP 1968, the scheme of maneuver for each CTZ would be:

1. I CTZ. Military forces would be committed primarily to anti-main force war to contain the enemy along the DMZ and the Laotian border and to destroy the 2d NVA Div and other enemy forces and bases. GVN pacification activities would continue at about the same level as in 1967, except in Quanh Ngai Province where a 50 percent increase would be made.

2. II CTZ. Containment forces in Pleiku and Kontum would continue to deny the enemy the ability to infiltrate freely from Laos and Cambodia; emphasis would be given to the annihilation of the 3d and 5th NVA Divs and enemy base areas; and pacification would be increased along the coastal plains as more effective territorial security was gained.

3. III CTZ. The 5th and 9th VC Divs and the 7th NVA Div would be destroyed; extensive operations would be conducted against known base area complexes; territorial security would be increased radially from Gia Dinh Province; the 1967 pacification efforts would be doubled; and key land and water LOCs would be opened and secured.

4. IV CTZ. Pacification would be greatly accelerated as territorial security expanded in pacification priority provinces. The principle of mass would be employed in heavily populated and resource-rich provinces where operations by regular forces would be conducted only when based on hard intelligence. The northern provinces of Chau Doc, Kien Phong, and Kien Tuong would be organized into a special zone secured primarily by RF/PF and CIDG forces. Emphasis would be given to the annihilation of the enemy and his bases, and the opening and securing of key LOCs.

(S) Tasks assigned to CGs, I, II, III ARVN Corps and CTZs, in coordination with appropriate US Commanders and other FWMAF, were:

1. Dispose forces and conduct operations to provide territorial security for populous areas, with priority to the pacification priority provinces, and protect the population, resources and the military and civil elements engaged in pacification activities within these areas and within areas previously pacified.

2. Provide territorial security for all provincial capitals, district towns, and logistic and operational bases, and other significant political and economic centers with particular emphasis to those locations identified as areas requiring special security. This defense will be characterized by saturation day and night patrolling, ambushes, and other anti-guerrilla tactics to supplement the static defense of these areas.

3. Open, keep open, and secure lines of communications. Prepare and maintain quick reaction plans for restoration of LOCs that are sabotaged by enemy forces or damaged by natural causes.

4. Conduct operations to protect and control the population and resources.

5. Establish an effective program to disrupt the VC tax collection efforts.

6. Provide for prompt, thorough, and effective screening, segregation, and disposition of civilian detainees.

7. Coordinate, assist, and support the Chieu Hoi program.

8. Assist and/or reinforce the National Police, as required, to identify and eliminate the VC infrastructure.

9. Assist, support, and participate in combined integrated civil/military intelligence collection and dissemination.

10. Conduct psychological operations.

11. Maintain active surveillance of the border of the RVN and known land and sea infiltration routes into the RVN.

12. Establish and maintain an active reconnaissance program, particularly long range patrols to locate VC/NVA forces, base areas, and supplies.

13. Utilizing forces not required to accomplish the above missions, conduct operations to destroy the VC/NVA main and guerrilla forces within the area designated for priority of military offensive operations.

14. Conduct refugee control measures.

15. Conduct military civic action in coordination with province and district officials.

16. Conduct offensive ground operations against VC/NVA forces, bases, and supply distribution points outside the area for priority of military offensive operations, utilizing available mobile strike forces. These operations will be conducted primarily against those forces and bases positively located by the reconnaissance directed in 12 above.

17. Maintain liaison with adjacent Corps Commander(s) for the purpose of coordinating all operations in the vicinity of the corps boundary.

18. Coordinate with and provide support as required to CIDG camps.

19. Conduct other operations in accordance with schedules published by RVNAF, JGS.

(S) Tasks assigned to CGs, III MAF and I and II FFORCEVs, in coordination with appropriate ARVN Corps Commanders and other FWMAF, were:

1. On a priority basis, conduct sustained, coordinated, combined ground and air operations to destroy the VC/NVA main and guerrilla forces, and neutralize bases and supply distribution points within the area designated for priority of military operations.

2. Conduct sustained offensive operations, based on hard intelligence, against enemy forces located outside the area for priority of military offensive operations.

3. Open, keep open,and secure lines of communications. Prepare and maintain quick reaction plans for restoration of LOCs that are sabotaged by enemy forces or damaged by natural causes.

4. Maintain active air and ground surveillance of the border of the RVN and known land and sea infiltration routes into the RVN.

5. Maintain an active reconnaissance program, particularly long range patrols, to locate VC/NVA main forces, their base areas and supplies,and conduct operations to destroy positively located forces, bases, and supplies.

6. Assist, support, and participate in combined integrated civil/military intelligence collection and dissemination.

7. Provide combat support of the respective ARVN Corps and FWMAF as required and as available.

8. Coordinate with and provide support as required to CIDG camps within respective CTZ.

9. Maintain liaison with adjacent US Force Commanders for the purpose of coordinating operations in the vicinity of the Corps boundary.

10. Conduct operations to support pacification activities in established TAORs and in other areas.

11. Assist ARVN in the conduct of operations to protect and control population and resources.

12. Assist ARVN to establish an effective program to disrupt the VC tax collection efforts.

13. Provide for prompt, thorough, and effective screening, segregation, and disposition of civilian detainees.

14. Assist and/or reinforce ARVN and the National Police, as required, to identify and eliminate the VC infrastructure.

15. Conduct psychological operations.

16. Conduct military civic actions in coordination with province and district officials.

17. Advise, assist, and support the Chieu Hoi program.

18. Conduct refugee control measures.

19. Conduct other operations.

20. Continue advisory effort to respective ARVN Corps Commanders and Corps

subordinate elements to assist in the accomplishment of tasks assigned to ARVN Corps in keeping with the concept for the conduct of this campaign.

(S) COMNAVFORV, in coordination with Commander VNN, will:

1. Destroy or otherwise immobilize confirmed and designated enemy military waterborne traffic in the coastal waters of RVN and inland waterways of I CTZ, III CTZ, and IV CTZ.

2. Detect and destroy enemy craft attempting waterborne infiltration in coastal and contiguous waters of RVN from the 17th parallel to the Cambodian border and beyond as authorized by the Rules of Engagement.

3. Provide shore bombardment and gunfire support to ground forces operating adjacent to the RVN coastline and the inland waterways.

4. Conduct mine countermeasures operations in the major shipping channels to Saigon, and in other harbors and waterways as dictated by operational developments.

5. Conduct operations on the inland waterways of III CTZ and IV CTZ to enforce curfews and interdict enemy attempts to infiltrate or distribute personnel or material.

6. Assist the GVN to conduct river patrol operations along the inland waterways of the III CTZ and IV CTZ in accordance with goals established in Annex E (Restoration of LOCs) and Annex F (Resources Denial).

7. Provide harbor defense in designated ports to include protection against clandestine surface attacks, swimmers and mines; and protection of shipping in coastal harbors.

8. Conduct Mobile Riverine Force operations in close coordination with assigned Army units along inland waterways in the II CTZ and IV CTZ to destroy enemy forces, bases and supply distribution points.

9. Conduct psychological operations in accordance with Annex H (Psychological Operations).

10. Support pacification in areas where naval forces can be brought to bear in accordance with Annex B (Military Support for Pacification) and Annex H (Psychological Operations).

11. Assist and/or reinforce VNN and other forces engaged in operations designed to eliminate the VC infrastructure in accordance with Annex J (Attack on the VC Infrastructure).

12. Assist VNN to establish an active program to assist National Police resource control efforts in accordance with Annex F (Resources Denial).

(S) Tasks assigned to CG, IV ARVN Corps and IV CTZ, in coordination within SA, IV CTZ and other FWMAF, were:

1. Conduct operations to destroy the VC main and guerrilla forces and neutralize bases and supply distribution points within the area designated for priority of military offensive operations and, based on hard intelligence, against enemy forces outside this area.

2. Execute all other missions assigned the ARVN Corps in priorities listed above, except 13 and 16.

(S) Tasks assigned to SA, IV Corps were:

1. Continue advisory effort to CG, IV ARVN Corps and IV Corps subordinate elements, to assist in the accomplishment of tasks assigned.

2. Provide support to IV ARVN Corps with US combat support units placed under operational control of Senior Advisor, IV Corps.

3. Coordination with CG, II FFORCEV in the planning and execution of all operations in IV CTZ involving participation of US forces.

(S) In a reappraisal of the CCP 1968, after the enemy's Tet Offensive, COMUSMACV, in a letter to CJGS on 12 March 1968, stated his belief that the plan's mission, objectives, and goals remained valid:

> I believe that the mission, objectives, and goals for the calendar year remain valid. The plan is sufficiently flexible to permit the corps commanders to establish local priorities for combat units to accomplish destruction of VC units in the vicinity of cities, open and secure LOCs, and support the Revolutionary Development effort as required by the situation in the corps zones. Further, there is no reason why battalions in support of RD cannot be diverted, on a case by case basis, for employment against enemy units in the vicinity of cities. When such employments are no longer required, then these battalions would revert to RD support. However, I believe that such diversions should be held to an absolute minimum and for only short periods of time. As you will recall, paragraph 3c(9) of Annex B (Military Support for Pacification) to the Combined Campaign Plan calls for the ARVN units in support of RD to be assigned a tactical area of responsibility or interest (TAOR/I). This should be accomplished in such a manner that the TAOR/I includes an area larger than the RD campaign area thereby permitting the ARVN unit greater latitude in seeking out the enemy and in providing security to contiguous areas which may require security.

(S) COMUSMACV further emphasized the need for commanders at all levels to remain offensive-minded and to guard against purely defensive positioning of troops:

> . . . I am concerned that recent enemy activities may have influenced our commanders to adopt a purely defensive posture in and around cities, thereby subjecting themselves to repeated rocket and

mortar attacks. I urge that we continue to impress upon commanders at all levels the need to remain offensive-minded and to move troops out of purely defensive positions in and around cities. By utilizing the RF/PF in less mobile defensive positions, ARVN battalions can be freed to conduct search and destroy operations in the area of their TAOR/I. In the end this will assist in expanding the security around cities and villages. [8]

(S) He urged the implementation of those portions of the plan that targeted friendly forces against specific enemy elements and he encouraged the application of force as described in CCP 1968:

> PF will primarily provide local security for hamlets and villages (also security for population centers, resources, LOCs, and key static facilities). PF will be targeted primarily against the VC guerrilla units. Besides, PF will participate actively in pacification as retraining occurs.
> RF will support and reinforce PF to provide security for hamlets and villages and is targeted principally against the regional units of the VC, including the province companies.
> ARVN regular units on territorial security missions will support and reinforce RF units in their responsibilities for supporting pacification. They will extend area security where necessary by conducting provincial search and destroy operations against the VC local forces (including the provincial battalions) and VC/NVA main force units where required. [9]

Early 1968

(S) COMUSMACV's basic strategic concept for military operations in RVN during the latter part of 1967 and the first part of 1968 was spelled out on 29 October. The directive reviewed developments, stated operational objectives, discussed the concept of operations, and assigned specific tasks. Developments were reviewed as follows:

> Previous offensives have created a situation which is conducive to initiating an all-out offensive on all fronts -- political, military, economic, and psychological. RVN/US/FWM forces have retained the initiative, spoiled enemy attempts to launch major offensives through the DMZ and in the western highlands, frustrated enemy efforts to disrupt pacification and election activities,

expanded the areas of secure population, and made inroads against enemy infrastructure in several key areas. The establishment of a strong point obstacle system south of the DMZ was initiated and is progressing.

Pacification throughout RVN is expanding. Revolutionary Development Cadre groups and military and paramilitary forces in direct support are gradually, but persistently, becoming more effective.

The war has passed the point at which losses inflicted on the enemy exceed his current replacement input. Air interdiction of the enemy LOCs in RVN and in the extended battlefield of North Vietnam and Laos are hampering enemy resupply efforts. Successive offensives into enemy base areas are reducing his unit effectiveness and morale. The Viet Cong capability to forage, to obtain recruits, and support in-country is decreasing. Except along the DMZ where the war has developed a conventional character, the enemy is resorting increasingly to terrorist activity, and hit-and-run attacks.

(S) The following operational objectives were established:

Increase political, military, economic, and psychological pressures on the enemy in RVN and, to the extent authorized, in contiguous countries and waters.

Expand and accelerate the pacification program with emphasis on improved territorial security, increased military operations against enemy units or bases threatening pacification priority areas, intensified action against enemy infrastructure, and more selective and effective population and resources control.

Increase employment and improve effectiveness of RVN forces with emphasis on RF and PF elements.

Invade enemy base areas, destroy or capture enemy materials and facilities, and defeat enemy organized units.

Interdicting enemy lines of communication both in and leading into RVN.

Open, secure, and use additional land and water lines of communication in RVN.

(S) The concept of operations was stated in the following terms:

As the containment forces prevent major incursions of the enemy from out-of-country sanctuaries the priority for offensive operations will shift, with the weather pattern changes, to the southern portions of II CTZ, all of III CTZ, and IV CTZ. A series of offensives will be conducted in selected areas. The priority for the GVN pacification program behind the protective shield of the US/FW/ARVN forces will be III CTZ/IV CTZ, II CTZ and I CTZ in that order. Economy of forces and maximum flexibility in force allocation between and within corps tactical zones, coupled with maintenance of a balanced logistics support system, is required.

The overall strategy will contain three basic facets: (1) offensives to keep the enemy off-balance; (2) persistent neutralization of enemy base areas with methodical capture/destruction of his supplies and facilities; and (3) improved and expanded territorial security and other pacification programs. Application of all three aspects throughout RVN will be concurrent, although apportioning the weight of effort among them will vary from area to area. A common requirement is finding and fixing the enemy. Hence, tactics will stress long-range patrolling in and around TAORs and integrated operations by military, paramilitary, and National Police Forces in populated areas.

The key to the overall concept is sustained territorial security for the pacification program. The concerted efforts of the entire military-civil team are required to accelerate improved security conditions. A major effort will be made to implement measures to integrate all aspects of the anti-infrastructure campaign. Similarly, better more specifically targeted population and resources control must be developed and enforced. Planning, as a matter of priority, will provide for the opening and securing of land and water LOCs to enhance inter-community contacts, increase friendly presence in the countryside, and permit uninterrupted flow of civil/commercial traffic.

Pressure will be applied on all segments of the enemy's external and internal support system to reduce the combat effectiveness of his organized forces and to keep him on the move and away from populated areas. Multi-brigade offensives will be launched against major base areas not previously invaded.

Close-in enemy base areas will be neutralized between major offensives with priority against those base areas most seriously affecting pacification priority areas. Previously attacked base areas will be reentered to insure continued neutralization. However, US/FWM/RVN units must be prepared for the enemy to react with increased use of guerrilla and terrorist activities.

Improvement in the overall effectiveness of Vietnamese military, paramilitary, and National Police Force (NPF) will be stressed. The planned RVNAF reorganization program is designed to provide the framework for enhanced effectiveness. Under this program ARVN and RF/PF units will continue to exert primary effort on territorial security aspects of pacification development. Concurrently, the tempo of offensive operations by ARVN, combined US/RVN and FW/RVN forces will increase. Our objective, by the end of the period, is to turn over the internal security of selected areas to PF, NPF, and to some hamlet self-defense forces. US, FWM, and RVN units will provide outer security by offensives against enemy main force units and into enemy base areas. It is vital that during RVNAF reorganization the tempo of ARVN operations not be allowed to decelerate and that improved integration be achieved rather than increased compartmentalization. [10]

(S) Specific tasks were assigned all major subordinate commanders in support of the above concept and objectives.

The YORK Series

(TS) COMUSMACV, in mid-August 1967, updated his guidance to field force commanders, with emphasis on employment of the 1st Cav Div (-) during the northeast monsoon season. The updated guidance was prompted by the planned arrival of additional maneuver battalions during the latter part of 1967. COMUSMACV stated that when these battalions arrived, the 1st Cav Div (-) would be relieved of its mission in northeast II CTZ. The logic of this action was that it would coincide with the beginning of the northeast monsoon and would permit deployment of the 1st Cav Div (-) as a theater exploitation force into selected areas where good weather prevailed. [11]

(TS) The campaign would last approximately 25 weeks (October 1967 - March 1968) and would consist of four phases; Phase I (PHOENIX) to locate and destroy MR 6 HQ and elements of the Tuyen Duc/Ninh Thuan/Binh Thuan/Lam Dong Provinces of southern II CTZ and open Highway 1. Phase II (SANTA FE) to locate and destroy the 5th VC Div elements in the northwest section of III CTZ and support operations to open Highway 1 in that area; Phase III (SAN ANGELO) to block the Cambodian border and seal withdrawal routes from War Zone D in support of Operation DODGE CITY against War Zone D; and Phase IV (YORK) to conduct operations against the enemy in the Do Xa area as a part of a larger force. The initial three phases of the plan were executed with forces other than the 1st Cav Div but during the time frame originally scheduled. However, the enemy chose not to contest our movements into his Military Regions (MRs), resulting in considerably less enemy killed than had been anticipated.[12]

(TS) In early December 1967, the original Operation YORK was modified to include planning for a series of operations to start about mid-February 1968. The new four-phased Operation YORK envisioned a combined task force assaulting successively into western Do Xa (YORK I), the A Shau Valley (YORK II), western Quang Tri Province (YORK III), and, at a time to be determined, the eastern Do Xa (YORK IV). The 1st Cav Div was again scheduled to constitute the basic task force. However, in mid-January 1968 the Div was deployed to northern I CTZ in reaction to the growing enemy threat in that area.[13]

(TS) Operation YORK I was cancelled on 10 January 1968 as planning progressed for the deployment of major forces to northern I CTZ. In December 1967 COMUSMACV had tasked the CG, III MAF to develop detailed plans for operations into the A Shau Valley (YORK II) and into western Quang Tri Province (YORK III). On 24 February 1968, COMUSMACV, in order to avoid duplication of effort and in consideration of their proximity to the scene, directed his newly formed MACV (FWD) HQ to take over MACV level planning for operations in northern I CTZ to include YORK II. The CG, III MAF had submitted his prior planning for YORK II to COMUSMACV on 6 February 1968. However, events were again overtaking our long-range planning.[14]

(TS) The enemy had commenced the seige of the Marine Combat Base at Khe Sanh in January 1968. The outpost guarded the approaches to the cities of Quang Tri and Dong Ha. The loss of this position would provide the NVA with a base from which to outflank our forces defending along the DMZ. These considerations dictated the early relief of this critical outpost. Planning was undertaken to relieve Khe Sanh (Operation PEGASUS) and also to preempt the enemy from massing for further attacks on Hue by attacking his bases in the A Shau Valley (Operation DELAWARE). In consideration of this planning and its close duplication of YORK II and YORK III, the YORK series of operations was cancelled on 23 March.[15]

(U) While the YORK operations were never executed, the prior planning and prepositioning of supplies had proven to be most fortuitous. In addition to supporting to a large extent the rapid deployment of the 1st Cav Div and the 101st Abn Div to I CTZ in January and February, the advance logistical planning aided in making possible the early relief of Khe Sanh and the advance into the A Shau Valley in April and May.[16]

Counteroffensive

(C) As the enemy committed his forces to a major offensive effort throughout RVN on 29 January, COMUSMACV advised his major force commanders to take advantage of the possible opportunities presented by the enemy as he withdrew:

> In view of the major enemy offensive effort throughout RVN during the last 72 hours and the losses he has suffered it is highly probable the momentum and intensity of his action will diminish significantly pending rest, resupply, and reorganization. During this lull or possible withdrawal, addressees will make maximum effort to maintain continuous contact and pressure on enemy forces as he attempts to break off from his present overextended posture.
>
> We must take advantage of opportunities presented by these enemy attempts to withdraw. Interrogations of detainees should focus on planned routes of withdrawal, rallying points, and base areas which the enemy may run for ....Scrutinize the routes of approach used by enemy units in entering their objective area as he may attempt to use the same routes in withdrawal. Terrain analysis will be helpful in directing the search for enemy withdrawal routes.
>
> Additionally, each commander must seek opportunities to out maneuver enemy forces, interdict his LOC, ambush his routes of withdrawal, infest his base areas, and otherwise relentlessly pressure his forces while he is in this vulnerable and disorganized posture. This counteroffensive will be keyed to hard intelligence, focused on major enemy units, and designed to disorganize and destroy his forces, material, and will to fight before he can withdraw and recoup. An aggressive and forceful effort by each echelon of command may yield extraordinary dividends beyond our expectations in shortening the war in RVN.
>
> The effort outlined above should be taken in concert with RVNAF and Free World Forces to ensure the maximum effectiveness in one synchronized drive to destroy the maximum NVA/VC strength in RVN. However, such coordination should not under any circumstances delay the execution of this effort. Commanders at each level will encourage all counterpart commanders to participate fully with the spirit and execution of this directive. [17]

(S) Later on 4 February, COMUSMACV provided further guidance relative to the enemy's capability to re-initiate attacks despite his losses during the Tet Offensive:

> The enemy's current country-wide major offensive has been blunted and stopped. The forces he initially committed have been turned back with enormous losses. I believe it significant to point out, however, that in many areas throughout the country the enemy has withheld many of his main force and NVA units. This is particularly true in III CTZ. Consequently, he continues to maintain a strong capability to re-initiate attacks country-wide at the time and place of his choosing, and most probably in conjunction with what I believe will be his ultimate efforts; a major offensive in the Khe Sanh/Cam Lo/Con Thien area.
>
> I caution all commands to remain particularly alert to this continued enemy capability and to turn the threat to our advantage by aggressive pursuit of beaten units and by preemptive attack, where possible, against enemy forces as yet uncommitted.[18]

Applying the Pressure

(C) On 1 April COMUSMACV reviewed developments since the enemy launched his Tet Offensive two months prior and emphasized the need for placing pressure on the enemy in order to achieve a major turn in the course of the war:

> In the months since the enemy launched his Tet Offensive, the RVNAF and FWMAF have achieved a significant victory in stopping the enemy and restoring the situation. In the eyes of the world, however, this has been a negative accomplishment, a reaction to enemy initiative. We must now take maximum advantage of the current situation, and put relentless pressure on the enemy to achieve what could be a major turn in the course of the war.
>
> We have many indications that the enemy is having serious problems .... Friendly operations which are denying the enemy control of population centers deprive him of access to his recruiting base. By denying him that access, we magnify his personnel problems nd keep his strength down, in both quantity and quality. Caches of food, ammunition, equipment, and medical supplies seized by friendly forces intensify his supply and distribution

problems. Captured enemy documents urge continuous attacks and express fear that we will continue to expand our offensive over the rural areas, with the result that they will not be able to "beseige and press" in the cities and towns. . . Continuous pressure applied to the enemy is bound to have additional effect on his already flagging morale.

From a friendly standpoint, the situation is increasingly favorable. For example: The government of South Vietnam is mobilizing. Its leaders are redoubling their efforts to ensure that political, economic, and social direction is pointed toward a common goal. RVNAF Forces have measured up well to the great challenge of the past two months and stand ready to accelerate the fight throughout their areas of responsibility. The FWMAF, to a man, has shown a determination to move against the enemy with increased aggressiveness. Our posture throughout the country is sound. Our forces are now in position to seek decisive battles in Quang Tri and Thua Thien. Throughout the entire littoral and the western highlands our troops are orienting their operations on the enemy to keep him away from population centers and resources. Allied campaigns throughout III and IV Corps are diligently securing and restoring lines of communications and installations (economic lifelines) that are vital to these rich and populated areas. The weather is beginning to break in the north and it will be acceptable for the offensive throughout the central and southern sectors of the country for the next sixty days. The challenge is now ours. We cannot let it slip. We must go after the enemy throughout the country; we must hound him and hurt him. We can achieve a decisive victory and we must do so at once, to restore the perspective with which the world sees this war. We must demonstrate by our actions that we are, in fact, winning the war. [19]

Increased Tempo

(S) It had become evident that the Allied forces had achieved commendable results in preempting, suppressing, and destroying Communist forces when, in late April, COMUSMACV called for an increased tempo and a maximum sustained effort against the enemy:

. . . There remains the potential for inflicting a substantially greater level of destruction on the enemy during the forthcoming weeks.

The enemy is on the run. He is avoiding contact in most areas. He must be kept on the run and not permitted to regroup, resupply, or redeploy. It is essential that all commanders ensure maximum sustained effort in the aggressive employment of all combat assets. The weather now favors the effective use of all of our combat arms in most areas of RVN. The highest order of tactical initiative and imagination in locating and destroying the enemy is required.

Aggressive execution of the general offensive requires response to opportunities on an order beyond that generally achieved to date. Our forces cannot be allowed to bog down in static and unproductive AOs. Every commander must use economy of force measures within selected portions of his area, so as to free a part of his forces. They must move out, find the enemy and preempt his buildups. They must operate at night. Reports of broken contact and incidents without immediate response are too prevalent. Contact must be maintained.

The concept of fixed fire bases is inappropriate in many instances. Artillery is a mobile weapon. It must be deployed to support all tactical opportunities. In this regard, the ratio of unobserved H and I fires (incl NGF) to observed fires remains too high.

The resolves of the RVNAF is on trial before civilian observers. It is of first priority that our efforts be rededicated to spurring RF/PF and ARVN to greater aggressiveness and effectiveness. Close coordination, combined operations, encouragement, and pressure are essential means to this mandatory objective.

The enemy's general posture has presented us exploitable opportunities. All commanders must spare no efforts or no assets in seizing these opportunities. Maximum pay off must be obtained from the full employment of our current forces.[20]

Pursuit of the Enemy

(S) Perhaps sensing the danger of losing the initiative to COMUSMACV's aggressive strategy and the increasing difficulty of regaining it once it was lost, the enemy struck at Saigon, Hue, Quang Tri and Dong Ha on 6 May in his Second General Offensive. With impressive stealth, he again maneuvered his troops to within five miles of the cities without detection. Even so, the

offensive was a "pale replica" of the January-February affair. To overcome the confusion of Tet, the enemy had broadly disseminated his plans among the attacking and coordinating forces with subsequent loss of security. As a result, the advance was met with blocking forces and, although some rather lengthy and fierce fighting took place, the costly assaults proved to be both military and psychological defeats for the VC/NVA.

(S) In any event, the Communist May-June Offensive confirmed COMUSMACV's strategy of relentless pressure on the enemy. On 6 May, the day after the new enemy offensive began, he wrote the CG, III MAF as follows:

> Commencing immediately, our objective will be to make a major breakthrough toward military victory in South Vietnam. We have the assets to do the job; in three years of fighting, we have acquired a level of experience in how to fight this war that must be exploited; today, we have a stronger alliance -- especially on the battlefield -- that must be used. Nothing less than the fulfillment of our potential will be an acceptable conclusion to the fighting which lies immediately ahead.
>
> The fighting will be characterized by an aggressive, unremitting, twenty-four hour application of pressure on all enemy elements throughout RVN. Twenty-four hours includes darkness. This cannot be accepted as a deterrent; in fact it must be adopted as an ally. The enemy will be hounded at night, as in the daylight; he will not be permitted to mass for attacks on the cities; he will be driven from the populated areas, pursued relentlessly, isolated and destroyed. In base areas, where hard intelligence indicates the presence of enemy forces, he will be subjected to the full weight of supporting arms-precisely applied with increased attention to mass. To conserve this mass, supporting arms will not be dissipated on soft targets, nor for the purpose of reassuring friendly morale by dubious device of indiscriminate harassing fire. Although the size of operations will be influenced by the weather, there will be no let up throughout the country because of the season. Only the emphasis will be altered. Techniques that adapt to the season will be utilized.
>
> Success will depend upon intelligence acquisition. This is a command responsibility equal to the employment of combat power. Reconnaissance will be the key. It must be carefully planned around the clock with ingenious employment of every sensor -- human and man made -- so as to provide positive, maximum coverage.
>
> The pay off will be in the reaction to intelligence. In the execution of battle plans, all US/ARVN/FW combat arms will be meshed together to isolate and destroy the enemy and his influence. This will call for a mental attitude that is ready to respond instantaneously to tactical intelligence with mobile fire and maneuver elements. Contacts, whether developed by US, FW, ARVN, RF, PF,

police, or civilians, will be exploited by all forces that can be brought to bear. Contacts gained will not be broken and, if lost, will be considered a tactical error. Pursuit will be second-nature; it will continue until the particular enemy is destroyed.

Allied forces must move out of their camps, go where the enemy goes, badger him and catch him, and move immediately to the next opportunity which our reconnaissance develops. The battle must be a continuum.

US commanders will take the lead in forging a totally coordinated military offensive, in which a full role will be assigned to the RVNAF. This must become increasingly their war. Vietnamese elements must be encouraged, or challenged, to be in the van of the attack. ARVN, RF, PF, CIDG, Sector, Sub Sector, combat, and combat service elements must be marshaled into a cohesive tactical force aimed exactly at the enemy. The enemy must be impressed with the fact that an attack even on RF, PF, or RD Cadre is a hazardous proposition that brings certain defeat.

Pacification operations are inseparable from the main offensive. The military effort required to insure their success will be expended with just as much sense of proprietorship by the tactical commander as he would display in the other facets of his responsibility. These operations must result in driving the enemy from the population and political centers of the country, opening the lines of communications, and giving breathing room to the process of pacification.

Security is what is strived for. It is not a tactic, it is a goal. It will be the result of a dynamically aggressive military campaign and thorough coordination with PHOENIX committees.

The purpose of fighting in the summer of 1968 will be to hound the enemy, destroy his forces, and rid this land of his influence. [21]

(S) Late in July a growing weight of intelligence indicated that the enemy was preparing to launch a strong series of attacks during the middle of August. COMUSMACV published operational guidance on 27 July to all major commanders stressing maximum anticipation of the enemy through an all-out intelligence effort linked with maximum combat reaction. The enemy's apparent offensive intent presented the Allied forces a chance to strike him a crushing blow. [22]

(S) As a follow-up to his guidance of 27 July, COMUSMACV issued further operational guidance to his commanders in mid-August. He warned that the then current estimates indicated that the enemy had achieved a posture from which he was capable of launching a major offensive. These attacks could be expected to be preceded by or in conjunction with infiltration

into populated areas and acts of sabotage, terrorism, and intimidation. COMUSMACV further emphasized the importa it role that the RF/PF were expected to play in anticipation of these attacks:

> In the enemy's preparati on for battle he is customarily preceded by reconnaissance parties and small groups who prepare food and ammunition caches, build or dig CPs, aid stations and similar installations. During the battle he employs couriers, aid men, ammunition and food resupply porters. During withdrawals he employs other small groups to link and support his major units. His dependence on these techniques of employment of individuals and small groups makes him vulnerable to a programmed coverage of the countryside by RF and PF units. This can be done by the RF becoming heavily engaged in aggressive patrolling and night ambushes under the direct supervision of officer personnel. Such actions can preempt surprise attacks on populated areas and installations, and permit application of our forces to preclude the enemy from attaining temporary successes. Because of their knowledge of the people and the local area, the PF can be an invaluable asset in preventing acts of terrorism and sabotage by identifying infiltrators into populated areas and by simply being alert to and reporting unusual incidents.
>
> I therefore charge US advisors at all levels, and particularly those in the position to directly influence RF/PF operations, to exercise all their skills and energies to achieve maximum response to the guidance outlined herein. [23]

(S) With the approach of the northeast monsoon season, COMUSMACV spelled out the need for continuing the tempo of offensive operations in order to deny enemy forces the opportunity to regroup, refit, and reorganize. In his planning guidance to CG, III MAF he directed that a concept of operations, to be conducted throughout I CTZ during the northeast monsoon season, be developed by 15 September. He stated the following planning guidance:

> . . . The difficult weather conditions that will exist during the northeast monsoon must not result in withdrawal of our forces to base camps and thus permit the enemy freedom of movement under the natural concealment that foul weather provides.
>
> We must continue to preempt the enemy's initiative. Our operations must deny him the use of his base areas and infiltration routes. It is expected that the number of US maneuver battalions

> available in I CTZ will remain unchanged during this period. Deployment of these battalions to priority areas should be considered as should pre-positioning of supplies in order to support operations that are not dependent on continuous helicopter support or long lines of communication. We must have plans for monsoon operations that will permit us to outmaneuver the enemy at every turn. Emphasis on US/ARVN combined operations should be increased with the goal of establishing GVN control of every district in I CTZ. [24]

(C) As further intelligence indicated a possible third offensive, COMUSMACV issued guidance directing preparation of a counteroffensive to exploit enemy losses as soon as the peak of his "Third Offensive" passed. One major adverse consequence of the enemy's Tet Offensive had been the withdrawal of many RVNAF units from the countryside to protect towns and cities which resulted in a considerable setback to the pacification effort. Relatively secure population had declined from about 67 percent at the end of January to under 60 percent by the end of February. This setback was of great concern to COMUSMACV:

> It is imperative that a setback of such proportions not be allowed to reoccur. The substantial growth in RVNAF strength and the enemy's greater relative weakness compared to Tet should enhance our ability to frustrate his "third offensive" without sacrificing rural population control. By engaging and attacking main force and local force units, RVN/FWM forces should be able not only to defeat enemy offensive moves directed against cities, towns, and military installations, but also to prevent the effective use of his force to gain control of rural areas.

(C) COMUSMACV directed US Advisors at all levels to impress on their counterparts that a major objective must be to avoid the withdrawal of security from the rural areas. If enemy attacks caused local withdrawals in specific areas, US Advisors were to immediately urge the re-establishment of territorial security at the earliest possible moment. Advisors were also directed to report such withdrawals to next higher headquarters for advisory action if needed at that level. Parallel guidance was to be issued by CJGS through RVNAF channels. [25]

Accelerated Pacification Campaign

(S) In his operational guidance for the 4th Qtr, CY68, COMUSMACV cautioned commanders that,although our tactical operations were punishing the enemy, intelligence reports indicated that the enemy was attempting to compensate for his tactical losses by turning his efforts to a political offensive in order to gain a political victory. Reports further indicated that the enemy was devoting effort to expanding the VC cadre and infrastructure and possibly organizing new VC local battalions so that he might be in a position to take advantage of a situation which

hopefully he would bring about by asking for a ceasefire. COMUSMACV warned his commanders that we must guard against getting into the position where we might lose the war strategically after having defeated the enemy on the battlefield.

(S) Accordingly, each commander was directed to expand his spoiling and preemptive operations, i.e., attacks against the enemy main and local forces, base areas, infiltration routes, LOCs, to include an intensive drive against the VC infrastructure and political apparatus aimed at eliminating it just as rapidly as possible. The drive would support and complement an intensified PHOENIX program and would call for close coordination with all elements of the GVN and USG. COMUSMACV was, in essence, calling for an expansion of intensity across the board to bring all available forces to bear simultaneously against the entire enemy spectrum:

> The concept is that each senior US commander, in conjunction with ARVN corps commanders and province and district chiefs, will cause continuous operations to be conducted which relentlessly screen the area until the VC infrastructure has been removed. 26

(S) Tactical elements were to assist primarily by a continuation of tactical operations, providing area security, and sealing off areas for search, but were not to be held on static missions. The actual screening of the population was to be done by RF/PF, police forces, and other appropriate RVN agencies, all fully coordinated between the local US commander, ARVN commander, province and/or district chief and their US advisors. Emphasis was to be placed on the elimination of the infrastructure from the cities, villages, and hamlets comprising the major population areas of RVN, and through this Viet Cong Infrastructure (VCI) elimination, the enemy's defeat would be assured. It would be difficult for the VC to revive itself within the climate of confidence generated. Local police and Popular and Regional Forces should then be able "to keep the weeds cut out of the garden."

(S) Goals for the Accelerated Pacification Campaign (APC) were to upgrade at least 1,000 contested hamlets to relatively secure ratings by 31 January 69, to neutralize at least 3,000 VCI each month during the three month campaign, to induce at least 5,000 Hoi Chanh to rally under the Chieu Hoi program, to expedite organizing 1,000,000 self-defenders and arming at least 200,000, and to conduct an information campaign to demonstrate to the people and the enemy that the GVN had seized the initiative and was moving rapidly towards the end of the war.

(S) The two campaigns were approved by President Thieu. A crash program began on 1 November 1968 in order to seize the initiative while the enemy was in a vulnerable condition. This three-month campaign would act as a curtain raiser for the year-long 1969 pacification campaign and was expected to show substantial results by Tet (February 1969).

(S) A vigorous counteroffensive by the GVN and FWMAF was to be waged through these campaigns with the objective of bringing about a reduction of the enemy's strength in Vietnam to the nuisance level. 27

THE STRATEGY AND GOALS - II

1. New York Times, April 1, 1968.

2. Msg (U), WASH DC to CINCPAC, 210230Z Aug 68, Subj: President's Detroit Speech of 19 August 1968 (U).

3. Msg (U), President to COMUSMACV, 081154 Apr 68, Subj: Not Stated.

4. Msg (U), SECSTATE to AMEMB SAIGON, 012251Z Nov 68, Subj: Remarks of the President (U).

5. Msg (TS), CINCPAC to COMUSMACV, 280050Z Sep 66, Subj: Concept for Vietnam (U), Gp-3

6. Ibid.

7. Combined Campaign Plan, 1968 (AB 143) (S), MACJ3, 11 Nov 67, Gp-1.

8. Ltr (S), COMUSMACV to GEN Gao Van Vien, 12 Mar 68, Subj: CCP (AB 143).

9. Ibid.

10. COMUSMACV Planning Dir No. 9-67 (S), MACJ3, 29 Oct 67, Subj: Planning Guidance for Senior Commanders for the Period 1 Nov 67 - 30 Apr 68 (U).

11. Bklt (TS), MACJ031, 16 Sep 68, Subj: USMACV Command History 1967 (U), Gp-1.

12. Ibid.

13. Msg (TS), COMUSMACV to Major Subordinate Commanders, 171045Z Dec 67, Subj: Operation YORK Planning Directive (U), Gp-4.

14. Msg (TS), CO 5th SFGA to COMUSMACV, 110900Z Jan 68, Subj: Operation YORK (U) Gp-4; Msg (S), CG, III MAF to COMUSMACV, 060758Z Feb 68, Subj: Concept, Operation YORK II (U), Gp-4; Msg (TS), COMUSMACV to DEPCOMUSMACV FWD, 241433Z Feb 68, Subj: I CTZ North Operations (U), Gp-3.

15. Msg (S), COMUSMACV to Major Subordinate Commanders, 231240Z Mar 68, Subj: Operation YORK (U), Gp-4; Interview (S), COL ARGO with GEN WESTMORELAND, Jun 68, Subj: Classified, Gp-None.

16. Interview (S), COL ARGO with GEN WESTMORELAND, Jun 68, Subj: Classified, Gp-None.

17. Msg (C), COMUSMACV to III MAF, et al, 010625Z Feb 68, Subj: Counteroffensive Operations (U), Gp-4.

18. Msg (S), COMUSMACV to III MAF, et al, 040655Z Feb 68, Subj: Classified, Gp-4.

19. Msg (C), COMUSMACV to 7AF, et al, 011403Z Apr 68, Subj: Pressure on Enemy (U) Gp-4.

20. Msg (S), COMUSMACV to III MAF, et al, 250018Z Apr 68, Subj: Allied Forces General Offensive (U), Gp-4.

21. Msg (S), COMUSMACV to III MAF, 061047Z May 68, Subj: Continued Offensive (U), Gp-4.

22. Msg (S), COMUSMACV to CG III MAF, et al, 271139Z Jul 68, Subj: Operational Guidance (U), Gp-4.

23. Msg (S), COMUSMACV to SA I CTZ, et al, 180555Z AUG 68, Subj: Operational Guidance (U), Gp-4.

24. Msg (S), COMUSMACV to CG III MAF, 220040Z Aug 68, Subj: NE Monsoon Planning (U), Gp-4.

25. Msg (C), COMUSMACV to SA I CTZ, et al, 270420Z Aug 68, Subj: Operational Guidance (U), Gp-4

26. Msg (S), COMUSMACV, 280629Z Sep 68, Subj: Operational Guidance - 4th Qtr CY68(U), Gp-4; Report (S), Part I, USMACV Year-End Review of Vietnam - 1968, dtd 4 Dec 68 (U); Msg (S) COMUSMACV, 130955Z Oct 68, Subj: Operational Guidance (U), Gp-4; Msg (C), COMUSMACV, 131045Z Oct 68, Subj: Operational Guidance - 4th Qtr CY 68 (U), Gp-4.

27. Ibid.

THIS PAGE NOT USED

CHAPTER III

THE ENEMY

INTRODUCTION

(U) "However absorbed a commander may be in the elaboration of his own thoughts, it is sometimes necessary to take the enemy into account."

Attributed to Winston Churchill [1]

Enemy Strategic Posture at the Beginning of 1968

(C) By summer of 1967, it became obvious to the enemy that his Phase II insurgency tactics were failing. His losses were exceeding his gains and his units were being soundly defeated. He was also concerned with his loss of control over increasing portions of the RVN population as the pacification campaign progressed. Consequently, in late summer of CY67, the enemy decided it was essential to escalate the conflict immediately into Phase III insurgency. His military posture had deteriorated and he wanted to take advantage of what he judged to be a significant opportunity in light of a considerable decline in public support in the US for the war effort. The enemy planned countrywide coordinated attacks, with emphasis on Saigon and other cities, hoping for heavy attrition of US forces which would further influence the attitude of the American people toward the war. He continued his three-pronged approach: military, political, and proselyting. He expected, based on a mistaken estimate, a popular uprising in SVN which would topple the government, cause the collapse of RVNAF, isolate the American forces from the war, and permit the expansion of enemy control in the rural areas. His efforts were to be called the "67-68 Winter/Spring Campaign."

Preparations for the 1968 First General Offensive

(C) Preparations for his Winter/Spring Campaign were underway by September 1967 and included strengthening his command and control arrangements. Actual military operations in the campaign began in late October 1967, continued into November, decreased somewhat in intensity in December, but were heavy in January, involving ground attacks and attacks by fire. The enemy made logistics preparations on an unparalleled scale including the building of new roads and the extensive stockpiling of supplies. Infiltration and recruitment of personnel rose sharply in January. The enemy was now ready to launch his First General or Tet Offensive.

The First General Offensive and Its Aftermath

(C) The larger attacks in the Tet Offensive were aimed at a few selected major urban targets and were supported by smaller ground attacks and attacks by fire in other areas. The most dramatic action was in Saigon but the enemy was quickly ejected from the city. The enemy had hoped to seize Quang Tri Province but his attack on the Khe Sanh Combat Base never materialized and resulted instead in an Allied victory as the enemy buildup was preempted by friendly firepower. The enemy's attack on Quang Tri City was repelled. Hue and Phu Bai were also attacked in the north, with Hue being the last city in the country to be cleared of the enemy. In II CTZ, attacks were launched on Nha Trang and Phan Thiet, as well as the key cities of the Western Highlands. In IV CTZ, action was widespread but individual attacks were smaller. The enemy's new strategy had failed. The GVN and RVNAF did not collapse but gained a new measure of respect. Although the enemy made some gains in controlling rural areas, his achievements were less than he had hoped. He was unable to hold permanently any of the cities he attacked; he lost in certain areas much of the infrastructure he had built up; morale was damaged; and he lost approximately 40,000 men or an estimated one-sixth of his military strength at the time. The enemy's major gain from Tet was in the propaganda field outside RVN. He withdrew from the immediate battle areas, reequipped and reindoctrinated his forces, and reassessed his position in preparation for his Second General Offensive.

The Second General Offensive and Its Aftermath

(C) The enemy realized he could not afford another countrywide offensive of the kind he attempted at Tet. He thought he could exploit the propaganda success he had achieved at Tet by sustaining the pressure on FWMAFs. To do this, the enemy decided to stagger his main blows in time and place, beginning in mid-April. Actually, this offensive did not begin until early May. The attacks on Saigon, the primary target, were on a smaller scale than during Tet but cost the enemy heavy casualties. Other relatively major attacks by fire were equally unsuccessful with many of the later attacks being preempted by friendly spoiling attacks. Overall, the enemy lost almost 30,000 KIA in his second offensive. He then withdrew into his base areas and border sanctuaries in order to refit, retrain, and receive replacements.

The Third General Offensive

(C) The enemy launched his so-called "Third General Offensive" on 17-18 August, with the intent that it would be more violent, of longer duration, and thus have greater impact than his previous major attacks. He planned to concentrate on two major objectives, Saigon and Da Nang, while keeping FWMAF tied down in the DMZ area and harassing friendly elements in the Western Highlands. The attacks either failed to develop momentum or were preempted. Diversionary attacks in III and IV CTZ failed to draw off Saigon defense forces while the enemy drive on Da Nang was blunted. The enemy had nothing to show for his expenditure of manpower. As his effort faded after mid-September, it was again clear that the enemy had not solved his basic problem of achieving his objectives. He had to mass; and, when he did so, he risked destruction by friendly forces' superior mobility and firepower.

The Turn to Negotiations

(C) The Third Offensive was to have strengthened the enemy's hand at the official conversations in Paris; instead, it exposed the essential weakness of his military posture. A reassessment, possibly as crucial as that of mid-1967, probably began as the full implications of the failure of the offensive became apparent to the Hanoi leadership. Militarily weakened, the enemy was forced to put added emphasis on political activity to buttress his position in SVN. He could turn his weakness and defeats to an advantage. He could set the stage for a full bombing halt by combining major withdrawals out of country into sanctuaries with the sharp reduction in activity tactically forced on him by friendly sweep operations, B-52 strikes, cache discoveries, and air interdiction. He had to approach the US, accept her "understanding," make a convincing show of it, and be prepared to slowly move forward in Paris. Thus, he gained a most valuable immediate prize--the bombing halt.

The Enemy Situation

(C) By mid-November 1968, most major enemy units were in border sanctuaries or in remote base areas. The enemy was continuing small-scale attacks against minor objectives, usually isolated FWMAF outposts. Attacks by fire continued, except on Saigon, but were not at a noticeably higher level than before the bombing halt. In general, the enemy was attempting to regroup, refit, and prepare for whatever course of action he might choose to adopt. By virtue of his deployment of forces, he retained multiple options. He was disposed where he could start a full-scale return to NVN. He also had the alternative of returning for attacks in RVN from I CTZ to the Delta. His capability to attack Saigon had been significantly enhanced. Remaining where he was, the enemy posed a counterweight to a possible resumption of bombing, or over the longer period, he was in a position to respond to any military or political opportunity which might appear.[2]

THE ROLE OF NORTH VIETNAM

"One should know one's enemies, their alliances, their country . . ."

Fredrick The Great: Instructions for His Generals, 1747.[3]

The Leadership of North Vietnam

The Party

(U) For years writers, newspapers, and other media have described the political machine of the VC/NVA. Perhaps the best description is one that has been broadcast by the Hanoi domestic radio service:

> As the organizer of all victories of the Vietnamese Revolution, the Party of the Vietnamese Communist,

through 39 years of struggle, has become a Marxist-Leninist Party, rich in experiences and animated with heroic and inventive spirit . . . . . The main factor of our Party's invincible power is its correct revolutionary lines. Our Party--which is the outstanding representative of the Great Revolutionary Thoughts of our epoch and the intelligence of our people--has closely associated universal principles of Marxism-Leninism with Vietnamese realities, blended the essence of mankind with the essence of our people, and heightened patriotism, the spirit of independence and self-reliance, and proletarian internationalism.[4]

The Party Solution

(U) What were the VC/NVA trying to achieve in their 1968 struggle? No doubt there were many objectives, but a rather vivid picture was presented by this "liberation press agency" article:

> If the United States really wants to solve the South Vietnam issue by peaceful means, it must take into due consideration the stand of the NLF as laid down in the November 3, 1968 statement. The United States must cease its war of aggression, withdraw unconditionally all US and Satellite troops and war means from South Vietnam, dismantle US military bases there, and let the South Vietnamese people settle their own affairs in accordance with the political program of the NLF, without foreign interference.[5]

The "People's Representatives" 1968

(U) It is beyond the scope of this narrative to present an all encompassing picture of NVN's political leaders and their influence on the war during 1968. However, a resume of the speeches of key NVN leaders and a brief discussion of other major personalities will provide a better understanding of the policies and nature of the enemy.

> It is essential to know the character of the enemy and of their principal officers--whether they be rash or cautious, enterprising or timid, whether they fight on principle or from chance.
>
> Atributed to Alfred Thayer Mahan[6]

(C) Direction from Hanoi. NVN's President, Ho Chi Minh, issued an appeal to the Vietnamese people on 20 July, the 14th anniversary of the 1954 Geneva Accords. It differed in a

a number of ways from Ho's 1966 mobilization appeal and probably reflected Hanoi's updated thinking on the conduct and goals of the southern conflict. It was geared to the policy of fighting while negotiating. The 1968 appeal was less high-pitched than the 1966 appeal and it was less exhortative. It lacked the almost desperate back-to-the-wall quality which marked the earlier call to arms. US policy was not described as "burn all, kill all, destroy all," nor was the North Vietnamese effort pictured as a struggle for "national salvation." The recital of settlement terms was also less absolute and there was no call for "total victory" or "complete victory." Although the 1966 appeal stated that "there is no alternative" to the Four and Five points (see Figure III-1) Ho's 1968 appeal did not cite either program. Nevertheless, it reiterated the call for an end to the US "war of aggression," for a bombing cessation, and for a withdrawal of US and Allied troops in order to leave the Vietnamese people "to settle their own affairs." Thus, the general character of the new appeal was less frantic, less extreme, and less emotional than the 1966 appeal. The 1968 appeal was more realistic in its expectations and objectives. The war was no longer referred to as a struggle that would last for "five, ten, or twenty years"; instead, Ho mentioned that the war had advanced "into a new period." The short-term character of the appeal was underlined even in the NLF commentary on the appeal which spoke of the "most decisive fighting phase;" Ho suggested that the war would not continue much longer. Instead of indicating that the US was in a "quagmire," as he had done in 1966, he stated that the US troops were being "driven into increasing passiveness" and "were at the end of their tether." In this regard, the new appeal was more confident in tone than the old appeal. It also highlighted the differences between Hanoi and Peking over the conduct and duration of the war. Ho Chi Minh's 1966 call for protracted war had been frequently cited by Peking. The combination of themes could have reflected the calmer attitude of the North under the limited bombing halt. The 1966 appeal had been issued following the first bombings of Hanoi and Haiphong and may also have reflected Hanoi's objective of ending the war quickly through a combination of military and political tactics.[7]

(S) Concerning Hanoi's military/political goals, further understanding may be acquired by examining NVN Premier Pham Van Dong's 1968 Annual National Day speech. His message had a curiously ambivalent character and seemed designed to suit all possible contingencies or policy directions which the Hanoi leadership might choose to follow. It sounded very confident of victory and boasted of alleged Communist military successes over the US in North and SVN. However, it lacked any clear and precise indication of where Hanoi planned to go or how Hanoi would get there. Dong's speech continued to express the DRV's desire for military victory but left the door open for a negotiated settlement. He stated that NVN was fighting "US aggression" on three fronts; military, political, and diplomatic. He explained several theories which appeared designed to justify the diplomatic policy. For example, he defended the 1954 Geneva Agreements by asserting that they had provided for reunification by July of 1956 but that the US had sabotaged these agreements. He claimed that the Paris talks served the useful purpose of showing American "obduracy" to the US and world public opinion. He also asserted that, while the US was only using the Paris Talks "to appease public opinion," the position and attitude of NVN's representatives was "correct and serious." At one point, Dong expressed Hanoi's demand for a bombing halt in very restrained terms, suggesting it not as an absolute condition but as a step which would have "a positive effect on the seeking, step by step, of a political settlement for the Vietnam problem." Beyond a bombing halt (effected on 1 November 1968) he listed three things which the US "must" do: withdraw all US and "satellite" troops, recognize the NLF, and talk with the NLF "on problems of concern to the two sides in SVN." He stated that all the above points "are in conformity with the main content of the Four Point

NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT

FIVE POINTS

1. South Vietnam is determined to strive to realize its sacred rights to independence, democracy, peace, neutrality, and prosperity and to proceed toward the peaceful reunification of the fatherland.

2. The US imperialists must put an end to their war of aggression against Vietnam, withdraw all US and satellite troops and their war equipment from South Vietnam, and dismantle US military bases in South Vietnam.

3. The internal affairs of South Vietnam must be settled by the South Vietnamese people in conformity with the NLFSV political platform, without foreign intervention. The NLFSV advocates the formation of a broad national and democratic coalition government and the holding of free general elections in South Vietnam.

4. The reunification of Vietnam will be settled by the Vietnamese people in both parts of the country step by step, by peaceful means, on the basis of discussions and agreement between the two parts of the country, and without foreign intervention.

5. South Vietnam will adopt a foreign policy of peace and neutrality; will not enter military alliances with foreign countries in any form; will establish friendly relations with all countries on the basis of the five principles of peaceful coexistence; and will establish good neighborly relations with the Cambodian Kingdom on the basis of respect for Cambodia's independence, sovereignty, neutrality, and territorial integrity within its existing borders, and with Laos on the basis of respect for the 1962 Geneva Agreements on Laos.

 FIGURE III-1

stand of the DRV and the political program of the NLF, as well as with the 1954 Geneva Agreements on Vietnam." Unlike 1967, Dong did not reiterate Hanoi's standard claim that its Four Points were "the basis for a correct political settlement." His new "conformity" statement could be intended to show flexibility, since it could be read as a suggestion that conformity with those three demands would be equivalent to acquiescence in the Four Points and that the US could thus get around the sticky issue of his original point three (which called for a settlement of SVN affairs in accordance with the NLF program). However, Dong was also raising a very tough Hanoi demand when he asserted that the US had to recognize the NLF and negotiate with it. This demand had not been cited publicly by any top-level Hanoi official since 1966, although it had been voiced on occasion at lower levels in different or indirect forms. It had, however, been cited a number of times in Paris. Hanoi's spokesman in Paris, Nguyen Thanh Le, stated in several press briefings that the US had to recognize the NLF and negotiate with it though he did not indicate any general or specific topic for such a negotiation. On 28 August, Xuan Thuy stated that the US had to recognize the NLF but added that the US had to let the South Vietnamese people settle their own affairs. On July 17, he had said that "world opinion" demanded recognition of the NLF. Even though it could be argued that Hanoi's demand for US negotiations with the NLF acknowledges our voice in SVN's affairs and represented a softer position than Hanoi's assertion that SVN's people should settle their own affairs, the demand was actually quite hard. Hanoi was certainly aware of the political implications of US/NLF conversations and of the prejudicial impact which they would have had on the future political development of SVN. Hanoi was also aware that such conversations would exclude the GVN from a role in a South Vietnamese settlement more clearly than its demand that the South Vietnamese people settle their own affairs. Hanoi's return to this position thus represented a distinct hardening. It was even cynical in its implication that the US should consider US/NLF talks to be a "positive effect" of a bombing halt. Dong's demand, however, conformed to the general 1968 pattern of Hanoi's efforts to push the NLF into the front of the picture after a period of relative neglect, although Dong also hailed the Alliance of National, Democratic and Peace Forces (ANDPF) and welcomed its program.

(S) Dong's speech did not give any clear indications about Hanoi's planning, particularly on the possible duration of the war. He used some phrases suggesting that Hanoi was thinking in terms of an early end to the conflict, with continued VC military pressure. He spoke of the "new period" which the war had entered since the Tet Offensive. He asserted that it was a good time "to win more victories," and stated that "our entire people" are "speeding up the struggle." He also boasted that the US had been forced to abandon the "search-and-destroy" strategy in favor of "clear-and-hold" and suggested that the US pullout from Khe Sanh showed that the US would not be able to hold very long; he also spoke of an "arduous, protracted" conflict, and at one point he stated that victory would be achieved "finally." Dong did not use some of the more militant phrases (e.g., "rush forward") prevalent in Hanoi exhortations over the post-Tet period. He did not speak of a "most decisive fighting phase" as the NLF had done in its commentary on Ho Chi Minh's 20 July 1968 appeal. He did not state that US troops were "at the end of their tether," as Ho had done but asserted that the US was in a "very critical" situation. He also warned of "greater hardships" and "greater sacrifices" and of the need to overcome "shortcomings." The general tone of these remarks accorded with other suggestions that Hanoi was considering the possibility of returning to an earlier strategy of protracted war rather than continuing its post-Tet drive for a quick political/military victory.

(S) Foreign aid to Hanoi received little notice in 1968. Although Dong thanked the "socialist countries" for their "very great and valuable support and assistance," he did not name either the types of assistance received or the countries donating it. This was in sharp contrast to Dong's 1967 remarks on the subject when he cited "moral, material, political, military, and economic aid" and lauded both the USSR and China for their help. In his 1967 speech, he had hailed the Soviets as recording great achievements in building the material and technical basis of Communism, and called the Chinese "brothers, as close to us as the lips to the teeth." In 1968 Dong made no mention of either nation. [8]

(S) After many months of exploiting the propaganda values of the bombing of NVN, Hanoi's leaders had to change their approach when President Johnson ordered a complete bombing halt on 1 November 1968. During the first two weeks following the halt, Hanoi initiated a campaign to strengthen her negotiating position. On 3 November, Ho Chi Minh characterized the bombing halt as a great victory. He praised all of the people who assisted with this accomplishment and included the socialist countries and "progressive" Americans; included in his "apoeal" were ideas concerning a peace settlement in SVN. He demanded that the US stop the war of "aggression" in the South and that the US troops be withdrawn and said that SVN should be allowed to solve their own internal problems without "foreign interference." Ho Chi Minh appeared to be concerned with the possibility that his supporters would adopt a relaxed attitude toward the war. To preclude such a turn of events, he called for "... compatriots (to) ... carry on their offensive and uprising ... and win complete victory." [9] On 4 November, the official newspaper of NVN, Nhan Dan, reiterated Ho's appeal and called for the armed forces to "constantly enhance their firmly established militant stand and ... to meet ... all requirements of the new situation and tasks." Special emphasis was placed on the total defeat of the US. On 9 and 10 November, Nhan Dan with the assistance of Hanoi radio, called for more emphasis to be placed on public security and high morale. Both media called for loyal supporters to criticize or "handle" anyone who violated state laws and regulations or committed other acts that adversely influenced the "revolutionary" way of life. [10]

(S) Hanoi initiated a campaign to exploit the dissension between the US and GVN. They had used similar tactics in 1954 when friction developed between France and VN. Hanoi insisted that the bombing halt was "unconditional" and that the US had been forced to accept the NLF as an "equal" in the Paris peace talks without first consulting the Saigon "stooges." Hanoi's representative, Xuan Thuy, told a press conference that NVN never had agreed to anything other than "quadripartite" talks. He denied that Hanoi had agreed to a two-party conference at an earlier date. The call for a peace settlement based on the "sacred national rights of Vietnam" was abandoned during this time, but Hanoi stood on her Four Point and the NLF's Five Point programs as a basis for peace. [11]

(S) Throughout November, Hanoi continued to demand two important conditions before the leaders of NVN would consider a cease-fire. NVN's second ranking representative at the Paris peace talks, COL Ha Van Lau, stated that first, all US and FWMAF had to be withdrawn from SVN and that their military bases had to be dismantled and, secondly, he said that the NLF's Five Point Program was the only acceptable plan for a political solution and that a cease-fire prior to its adoption was unrealistic. [12]

(C) Generally, the people of NVN seemed to accept the idea that the bombing halt was a great "victory." All who accepted this idea were encouraged to strive for the complete overthrow of the "US Imperialists" and to gain a "final victory." As one captured document stated, party members were not to harbor peace illusions but to advance and defeat the FWMAF/

RVNAF and replace the GVN with a coalition government. [13] Hanoi continued to denounce the US "aggressive acts of war." Ranked in decreasing order, Hanoi's complaints included the following topics:

The US is intensifying the war in the South.
Continued US reconnaissance flights.
Stepped-up B-52 operations in South Vietnam.
Large unit operations, especially sweeps.
Greater pacification efforts.
Increased tactical airstrikes.
Naval operations off the coast of South Vietnam and in the Mekong Delta. [14]

Hanoi made no open threats to abandon the Paris peace talks but let it be known that the VC/NVA were ready to continue the ground war in SVN. In general, the bombing halt compelled Hanoi's leaders to change their propaganda approach to the war, but it did not change their announced objectives to "strengthen the resolve of the armed forces (and) to continue the military struggle." [15]

(C) NVN Personalities. According to Hanoi, the former commander of Viet Cong Military Region (MR) 5 in SVN, MG Gen Nguyen Dou, was reassigned to the Defense Ministry in Hanoi. Dou was identified as a Vice-minister of Material Defense and an alternate member of the Lao Dong Central Committee. He was in Moscow heading the NVN delegation to the Soviet Army Day celebrations. There was some indication that Dou was designated Deputy Commander in 1966 when LTG Hoang Van Thai reportedly went to SVN to take command of the MR. This was not confirmed. Dou's reassignment suggested that, in spite of his rumored resignation, he was still in good standing. His knowledge of the problems of the northern portions of SVN--the focal point of Communist military efforts--would be valuable to NVN's military planners. [16]

(S) Another important NVN leader Le Duc Tho, was born in 1912 in NVN. Bearing in mind that in the DRV the political side outranked the military side, he was considered No. 4 of the Politburo after Ho Chi Minh and Troung Chinh. He was, above all else, a doctrinaire fanatic. He was supported by Troung Chinh who was leader of the hard line and by Hoang Quoc Viet (Ha Ba Cang) who was an old Leftist from the 1930's. He was the only person with as much seniority in the party as Ho and was President of the Supreme Organ for the Peoples Control (a type of super-police which kept an eye on Party as well as population).

(S) Le Duc Tho was the Chief of Resistance in the south during the war against the French and was most qualified to defend the position on the front. He knew and understood the whole of SVN with its political and ethnic differences. He had established intelligence personnel there for more than 20 years. He was a director of the cadre school of the Worker's Party and founder of the People's Revolutionary Party (PRP) which was the working wing of the front in the south and had some 80,000 members. It was at Le Duc Tho's urging that the Alliance of Democratic Forces was presided over by his protege, Trinh Dinh Tao. His presence in Paris was due to the double impact he had on both sides of 17th parallel. He was a humorless Communist who never laughed, was extremely serious, and rarely listened to those with whom I was talking. Since 1967, he had been President of the Committee for the Supervision of the South in connection with COSVN which was the clandestine military and political headquarters through which Hanoi controlled all activities on Front and its military arm, the People's Army of Liberation (VC). Le Duc Tho was an authoritarian and ascetic individual. His enemies

nicknamed him the "Watchdog of the Party" because of his uncompromising ideological attitudes. The PRP which he formed in the south was governed by very strict discipline. All members obeyed, without discussion, the directives of the Central Committee: "there was one cry and millions of echoes." Le Duc Tho personally designated principal members of the DRV delegation to the Paris talks, especially Le Chan, Press Officer; Nguyen Than Le, Spokesman for the Delegation; and Ha Van Lau who was classed among the military with a powerful political base. Le Duc Tho, unlike other North Vietnamese, never spoke French during private contacts. The Communists had a strong sense of rank and when Le Duc Tho spoke, the others remained silent. His return to Paris indicated that the north did not want to break off talks. [17]

(S) Pierre Darcourt, a French reporter, furnished some interesting information about Vietnam's ex-Emperor. He reported that NVN had contacted Bao Dai in order to determine whether or not he would be willing to return to SVN and take charge of electing a constitutional assembly. By elections, NVN was referring to political action which they hoped would result after success at the Paris peace talks. If such an event had taken place, the plan was for Bao Dai to hold elections and then depart SVN. The elections would have been designed to provide two Vice Presidents, one representing the "incumbent" of the GVN and the other would represent the NLF. [18]

Conditions in North Vietnam

(C) As 1968 began in Hanoi, the physical evidence of damage done by air raids on the bridges, houses, and electricity was there for all to see. The partial evacuation of Hanoi was already old history. The meager food and clothing and severe scarcity of any form of commodity for sale was equally obvious and by then routine. The first really cold weather at the end of November 1967 had served to emphasize the poor clothing of the people; faces, which were cheerful in the warm sunshine, looked pinched and lugubrious in the winter. War-like preparations for the worst that might happen continued; deep shelters, installations of small generators, and movement of heavy anti-aircraft guns closer to the center of the city were all easily verified.

(C) The true meaning of this physical evidence was difficult to assess. There was hardship, discomfort, and preparation for further bombing and a long war. It was possible that these preparations were part of an elaborate charade by the Party and that in their innermost councils they were already admitting their failures in the south, recognizing that they could not win in the foreseeable future, and seeking a way out of the impasse. If this were so, they seemed to conceal the fact successfully from visitors and the masses, and if they discounted the possibility of heavy bombing of the city, the charade of deep shelters was certainly a costly and time-consuming deception plan. Against the thesis that the Party knew they were losing and did not intend to protract the war, and thus that the shelters were for show, must be put the fact that the Party seemed to be careful to play down casualty figures. Therefore, the new bunkers could hardly be helpful in the context of quieting the fears of the populace, particularly since there were insufficient deep bunkers for the majority to use.

(C) The testimony of the North Vietnamese was unfortunately severely limited. On the official side, it was more than surprising if there were any deviations from the Party line of defiance. Officials invariably took the line that the war in the north would get worse but they were ready to continue the battle which had been going on for over twenty-five years, until Vietnam was finally left to settle its own affairs. Unperturbed by the effects of the situation, they were convinced that, however long the war continued, victory would eventually be achieved on the DRV terms.

(C) The few unofficial contacts available had, of course, a very different view. They were probably no more representative of the man in the street than the officials, but their view was part of the whole and was not entirely irrelevant despite their middle class reactionary nature. To them, the war was something which should be brought to an end as soon as possible so as to improve their chances of seeing their families again and, possibly, of improving their standard of living. They were frightened of escalation, easily persuaded that they were in great personal danger, and anxiously clutched at every peaceful straw, such as President Johnson's neutral ship on a neutral sea. They did not cite the Party's rejection of compromise with approval and feared for the future.

(C) It was difficult to get much firm evidence on the man in the street. Unofficial contacts stated that there was no longer a cheerful volunteering for the Army and conscripts worked hard to find one of the normal human gamut of excuses for staying at home. Czech electrical technicians, on the other hand, stated that the young men were more interested in playing soldier than working in their profession. No doubt both comments were true of individuals and there was no Gallup Poll to help construct a more representative picture of the man in the streets of Hanoi.

(C) The propaganda media was available to all students of the Vietnamese scene and could be better assessed in depth by those equipped with larger staffs. Briefly, however, the picture was one of unremitting defiance and exhortation to fight, to train, to form self-defense corps, to mobilize all resources, and to endure until victory was achieved. The radio, the press, the notice boards, and the scoreboards claimed that over 2,600 US aircraft had been destroyed and preached the same gospel of unrelenting resistance to US activity in Vietnam and support for the NLF in the south. Each day the newspapers carried pictures of the heroic soldiery and militia, old and young, male and female, engaged in war-like activities of every sort. The heroes ranged from the NLF guerrillas preparing man traps through the rifleman and women who claimed to have shot down aircraft to the members of anti-aircraft units. The front page of Nhan Dan daily displayed banner headlines on the number of allied troops and units allegedly annihilated and equipment destroyed. Not a day passed without a vivid description of a great victory, either in the air or on the ground, and the inside pages embellished the theme with human interest stories. The entire paper was laced with articles designed to prove that US presence in the south and their failures to win an overall victory after several years was in itself a defeat.

(C) From all sources it seemed that the assessment of the NVN leadership was as follows:

1. The US was unlikely to accept the DRV position on the talks; not because of a guarantee that there would be talks if the bombing stopped, but because the US was not prepared to withdraw from South Vietnam.

2. There would be no qualitative change in the situation before the US presidential elections.

3. There would be escalation, probably including heavier bombing of Hanoi.

4. Mr. McNamara's resignation could only mean escalation.

5. There was not likely to be any invasion of the north since this would affect a qualitative change in the situation entailing imponderable international complications.

(C) The root of the matter was seen by most observers in Hanoi to be not the bombing policy but the US commitment to oppose Communism which, in turn, seemed to entail a long-term US presence in Saigon and thus was directly opposed to DRV and NLF policy.[19]

(C) According to a CDEC summary translation, notes from an indoctrination session, which took place at Hanoi in late 1967 on the subject of security and dealt specifically with the suppression of anti-revolutionaries, indicated that in NVN "230,000 out of 300,000 people who opposed the Hanoi government had been sent to reformatories." The notes also stated that there were 1,500 teen-age pickpockets in Hanoi, most of them the children of cadre, even high-level cadre. These teen-agers were alleged to commit 30 to 40 percent as many crimes as the professional criminals. As many as 50 of the latter were said to be arrested in a single night in Hanoi.

(C) The notes from the indoctrination session also asserted that corruption was the gravest social problem in NVN. "The majority of the cadre are grafters." The notes concluded by enumerating the three types of reactionaries found in Hanoi: supporters of the Saigon Government, Titoists, and neutralist/pacifists. Hanoi was so concerned with the state of affairs, conditions, and problems in NVN that on 21 March 1968 a presidential decree on punishment for "counterrevolutionary crimes" was discussed in the Hanoi press. The 15 such crimes listed were collectively described as those of "opposing the fatherland, opposing the people's democratic power, sabotaging socialist transformation and construction, and undermining national defense and the struggle against US aggression for national salvation." Punishments were said to have ranged from prison terms of two years to life or death. Those who stubbornly opposed the revolution were severely punished; those who were forced, enticed, or misled and those who sincerely repented were treated leniently; those who redeemed their crimes with meritorious acts had their sentences commuted or were forgiven. There was some evidence that NVN had put in effect a series of measures designed to improve security. They may have been needed because of the disruptions to civil life and evacuations from urban areas caused by US bombings. Hanoi was fearful of the presence of "ranger spies and saboteurs." There was no credible information to indicate that Hanoi's measures had been anything but effective.[20]

Conditions following the 1 April Bombing Limitation

(C) With a view of cautious optimism, NVN started to rebuild the country when the US bombing pause began but it continued to give military training to civilians and to relocate government installations. The effect in the Hanoi area was said to have involved primarily the repair and expansion of existing facilities. Factories which had moved to outlying areas had been left there in the event that air attacks were resumed; the facilities were to have served as centers for new industrialization. Government agencies had allegedly been dispersed and operated out of air raid shelters, most of them in a hilly suburb of Hanoi. Communications between the various governmental elements was said to have been very poor. Military training of

civilians continued and the deputy chief of the general staff had reportedly stated that it would be given until the US withdrew from SEASIA. [21]

(S) General conditions in NVN improved considerably following the bombing limitation. Popular morale improved north of the 19th parallel, transportation and communication problems eased, and economic activity had revived considerably. Nevertheless, Hanoi still faced a variety of problems: a degree of war weariness on the part of the people, hints of disunity within the Party (it should be noted that the Party was in no danger of collapse), typhoons and floods, labor and manpower shortages, congestion in Haiphong, inflationary pressures, and poor harvests which necessitated greater reliance on food imports. As of 1 September, little permanent reconstruction of bombed areas had been undertaken but some planning for post war development had begun. Foreign trade contacts and diplomatic overtures to non-Communist states increased. During 1968, the first census since 1960 was completed.

(S) Although morale and other conditions in the Hanoi area had reportedly improved considerably, there had been some signs of an underlying popular disenchantment with the war. Some people living in the bomb-free zone, north of the 19th parallel, were reportedly losing their war psychology and were longing for peace; others, living south of the 19th parallel, were envious of their brothers further north. Early in the summer, rumors circulated in Hanoi diplomatic circles that some Catholics and "bourgeois holdovers" were critical of the government's policies. During the summer and early fall, however, Hanoi propaganda appeared to be airing such concern less frequently. After the bombing halt, many people returned to Hanoi and other cities despite warnings from authorities to stay in their evacuation centers in the countryside. Children were much in evidence in Hanoi. It appeared that authorities lacked either the real desire or the ability to prevent the influx of people into the capital city.

(S) Travel restrictions for foreigners were still in effect in Hanoi. They could not visit bombed areas of the city or the port area along the Red River. Some diplomats in Hanoi believed that the Chinese continued to have access to forbidden locations but this could not be confirmed.

(S) By early September, the Doumer and Pont Des Rapides Bridges near Hanoi were operating normally, and the temporary pontoon bridge spanning the river had been removed due to the high water period. Heavy truck traffic continued between Haiphong and Hanoi, and from Hanoi to points south. It could not be determined whether air raid shelters were still being built in Hanoi; there were conflicting reports from on-the-spot observers. As mentioned above, however, the population was frequently exhorted by government broadcasts to maintain vigilance. The frequent appearance of US reconnaissance planes over the capital seemed to cause some anxiety. Air raid alerts generally sounded when these planes appeared.

(S) The Haiphong port continued to be congested; many ships were waiting to unload and a large amount of supplies remained piled on the streets and quays. A western observer said the port situation was "sheer chaos" since the North Vietnamese appeared to be trying to operate it at up to twice its normal capacity. A truck shortage and heavy rains in July and August also combined to hinder the speedy and continuous off-loading of ships. Nevertheless, there was no evidence that these difficulties were preventing adequate supplies from entering NVN. In fact, one east European speculated that the North Vietnamese were receiving more equipment than they needed and were planning to hold the surplus for use in post-war development. Photography showed that systematic repairs and expansion had been undertaken at Haiphong after the end of March. These activities included dredging, construction of a new quay, and replacing of planking. The new quay, when completed, would be able to accommodate at least two additional merchant ships.

(S) Little reconstruction of a permanent nature appeared except for improvements in the port facilities of Haiphong and possibly to the Doumer Bridge and to some factories. The North Vietnamese, however, seemed to be giving some thought to post-war reconstruction. Furthermore, according to a Japanese newsman who spent two years in NVN, "restoration and reconstruction" had become major topics of conversation in government circles. He contrasted this to the slogan of "victory at any cost" which had been the predominant sentiment before the bombing limitation.

(S) According to a report, Hanoi officials told another Japanese that NVN had conducted a comprehensive study on the rehabilitation of war damage and had developed plans for reconstruction. A committee of 34 high-level consultants was reportedly established to promote exports, speed economic growth, and facilitate technical exchanges with foreign countries for the development of natural resources. [22]

Conditions Following the 1 November Bombing Halt

(S) Following the bombing halt of 1 November, NVN expanded efforts to rejuvenate economic construction and to further strengthen the DRV's defenses. The Soviet newspaper, Pravda, described the priority of tasks as "vigilance, military preparedness, increase of production, development of construction, and timely fulfilment of plans." The picture that was presented depicted NVN turning to economic tasks while maintaining partial battle readiness in response to continued US operations. [23]

(S) Ship congestion in Haiphong harbor had decreased considerably from the record level that had been noted on 14 September. There were 38 cargo ships in Haiphong but the number decreased to approximately 28 by the middle of November. Only one ship from the Soviet Union was scheduled to arrive in Haiphong during the month as compared to four Soviet ships the previous month. [24]

(S) Traditionally, Vinh had been a major NVN logistics center. It was served by Route 1A, the major north-south coastal artery; Route 15, the major inland north-south highway; and numerous interconnecting secondary roads. Route 8, which originated at Vinh, was being re-opened as an additional access route to Laos. There were also rail and water routes connecting Vinh and other sections of NVN. Prior to 1 November, Vinh had been unusable but, after 1 November, NVN immediately began to restore the LOCs throughout the Panhandle. By 8 November, Vinh had resumed its role as a major logistical support base for the NVN war effort. Waterborne logistical craft activity increased tremendously as did rail activity. Photographs that were taken on 3 December showed 50, four-axle and 69, two-axle cars at the Vinh railroad yard. This was the first "full-sized" equipment seen at Vinh in over a year. Reconstruction of the rail line included the bridges at Dien Chau and Tam Da which allowed conventional rail traffic to travel directly from Vinh to Hanoi. Prior to this time, it had been necessary to transship cargo by other modes of transportation. Finally, a photo taken on 31 December revealed the location of forty-two 2,000 gallon POL tanks. Thus, from 1 November to 31 December, NVN had succeeded in redeveloping Vinh as one of their most important logistical centers.

(S) The bombing halt also brought about a noticeable rise in the morale of the people. This was particularly true in Hanoi. Another reason for this rise was the decreased military activity in SVN. With this morale boost, the people of Hanoi appeared to adopt a more relaxed attitude during air-raid alerts and officials experienced difficulty in enforcing prescribed procedures. Coinciding with the decline of discipline was a general decrease in the work pace. Both of these reactions to the bombing halt seriously disturbed the leaders of NVN. [25]

Relations With the Communist Bloc

(S) On 28 May, supplementary economic and military aid agreements were signed with Hungary for 1968 and 1969. This transaction was accomplished by NVN Deputy Premier, Le Thanh Nghi, in Budapest. In announcing the accords, Budapest radio noted that Hungary had agreed to furnish "further material and other assistance." A trade and payments agreement was included for 1969 and Hungary agreed to train Vietnamese "specialists." [26] Nghi had also negotiated the Soviet aid pact for 1968. This had been accomplished in Moscow during September 1967. This agreement had provided for the delivery of Soviet planes, anti-aircraft weapons, artillery, small arms, and other military equipment and economic aid.

(U) An NVN delegation arrived in Moscow on 24 June 1968 to open talks on the 1969 Soviet military and economic aid plan. The group was again led by Deputy Premier Nghi who had flown from East Germany after traveling through eastern Europe collecting commitments for 1969 assistance. Although figures were not announced, it was estimated that Soviet aid for 1968 would reach the $1 billion mark. By the end of 1968, it was estimated that the total Soviet investment in NVN would be more than $4 billion. [27]

(C) Nghi's mission was concluded on 4 July with the signing of a new Military and Economic Aid Agreement. This concluded his tour of European Communist countries in the quest for increased economic assistance. The military items covered by the agreement were not announced. It was noted that the mission came far earlier in the year than it had in the past which indicated that Hanoi had exhausted much of the aid that had been promised for 1968 and was faced with a shortage of certain military and economic supplies. NVN may also have wanted the new materiel to help make impressive military gains that would strengthen its bargaining position at the peace talks in Paris.

(C) In early June, a radio Moscow broadcast indicated Hanoi's urgent need for increased assistance. It reported that US bombing had caused considerable damage and that the USSR had to send materials for rebuilding railroads, bridges, and irrigation works. The commentary added that the Soviets were extending interest-free loans to rebuild North Vietnamese industries and provide the country with food and fertilizers. [28]

(C) The USSR was the chief supplier of weapons to NVN and only limited amounts were being supplied by Communist China. Although the volume of weapons had decreased, the quality had improved. The USSR aided NVN considerably with large numbers of new and powerful weapons such as the 23mm anti-aircraft gun and the 85mm field gun. It had been reported that these weapons had been supplied to NVN not only for the purpose of fighting US forces and the SVN government forces but also as a precaution against an invasion by Communist Chinese forces, which was considered as a possibility if peace was achieved. The USSR was compelled to reduce its arms aid to NVN because it had to react to the disorderly conditions in various

East European nations and also to provide assistance to North Korea as well as the Middle and Near Eastern nations. Soviet arms aid routes, by rail and ship, extended from Vladivostok to the ports of Chjongjin and Wonson in North Korea before being transported over sea routes to the NVN port of Haiphong. The Soviet atomic energy naval vessel, based at Wonson, was escorting. Politically as well as militarily, the Soviet influence on the NVN government was far greater than that of Communist China.

(C) Communist China had provided NVN with personnel assistance by dispatching 40,000 to 50,000 troops to serve in transportation and rear service units. However, it was the USSR that provided NVN with arms assistance that proved directly useful against US bombings. The people of NVN appeared to feel more grateful to the USSR than to Communist China. This seemed to be one of the reasons that the NVN government attached greater importance to the USSR. [29]

(S) There was apparently no easing of NVN's food problems and they reportedly asked the USSR to more than double the amount of flour it had been shipping monthly. Hanoi supposedly requested that thirteen ships, loaded with flour, be sent each month during the last quarter of 1968. The Soviets responded with the promise to meet Hanoi's demands if they could unload their ships. As of November, Moscow had sent a monthly average of 22,000 metric tons of bulk foodstuffs to NVN. Most of the flour had come from Vladivostok. [30]

(C) The Chief of the Indochina Desk, at the French Foreign Ministry, informed US officials in Paris that apparently, for the first time in years, Soviet economic assistance to NVN would be greater than military assistance. In the accord signed in Moscow on 25 November, the Soviets reportedly agreed to supply Hanoi with foodstuffs, POL, transport vehicles, ferrous and non-ferrous metals, chemical fertilizers, arms and ammunition, as well as other equipment and materials "necessary for consolidation of national defense and economic development of the DRV." [31]

(S) The relative increase in economic over military aid came about as a result of the partial bombing halt on 31 March and the complete cessation on 1 November. The dollar value of the aid arranged for in November was not announced, but the new agreements were said to have covered free economic and military aid, the granting of long term credits, trade, and other "questions" of Soviet-Vietnamese cooperation. This portion of the agreement was believed to have referred to the possibility of long-range Soviet economic and technical assistance for restoring and expanding the NVN economy. [32]

Relationship With Communist China

(C) Reports indicated that as early as Tet in February 1965, Chinese Communist troops were in the Do Son Township of Haiphong in NVN. NVA cadre said that the troops were members of a Chinese Communist battalion that was assisting the NVA 50th Regiment in the defense of Haiphong City. The Chinese Communists, for their air defense responsibility, were armed with K-53 (7.62mm) AAA weapons. Four or five of these weapons were installed in defensive positions which the Chinese had built. [33] Additional information indicating the presence of Chinese Communist in NVN was provided by a captive NVA Colonel, Vo Thu, Chief of the Quang Da Special Zone. It was reported that during interrogation Colonel Thu stated:

1. If the US increased their military strength in SVN, the Chinese Communists would enter the war and World War III would start.

2. The Chinese Communist had offered two million combat troops to NVN.

3. If an invasion of NVN was tried by either GVN or Allied troops, the Chinese Communist troops would immediately engage the invaders.

4. Because of the Chinese Communist presence in NVN, the VC in SVN would never be eliminated. In December 1967, infiltrators stated that there were numbers of Chinese Communist troops in NVN. These large groups were in Hanoi, Thi Nguyen, the northwest MR, the Viet Boa MR, and along the NVN-Chinese Communist border. [34]

(S) It is probable that Hanoi, in coming to Paris, finally rejected Chinese pressures to continue fighting until final military victory was won, regardless of how Ho Chi Minh propagandized. This decision seems to have been made after Moscow promised Soviet diplomatic and economic support in winning at the conference table. Also, Hanoi probably wanted the bombing stopped before being pushed into complete economic dependence on Communist China. NVN's fairly primitive industries were largely shattered by the bombing. Also, 80-90% of NVN's total foreign trade (excluding military aid) was with China. Relations with China became a particularly sensitive issue in Hanoi following an agreement in the spring of 1967 which stated that North Vietnam should formally take delivery of Soviet military aid as soon as it entered China. Hanoi saw this requirements as completing an uncomfortable, four-faceted dependence on China--geographical, geo-political, economic, and military. There probably were high-placed fears in Hanoi that continued full-scale war would have ended North Vietnam's independence and reduced it to complete subservience to China. Hanoi was, of course, unwilling to have that happen. [35]

(C) Communist China's silence regarding NVN's willingness to engage in peace talks suggested that Peking had only the slightest ability to influence Hanoi's policy decisions on the matter. Not unexpectedly, official news media labeled the partial bombing suspension by the US a fraud and charged that the USSR was the number one accomplice of the US Imperialists. Hanoi was urged to achieve peace by winning a military victory on the battlefield and to drive the US aggressors out but Peiping had given no indication that it planned to exert pressure or employ other methods to block the peace talks. [36]

(S) Notwithstanding press reports, it was unlikely that Communist China threatened to withdraw its economic and military aid if NVN entered into peace negotiations with the US. Peking denounced all US efforts to initiate negotiations as peace talk hoaxes. After the Tet Offensive Premier Chou En-Lai stated that "before the final victory, there is still a hazardous course to travel because the enemy will undoubtedly put up a dying struggle. We are confident that by persevering in protracted war, the Vietnamese will surely defeat the US." Peking had also frequently indicated that it considered the Geneva Accord of 1954 a dead letter and that it would not participate in a new Geneva Conference.

(S) In March 1968, Foreign Minister Chen Yi said that "Peking leaves the decision in full confidence to Hanoi. Experience tells us that Hanoi knows what it is doing. There was speculation abroad on the decisive influence of Peking on Hanoi. One has to know the Vietnamese to understand that even if China wished to do so, neither we nor the Russians could influence Hanoi." [37]

(C) An agreement concluded in Peking on 23 July was signed in the presence of Chou En-Lai, Chen Yi, Wou Yu Seng (Deputy Chief of Staff, PLA) and Han Niem Long (Deputy Minister Foreign Affairs). Le Thanh Nghi signed for Hanoi and the NLF. Representatives of Peking attended the signing ceremony. The agreement covered the 1969 economic, technical, and military assistance aid to be given on a grant basis. It was noted that public announcements made no reference to financial clearing arrangement or to long-term loans. According to an Eastern European Ambassador in Hanoi, CHICOM aid for 1969 to DRV was not above previous aid levels and would even be less than that of the previous year.

(C) The French understood that aid negotiations were difficult and that during a two week period in China (Aug 9-24) members of the NVN delegation made several trips back to Hanoi for consultation. The French also noted that the Hanoi press only twice mentioned aid negotiations with China, when the mission arrived and after the agreement was signed. The complete silence between them may have reflected difficulty in the negotiations. [38]

(S) The nature and scope of the assistance rendered by Chinese forces in NVN had apparently been continuing along established lines and there was no evidence of major changes. A number of railroad, bridge, and airfield construction projects appeared to be nearing completion and some new construction projects were initiated. The Hanoi-Dong Dang Rail Line was ready to be entirely converted to dual-guage. The new rail line between Kep and Hon Gai had the potential of being completed that year and the airfield at Yen Bai was serviceable. The road network from China into NVN continued to be improved. NVN would continue to accept existing Chinese air defense, construction, and logistical support. However, the increased factional fighting within China, together with widespread flooding, continued to disrupt rail transportation intermittently in Southern China. Serious disruptions on the north-south rail lines through China to NVN were believed to have commenced in early May. Persistent rail stoppages seriously hampered the overland transport of Soviet military and other Communist aid to NVN but military and economic stockpiles were probably large enough to absorb temporary interruption of deliveries. [39]

(C) On July 26 the Hanoi Communist Party daily, Nhan Dan, carried an editorial on the signing of the Annual Aid Agreement with China which was even more effusive than a similar comment on the previous year's agreement. Praise for Mao Tse-Tung and for the traditional closeness of the two peoples was considerably more marked than in 1967. Specific mention was made of the "practical deeds" of the Chinese people (including loss of life of some Chinese sailors) to back up their aid. This came at a time when indications were that Peking strongly disapproved of Hanoi's decision to go to Paris and when there had been reports of recent anti-Vietnamese demonstrations in China and of delays in the transit of supplies traveling from or through China to NVN. It appeared that Hanoi was still attempting to put the best face on things by maintaining a friendly public tone despite persistent frictions. The Nhan Dan editorial hailed the 1968 agreement as "a new, militant expression of the militant solidarity and the relations of friendship and mutual support" between China and NVN. The two countries were linked by a long-standing friendship, said Nhan Dan, and enjoyed "extremely intimate relations between those who are both comrades and brothers, between militant friends sharing weal and woe, going together through thick and thin, supporting each other, struggling together and winning victories together." The 1967 editorial had been less gushy, referring to "an age-old militant friendship" rising out of a "revolutionary struggle" and being constantly "consolidated and developed."

(C) In 1967, the NVN tone, while correct, had been less enthusiastic about Chinese aid contributions. The 1967 agreement was seen as "another manifestation of the heartfelt, great, and valuable support and assistance given by the Chinese people to the Vietnamese people." Nhan Dan thanked the Chinese people for having given "extremely great and powerful support and assistance." However, Peking was reminded that Hanoi equated its contribution with those from other donor nations. "Vietnamese successes cannot be separated from the assistance given by China and other fraternal socialist countries."

(C) In 1968, Nhan Dan was more effusive and went into more detail: "Our people have always enjoyed the valuable support and assistance of the fraternal Chinese people. The Party, Government and people of China have warmly supported and assisted our people in their war of resistance against the French Colonialists and in socialist construction of North Vietnam. The political, moral, and material support, encouragement and assistance of China are very great, valuable, and effective." Mao Tse-Tung's name had been mentioned in the 1967 comment but he had not been described in heroic terms. In 1968, he was lauded as a "Great leader of the Chinese people and esteemed friend of the Vietnamese people." Lin Piao and Chou En-Lai also received favorable comment.

(C) The Nhan Dan editorial also bowed to the Chinese by making no reference to the newly formed Alliance of National Democratic and Peace Forces in SVN, an organization which Peking had not yet mentioned in its propaganda. Instead, Nhan Dan referred, on several occasions, to the NLF and quoted Mao's December 20, 1967 message to the NLF Chief, Nguyen Huu Tho, as well as the latter's reply. Curiously, Nhan Dan did not mention Ho Chi Minh.

(C) In 1968, the subject of Chinese "volunteers" came up more prominently than in 1967. In 1967, Hanoi had asserted that "tens of millions of Chinese youths had registered to go to Vietnam as volunteers." The same number of men was mentioned in 1968 but they were said to have "eagerly enlisted." In addition, Nhan Dan in 1968 said that the Chinese people "have regarded their support for Vietnam as their sacred internationalist duty" and that such sentiments had been turned into "practical deeds" by all sectors of society. Nhan Dan specifically mentioned sailors on Chinese ships carrying goods to Vietnam, saying that "Some of them have courageously sacrificed themselves to insure the steady flow of goods." It also gave favorable notice to the Hong Kong Chinese crewmen who had "chosen to lose their jobs rather than transport war material for the imperialists." While the tone of the Nhan Dan editorial indicated Hanoi's continuing desire to put the best tone on its relations with Peking, frictions and tensions obviously persisted. Neither Hanoi nor Peking announced Le Duc Tho's stopover in Peking on his way back from Paris. Again, Peking, ignoring last year's precedent, did not report the farewell banquet which took place before Le Thanh's departure. There was also a report indicating that NVN's aid delegation to Peking was displeased because the Chinese met them at the airport with signs denouncing Soviet "revisionism." However, Hanoi still wished to preserve good relations with Peking. It needed Chinese military and economic aid, particularly since the 1968 North Vietnamese harvest was expected to fall short of their needs and because it did not wish to find itself entirely dependent on Soviet support. [40]

(C) On 7 October, a Hanoi correspondent, Moalic, stated that the Chinese were withdrawing troops from NVN. He attributed this to DRV convictions that the US bombing halt was final and would not resume. As a result, Chinese repair and anti-aircraft crews were no longer needed. He did not think that the alleged troop withdrawal had anything to do with strained Chinese/DRV relations. [41]

(C) Prior to October 1968, Peking had not formally acknowledged the Paris peace talks. They departed from this line on 19 October when an international broadcast warned NVN against accepting US bombing halt proposals. The broadcast was restrained in tone and only once referred to the alleged proposals as a "big plot and fraud." China's prolonged silence on the Paris talks had indicated her opposition to a negotiated settlement. [42]

(C) After mid-October, Peking occasionally carried a news story, based on western press reports, discussing the negotiations. The CHICOM media sporadically attacked the meeting as a "peace talk hoax." Peking did not, however, make any bold editorial comments. By refraining from comment, she hoped to avoid the pit-falls of denouncing negotiations that she did not control. If the negotiations turned out to be a success, it would be a public demonstration of Peking's lack of authority over NVN. Peking used a more subtle method of displaying her dissatisfaction: the CHICOM news media reproduced US texts and, for the first time, did not ritualisticly denounce their content. [43]

(FOUO) Mao, Lin Piao, and Chou En-Lai's greetings to the NLF on its anniversary was another indication of CHICOM/NVN's strained relations. 1968's treatment of the occasion was very subdued in comparison to 1967's effusive celebration of the 19 December event. In 1967, Mao asserted that the two nations were "lips and teeth. . . brothers, sharing weal and woe" and that the Chinese people would provide "powerful backing." The 1968 message simply noted China's "resolute support" of Vietnamese and their struggle. The picture presented by this message indicated that China wanted to go on record in support of past achievements of the Vietnamese "people's war," and to express its conviction that persistence in such an approach was the way to final victory. [44]

(C) During the latter part of December, CHICOM Deputy Chief of the General Staff, Wu Fa-Hsien, praised the Vietnamese people for their "perservering in the protracted war." He reiterated Peking's belief that final victory would be the product of battlefield confrontations --not the Paris talks. He charged the US and Soviet Union of collusion, and he said that the USSR desired to "sabotage the war against US aggression." [45]

NVN INFILTRATION INTO RVN

(C) Enemy troop strengths in SVN were largely the result of decisions made in Hanoi in mid-1967. At that time, the enemy was losing the war of attrition. In order to offset his losses and to improve his weapons and munitions, the enemy increased both his infiltration rates and the modernization of his LOCs.

(S) Infiltration into SVN increased appreciably in 1968. Estimates of infiltrators entering the country for the first half of the year varied from 90,000 to over 100,000. It was estimated that air strikes, defections, and malaria, collectively, took a toll of 35 percent of this number. A majority of the infiltration packets moved by foot and averaged approximately 12 kilometers per day. Most of the groups were replacement packets with an average size of 300 to 400 men. Some complete combat units, such as regiments and particularly artillery battalions, were also infiltrated. [46] Infiltration of personnel and material into SVN was accomplished by the interchangeable use of main roads, mazes of trails and inland waterways and, to a very minor

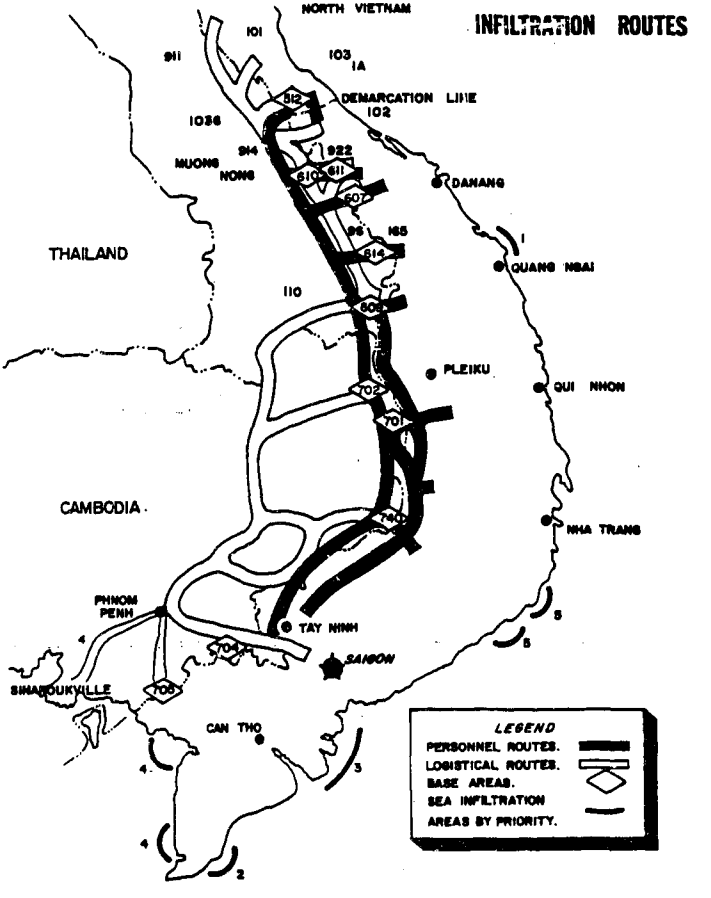
degree, by various sea routes (see Figure III-2). Tracing the infiltrators' exact routes was difficult due to a lack of more definitive intelligence information and the enemy's constant ability to select from the multitude of avenues. Routes employed to infiltrate into the DMZ area were believed to have been Routes 1A, 101, 102, 1036, and to some extent Route 103 which was supplemented by a maze of trails. [47]

(S) Evidence indicated that beginning in 1965 there was an increase of NVA personnel routed through Cambodia. In 1965 and early 1966, the major infiltration trail crossed a short portion of the northeastern tip of Cambodia in the tri-border area into SVN, down the valley of Nam Sathay River, almost to its junction with the Se San River, and crossed Highway 19 before heading into SVN again. From the fall of 1967, there was a noticeable increase in enemy road construction activity along the trans-border infiltration route. This construction was instrumental in the significant upsurge in vehicular, personnel, and equipment movement into SVN in 1968. During September 1968, information indicated that additional routes had been constructed in Cambodia which gave the enemy a ready alternative to their older approaches to SVN. The southern extension of the infiltration route was not clearly delineated but it appeared to swing back into SVN in the Nam Lyr Mountain area; however, it may have extended on the Cambodian side of the border as it apparently had been extended on the SVN side of Tay Ninh Province.

(S) All material destined for enemy forces in SVN, that crossed the Lao Panhandle, entered Laos via NVN Routes 15 and 137. Within the Panhandle, the main logistical routes were 23A, 911, 912, 91, 914, 92, and 96. Eastward roads leading toward the SVN border were 9, 925, 926, 922, 165, and 110. During the first half of 1968, construction and improvement was detected in most of these areas. Infiltration groups used varying patterns of movement and march discipline. For example, while in Laos or Cambodia under a double or triple canopy foliage, groups proceeded freely during daylight and exercised little or no march discipline. After entering SVN, movement was conducted at night with excellent noise, light, and march discipline. Commo-liaison stations (see Enemy Support Operations) played an important role in the infiltration effort. They functioned as resupply points, provided medical aid to the more seriously wounded or ill, and furnished guides to the next stopover. The stations were located along the infiltration routes but not necessarily on the trails themselves. Infiltration represented a cross section of all types of NVN personnel and equipment required by the enemy in SVN. They probably included not only combat and combat support units but also some administrative service and political personnel. Enemy infiltration in IV CTZ consisted primarily of food and munitions with only minimal personnel infiltration reported. Only an estimated 1,000 troops had entered IV CTZ by mid-1968.

(S) Infiltration groups, particularly those that entered the Saigon area, were not heavily armed during their infiltration or at the time of their arrival. Most elements arrived with just enough weapons to provide a minimum defense capability. This procedure was probably based upon the assumption that infiltration personnel were not likely to encounter Allied units until after their arrival in assigned areas of operations. Many of the infiltrators were soldiers who had been drafted and trained shortly before their departure from NVN. The very young and the older recruit appeared frequently in 1968. Pre-infiltration training lasted from three to four months. It consisted of weapons, tactics, physical, political, and infiltration training. Certain interrogation reports indicated that all infiltration training was not so extensive. In one instance, they had received only one month of training prior to infiltration; in another case the training consisted only of carrying pack loads of increasing weight on long foot marches over a period of weeks. [48]

~~SECRET~~



~~SECRET~~

FIGURE III-2

(C) The nature of the enemy's infiltration of personnel was such that many groups remained undetected for several months. For this reason, infiltration data was subject to continuing reevaluation due to receipt of updating information. Data for the period from 1 July 1968 to 31 December 1968 was considered incomplete and totally inadequate for determining trends. It is emphasized that the estimate of 136,229 NVN personnel who infiltrated SVN from 1 January to 31 October 1968 represents the only valid information available at the time of this report but it is probable that only a portion of the actual infiltration is presented:[49]

	ACCEPTED			POSSIBLE	TOTAL
	Confirmed	Probable	Total		
1. Jan 68	13,850	600	14,450	7,670	22,120
2. Feb 68	8,726	420	9,146	3,682	12,828
3. Mar 68	18,884	700	19,584	4,876	24,460
4. Apr 68	11,729	1,902	13,631	6,237	19,868
5. May 68	7,930	1,500	9,430	6,775	16,205
6. Jun 68	8,753	1,400	10,153	646	10,799
7. Jul 68	5,470	1,550	7,020	2,380	9,400
8. Aug 68	6,486	700	7,186	2,830	10,016
9. Sep 68	1,795	700	2,495	1,100	3,595
10. Oct 68	500	1,100	1,600	1,400	3,000
11. Nov 68	-----	1,180	1,180	1,133	2,313
12. Dec 68	200	500	700	925	1,625

VC POLITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Leadership

General

(C) At the close of 1967, through captured documents and PW interrogation, MACV was able to develop a better understanding of the VC political infrastructure organizations and their missions, from the Central Office for South Vietnam (COSVN) to hamlet level. The war in

Vietnam was really a two phase war. First, it was a military struggle against the VC and the NVN regular military forces; second, it was a political struggle against the VC political administrative apparatus or infrastructure that directed and supported the military forces and front organizations at all levels -- from the military region down to the hamlet. The political infrastructure was the "shadow government" of the VC that directed the insurgency in the south and competed with the legal SVN government for control of the people. This very complex organization was manned and operated by thousands of well-trained and dedicated VC political cadre who sought first to control and then to organize all facets of the South Vietnamese people's lives toward full support of the insurgency. In VC-controlled areas, the infrastructure acted as a civil government. In contested and GVN-controlled areas, it directed a program of intense propaganda mixed with terrorism which was aimed at undermining GVN control. In many parts of the country, VC and GVN officials competed openly for the people's support. For example, the GVN would build roads and collect taxes during the day while during the night the VC collected taxes and committed acts of terrorism. This critical struggle was going on everywhere in SVN and had to be recognized and monitored closely.

Background

(C) After the decisive French defeat at Dien Bien Phu, Ho Chi Minh, under apparent Sino-Soviet pressure, let it be known that he was ready to discuss peace. The resulting negotiations fixed a Provisional Military Demarcation Line roughly along the seventeenth parallel. It provided for the total evacuation of NVN by the French forces and a concurrent evacuation of the area south of the seventeenth parallel by the Vietminh forces. In addition to the truce agreement, a final declaration, commonly referred to as the Geneva Accord, dated 21 July 1954, provided for the holding of general elections throughout both North and South Vietnam in July 1956.

(C) In anticipation of the elections, Ho Chi Minh left a number of "stay-behind" political cadre in SVN to maintain and improve his position among the people. As 1956 approached, it became apparent to Ho that the elections would not be held; therefore, he gave the word for the Vietminh underground, deliberately left behind in the south, to begin building a political infrastructure in preparation for full-scale insurgency. By 1958, this apparatus was well-enough organized to direct small-scale terroristic activities consisting primarily of assassinations of village and hamlet chiefs who had been appointed by the then - President of SVN, Diem. Toward the end of 1959, VC guerrilla units were sufficiently organized to conduct actual armed attacks against GVN installations; by mid-1960, the movement had grown large enough to require a formal, overt, sponsoring organization.

(C) In response to the need for a front organization, members of the southern element of the ruling Lao Dong (Worker's) Communist Party of NVN met to announce the creation of the National Front for the Liberation of South Vietnam (NFLSVN or NLF). The NLF was designed to channel anti-Diem and southern nationalist feelings and groups into a single broad-based organization in support of the insurgency. At the same time, it was to provide a screen behind which the Communists could continue to direct the movement. In a further attempt to disguise Communist control of the Front, the southern branch of the Lao Dong Party changed its name in late 1961 to the People's Revolutionary Party (PRP). Shortly thereafter, the Central Office for South Vietnam (COSVN) was formed by Hanoi to serve as the political/military command and control headquarters for all its activities in the south. COSVN had the mission of implementing directives and policy decisions passed down from the Reunification Department of the Lao Dong Party.

(C) From 1962 until about 1965, the VC infrastructure continued to expand until it included some type of organization in nearly all of SVN's 2,500 villages and 12,000 hamlets. After early 1966, direct US military intervention forced Hanoi and COSVN to shift more emphasis to the military effort at the expense of the continued growth of the political apparatus. At that time, the infrastructure underwent a considerable change in attempting to adjust to US military pressure. During 1968, more emphasis was directed toward consolidation of areas under VC control.

(C) It is important to remember that, while the infrastructure was no longer the largely unfettered, expansion-oriented organization it was in 1965, it was still an extremely well-organized, disciplined, and effective control apparatus that coordinated the war effort in the South with great determination in the face of great pressure from FWMAF operations. Many of its cadre remained convinced of the inevitable triumph of their cause.

Definitions

(C) Infrastructure. The official MACV definition of infrastructure is:

> The political and adminstrative organization through which the Viet Cong control or seek control over the South Vietnamese people. It embodies the Party (People's Revolutionary Party) control structure, which includes a command and administrative apparatus (Central Office for South Vietnam) at the national level, a parallel front organization (National Front for the Liberation of South Vietnam--NFLSVN), both of which extend from the national to the hamlet level. 50

1. The infrastructure included:

a. Membership of the Current Affairs Committee and all subordinate functional elements of each party chapter organization down to and including the hamlets.

b. Leadership only of the parallel Front organizations.

c. Leadership only of the Military Party Affairs element of each echelon party committee (at the village and hamlet levels, this included the guerrilla chief).

2. The infrastructure did not include:

a. Members of organized military units (except village and hamlet guerrilla chiefs).

b. Rank and file members of the Front associations.

c. Persons who were recruited as civilian laborers by the infrastructure to perform a single specific task or to work on an irregular basis.

d. Members of the population base in VC-controlled areas who did not hold specific positions within the infrastructure.

(C) People's Revolutionary Party (PRP). The PRP was the southern branch of the Lao Dong (Worker's) Communist Party of North Vietnam. It was the guiding organization behind all insurgent activity in South Vietnam.

(C) National Front for the Liberation of South Vietnam (NFLSVN). This was the cover or Front organization behind which the PRP carried on the war in SVN. This organization was created by the PRP to act as an agent of the Party in relations with foreign countries and to give the false impression to the South Vietnamese people and to the world that the VC were sponsored by an indigenous southern nationalist organization, not by the Communist Party of NVN. The Front served the additional purpose of providing the leadership for a wide variety of Front Associations (such as farmers', womens', and youth associations) which embraced all age, occupational, or interest groups in SVN under the banner of progressive anti-GVN, anti-American nationalism. In this way, the PRP hoped to organize a great number of people in support of their cause without showing their true Communist ties.

Territorial Organization

(C) The VC organized SVN into nine Military Regions (MR) subordinate to the COSVN. These MRs, each having its own political/military headquarters with 200 to 700 cadre, varied considerably in both size and mission. Subordinate to these MRs were 33 VC provinces (in contrast to 44 GVN) and approximately 230 districts, each with its own party organization. A province headquarters could have between 75 and several hundred cadre while a district organization usually had about 50. (Figure III-3 indicates VC boundaries and names for the political subdivisions, down to province level).

(C) Below the district level, the infrastructure organization included some administrative apparatus in most of the 2,500 villages and 12,000 hamlets in South Vietnam. It was at the village and hamlet levels that the infrastructure was most active in fulfilling its primary mission of providing a popular base for the insurgency.

Structure

(C) Province. Each of the 33 provinces was controlled by a Province Party Committee similar to the one shown on the line-and-block chart (See Figure III-4). The Province Party Committee itself was composed of PRP members who staffed the subordinate elements. While not everyone in the various subordinate sections belonged to the Party, all the important positions were filled by Party members.

1. The Executive Committee met periodically to make broad policy decisions. It was composed of the Party Secretary and other key Party officials, most of whom also held jobs elsewhere in the organization.

2. The Current Affairs Committee carried on the daily business of the Province Committee. Its membership consisted of the chiefs of the subordinate functional sections. The Current Affairs Committee met every day to make specific decisions implementing policy and assigned tasks both to subordinate sections within its own organization and to the districts.

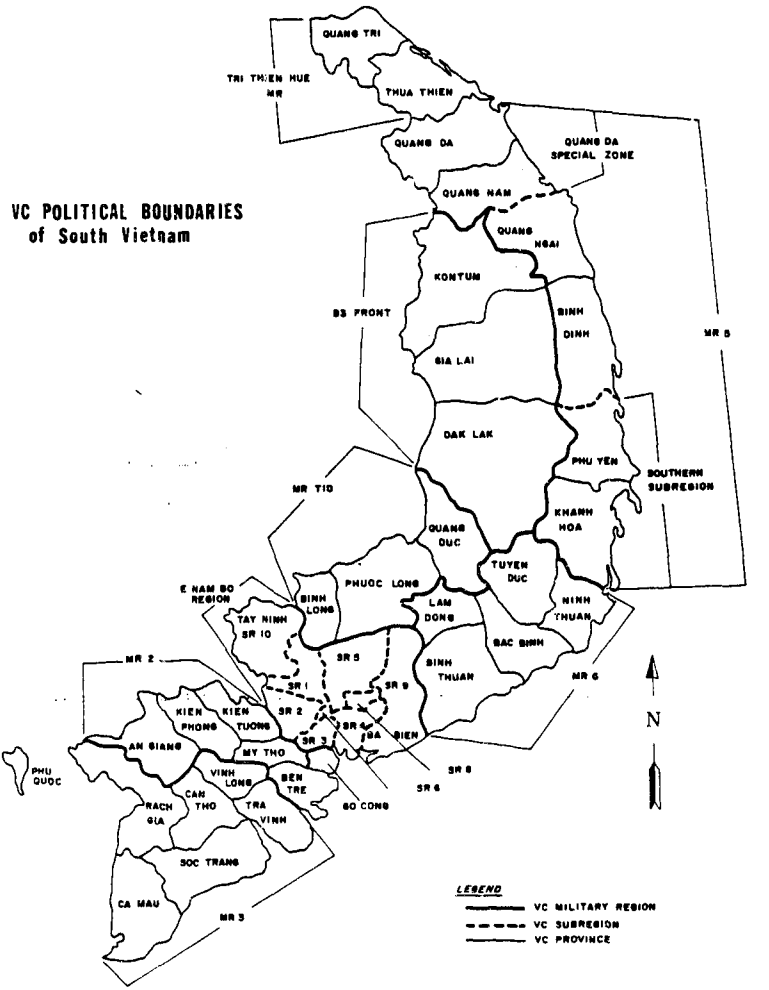

VC POLITICAL BOUNDARIES
of South Vietnam
QUANG TRI
TRI THIEN HUE MR
THUA THIEN
QUANG DA
QUANG DA SPECIAL ZONE
QUANG NAM
QUANG NGAI
KONTUM
B3 FRONT
BINH DINH
MR 5
GIA LAI
DAK LAK
PHU YEN
SOUTHERN SUBREGION
MR TIO
KHANH HOA
QUANG DUC
TUYEN DUC
E NAM BO REGION
PHUOC LONG
BINH LONG
LAM DONG
NINH THUAN
TAY NINH SR 10
BAC BINH
MR 2
SR 5
SR 1
SR 9
BINH THUAN
MR 6
KIEN PHONG
KIEN TUONG
SR 2
SR 4
SR 3
BA XUYEN
AN GIANG
MY THO
PHU QUOC
VINH LONG
BEN TRE
SR 8
SR 6
CAN THO
TRA VINH
GO CONG
RACH GIA
SOC TRANG
CA MAU
MR 3
N
LEGEND
VC MILITARY REGION
VC SUBREGION
VC PROVINCE

FIGURE III-3

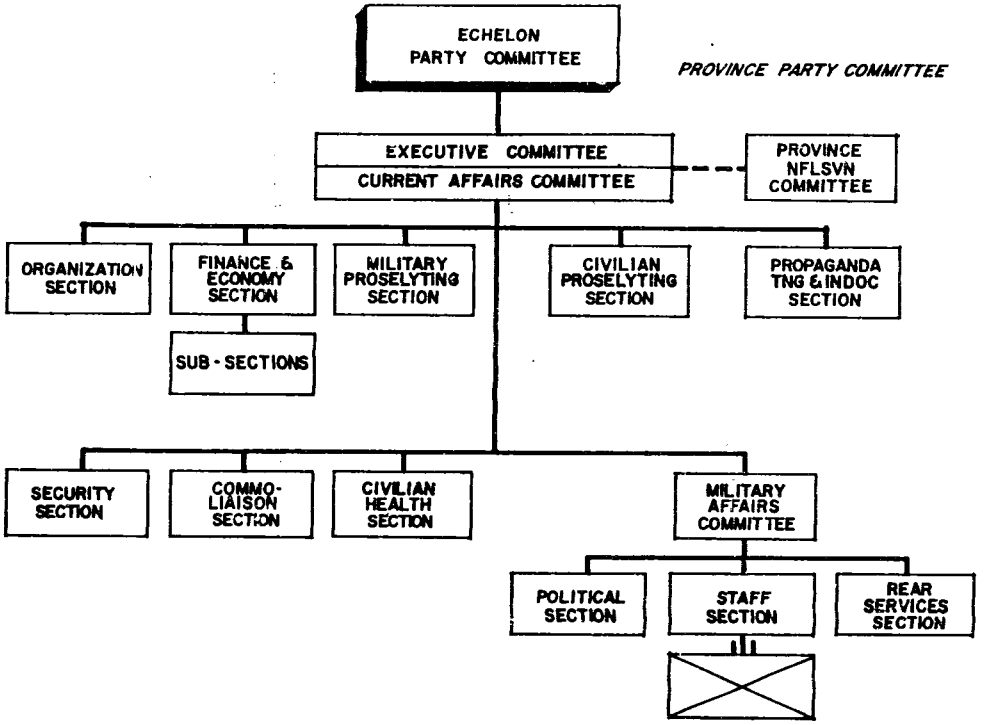

ECHELON
PARTY COMMITTEE
PROVINCE PARTY COMMITTEE
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
CURRENT AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
PROVINCE
NFLSVN
COMMITTEE
ORGANIZATION
SECTION
FINANCE &
ECONOMY
SECTION
MILITARY
PROSELYTING
SECTION
CIVILIAN
PROSELYTING
SECTION
PROPAGANDA
TNG & INDOC
SECTION
SUB - SECTIONS
SECURITY
SECTION
COMMO-
LIAISON
SECTION
CIVILIAN
HEALTH
SECTION
MILITARY
AFFAIRS
COMMITTEE
POLITICAL
SECTION
STAFF
SECTION
REAR
SERVICES
SECTION

FIGURE III-4

3. The Organization Section was similar to the adjutant general in our own military organization. This section maintained personal history statements, made Party personnel assignments, wrote efficiency reports and, since this was a Communist Party organization, had the additional responsibility of maintaining Party discipline.

4. The Finance and Economy Section was one of the most active. It prepared an annual budget for approval by the Executive Committee as well as overseeing a complex tax collection and dispersal system which received, accounted for and allocated scarce resources. These resources included food and war materials as well as money. At the provincial level, this section usually operated a number of production subsections to produce goods for use in the insurgency and to bring in non-tax revenues for the Party officers. For example, in Binh Dinn Province, the Finance and Economy Section ran a blacksmith shop to perform services directly for the Party as well as to produce revenue by commercial operations.

5. The Military Proselyting Section was responsible for recruiting ARVN soldiers to the VC cause. "Proselyting" was a combination of recruiting, training, and indoctrinating. A common method of operation was to encourage families in VC-controlled hamlets to write letters to sons and relatives serving in the ARVN, urging them to return home.

6. The Civilian Proselyting Section provided staff supervision over the District Front Committees within the province. This section decided how to organize unexploited interest and occupational groups into some form that would lend support to the VC, such as the organization of an "Old Monks' Association." Care must be taken to differentiate this Civilian Proselyting Section from the Front Committee or NFLSVN Committee which in some areas was the popular name for the entire chapter organization. This distinction depended on the degree to which the Party had successfully shrouded itself behind the NFLSVN. For example, in most areas official Party correspondence was sent on stationery bearing the letterhead of the "National Front for the liberation of South Viet Nam."

7. The Propaganda, Training, and Indoctrination Section had the mission of developing and disseminating the highly refined VC propaganda to which the population of South Vietnam was constantly subjected. The VC did not draw a clear distinction between indoctrination and training. The "training" was actually political indoctrination. Party members and functionaries were given nearly as much attention as the general population and they were quickly sent off to "retraining" courses if their enthusiasm for the insurgency showed signs of waning.

8. The Security Section performed both physical security and counterintelligence functions. As part of its intelligence responsibilities, this section operated an extensive network of agents within and outside of VC-controlled areas.

9. The Commo-Liaison Section was responsible for communications within a province. The VC had established a labyrinth of commo-liaison stations and routes for carrying messages and guiding personnel from one infrastructure element to another.

10. The Military Party Affairs Section was one of the most important elements in the infrastructure. Its mission was to direct the activities of the province military unit, usually a battalion.

a. The Political Subsection was headed by the political officer who insured that all military decisions made by the unit commander were "politically" correct. He was also head of the PRP chapter and cell organization within the province military unit.

b. The Military Staff Subsection performed a combination of the S1, S2, and S3 functions which were similar to those of the US military.

c. The Rear Service Subsection provided logistical support for the military unit and could be compared with the S4 function in a US military unit.

(C) District. At the district level, the infrastructure was organized very much like it was at the province except that it had fewer people and a more compact area of responsibility. The functional elements subordinate to the Current Affairs Committee at provincial level also appeared at district level and their missions and names were similar. This was true even though there was some evidence that the original VC plan for the infrastructure did not include a district echelon. The original intent was for the Province Party Committee to control villages and hamlets directly. This means of control proved to be unworkable however, and the District Committee was created to improve communication with the people. The important difference between the province and district was that at the higher level, "policy" was formulated by interpreting MR directives. At the district level, this policy was carried out by dividing and assigning tasks among the subordinate villages and hamlets. Because of the District Committee's role as an "action" rather than a "policy" organization, it was particularly vulnerable to manpower shortages and reductions in the quality of its cadre.

(C) Village/Hamlet. Because the majority of the South Vietnamese people lived in rural villages and hamlets, the VC placed special emphasis on the organization of the infrastructure at these levels. The great majority of infrastructure cadre in SVN were in village and hamlet organizations, of which there were two basic kinds:

1. GVN-Controlled Area. In GVN-controlled and contested areas, village and hamlet infrastructure was both flexible and covert. It usually included four or five Party members who operated in the village at night and hid outside the populated area during the day. Emphasis was placed on propaganda, terrorism, tax collection, and intelligence gathering; the overall purpose being to undermine GVN authority. In areas of particularly strong GVN control only one or two clandestine cadre would operate, usually under the direct control of the District Party Committee.

2. VC-Controlled Areas. In VC-controlled areas, the infrastructure placed more emphasis on civil government with the mission of fully involving every man, woman, and child in some activity supporting the insurgency. To take full advantage of the natural leaders in the villages and hamlets, the VC held free popular elections for a governing body which was usually an Autonomous Administrative Committee (AAC). The elections were, of course, controlled by the Party, but the idea was to install popular leaders in an apparently legitimate government and then bring them under Party control through intensive indoctrination. The VC preferred to allow the people to govern themselves with a minimum of background Party guidance, thereby releasing Party cadre for other tasks. At the same time, the people's sense of participation in their own government lent legitimacy to the AAC as a legal civil organ and reduced the Party's apparent role in the insurgency.

a. AACs performed all the roles of a normal civil government plus a few additional ones necessary to support the war. According to a captured VC document, their overall mission was divided into three broad areas:

(1) Mobilization of manpower and material resources for the war effort.

(2) Maintenance of security and order in villages and hamlets.

(3) Provision for services in public health, education, culture, and social welfare activities.

b. In addition to the AAC, VC-controlled villages and hamlets had a Liberation Front Committee, usually headed by a Party member, under which virtually the entire population was organized into a broad range of "liberation associations" to which the people were more or less compelled to belong. For example, the Farmers' Association usually controlled the market place which only members were allowed to use.[51]

Military Regions

(C) During early 1968, the VC political infrastructure MRs underwent boundary, district, territorial, and to some degree, infrastructure organizational changes. Two VC reorganizations, involving boundary changes, reportedly took place in the Tri-Thien-Hue MR. The first of these reorganizations included the adoption of interdistrict or subregion echelons (See Figure III-5). The following interdistricts or subregions were reportedly created within the Tri-Thien-Hue MR:

1. Interdistrict or Subregion 1, consisting of (VC) Gio Linh and Cam Lo Districts and the northern part of (VC) Huong Hoa District.

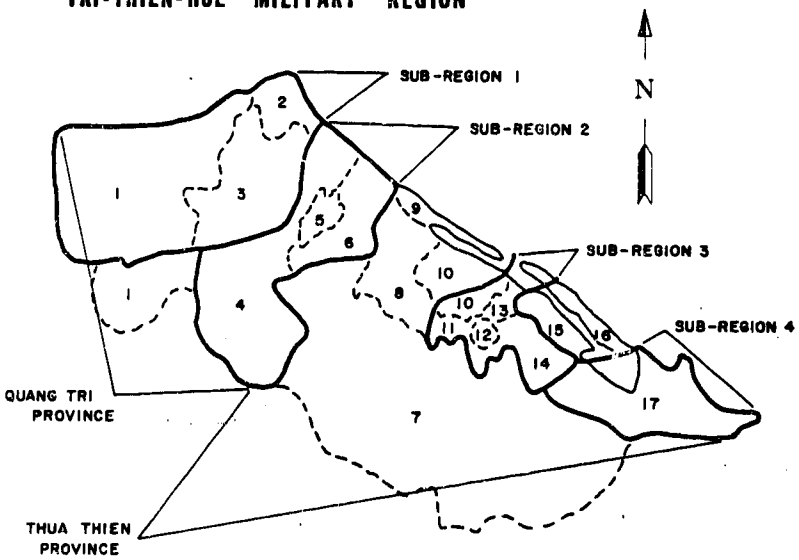
2. Interdistrict or Subregion 2, consisting of (VC) Trien Phong and Hai Long Districts.

3. Interdistrict or Subregion 3, consisting of (VC) Huong Thuy, Phu Vang, and Huong Tra Districts.

4. Interdistrict or Subregion 4, consisting of (VC) Phu Loc District.

(C) As part of the above reorganization, the province-level echelons of both (VC) Quang Tri and Thua Thien Provinces were abolished. These province-level echelons had apparently been replaced by interdistrict or subregion echelons, each of which administered several districts. Thus, four interdistrict-level organizations were administering an area which was formerly administered by only two province-level organizations. The reorganization, therefore, enabled the VC to maintain closer contact with, and better control of, subordinate districts, villages, and hamlets. The reorganization in the Tri-Thien-Hue MR probably was the result of a growing awareness among high level cadre that the past emphasis on military activities had only been possible at the cost of a corresponding de-emphasis on maintenance of a viable infrastructure. The new organization was designed to promote and facilitate greater emphasis on the political activities necessary to regain or increase popular support. The most acute losses in the VC infrastructure had resulted from the large-scale movement of people from rural areas, which were often VC-controlled, to urban areas which were generally under friendly control. The VC recognized the need for strengthening their infrastructure in the rural areas (including the new interdistrict echelon) and were initiating an intensive campaign to reduce damaging emigration. The enemy also hoped to revitalize his urban political apparatus in an effort to gain the support of the city dwellers. It was expected that he would introduc

TRI-THIEN-HUE MILITARY REGION



SUB-REGION 1
1. HUONG HOA (EXCEPT SOUTHERN PORTION)
2. GIO LINH
3. CAM LO

SUB-REGION 2
4. TRIEU PHONG
5. MAI LINH
6. HAI LANG
*7. NAM HOA
*8. PHONG DIEN
*9. HONG DIEN

SUB-REGION 3
10. QUANG DIEN
11. HUONG TRA
12. HUE
13. PHU VANG
14. HUONG THUY
*15. PHU THU (GVN)
*16. VIN LOC (GVN)

SUB-REGION 4
17. PHU LOC

LEGEND

——— SUB-REGION
- - - - DISTRICT
* UNACCOUNTED FOR IN REORGANIZATION

FIGURE III-5

additional cadre into urban areas and organize stay-behind elements into urban guerrilla/political forces.

Significant Enemy Activities

(C) Military Region 5. There were indications that the VC were shifting their emphasis from rural to urban areas in (VC) Khanh Hoa and Phu Yen Provinces. As early as the fall of 1967, a captured document from the Nha Trang City Committee indicated that the VC considered it necessary to extend their control into the urban areas because of the steady emigration of the rural population to cities and towns. Advance units were given the responsibility of setting up political organs in the cities. In support of their plans and as part of the Winter/Spring Campaign, attacks were to be made on Tuy Hoa City, the capital of (C[illegible]hu Yen Province, and Nha Trang City in (GVN) Khanh Hoa Province. During the Tet [illegible] attacks on these cities were, in fact, initiated. The attacks were launched in hop[illegible] considerable number of urban residents to join in the "Khoi Nghia" (general uprising), [illegible]e VC to hold cities or, at least, to impress urban residents and the ARVN/FWMAF [illegible] capability of the VC to penetrate GVN urban strongholds at will.

(C) Military Region 6. As in other areas of SVN, there were reports of [illegible]ading" cadre from district to village level in MR 6. However, a program of "upgra[illegible]eteran cadre through additional training was also reported. The Province Party Committe[illegible] were given the responsibility of selecting a number of "winter cadre," (i.e., veteran cadre) to be sent to NVN for training in various service branches and combat arms. Criteria for selection included Party membership and "firm" ideological beliefs, as well as literacy and an unblemished personal history.

(C) Both the widespread "downgrading" of cadre and the "upgrading" of cadre by additional training were symptomatic of two related manpower problems. The first problem occurred when all the more able cadre at a certain echelon had been upgraded, leaving only the incompetent at the lower level. The second problem arose when cadre who had been promoted on the basis of Party fervor or battlefield exploits were later found to be lacking the necessary training and qualifications for higher positions. The Party had attempted to solve both problems by either downgrading competent cadre or by training cadre to a level of competence commensurate with their position.

(C) Military Regions 2 and 3. VC Long An Province in MR 2 had implemented a program for training agents to be placed in Saigon. Because of inadequacies, both in quality and quantity, of the "revolutionary force" in Saigon, COSVN adopted the policy of using rural forces to strengthen the VC element in the city. To that end, the following directive was issued to (VC) Long An Province:

> Each district will establish a Coordination and Operations Committee to take charge of the selection and training of personnel to be sent to Saigon.
>
> The district Party committee will have the responsibility for motivating Party members to comply with the directive.

The district Party committee will have the responsibility for motivating Party members to comply with the directive.

The expense of planning VC agents in Saigon will be paid for by the Province Party Committee.[52]

Strengths and Vulnerabilities

(C) Tri-Thien-Hue Military Region. In the Tri-Thien-Hue MR, emphasis had been placed on civilian proselyting. The insurgents had two possible reasons for this emphasis. First, the expectation that NVN would send needed military replacements decreased the emphasis on military proselyting. Secondly, the insurgents were having difficulty controlling the inexperienced recruits who deserted at the first opportunity as a result of insufficient indoctrination by civilian proselyting cadre.

(C) Recruiting and Shortage of Personnel. In MR 5, the VC recruiting trend was toward younger persons, both male and female, and older males than were formerly recruited. Also, recruiting efforts seemed less concerned with the "character" of the recruits, a quality often stressed in earlier directives. Recruiting difficulties had been reported (VC) Khanh Hoa Province in MR 5. This difficulty was understandable since relatively self-sufficient Kanh Hoa had never been particularly pro-VC, even in the days of the Vietminh-French struggle.

(C) The increased recruiting of women and children by the VC to fill key infrastructure slots in MR 2 and 3 was evidence of a shortage of male cadre. In the (VC) My Tho Province of MR 2, there was for example, a report of the Province Party Committee recruiting females for province agencies in order to free male personnel for service with the province military unit.

(C) Part of the VC recruitment problem in the Delta stemmed from their failure to utilize personnel resources adequately. Some areas appeared to have an ample supply of recruits whereas other areas had an acute shortage.

VC Political Objectives for the Tet Offensive

(C) The VC political objective for the offensive campaign launched against urban areas in SVN during Tet (30 January to 1 February 1968) was for an "ultimate" or "final" victory to be achieved militarily by seizing and holding urban population centers in SVN. This objective included the complete takeover of the GVN national and provincial administrative apparatus by NFLSVN people. In this case, there was to be no coalition government or non-NFLSVN participants.

(C) The first step in achieving the ultimate objective was military action to defeat the ARVN and to inflict heavy casualties on FWMAF units. Efforts were to be concentrated on destroying air bases, logistics storage areas, troop base areas, and LOCs in order to restrict the reaction forces available for aiding the cities which would also be under attack. The VC were to attack and seize the cities; most significantly, the attacks were to be aided and supported by a popular "general uprising." In the second stage, the VC expected that the "general uprising," including the VC show of armed strength, would result in the overthrow or

surrender of all the GVN administrative apparatus. In preparing for the Tet Offensive and "general uprising," the VC stressed the need for closer coordination between political and military activities.

(C) The final step in achieving the ultimate VC objective was to be the destruction of the remaining loyal ARVN units and attacks on FWMAF bases by VC units reinforced by deserting ARVN troops. The FWMAF were to be isolated with their LOCs cut. They were then expected to be forced to consolidate in a few heavily fortified enclaves. The enemy believed that political pressure and public opinion within the US would prevent the sending of additional troops to Vietnam to recapture the area lost. Moreover, public opinion in the US was then expected to force the US into negotiations which would result in the complete withdrawal of US troops from Vietnam.

(C) The military result that the VC expected to achieve in the Tet Campaign was the seizing and holding of some of the GVN province and district capitals and overrunning parts of Saigon. This success also was expected to lead to a "general uprising," the formation of a coalition government, and the eventual withdrawal of US forces from Vietnam.

(C) VC military forces, supported by the "general uprising," were to seize and hold the provincial cities. Military action would weaken control of the GVN, leaving the GVN in control of only the few urban areas which were strongly defended by ARVN/FWMAF units. GVN troops would be withdrawn from rural areas to defend the cities and to consolidate the remaining GVN-controlled areas leaving the rural areas and the unprotected urban areas exposed to VC "liberation."

(C) A coalition government was to be formed in VC "liberated areas." Key members of the coalition government would be drawn from the NFLSVN and from those persons from the GVN who "desired peace and neutrality." However, NFLSVN front organization names would not be used. Instead, new names, such as the "United Front for the Struggle of Peace and Democracy," would be used to convey the impression to the world that it was not the NFLSVN but all the Vietnamese people who were participating in the coalition government.

(C) Negotiations with the US were then to follow with the purpose of setting up a broad national coalition government and providing for the neutralization of SVN and the withdrawal of all US troops. Negotiations would be conducted between the US and the NFLSVN but the "puppet" Saigon government would be excluded. The NFLSVN would have a key role in this coalition government and NFLSVN members would hold the key Ministries of National Affairs, Public Security, Economy, and Foreign Affairs. It was expected that public pressure in the US would force the US to accept these negotiations.

(C) The minimum VC objectives in the Tet Offensive were identified as being those results which the VC leadership expected to achieve if their attacks on GVN population centers failed to win either complete or partial domination of the areas. The theory was that the attacks on the cities would still accomplish certain objectives, some of which were:

1. To increase friction and dissension between ARVN and FWMAF units.

2. To cause dissension among South Vietnamese government leaders and discredit the GVN administration.

3. To destroy large numbers of ARVN troops, thereby reducing their will to fight.

4. To cause suffering and hardships for the residents of previously "safe" urban areas, thus reducing their will to continue supporting the struggle against the VC.

5. To demonstrate VC strength to the Vietnamese people.

6. To infiltrate sapper units and "legal" cadre (intelligence agents) into GVN-controlled areas for use in future operations against the GVN.

7. To force ARVN/FWMAF units to leave pacified rural areas in order to defend the cities, thus opening the rural areas for the VC to expand their control.

8. To cause heavy US casualties, thus resulting in unfavorable US public opinion that could force the US to negotiate with the NFLSVN for a coalition government in South Vietnam.

Preparations for the Tet Offensive

(C) The creation of interdistrict or subregion echelons in the Tri-Thien-Hue MR and MR 4 seemed to have been aimed not only at strengthening VC control over districts, villages, and hamlets but also at meeting requirements of the major multipronged offensive on such cities as Quang Tri, Hue, and Saigon.

(C) It appeared that, in preparation for the Tet Offensive, the VC infrastructure organizations in areas surrounding population centers were tasked by higher echelons to provide organizational support within the cities themselves. One example was (VC) Long An Province in MR 2; the Long An Province Committee received an extensive directive from the COSVN concerning the use of province forces to strengthen the "revolutionary force" in Saigon. There were also reports of increased infrastructure activities in other South Vietnamese urban centers prior to 31 January. For example, in the Tri-Thien-Hue MR, the VC were revitalizing their urban political apparatus; in Phan Thiet City of MR 6, the residents were urged by the VC to maintain stores of food in preparation for offensive operations.

Objectives

(C) The VC planned to establish a coalition government if the Tet Offensive succeeded in triggering the "Khoi Nghia," or "general uprising," to which the success of the offensive was so explicitly tied. This objective may have been inspired by the long-planned Vietminh uprising against the French in Haiphong in 1946. Fortunately, any VC plans to provoke a similar uprising in the 1968 Tet Offensive were unsuccessful.

(C) While much of the VC infrastructure reorganization appeared to have been directly related to the Tet Offensive, reorganization also appears to have been part of a general VC program to strengthen control over the Vietnamese people. This general program was primarily the result of the movement of people from war-torn, rural, VC-controlled areas to GVN-controlled areas-- particularly urban centers. To counter this movement, lower VC echelons had been strengthened, VC boundaries were realigned, and VC elements in urban areas were expanded.53

Infrastructure Losses During the 1968 Tet Offensive

(C) One expected result of the heavy casualties suffered by the VC during the Tet Offensive was the loss of individuals who held leadership positions within the infrastructure. As of 2 March 1968, 47,014 of the enemy had been reported killed as a result of the Tet Offensive. Reports indicated that a significant portion of these fatalities (possibly several thousand) were VC political cadre. Most of these cadre were probably replaced by recruitment or infiltration; consequently, the losses could not be subtracted directly from total infrastructure strength. Nevertheless, such a large attrition in a relatively short period of time placed a severe strain on VC recruiting capabilities, probably resulting in an actual net loss in total strength. It should be noted, however, that strength figures alone mean little. Far more important were the early indications that a larger number of district and higher level cadre had been captured or killed during the Tet Offensive than at any other comparable time of the insurgency. These losses almost certainly had a significant impact on the overall quality of the political cadre and on the effectiveness with which the infrastructure would be able to direct and support the insurgency.

(C) In anticipation of a general uprising in the cities, large numbers of "legal cadre" infiltrated into and around urban areas to motivate the people and to lead them in demonstrations against the government of SVN. By such actions, the cadre became vulnerable to friendly military and police operations and initial reports indicated that a considerable number were captured or killed. At the same time, organic infrastructure organizations, already operating in the cities, sacrificed their relatively covert status for overt activities in support of the anticipated uprising. In Saigon this activity included preparations for a provisional coalition government and explained why the VC were willing to risk the presence of General Tran Do, Deputy Political Officer of the Central Office for South Vietnam, in the Saigon area where he was killed on 11 February.

(C) All of the above indicates a particularly serious loss for the clandestine city or municipal political infrastructure organizations (equal to the district echelon in the infrastructure chain of command) throughout the country. Most initial attacks on government installations, National Police headquarters, and ARVN compounds in and around the cities were conducted by elements of various sapper units directly subordinate to the city political apparatus. At the same time, city and other legal cadre conducted open propaganda directed at organizing demonstrations to complement the sapper attacks. When no uprising materialized, many political cadre were rounded up by the National Police, along with the sapper units. Subsequent interrogations led to still further arrests as the National Police set up special teams to exploit leads and capture members of the surfaced city organizations before the VC could realize their miscalculation and return to underground operations. For example, information obtained during interrogation of a prisoner in Nha Trang was the basis for a police raid that netted four cadre, including two members of the Nha Trang Municipal Committee. In turn, their interrogation led to the arrest of a member of the Khanh Hoa Province Committee and one other cadre. The interrogation of the Province Committee member then led to the arrest of two other cadre. This chain of arrests was completed in about 72 hours. The Khanh Hoa ICEX Coordinator stated: "It is possible that before the police are through, the entire VC Nha Trang organization will be destroyed." Similar police successes were possible in Qui Nhon where reports included the Secretary and Assistant Secretary of the Qui Nhon City Committee as being among the VC eliminated in the 30 January attack on that city.

(C) It appeared that the VC plan for the general uprising was to have been carried out primarily through the leadership of district and city echelon cadre. These cadre were to have led the people through the uprising and then established provisional local governments to fill the vacuum resulting from disintegrating GVN authority. In place of their anticipated success, the VC were then faced with the possibility of a temporary breakdown of infrastructure control in certain urban areas. This breakdown was expected because losses suffered at the district and city echelons played a very critical role in the chain of command for the VC infrastructure.

(C) The district or city Party Committee was particularly vulnerable to manpower shortages because it was the highest "action" level in the Party political structure. At the province echelon, where policy was still being interpreted and formulated, the loss of key cadre undoubtedly detracted from the quality of long-term planning but only in a few cases would the loss be immediate or critical. The province Current Affairs Committees generally met once a month, allowing sufficient time to adjust responsibilities or to replace lost members.

(C) At the village and hamlet levels, no individual cadre's responsibilities were so great that they could not be absorbed, either temporarily or permanently, by another member of the local infrastructure. Furthermore, these local organizations were usually sufficiently flexible to allow for the shift of missions between various elements. For example, if the village Party chapter was destroyed, the Farmer's Association Executive Committee could take over its functions, perhaps under the general direction of a single Party member from the district level. In addition, local guerrilla units could be used to collect taxes and conduct armed propaganda sessions. Self-defense and secret-defense elements could be similarly utilized.

(C) At the district level, however, the sudden loss of key cadre (e.g., Finance and Economy, Military Party Affairs, or Security) had immediate and far-reaching effects. District cadre usually had many years of Party experience, proven leadership capabilities, and commensurate responsibilities that required day-to-day active supervision of a large segment of political activity in all the villages and hamlets within the district. District cadre were not policy makers or functionaries that carried out detailed instructions but rather "action" cadre who bridged the gap between the two. As such, their loss placed a critical strain on the infrastructure and their replacement was given the highest priority.

(C) Some temporary adjustments were made in the structure of district organizations. These adjustments included changes in the balance between military and political activities. For example, in the Delta during Tet when GVN Revolutionary Development (RD) cadre were temporarily withdrawn from the countryside into the cities, VC district organizations expanded their propaganda and proselyting elements (at the expense of military operations) in an intensive effort to bring villages abandoned by the GVN into their political sphere before the return of RD cadre. By contrast, districts that had taken heavy casualties among their subordinate local force units as a result of the Tet fighting were under considerable pressure from the province committees to place the highest priority on recruiting. Some military leaders were recruited directly from the infrastructure ranks, thereby further weakening the political organizations to strengthen the military.[54]

The New Front

(C) In order to further their cause, the VC/NVA leadership created a new front, the Alliance for National Democratic and Peace Forces (ANDPF). This organization was, apparently, formed in Ban Me Thuot as early as mid-February 1968 but its membership was to remain secret until after the VC had won a military vic' ". 55 Therefore, the formation of the Alliance was not announced until 20 April 1968 in Cholon. The following day, the Liberation Radio began a propaganda campaign which was immediately picked up by Hanoi. Within a week, the momentum was building and the Alliance received the praises of a Politburo member, Truong Chinh. He stated that Hue and Thua Thien were two locations where "people's power" had been installed. By 29 April, the new front had been recognized by Moscow through the Tass International Service. Trinh Dinh Thao was installed as the head of the Alliance while the Vanh Han region chairman, Thich Don Hau, was promoted to the vice-chairmanship. 56

(S) During the first month of existance, the Alliance appeared to have had a very limited affect on the people of SVN. It did, however, attract certain student groups, intellectuals, and "militant" Buddhists of central Vietnam. Two of the more prominent Saigon students who supported the new organization were Tran Trieu Luat and Ho Huu Nhut. Both were "officers" in student activist circles. Luat's support of the Alliance was viewed as a significant triumph for he was widely respected in the student community of Saigon.

(S) The formation of the Alliance also succeeded in creating some doubt in the minds of GVN leaders concerning the "good faith" of US intentions in SVN. For example, Tran Thuong Nhon, Secretary General of the Free Democratic Forces, stated that the Alliance may have been "American-inspired." He believed that this could have been a creation which was designed to facilitate the imposition of a coalition government on SVN. Thus, although the Alliance had an unstable beginning, it was not a total failure. 57

> The Alliance's action program, as outlined in . . . Liberation Radio communique, was to put an end to the war, restore peace, achieve national independence and sovereignty, build South Vietnam into an independent, free, peaceful, neutral, and prosperous nation, and advance toward unifying the country peacefully on the basis of equal discussions between North and South. 58

(C) Members who were elected to the Alliance Central Committee were overtly non-Communist. This, along with the adoption of an official flag and anthem, was designed to foster its "independent" image, but the mask that was created was very thin. A national "salvation" appeal was passed by the conference that had announced the formation of the Alliance. This appeal was very similar to programs that had previously been supported by the NLFSVN. Thus, the Alliance exposed itself as a creation of the NLFSVN, and it was labeled by the US and GVN as a disguise of the NLFSVN. 59

(S) As a result of the close association of the Alliance and the NLFSVN, the Alliance was still experiencing difficulty in attracting popular support in mid-July. This was significant because the people of SVN were obviously favoring a peaceful solution to the war and many believed that a third force was necessary for the accomplishment of this goal.

(C) On 12 July, the GVN took a bold step which was designed to further discredit and expose the Alliance as a front organization. The GVN sentenced the top ten leaders of the Alliance to death, in absentia. 60 But, the Communists were not idle, for during the same month they initiated a concerted effort to gain support of the Alliance on the international scene. Their approach coincided with a decline in military activity. The Alliance was given new prominence in their propaganda and it was even mentioned in relation to the negotiations which were taking place in Paris. 61

(C) On 15 August, Liberation Radio explained the Alliance's political program in terms that were almost identical to those of the NLF. The conclusion of the program gave a hint as to why the Communists did not adequately disguise the Alliance's function as a NLF organization. It noted that the Alliance "consistently sides with the NLF." It further asserted that the program served the formation of a "comprenensive anti-US, national salvation, national unified front." Only the addition of capital letters to these words would have been needed to "merge" the Alliance and the NLF. Further, on 3 September, Nguyen Huu Tho stated that "the Liberation Front asserted its attitude of coalition with the Alliance." Thus, the chairman of the NLF paved the way for any future unification plans that either organization may have had. 62

(C) On 10 November, Liberation Radio broadcasted a statement which was made by the Alliance leadership. It attacked the GVN for refusing to participate in the Paris talks and for being a "lackey" of the Americans. There was one departure from their traditional broadcasts. The Alliance called for the GVN to be overthrown and replaced by a "peace cabinet which will negotiate with the NLFSVN with a view to the early ending of the US war of aggression and the restoration of peace. . ." 63

People's Liberation Committees

(C) Further reflecting traditional Communist doctrine, political forces expressed their authority through state or government mechanisms. In 1964/65, the Communists had developed "Autonomous Administrative Committees" to give an appearance of legitimacy to their control of the population. This innovation included theoretical elections of such committees although it was clear that the PRP maintained control of them. As an element of the preparations for the 1968 Winter/Spring Offensive, the Communists revived this concept and began the process of developing "Liberation Committees." They experienced difficulty and very little was accomplished prior to Tet. During this phase, the practice of appointment usually replaced the theory of election. 64 In contested areas, or areas under GVN control, VC cadre who had good relationships with the people were directed to establish Liberation Committees at all levels except district and provincial. They were also to form a VC governmental structure which, administratively, paralleled the governmental structure of the GVN. These committees were to act as the governing body in the event that a coalition government was formed. Liberation Committees also had the mission of inciting the people to join in a general uprising against the GVN. According to the 6th COSVN Resolution of March 1968, ". . . people in the rural areas should be steadily mobilized to rise up and topple the whole administrative apparatus of the enemy . . . to seize power for the people." 65 The directive explained the purposes, organization, duty assignments, tasks, and work regulations of the Liberation Committees at village and hamlet level. It emphasized that COSVN was attempting to institute a fighting machine as well as an administrative organ. The directive also called for elections of village People's Liberation Councils (PLC). The councils were to consist of representatives from the various people's groups and from guerrilla and militia organizations. Further, the councils were to elect village PLCs from among the members of the councils. 66

(C) Missions of the Liberation Committees varied at different levels. A hamlet Liberation Committee was to report regularly to the village Liberation Committee on activities in the hamlet and to effect Party policies in the hamlet. In turn, the village Liberation Committee executed the orders of the village Liberation Council, strengthened Party solidarity in the rural areas, aided the guerrilla warfare proselyting activities, expanded "Liberated" areas, increased community work projects, provided health services and improved education, and guarded against revolutionary traitors and counter-attacks. The mission of the district and province Liberation Committees was to recruit, transfer, promote, and dismiss local cadre; to establish administrative staffs; and to issue policy directives received from higher commands. [67]

(C) Additional insight into the enemy's tactics can be gained by considering enemy propaganda after phase one of the General Offensive. The main propaganda themes emphasized the fact that Liberation Committees did exist and that they exercised administrative control over large areas of SVN. On 9 April, Liberation Radio announced that within 45 days, 1.6 million people and 600 villages had been liberated and numerous administrations had been established. For the most part, these were "shadow" entities which did not exist, but some village Liberation Committees began to appear late in April and in early May. The implementation and intensity of the effort suggested an association with the anticipated peace talks between the US and NVN. [68]

(C) By mid-June it was obvious that COSVN and Hanoi's goal to create effective Liberation Committees had fallen short of their intended mark. Some had been created in IV CTZ, the traditional base for Communist organizational activities, and there was the existing structure in I CTZ, which had remained after Tet; but in II and III CTZ almost nothing appeared to have been accomplished.

(C) Despite the lack of reported successes, the Communists boomed their "progress" in forming such committees. This organizing effort picked up steam during the summer. It became clear that the Communists were going on with the creation of such committees at the district and even provincial level, whether or not they had organized fully the hamlet and village base. It appeared that some areas actually got ahead of COSVN in creating these bodies; for example, a Communist document issued 3 June by RF 2 laid out the approach to take in forming district committees "while waiting for the official decisions from Nam Truong (COSVN)." [69]

(FOUO) As the summer progressed, the Communists pushed even harder to create their committees. On 28 August, Liberation Radio added another chapter to the establishment of Liberation Committees and revolutionary governments in SVN. The broadcast announced that the (VC) Cau Mau Province had established the country's first "temporary Provincial People's Liberation Committees." This announcment differed from earlier Liberation Radio statements by tying the committees to the NLF. The broadcast put forth this statement: "Attending the meeting were all representatives from the NLFSVN Provincial Committee. . . ." There was no mention of the ANDPF. [70]

(C) On 2 September, Liberation Radio broadcasted a commentary concerning the successful establishment of revolutionary administrations at the village and district levels throughout SVN, including the province level. Though this claim left sections of the country unorganized, it did represent a substantial move toward the completed formation of a new administrative system on paper. There was no confirmation that these committees actually existed but enemy directives indicated that a number of them may have, in fact, been formed. [71]

(C) Any success of the 1968 summer campaign was due to the initial emphasis placed on establishing PLCs in VC/NVA controlled areas. By October, about 1,700 PLCs were estimated to have been functioning at all echelons in these areas. As of 15 October, 1,186 were confirmed. About 25 to 30 percent of the total area under VC/NVA control was under the jurisdiction of PLCs. The fact that the VC/NVA were able to form PLCs reflected a lack of security and development rather than popular acceptance. In a majority of the hamlets, 60.7 percent, the general security status was estimated to be poor. 72

(C) With 1968's ending, a December estimate stated that the significance of these committees was threefold:

1. In future offensives the VCI can be expected to follow up any gains in the countryside with either VC occupation or the formation of PLCs.

2. As a government-in-being, they can demand representation in peace talks, negotiations, and in any future coalition government.

3. By posing as a legitimate government, the VCI will be able to exploit the resources of the areas they control more efficiently. 73

VCI Personalities

(U) Throughout 1968, as a result of document screening, monitored broadcasts, intelligence activities, etc., much was learned about many of the military and political leaders of the VCI.

(S) The following is a list and brief description of certain military/political leaders within the VCI:

1. GEN Hoang Van Thai was a full member of the Lao Dong Party Central Committee; 1st Deputy Minister of Defense; 1st Deputy Chief of Staff of the NVA and Director of the NVA's Training Directorate. While operating in SVN, he used the code name of Tahi. Reportedly, he was the commanding officer of the MR 5 area.

2. GEN Tran Van Tra was an alternate member of the Lao Dong Party Central Committee and 4th Deputy Chief of Staff of the NVA. In SVN, he was the chairman of the COSVN Military Affairs Committee. He used the code name of Tu Chi.

3. GEN Chu Huy Man was a full member of the Lao Dong Party Central Committee; 3rd Deputy Chief of the NVA General Political Dept.; and Political Officer of the NVA's Northwest MR (Thai Nguyen). He commanded the B-3 Front in SVN.

4. GEN Tran Do was an alternate member of the Lao Dong Party Central Committee and was the Political Officer of Right Bank MR (Nam Dinh). He used the code names of Chin Vinh and Tran Quoc Vinh while serving in his capacity as a deputy Political Commissar of the Communist military forces. He was reported KIA in Saigon during February.

5. GEN Tran Luong was a full member of the Lao Dong Party Central Committee. He once headed the COSVN Military Affairs Committee. He was also identified as the head of the NLF's Military Affairs Committee.

6. GEN Nguyen Don was an alternate member of the Lao Dong Party Central Committee. In SVN, he was the former head of MR 5. With the arrival of GEN Thai as Regional Commander, Don became Thai's deputy. Don used the code name of Do Mau.

7. GEN Ha Ke Tan was an alternate member of the Lao Dong Party Central Committee and was listed as the DRV's Minister of Water Conservation. In the South, he was a member of the COSVN Military Affairs Committee and a deputy commander of Communist military forces.

8. GEN Tran Guy Hai was an alternate member of the Lao Dong Party Central Committee; 2nd Deputy Minister of Defense; 2nd Deputy Chief of Staff of the NVA; and was the Communist Military Commander of a sub-region in Quang Tri/Thua Thien zone in SVN.

9. GEN Le Trong Tan was the 3rd Deputy Chief of Staff of the NVA and once commanded the 312th NVA Division during the 1954 Dien Bien Phu campaign. In SVN, he was a deputy commander of the Communist military forces and used the name Ba Long.

10. GEN Hoang Minh Thao was the Director of the NVA's Military College and once commanded the 304th NVA Division during the Dien Bien Phu campaign. It was reported that he held a "high" position in SVN's B-3 Front.

11. GEN Le Chuong was reported to be the "top" Commanding Officer of the Quang Tri/Thua Zone. He was a native of Quang Tri Province and had been a member of the Lao Dong Party since the mid 1930's. 74

(S) The following is a brief description of certain NLF political officials:

1. Nguyen Thi Binh was the head of the NLF delegation to the Paris peace talks until 11 December 1968. She was an avid, doctrinaire Communist, according to a French journalist, Darcourt. She was a political revolutionary activist during much of her lifetime and was reputed to be one of the few women to achieve prominence with the NLF. Her political career dated back to at least 1950 when she was active in organizing a terrorist campaign in Saigon. Activities of her terrorists included the raising of the Viet Minh flag over the Saigon city hall and the fatal stabbing of a French colonel who tried to prevent the demonstration. Among other acts, she was also credited with arranging the execution of two 15-year old students and a school teacher. As a result of her activities, she was imprisoned by the French. During her imprisonment, she recited Marxist Doctrine for extended periods in order to counter interrogation attempts by her French captors. She did assert that she was the daughter of a Vietnamese national leader, Phon Chan Trinh. 75 Darcourt said that Trinh had one son and no daughters. As a result, he probed deeper and discovered that Madame Binh's real name was Ngueyn Thi Sa (or XA). He said that she was actually the daughter of Nguyen An Ninh. 76

2. Tran Buu Keim replaced Madame Nguyen Thi Binh as head of the NLF Paris peace delegation. This occurred on 11 December. Kiem had been the Chairman of the External Relations Commission and had spent much of his time in Cambodia for three years prior to this appointment. He was involved in attempts to win Cambodian diplomatic and material support for the VC. He was believed to have been a close associate of members in the PRP and had many contacts with members of the Propaganda and training section of COSVN. He was one of the founders of the New Democratic Party in 1945 and he had joined the Communist Party toward

the end of the resistance. Besides his other duties with the NLFSVN, Kiem was the Chairman of the Liberation Students and Pupils Association. There were times when he used the aliases Chin Kiem and Chin An. 77

3. Nguyen Van Tien was the NLF's representative to Hanoi. He had been in this position since December of 1966. Tien was reported to have been directly associated with Ho Chi Minh, rather than the NVN government. He was a tireless speaker and he was always ready to grant interviews in order to explain the aims of the NLF. One of Tien's principal themes was the NLF's independence from Hanoi and it's heterogeneous political makeup. At the same time, he would usually mention the "brotherhood" between North and South and the mutual assistance each extended to the other in political, economic, and military matters. Tien believed in a transitional period after the war's end during which time the North and South would not unite. Then, he felt that a gradual transformation would take place and the two would become one, "without foreign interference."

4. Madame Do Thi Lien -- also known as Le Thi Mai, Thi Tu Om, and Sau Thu -- was a hard core VC cadre member. A former member of the Central Executive Committee of the Association of Women for the Liberation of SVN, she was bitterly anti-American. She became involved in anti-government activities in 1949. Madame Lien was arrested in 1951 and imprisoned for 30 months. In 1957, she joined the Communist Party. During 1960, she worked for the Civilian Proselyting Section of COSVN. In mid-1966, she transfered to the Saigon Market Party Committee (SMPC). While a member of the SMPC, she was arrested in 1967 and released during June 1968. At this time, it was believed that she moved to Hanoi.

5. Dinh Ba Thi became the NLF's representative to Hungary on 15 December 1965. Prior to this assignment, he had been the deputy head of the NLF mission in Prague. He led delegations of the NLF to meetings of the World Peace Council (WPC) in Helsinki, July 1965; Geneva, June 1966; Prague, 1967; and Nicosia in 1968. In October, 1968, he accompanied a joint NLF/NVN delegation which made a public relations visit to France. Observers pictured him as a hard-core Communist professional who was unwavering and dedicated to his work. 78

6. Pham Van Ba and Ha Thanh Lam were the number 1 and 2 NLF Information Office representatives to the Paris peace talks. Ba was born in Gia Dinh in 1921. He joined the resistance movement in 1945 and by 1964 had become "Head of NLF for Eastern SVN." In 1968, Ba was the Director of the NLF's Information Bureau in Prague. Lam was born in Saigon in 1922. He also joined the resistance in 1945. From 1966 to 1968, he served as the NLF's Deputy Chief in Prague. 79

7. Finally, there was Tran Nam Trung who was the Vice Chairman of the NLF. Actually, the Vice Chairman was the real leader of the NLF. Most interesting, however, is the fact that there was no such "person" as Tran Nam Trung because the name was a designation that was held at various times by two or three NVN Generals. One former Tran Nam Trung was identified as Tran Luong, a member of the Communist Central Committee. The Communist military effort in SVN was directed by Hanoi's Central Office which appointed a staff officer to the Tran Nam Trung position. 80

December 1968 Political Situation

(C) During the last quarter of 1968, there were reports that the NLF, like the Indo-Chinese Communist Party of 1945, would fade into the background in Vietnam. A directive from the Political Bureau to VC Provincial and District cadre urged that a propaganda campaign be initiated and it requested that the name of the NLF be changed to the "People's Anti-American Political Striving Front." Also, it appeared that Liberation Committees were taking over many of the NLF's functions at province level and below. If successful, these committees might give the impression that most of SVN was not under GVN control. Therefore, the VCI had political roads open to them that could produce their desired results:

> A national level coalition, dominated by representatives from the Liberation Committees and including other groups such as the NLF and the National Alliance for Democratic and Peace Forces, could be formed by the enemy to challenge the legitimacy of the GVN. 81

(S) As the World waited for the Paris negotiations to yield some evidence that the Vietnam crisis would be solved, the following summary of the situation was presented:

> In present negotiations, the Vietnamese Communists face difficult situations both in Vietnam and on the international scene. As always, their goals are ambitious ones. However, unlike 1954, their Communist allies are less able to exert pressures upon them, and no specific deadline for reaching an agreement has been set nor have pressures been applied to this end. . . . These factors suggest they can and will negotiate slowly. But it must be remembered that they [illegible] a formidable and unpredictable enemy in the United States as well as stronger and more coherent Vietnamese non-Communist opposition. 82

Morale and Recruitment

Morale

(C) At the end of 1967, morale of the VC/NVA troops in South Vietnam was declining, and it appeared that this decline would continue. Many factors contributed to this decline; however, the primary factors appeared to be friendly sweep operations, and artillery raids, and severe hardships. This loss of morale was beginning to affect the enemy's ability on the battlefield. Captured documents revealed that forces were being withdrawn from combat without appropriate orders for withdrawal and that the enemy was unable to conduct operations due to the low morale of the units involved. Morale appeared to be affected most adversely by Allied

sweep operations in what the enemy considered to be VC-controlled areas. The enemy was often forced to move hurriedly when he was confronted by units possessing superior firepower, leaving behind the stores he had cached to support himself in future operations.[83] When sweep operations were not being conducted, the enemy was continually harassed by air and artillery strikes which were demoralizing to him since they deprived him of safe refuge. He was ostracized by the local villagers who feared reprisal by Allied air and artillery raids if they gave refuge to the VC/NVA.[84]

(C) A shortage of logistical supplies also caused severe problems for the enemy. The enemy normally maintained enough ammunition to remain in contact with Allied forces for about three days. In addition, he usually maintained caches in the immediate vicinity with a reserve sufficient to enable him to fight for periods up to thirty days. If, however, he lost control of the area or if his local caches were uncovered, his situation became critical. Interrogation reports showed that such incidents were frequent and were expected to occur with increasing regularity. The lack of medical supplies, especially medicines to counteract malaria, had further lowered morale and physical strength. Numerous interrogation reports stated that malaria affected eighty percent of some units during infiltration. Other diseases, such as cholera and beri-beri, were also reported. Crude means of evacuating the wounded from the battlefield and primitive medical treatment offered the wounded soldier little hope of total recovery.

(C) The enemy soldier found that the situation in SVN was not as favorable as he was led to believe before leaving NVN. The infiltrator was told that the Allied forces were poor fighting units and did not have the support of the people in the US. He was informed that the people of SVN would welcome him with open arms. He had also been told that he would soon return home because the US was near defeat. The infiltrator quickly realized he had been deceived.

(C) As the SVN government gained control of the population, VC recruitment became more difficult and was frequently accomplished through coercion. The once available manpower pool in NVN was reduced due to personnel requirements in air defense, coastal defense, and construction units. The infiltrators and the recruits no longer appeared to be well-trained and highly qualified personnel; rather, they were young and unprepared for the rigors of survival in SVN. The morale of the young soldier was more difficult to maintain since he was more susceptible to homesickness and the fear that he would never see his loved ones again. This same fear affected the older personnel to a lesser degree. Cadre at all levels, but particularly among the lower levels, became disillusioned with the cause. This necessitated their replacement. Many of these replacements were regroupees who were given positions superior to individuals who had worked for the cause in SVN for years. This, in turn, created hard feelings and distrust among the cadre. An analysis of interrogation reports and captured documents indicated that the VC had realized they had to increase their political training; the soldiers were losing confidence in their leaders. Many cadre had been lost, and there was a shortage of qualified replacements. The high-level cadre still appeared to be effective, as did the company and battalion commanders; however, lower cadre squad leaders were considered only adequate.[85] With the decline in confidence, came dissension between NVA and VC personnel. This may have been the result of the ever increasing number of NVA troops in the South. Prior to 1967, the NVA soldiers were often in the minority in mixed units. 1968 saw a change in this situation, with the VC troops becoming the minority in many instances. As a result, there were times when NVA troops found that the people were withholding support, citing the need to support their own relatives in VC units. Mid-level defectors had spoken of strain between the VC and

the NVA, as well as the NLF resentment of Hanoi's journey to Paris. These differences peaked in May when Hanoi ordered "second wave" of assaults on RVN urban areas. The weakened VC/NVA attacked friendly positions which were in a high state of readiness and consequently suffered exorbitant casualties again. This operation was militarily inadvisable, but Hanoi hoped that it would strengthen its position in Paris. Both of these situations tended to lower the morale of the NVA and VC troops. [86]

(C) The enemy's morale problems even arose prior to his forces becoming engaged in combat in SVN, as indicated in a captured notebook of a political cadre of the D-2 Unit (possibly the 2d Bn, 36th Regt, 308th NVA Division). The notebook revealed that during the trip only 15 men were left at way stations as compared to other units which left 300 men behind and 60 who died. During preparations for a mission, the unit encountered a serious desertion problem. The author wrote, "Desertion is alarming, they deserted in masses." [87] One of the first indications of low morale, which resulted in mass defection of VC/NVA troops, occurred on 18 June 1968. Beginning at about noon on this day, large numbers of the VC Quyet Thang (Resolved to Win) Regiment, and the 273d Regt, began rallying to GVN in the Gia Dinh/Go Vap areas of suburban Saigon. Their action was in response to broadcast appeals from their former Executive Officer, Captain Phan Van Kuong, who had rallied the day before. Confirmed reports indicated 119 men were involved; unconfirmed reports said 148. The ralliers were reported to have brought in 96 weapons. ARVN and press sources had claimed that virtually the entire group was NVA, but this was not confirmed. There was no doubt that a mass defection had occurred and that it was most probably the largest to date. A complete breakout of this defection was listed as follows:

> On 18 June 1968, a total of 113 detainees of the Quyet Thang Regiment were taken by the 1st and 6th Battalions of ARVN Marines with the following breakdown:
>
> 1. 42 - 1st MF Bn.
>
> 2. 53 - 2 LF Bn.
>
> 3. 18 - Wounded and hospitalized: Battalion designation not yet known. ARVN considered these personnel detainees. Classification as PWs or Hoi Chanh was pending. Approximately 50% of the group were NVA who were in Infiltration Group 273. One detainee was 14 years of age; two were 16 years; 7 were 17 years; 7 were 18 years; and the remainder were between the ages of 19 and 33. The group had no food, no ammunition, no medicine, and morale was low. [88]

(C) On 8 September a continuing decline in VC/NVA morale was noted during the interrogation of the former Assistant Chief of Staff of the D-1 Regiment. He stated that the morale of the VC officers and soldiers was very low due to serious casualties inflicted by Allied forces, a shortage of personnel, and a lack of popular support. He claimed that the continuous and numerous operations launched against the D-1 Regiment's base camps had consistently countered enemy attack plans. He stated that an enemy battalion could not accomplish the same mission which before Tet had been successfully completed by a company size unit. [89]

(C) A September analysis of captured enemy documents revealed a marked deterioration in the morale and determination of the VC. VC/NVA operational reports prepared by subordinate units and forwarded to higher headquarters continued the facade of reporting sweeping successes against the FWMAF/RVNAF. However, they also included candid statements, which reflected a growing disillusionment with the course of the war. A classic example of this defeatist attitude was reflected in a letter captured on 18 September 1968. The letter, dated 5 September, stated that both the civilian population and the underground cadre were convinced that the "enemy" was "too strong to be defeated." This was the first recorded instance where VC/NVA cadre admitted that a military victory was not possible. [90]

(S) On 22 October, an agent report stated that certain villages in I CTZ refused to furnish supplies to the VC because of their hatred for the NLF. The (VC) Can Tho Province Commissioner stated that the situation throughout the country was tragic and that if the Allies persisted, the war would be lost by the end of the year (1968). These were two, of many, low-level reports that indicated the enemy's morale was deteriorating. [91]

(C) An enemy notebook, with entries dated from 6 to 12 November 1968, hailed the 1 November bombing halt as a great victory; but, it also admitted that even this had not raised the morale of the VC/NVA to any great extent. The document related that the cadre and district members, possibly of Darlac Province, were ". . . still displaying a low fighting spirit, fear of hardships, and lack of discipline." It noted that large numbers of the cadre and members had deserted their units to return to their families or to surrender to the enemy for fear of hardships and the rigors of war. [92]

(C) The enemy was aware of a morale problem among his troops; to counter the decline and bolster morale of the VC/NVA troops, a directive, dated 10 June 1968, was published by the Forward Command Post, Hq, SVNLA, concerning the Second General Offensive:

> One month after Climaxing Phase 2 was started, the Current Affairs Committee of COSVN and Hq, SVNLA met to assess the situation and to set forth the policy lines to be observed by the Armed Forces . . . After the implementation of the Second Climaxing Phase, we have recorded great successes which were tremendous contributions and support to our diplomatic struggles. At present, the Americans and Puppet (Army and Government) are extremely embarassed, passive, and demoralized. All units, such as Airborne, Marines, Field Police, and Special Forces committed to protect Saigon, sustained heavy casualties (which are reportedly reaching 50 to 70%). . . The US units have also suffered bitter defeat and the morale of their personnel has also lowered while reinforcements fail to arrive. The US and puppet troops only relied on air and arty fire power. But bombs and ammunition have been exhausted . . . The Central Puppet Government was shaken and many of their high-ranking cadre were either killed or wounded. They planned

to move TRAN VAN HUONG's Cabinet and foreign embassies out of Saigon because our art, inf, and Special Action Forces, coming from various directions, have conducted attacks right in the heart of the Capital. . . Contridictions arose within the internal ranks of the Puppets and disension prevailed between the US and Puppet authorities. . . The US and Puppet troops can no longer trust one another. Continue to attack the enemy in the Capital and the outskirts. . . Cadre ranking from Co level and up should study the Directive of R pertaining to the betrayal of X. . . cadre of Subregion X. The purpose of this Directive is to encourage everybody to improve his morale and revolutionary pride.[93]

(C) Probably the most effective technique for motivating and controlling the VC/NVA soldier was the three-man cell. This unit is formed early in the training stage and, theoretically, remained intact throughout the individual's service. Each cell was generally commanded by a squad leader, an assistant squad leader, or a senior combat veteran. The three-man cell was the backbone of the VC military organization. The individual soldier usually considered the cell to be a distinct advantage during combat but a hindrance to free thought and movement during times of peace.

(C) The self-critique system also played an important part in the VC control of its forces. These sessions were primarily used to impress upon the individual the knowledge that he "must" be diligent in his conduct and duty and "must" be prepared to make sacrifices. Individual hardship and suffering were not considered. As a result, the VC/NVA soldier underwent intensive political indoctrination. He attended lectures and discussions which reminded him of his patriotic duty in fighting for a just cause and the side of right. Political officers continually strove to indoctrinate individuals with a will to win and reminded them of the sacrifices they had to make.

(C) The morale of the VC/NVA troops fighting in SVN was certainly on the decline. The lack of food, medical and military supplies, all combined to impose unacceptable and frustrating constraints. In addition, there was a growing realization that the counter-insurgency would be much more than a brief struggle. Understandably, these factors, together with the successes of FWMAF and expanding GVN control, had greatly aggravated recruiting problems. The future for VC/NVA forces had assumed a bleak character and enemy morale was reflecting this. However, it should be noted that although there were instances when low morale may have produced poor individual battlefield performance or "mass defection," analysts estimate that this was not a general rule. For the most part, those that remained continued to be an effective fighting force.[94]

Recruitment

(S) The NVA recruiting and induction standards appeared to originate at the MR level. The province and its subordinate districts were tasked with meeting quotas set by the MR headquarters and NVA high command. The NVA male was told to report to his district head-

quarters upon reaching draft age, which at the beginning of 1968 was believed to be 17. At this time he was examined, tested, and required to fill out a biographic questionnaire. He was then placed in a draft category corresponding with his acceptability and physical condition. The potential recruit was then told to return to his home and wait until notified. When the final notice of call-up was received, the new recruit, along with other members of his village, was told to report to district headquarters. He and the other personnel from his village were joined by individuals from other rural villages in the district. These individuals were then directed to the province town for final induction processing and assignment to training units where they received basic military training and political indoctrination.

(S) The recruitment policy of the NVA had changed drastically after 1964. Prior to 1964, draft calls were held semi-annually; during 1964 quarter : and in 1965 monthly. The length of enlistment had also been changed from a three year commitment to an indefinite status. Rejections for physical reasons were apparently few. Examples of lowered physical standards became evident when one PW stated he had not been allowed to fire his squad's machine gun because he was blind in one eye. Another PW reported he knew of an NVA soldier who had suffered a heart attack but was not released from active duty. Still another PW stated he had been examined several times for the draft in 1964 and 1965 and was rejected for bad health; in 1966 however, he was ordered to report for induction without another physical examination. Further review of PW reports indicated that persons previously deferred or considered exempt from the draft were being drafted into the armed forces.

(S) The NVA training program appeared to have gone through several phases due to rapid expansion of the NVA and increased troop requirements in SVN. Basically, the changes were:

1. 1964: Basic infantry training was conducted by the training battalion of the division. The length of training varied depending on the type and mission of the unit to which the individual was assigned. Prior to 1965 the basic infantry cycle appeared to have lasted four to six months.

2. 1965 to 1966: During this period the basic infantry training cycle appeared to have been reduced to three or four months. Basic infantry training was conducted by both divisions and independent training battalions and regiments subordinate to the military region. During this period, infiltration training, which previously had been the responsibility of the divisions and training units, was largely accomplished by the 338th Infantry Brigade.

3. Late 1966 and 1967: In 1966 the NVA established at least three basic infantry training centers. Review of PW reports indicated that many personnel drafted into the NVA in late 1966 to mid-1967 received six weeks or less basic training while assigned to training units or centers. PWs trained by regular NVA units during 1966-67, however, reported that they received six to eight months of basic and advanced infantry training prior to receiving infiltration training. Training subjects taught were governed by the length of the training cycle and the mission of a recruit's intended unit. The training program generally consisted of the following:

a. Political training: Detailed instructions in Communist doctrine and the political situation in both NVN and SVN.

b. Military training: Disassembly and assembly of automatic and semiautomatic weapons. Marksmanship training and firing of organic weapons. Squad, platoon, and company tactics.

c. Physical training: Considered the main subject of the training program. Training consisted of long marches with the recruit carrying heavy loads to prepare him for infiltration.

(S) Officer training was conducted in division OCS classes of two or three months duration. Classes were composed of either recalled senior NCO's or personnel who completed at least seven years of formal schooling. NCO training was no longer mandatory, but some divisions offered short courses. Soldiers who had good records and exhibited political zeal were eligible to hold NCO rank. It appeared that the NVA lacked properly trained personnel to fill the ranks of platoon leaders, sergeants, and squad leaders. The overall level of company grade leadership had declined over the previous two years as a result of the expansion of the air defense effort; the upgrading of several brigades to divisions; and the necessity for the creation of divisions, regiments, and supporting elements to infiltrate into SVN. It appeared that this qualitative decline would continue in the future, despite attempts to accelerate officer and NCO training programs.[95]

(C) 1968 witnessed increased enemy recruitment activities. Agents reported that the enemy was intensifying his proselyting activities throughout the IV CTZ. Enemy documents had indicated that, following Tet, more proselyting was a prerequisite to total victory. COMUSMACV reported that the VC were bringing pressure to bear on government employees and the families of government employees and soldiers. In many instances this pressure was in the form of applied terror. Although terror tactics could provide the manpower needed, the VC risked popular resentment. People in the countryside were said to be pressing the VC concerning the welfare and whereabouts of family members who took part in the 31 January attack on Ca Mau. On several occasions VC cadre had been denounced and even killed by the peasants when it was learned of the death of a relative.[96]

(C) Reports were continually received during the year with reference to inadequate military and political training in both main and local force units which continued to weaken the VC's effectiveness. For example, in the Delta two 18 year old soldiers from the 516th Local Force Battalion claimed that they were forcibly recruited by the VC and after one month of training, they were given rifles and assigned to a reconnaissance platoon. Elsewhere in the Delta, in Kien Tuong Province, a captured document disclosed that the enemy continued to have problems recruiting civilian laborers. The document stated that after complete failure one cadre of the DT-2 Regiment considered employing organic troops but, because of pressing military matters, was unable to do so. Instead, the troops were sent in every direction to locate civilian laborers. This extended impressment of civilian laborers by the VC resulted in increased anti-VC sentiments in the Delta.[97]

(C) Recruiting problems for the enemy were not limited to the Delta areas alone. In August 1968, enemy documents captured from Binh Dinh province indicated that district units in MR 5 were having recruiting difficulties and that the unfilled quotas of district units were the result of Allied operations. Bombings and the use of defoliants had caused many casualties, forced guerrillas from their normal operating areas, and created famine conditions in base

areas. Of the 4,000 recruits that were required (apparently referring to 1967,) less than 200 were provided by Hoai Nhon and Phu My districts. Other district units apparently had similar problems in meeting their quotas.[98]

(C) The quality of many of the NVA soldiers was reported as very poor, according to a rallier and a prisoner taken on 28 September. The rallier claimed to have received but one month of training in NVN and another month after joining the NVA 95th Regiment in the Kontum-Cambodia border area in July. After firing mortars at a hamlet near Duc Lap, members of his battalion fled and became lost; he surrendered because he was sick and afraid to fight. Another NVA soldier stated that he was drafted in May at the age of 33, received one week of tactical training, never fired a weapon, and was immediately sent to SVN. He stated that all soldiers in his infiltration group were under 20 or over 30 years of age and that the maximum draft age in NVN had been raised from 30 to 33 years during the previous six months. Morale was very low, since men drafted into the NVA never returned.[99]

(C) In order to reduce the problems surrounding recruitment, the VCI developed a system of gradual recruitment. Under this system, a youth of 14 or 15 years was induced to join a youth association in his village. Later, perhaps in two or three years, he joined the village defense force and then was recruited into a local guerrilla unit. When there was a need for troops in local or main force units, the guerrilla was upgraded. This upgrading had two advantages. First, the soldier reached the main force unit after he had received some training. Secondly, he was gradually induced to leave his home and fight for the VC, regardless of where he was assigned. However, gradual recruitment was not always followed. Villagers were recruited directly into local and main force units. Even political cadre were known to have become soldiers prior to a large offensive.[100]

(C) There were indications that the VC had increased their recruiting efforts in the last quarter of 1968; however, there was evidence that he had experienced considerable difficulty in achieving recruitment goals. Geographically, the bulk of the recruitment was centered in the Delta provinces, although I CTZ had experienced a recruitment drive. The amount of increasing NVA strength in VC local units, in the area around and north of Saigon, indicated that he was exhausting the eligible manpower in this vicinity.

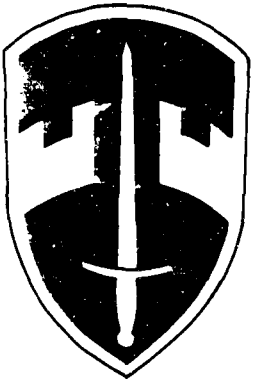
(C) The VC recruitment rate was derived from an analysis of field reports, which described the amount of recruitment in each district of SVN. The analysis and resulting estimates considered the GVN control in a given area, local population, previous recruiting trends, captured enemy directives, reports, recruiting difficulties, and the general hostile environment.[101]

Period	I CTZ	II CTZ	III CTZ	IV CTZ	TOTAL
Jan - Apr	2,350	1,300	450	2,900	7,000
May - Jun	1,700	850	350	2,100	5,000
Jul - Sep	870	360	450	1,320	3,000
Oct - Dec	860	500	540	1,600	3,500*

*Estimated.

COMMANDER

UNITED STATES MILITARY ASSISTANCE COMMAND, VIETNAM



COMMAND HISTORY
VOLUME I
1968

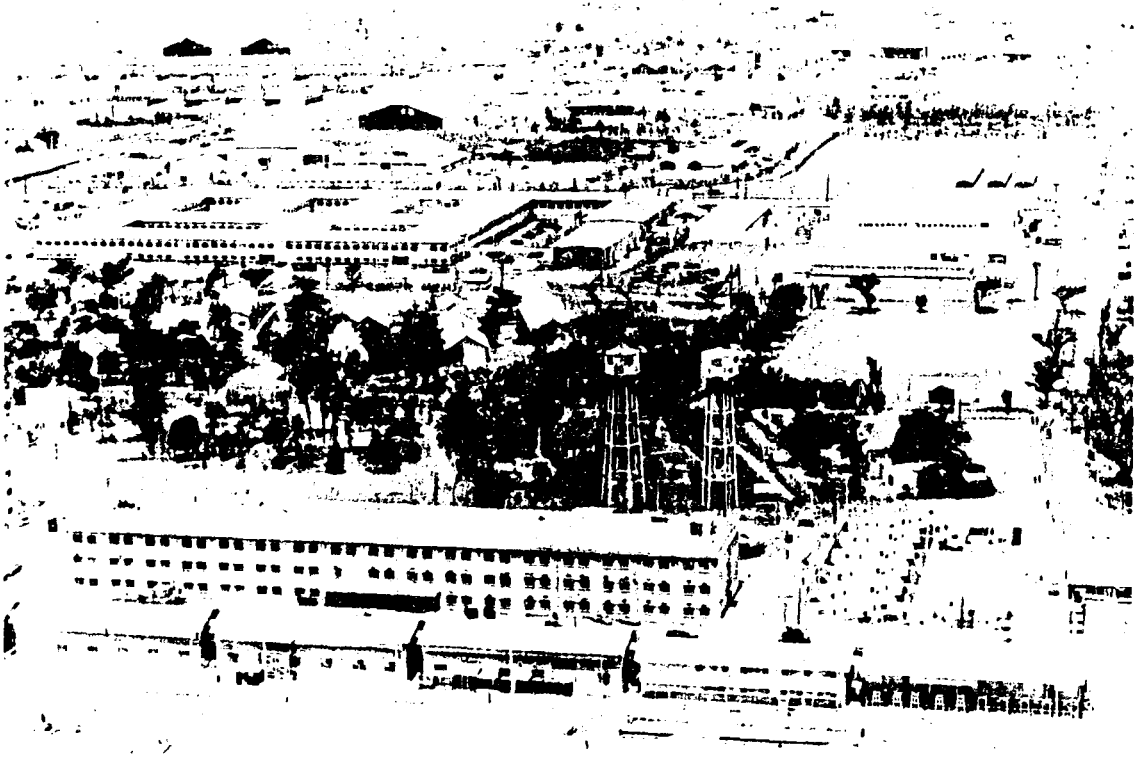
Prepared by the Military History Branch
Office of the Secretary, Joint Staff
Headquarters, USMACV, APO San Francisco 96222
Saigon, Vietnam

GENERAL WILLIAM C. WESTMORELAND

COMUSMACV 20 JUN 64 - 3 JUL 68

GENERAL CREIGHTON W. ABRAMS

COMUSMACV 3 JUL 68 -



HEADQUARTERS MILITARY ASSISTANCE COMMAND, VIETNAM

HEADQUARTERS
UNITED STATES MILITARY ASSISTANCE COMMAND, VIETNAM
APO SAN FRANCISCO 96222

PREFACE

The MACV Command History for 1968 is the fifth in the Command History series which was initiated in 1964. The objective of this history is to provide a comprehensive official record of operations and status of the command to include its many facets of activity viewed from the level of the commander with an account of the problems he faced and the decisions he made in solving them. Although it is not intended to duplicate unnecessarily the official histories of the component commanders, those operational matters as well as administrative and logistical problems have been covered which required the attention of COMUSMACV in his capacity as the US operational commander and senior US military commander in the Republic of Vietnam.

The purpose of this history is to serve as a prime authoritative source for future research and reference purposes.

While the scope of this history is basically restricted to the calendar year 1968, such summary accounts of earlier events that have been deemed appropriate to provide continuity and understanding have been included. Certain accounts of events concerning the earlier years of this command, which for various reasons were not covered in prior histories, have also been incorporated.

Individuals using this history who encounter gaps in the coverage or insufficient material to meet their requirements are invited to forward recommendations to this headquarters (Attention: Military History Branch).

Robert J. Parr

ROBERT J. PARR
Colonel, USA
Command Historian

TABLE OF CONTENTS

(Volume I)

	Page
Letter of Promulgation	i
Title Page	v
Preface	ix
Table of Contents	xi
List of Illustrations	xiv
Chapter	
I. INTRODUCTION	1
II. THE STRATEGY AND THE GOALS	
US Policy and Objectives	5
Combined US/RVN Strategy	13
III. THE ENEMY	
Introduction	37
The Role of North Vietnam	39
NVN Infiltration into RVN	56
VC Political Infrastructure	59
Enemy Support Operations	96
Enemy Operations in RVN	128
Conclusion	195
IV. FRIENDLY FORCES	
Command and Control Structure	217
United States Forces	223
Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces	249
Free World Military Assistance Forces	345
V. OPERATIONS IN THE REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM	
Ground Operations	371
Air Operations	402
Naval Operations	441

Chapter Page

VI. PACIFICATION AND NATION BUILDING

Introduction 519
Summary 519
Pacification 523
Territorial Security Forces 530
Project RECOVERY 536
Attack on the VC Infrastructure 544
Chieu Hoi 549
Economic Revival 552
Revolutionary Development People's Groups and Urban Self-Defense Groups 554
Revolutionary Development Cadre and Song Tan RD 556
New Life Development 557
Psychological Operations 560
GVN Leadership 561
Outlook for 1969 564

(Volume II)

Chapter

VII. INTELLIGENCE

General 569
The 1968 Collection Program 581

VIII. PSYCHOLOGICAL OPERATIONS

Organization 591
PSYOP Media 597
PSYOP Programs 604

IX. LOGISTICS

General 615
Classes of Supply 624
Services 639
Maintenance 641
Transportation and Lines of Communications (LOC) 646
Construction 670
Port Development and Operations in RVN 680
Medical 699
Military Assistance Service Funding Program 706
Communications 713

Chapter — Page

X. RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

Organization and Policy 743
Finding the Enemy 747
Search and Attack Systems 752
Mobility 756
Artillery/Mortar/Rocket/Countermeasures 759
Munitions and Weapons Systems 763
Communications 770

XI. CONTINGENCY PLANS AND SPECIAL STUDIES

Contingency Plans 777
Special Studies 782

XII. SPECIAL PROBLEM AREAS AND SELECTED TOPICS

Morale and Welfare 799
Discipline, Law, and Order 836
Prisoners of War 841
Security 860
The Tax Problem 866
Project MACONOMY 869

Annexes

A. TET OFFENSIVE IN RETROSPECT 881

B. ANTI-INFILTRATION BARRIER 911

C. OFFICE OF INFORMATION AND PRESS RELATIONS AND PROBLEMS 935

D. LIST OF GROUND OPERATIONS BY CORPS TACTICAL ZONE 997

E. COMMANDERS AND PRINCIPAL STAFF OFFICERS 1017

F. SOG (LIMDIS) DISTRIBUTED SEPARATELY

CHRONOLOGY 1025

GLOSSARY 1067

INDEX 1083

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

(Volume I)

NO.	TITLE	PAGE
Intro-1	GENERAL WILLIAM C. WESTMORELAND, COMUSMACV 20 Jun 64 - 3 Jul 68	vi
Intro-2	GENERAL CREIGHTON W. ABRAMS, COMUSMACV 3 Jul 68 -	vii
Intro-3	HEADQUARTERS MACV	viii
Intro-4	SOUTH VIETNAM ADMINISTRATIVE REGIONS	xviii
III-1	NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT FIVE POINTS	42
III-2	INFILTRATION ROUTES	58
III-3	VC POLITICAL BOUNDARIES OF SOUTH VIETNAM	63
III-4	PROVINCE PARTY COMMITTEE	64
III-5	TRI-THIEN-HUE MILITARY REGION	68
III-6	I CTZ ORDER OF BATTLE - NORTHERN HALF	90
III-7	I CTZ ORDER OF BATTLE - SOUTHERN HALF	91
III-8	II CTZ ORDER OF BATTLE - NORTHERN HALF	92
III-9	II CTZ ORDER OF BATTLE - SOUTHERN HALF	93
III-10	III CTZ ORDER OF BATTLE	94
III-11	IV CTZ ORDER OF BATTLE	95
III-12	I CTZ VC/NVA BASE AREAS AS OF 31 Dec 68	97
III-13	II CTZ VC/NVA BASE AREAS AS OF 31 Dec 68	98
III-14	III CTZ VC/NVA BASE AREAS AS OF 31 Dec 68	99
III-15	IV CTZ VC/NVA BASE AREAS AS OF 31 Dec 68	100
III-16	NVN/LAOS/VC/NVA BASE AREAS AS OF 31 Dec 68	101
III-17	CAMBODIA/VC/NVA BASE AREAS AS OF 31 Dec 68	102
III-18	VC/NVA SUPPLY SYSTEM--CHAIN OF CONTROL	103
III-19	DISTRICT WORKSHOP	107
III-20	1968 INCIDENTS OF TERROR	144
III-21	ENEMY WEAPONS CAPTURED DURING 1968	198
III-22	ENEMY KILLED IN ACTION	199
IV-1	MACV COMMAND RELATIONSHIPS (11 Dec 68)	218
IV-2	FRIENDLY FORCES STRENGTH BUILDUP 1964-1968	724
IV-3	COMPARISON OF RVN/US PROMOTION CRITERIA	287
IV-4	RVN COASTAL ZONES	310
IV-5	VIETNAMESE NAVY COMMAND STRUCTURE	312
IV-6	PATROL SHIP ORGANIZATION CHART	313
IV-7	LOGISTIC SHIPS ORGANIZATION CHART	314
IV-8	VNN RIVER ASSAULT GROUP BASES	315
IV-9	ORGANIZATION CHART OF THE SAIGON NAVAL SHIP YARD	319
IV-10	VNN STATISTICAL SUMMARY - 1968 CRAFT AND PEOPLE SEARCHED	324
V-1	ARRIVAL, LOCATION AND SIGNIFICANT MOVES OF MAJOR US/FW UNITS 1968	372
V-2	I CORPS	377
V-3	II CORPS	385

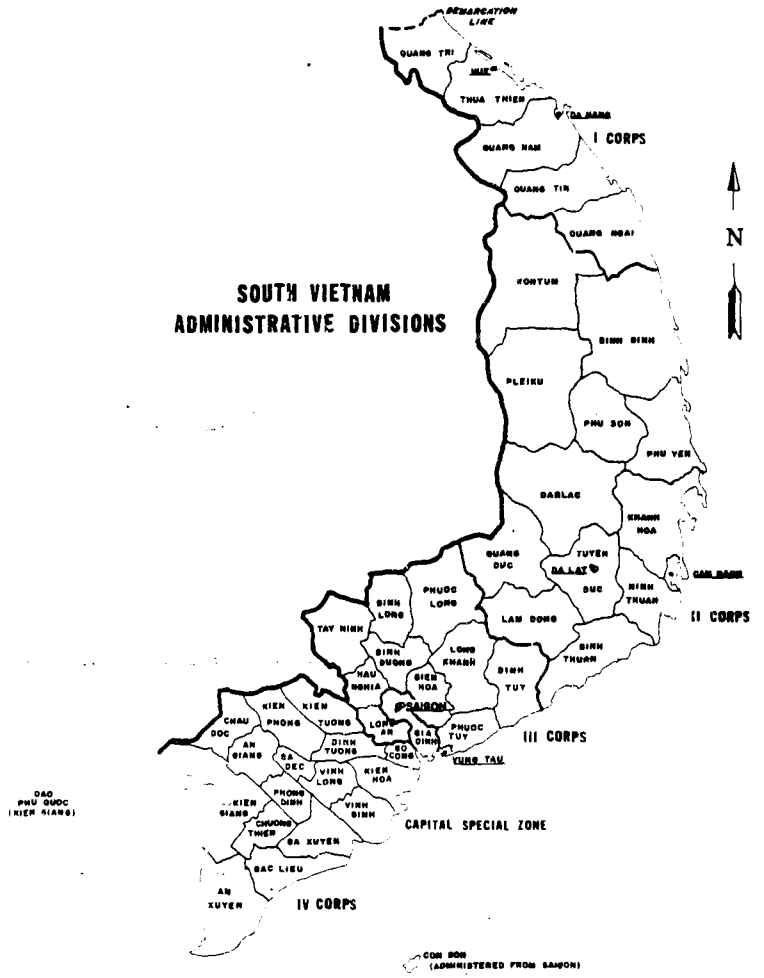
NO.	TITLE	PAGE
V-4	III CORPS	389
V-5	IV CORPS	398
V-6	INTERDICTION AREAS IN LAOS	410
V-7	ROUTE PACKAGES IN NORTH VIETNAM	413
V-8	ROLLING THUNDER SORTIES	417
V-9	ARC LIGHT STRIKES AND SORTIES	422
V-10	FIXED-WING TRANSPORTATION SORTIES, SVN, 1968	428
V-11	TACTICAL RECONNAISSANCE SORTIES	432
V-12	COMBAT-MANEUVER BATTALIONS	435
V-13	ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE AND COMMAND RELATIONSHIPS - I CORPS: March 1968	438
V-14	MARKET TIME ACTIVITY	454
V-15	GAME WARDEN ACTIVITY	464
V-16	USS GARRETT COUNTY (LST-786) MOBILE SUPPORT BASE FOR PBR	465
V-17	USS BENEWAH (APB-35) MOBILE BASE FOR MOBILE RIVERINE FORCE	473
V-18	NAVY CONSTRUCTION FORCES	477
V-19	SEABEE TEAMS	478
V-20	I CORPS	482
V-21	II CORPS	483
V-22	III CORPS	484
V-23	IV CORPS	485
V-24	USS NEW JERSEY (BB-62)	496

(Volume II)

VII-1	COMBINED INTELLIGENCE CENTER, VIETNAM	573
VII-2	DOCUMENT EXPLOITATION PROCESS	575
VII-3	FLOW OF CAPTURED DOCUMENTS TO CDEC	576
VII-4	DOCUMENT EXPLOITATION AT CDEC 1968	577
VII-5	1968 PRIORITIES & OTHER INTELLIGENCE REQUIREMENTS	583
VII-6	EXAMPLES, PRIORITIES, EEI, INDICATORS, & SOR	584
VII-7	INTELLIGENCE COLLECTION AGENCIES	585
VIII-1	PSYWAR AERIAL OPERATIONS	603
IX-1	SUPPLY CLASS III	632
IX-2	US ARMY MORTUARY - TSN	642
IX-3	US ARMY MORTUARY - DA NANG	643
IX-4	SECURITY STATUS ESSENTIAL MILITARY ROADS AS OF 31 Dec 68	654
IX-5	SECURITY STATUS RAILROADS AS OF 31 Dec 68	661
IX-6	PORTS, LAND LOCS AND MAJOR LOGISTIC COMMANDS	682
IX-7	439L AND IWCS THRU PHASE 3	714
IX-8	DIAL CENTRAL OFFICES	717
IX-9	AUTODIN	719
IX-10	AUTOSEVOCOM	722

NO.	TITLE	PAGE
IX-11	MARS STATIONS TRAFFIC - 1968	725
XII-1	AMERICAN RED CROSS LOCATIONS IN SOUTH VIETNAM	831
A-1	ENEMY TET OFFENSIVE 29 Jan - 4 Feb 68	882
B-1	ORIGINAL DYE MARKER CONCEPT	913
B-2	ANTI-INFILTRATION SUBSYSTEMS	920
C-1	MACV OFFICE OF INFORMATION	936
D-1	TIME FRAME OF GROUND OPERATIONS IN I CTZ	998
D-2	TIME FRAME OF GROUND OPERATIONS IN II CTZ	1005
D-3	TIME FRAME OF GROUND OPERATIONS IN III CTZ	1009
D-4	TIME FRAME OF GROUND OPERATIONS IN IV CTZ	1012

UNCLASSIFIED



UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

(U) In 1968, the third year of US combat operations in SEASIA, the basic issues of the war remained largely unchanged. The Viet Cong (VC), supported by regular North Vietnamese troops (NVA), sought to gain control over South Vietnam (SVN) by destroying the existing politico-socio-military structure and substituting in its place one of Communist domination. On the other hand, the Government of Vietnam (GVN) sought to check the VC/NVA assaults by building a viable nation immune to Communist overthrow. To accomplish this, however, GVN needed US economic and military support, particularly the manpower, mobility, and firepower of US armed forces. The GVN also needed that vital asset of a nation which could only come from within, i.e., the integrity and moral fibre of responsible leadership that alone could make any gains permanent.

(U) In keeping with insurgent doctrine as laid down by Mao Tse Tung, the VC/NVA capitalized on the terrain cover, the population mix, the propaganda value of "foreign invaders," terrorism, various levels of military and para-military operations, etc. to achieve their political goals. The US, in support of the GVN, responded with the type resources available only to the strongest, most industrialized nation in the world. Mobility and firepower were utilized to protect and reinforce threatened areas. Ground, air, and naval operations were launched, singly and in combination, to destroy enemy personnel, supplies, base camps, lines of communication (LOC), and to seize and keep, if possible, the initiative. The US utilized its scientific know-how to overcome the major problems of finding the enemy and destroying him in his guarded sanctuaries. US forces utilized the latest PSYOP techniques and, perhaps most important, worked in various ways to build a strong, viable government, capable of properly protecting, pacifying, and leading the people of SVN.

(U) While overall the year was a good one for US, Free World (FW), and GVN forces, the insurgents showed surprising initiative from time to time. In January, the enemy massed his forces against the Marine outpost at Khe Sanh, attempting thereby to gain a military and psychological victory while opening the way to an assault on Quang Tri City. Also in January, he launched what has become known as the Tet Offensive, which consisted of attacks against every major city in SVN. The purpose here, apparently, was to capture many of the cities and generate a popular uprising. The anticipated results would be massive defection of Vietnamese armed forces, eventual withdrawal of US troops, and reunification of SVN to the Communist dominated North.

(U) The Tet Offensive, like Khe Sanh, was a costly military failure. In most cities, the VC were pushed out within two or three days; however, the battles in Saigon and Hue were longer and more intense. By the end of February, the enemy had lost an estimated 37,000 KIA. Nevertheless, he was quick to claim a psychological victory by virtue of his "show of strength," and in many areas of the world, where the people had been led to believe he was incapable of such action, the psychological effect was noticeable.

REGRADED UNCLASSIFIED
ORDER SEC ARMY BY TAG PER
830621

Page 441-NAVY
Pages 346-350-STATE
REVIEW DATE: 5 SEP 84
CLASSIFICATION CONCURRED BY: NAVY/STATE
CLASSIFY AS: or/OADR
DECLASSIFY ON:
All OTHER PAGES DECLAS & RELEASED

UNCLASSIFIED

CONFIDENTIAL
REGRADED
SECRET
8306

(U) To relieve the plight of the thousands of homeless refugees created by the Tet attacks, Project Recovery was instituted to provide emergency assistance in the form of food, supplies, and building materials. In all, over one million refugees were assisted through this program, without which the GVN might have had an unmanageable urban evacuee burden, economic chaos, and serious political problems in the cities. In spite of many mistakes under the stress of combat, the overall US, FW, and GVN performance in reestablishing over a million urban evacuees and renewing urban viability was one of the bright spots of 1968.

(U) Despite the enemy's set-backs of Tet, he attempted a minor follow-on to Tet on 18 February. This effort also failed and the enemy indicated a willingness to enter diplomatic negotiations. Nevertheless, in May, he twice struck Saigon. These attacks were supposedly the second wave of his Winter/Spring Campaign, but if so, they were a weak replica of Tet. The battles, mostly in the Cholon area of Saigon, ended with the enemy claiming the usual psychological gains, but suffering heavy military losses.

(U) The January-February and May assaults (Tet and the May Offensive) strongly affected US/GVN programs and strategy. The vital pacification campaign was arrested as outlying posts were temporarily left unprotected in order to save the cities. This proved a serious but unavoidable loss, although resurgent efforts in pacification, especially the Accelerated Pacification Campaign (APC) which began in November, brought the year to a close with an estimated 76 percent of the people living in relative security from the VC.

(U) On 9 June, General William C. Westmoreland left his position as COMUSMACV and returned to Washington to become Chief of Staff of the Army. General Creighton W. Abrams, his former Deputy, became COMUSMACV effective 3 July.

(U) A change in U.S. strategy, worked out in Washington and Saigon, roughly coincided with the change in command. Under the new concept, U.S. forces no longer regularly engaged in large, multi-battalion operations. Rather, the decision was made to protect Saigon as the nerve center of the Republic and, by maintaining constant pressure on the enemy, to seize the initiative from him and preempt offensive operations by keeping him continually off balance. Flexibility, mobility and firepower increased in importance as American and Republic of Vietnam (RVN) units sought out the enemy, destroyed him when possible, and uncovered his stockpiled material of war.

(U) The value of this strategy became apparent when, in August, the enemy again attempted to seize the initiative in operations against Da Nang, Ban Me Thuot, Tay Ninh, and other cities. The Ban Me Thuot drive was shifted to a small CIDG camp at Duc Lap where a small but furious battle was fought. The overall offensive was such that it is still questionable whether this was indeed the beginning of the enemy's announced "Third Offensive."

(U) Despite Ho Chi Minh's fantastic year-end statement that 1968 was a year of "glorious victories" wherein "we and our Allies killed 165,555 enemy troops on the battlefield, captured 20,685 others, seized 59,505 weapons, welcomed 17,826 defectors, and wiped out most of the American aircraft," it was clear that militarily, at least, the insurgent forces had been hurt badly. The latter part of the year witnessed a withdrawal of the major NVA units into base sanctuaries in North Vietnam (NVN) and Cambodia. The blustering continued, and there was much talk of new offensives, particularly against Saigon, but enemy leaders seemed more anxious than ever to get to the conference table. There was ample evidence that many of his troops were licking their wounds in sanctuaries.

(U) While it was unreasonable at year's end to attempt to properly evaluate the many attitudes and activities that contributed to the year's evident progress, some of the more conspicuous gains were too obvious to miss. For one thing, the Communist offensives, whatever their effect on war weary onlookers the world over, proved to be a catalyst in South Vietnam. The realization that the enemy had this aggressive capability led to increased determination and emphasis on meaningful programs, such as pacification, stable government, and a military strategy designed to seize the initiative from the enemy. The key to this strategy was broad offensive operations utilizing to the fullest the mobility and firepower of US ground, air, and naval forces, supported by vast logistical and scientific efforts.

(U) While the history of MACV was inherently tied more closely to military operations than to civic action, the military objectives and means were in keeping with the maxim that military objectives are determined by political objectives. Throughout the year, the overall outlook was towards a responsible and stable GVN, a responsive and secure population aware of the threats of Communism, and a Republic of Vietnam Armed Force (RVNAF) of sufficient size and strength to protect the people against foreign military domination.

(U) At year's end, there was strong feeling in MACV that 1968 had indeed been what a local paper called it, "A Year of Progress." This claim was still a far cry from "victory" and one had to qualify success as "limited." Major problems, such as corruption in GVN, and serious apprehensions, such as NVN's logistical buildup, remained. Nevertheless, the outlook for 1969 was bright compared to the dark days of the Tet Offensive in early 1968. In particular, the Paris peace talks and the retreat of NVA regular units into North Vietnam and Cambodia were strong indicators of effective US strategy and tactics. Even more impressive, however, was the growing evidence that, barring some unforeseen crisis, 1969 would bring emphasis on certain political objectives for which some military success would be a necessary prelude, i.e., pacification ("nation building") and RVNAF growth, development, and modernization.

THIS PAGE NOT USED

CHAPTER II

THE STRATEGY AND THE GOALS

US POLICY AND OBJECTIVES

The View from Washington

(U) ". . . Our goal is peace -- and peace at the earliest possible moment," so stated President Johnson in his State of the Union message of January 1968. However, the President continued to make clear, it was not a matter of peace at any price. We were in Vietnam and would see that struggle through to a successful conclusion because it was in the best interest of our nation that we did so. Three US presidents had confirmed this basic position. President Eisenhower said in 1959:

> Strategically South Vietnam's capture by the Communists would bring their power several hundred miles into a hitherto free region. The remaining countries in Southeast Asia would be menaced by a great flanking movement. The freedom of 12 million people would be lost immediately and that of 150 million in adjacent lands would be seriously endangered. The loss of South Vietnam would set in motion a crumbling process that could, as it progressed, have grave consequences for us and for freedom.

President Kennedy stated in 1963:

> We are not going to withdraw from that effort. In my opinion, for us to withdraw from that effort would mean a collapse not only of South Vietnam, but Southeast Asia. So we are going to stay there.

President Johnson stated in September 1967:

> . . . I am convinced that by seeing this struggle through now we are greatly reducing the chances of a much larger war -- perhaps a nuclear war. I would rather stand in Vietnam in our time, and by meeting this danger now and facing up to it, thereby reduce the danger to our children and for our grandchildren.

(U) The President, in his State of the Union message of January 1968 offered no new concessions to Hanoi as an incentive for starting peace talks. Rather, he reiterated the position taken when he addressed the National Legislative Conference at San Antonio, Texas on 29 September 1967. This position, known as the San Antonio Formula, was as follows:

> The bombing (of NVN) would stop if talks would take place promptly and with reasonable hopes they would be productive. And the other side must not take advantage of our restraint as they have in the past. This nation simply cannot accept anything less without jeopardizing the lives of our men and our allies.

(U) On 31 March 1968, the US took a major step toward de-escalation of the war when President Johnson ordered a ceasefire of the bombardment of NVN by aircraft and naval ships north of the 20th parallel:

> Tonight, I renew the offer I made last August: to stop the bombardment of North Vietnam. We ask that talks begin promptly, that they be serious talks on the substance of peace. We assume that during those talks Hanoi will not take advantage of our restraint.
>
> We are prepared to move immediately toward peace through negotiations. So tonight in the hope that this action will lead to early talks, I am taking the first step to de-escalate the conflict. We are reducing -- substantially reducing -- the present level of hostilities, and we are doing so unilaterally and at once. Tonight I have ordered our aircraft and our naval vessels to make no attacks on North Vietnam except in the area north of the demilitarized zone where the continuing enemy buildup directly threatens allied forward positions and where the movement of their troops and supplies are clearly related to that threat. The area in which we are stopping our attacks includes almost 90 percent of North Vietnam's population, and most of its territory. Thus, there will be no attacks around the principal populated areas, or in the food-producing areas of North Vietnam.
>
> Even this very limited bombing of the North could come to an early end -- if our restraint is matched by restraint in Hanoi. But I cannot in good conscience stop all bombing so long as to do so would immediately and directly endanger the lives of our men and our allies. Whether a complete bombing halt becomes possible in the future will be determined by events. Our purpose in this action is to bring about a reduction in the level of violence that now exists. It is to save the lives of brave men -- and to save the lives of

innocent women and children. It is to permit the contending forces to move closer to a political settlement. Now, as in the past, the United States is ready to send its representatives to any forum, at any time, to discuss the means of bringing this ugly war to an end. I call upon President Ho Chi Minh to respond positively, and favorably, to this new step toward peace. But if peace does not come now through negotiations, it will come when Hanoi understands that our common resolve is unshakable, and our common strength is invincible.[1]

(U) On 19 August 1968, the President again reiterated, in a speech to the annual Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars at Detroit, Michigan, the United States' policy for peace in Vietnam:

First, our objective in Southeast Asia is peace, and the essentials of what we mean by peace for a long time have been quite clear. I am going to repeat them briefly.
-- Reinstall the Demilitarized Zone at the 17th parallel, as the Geneva Accords of 1954 require and let the matter of Vietnam's unity be decided by the people of North Vietnam and the people of South Vietnam in the future;
-- Remove all foreign forces from Laos and reinstall and make fully effective the Geneva Accords of 1962 on Laos;
-- Withdraw US forces from South Vietnam under the circumstances described in the Manila Communique;
-- Encourage the people of South Vietnam to exercise their rights of determination. It is for them to decide in peace without any coercion of any kind -- from anyone -- their own political future on a one-by-one vote basis in a free election -- in the spirit of reconciliation reaffirmed by President Thieu at Honolulu. He said there that all can vote in Vietnam and all can run for office, if they will forsake violence and live by the Constitution. We of the United States agree.
. . . . . .
Second, the US took a major initiative toward peace on March 31. We not only made an offer, but we immediately acted. We took a first dramatic step to de-escalate the conflict. Immediately ordered our aircraft and our naval vessels to make no attacks on North Vietnam north of the 20th parallel. This excluded from bombing almost 90 percent of the North Vietnamese population and almost 80 percent of the North Vietnamese territory . . .
. . . . . .

Thus far Hanoi's response has been:
-- To reject every single suggestion made by ourselves or others to de-escalate the conflict.
-- To proceed since March 31 with the highest level of infiltration that we have observed during the war in Vietnam; the highest level of southward movement of military supplies; and the highest level of preparation for a major wave of attacks of 1968.

. . . . . .

We have made a reasonable offer and we have taken a major first step. That offer has not been accepted. This administration does not intend to move further until it has good reason to believe that the other side intends seriously to join us in de-escalating the war and moving seriously toward peace. We are willing to take chances for peace but we cannot make foolhardy gestures for which our fighting men will pay the price by giving their lives.

. . . . . .

I can tell you that I believe peace is going to come -- that is, if we are steady and it is going to come, if I have anything to do with it, on honorable terms. I cannot tell you precisely when it will come, but I believe that it will come because:
-- I believe military victory is beyond the enemy's grasp.
-- Because the South Vietnamese are gathering military and political strength and confidence day by day.
-- And finally because I believe in America. However great our anxiety for peace; however great our concern for the war in Vietnam; however great our passionate desire that the killing shall stop, I do not believe that the American people are going to walk away from this struggle unless they can walk away with it on honorable terms. [2]

(U) Upon the termination of the seige of Khe Sanh and the relief of the Marine forces by Operation PEGASUS, the President of the US sent the following message to COMUSMACV:

The relief of the forces which have held the base at Khe Sanh is an occasion for me to express the pride and confidence I feel in those who are carrying forward the nation's struggle against aggression in SE-ASIA.

Side by side with your South Vietnamese comrades -- and our other fighting allies -- you have taken the full initial weight of the enemy's Winter/Spring Offensive: and you have now seized the initiative.

> The enemy intended to destroy the constitutional government of South Vietnam and its armed forces. In this he failed. The enemy intended to over-run the base at Khe Sanh. For this purpose he emplaced around that base at least two divisions of North Vietnamese Regulars. Less than 6,000 US Marines and South Vietnamese Rangers -- backed by our tremendous air capacity -- pinned them down, kept them away from the populated areas at the peak of the Winter/Spring Offensive; and imposed heavy casualties. Now the seige of Khe Sanh is lifted. But clearly the fighting in South Vietnam is not yet at an end. The enemy may throw new forces into the battle. You, I know, intend to continue to move forward. But by your gallant and skillful support for the brave people and Armed Forces of South Vietnam, you have brought nearer the time of peace in that suffering land and in all Southeast Asia.
> As we seek now to find through negotiations an honorable peace in Vietnam, I wish you to know that we are grateful for what you have already accomplished and will be counting on you more than ever, until the blessed day when the guns fall silent. [3]

(U) A break in the Paris peace negotiations was evident in November when the President informed the American people of the confirmation of the essential understanding that had been sought with the NVN on the critical issues between our governments. As a result of these developments, the President ordered that all air, naval, and artillery bombardment of North Vietnam cease as of 0800, 1 November 1968, Washington time:

> We have been engaged in discussions with the North Vietnamese in Paris since last May. The discussions began after I announced on the evening of March 31st in a television speech to the nation that the United States -- in an effort to get talks started on a settlement of the Vietnam war -- had stopped the bombing of North Vietnam in the area where 90 percent of the people live. When our representatives -- Ambassador Harriman and Ambassador Vance -- were sent to Paris, they were instructed to insist throughout the discussions that the legitimate elected government of South Vietnam must take its place in any serious negotiations affecting the future of South Vietnam.
> Therefore our Ambassadors Harriman and Vance made it abundantly clear to the representatives of North Vietnam in the beginning that -- as I had indicated on the evening of March 31st -- we would stop the bombing of North Vietnamese territory entirely when that would lead to prompt and productive talks, meaning by that -- talks in which the government of Vietnam was

free to participate.
Our ambassadors also stressed that we could not stop the bombing so long as by doing so we would endanger the lives and the safety of our troops.
For a good many weeks, there was no movement in the talks at all. The talks appeared to really be deadlocked.
Then a few weeks ago, they entered a new and a very much more hopeful phase.

. . . . . .

Last Sunday evening, and throughout Monday, we began to get confirmation of the essential understanding that we had been seeking with the North Vietnamese on the critical issues between us for some time. I spent most of all day Tuesday reviewing every single detail of this matter with our field commander, General Abrams, whom I had ordered home, and who arrived here at the White House at 2:30 in the morning and went into immediate conference with the President and the appropriate members of his cabinet. We received General Abrams' judgement and we heard his recommendations at some length.
Now, as a result of all of these developments, I have now ordered that all air, naval and artillery bombardment of North Vietnam cease as of 8:00 AM, Washington time, Friday morning. I have reached this decision on the basis of the developments in the Paris talks.
And I have reached it in the belief that this action can lead to progress toward a peaceful settlement of the Vietnamese war.

. . . . . .

The Joint Chiefs of Staff, all military men -- have assured me -- and General Abrams firmly asserted to me on Tuesday in that early, 2:30 AM meeting -- that in their military judgement this action would not result in any increase in American casualties.
A regular session of the Paris talks will take place on Wednesday, November 6th, at which the representatives of the Government of South Vietnam are free to participate. We are informed by the representatives of the Hanoi government that the representatives of the National Liberation Front will also be present. I emphasize that their attendance in no way involves recognition of the National Liberation Front in any form. Yet, it conforms to the statements that we have made many times over the years that the NLF would have no difficulty making its views known.
What we now expect--what we have a right to expect--are prompt, productive, serious and intensive negotiations in an atmosphere that is conducive to progress.

We have reached the stage where productive talks can begin. We have made clear to the other side that such talks cannot continue if they take military advantage of them. We cannot have productive talks in an atmosphere where the cities are being shelled and where the Demilitarized Zone is being abused.

. . . . . .

I have finally decided to take this step now and to really determine the good faith of those who have assured us that progress will result when bombing ceases and to try to ascertain if an early peace is possible. The overriding consideration that governs us that this hour is the chance and the opportunity that we might have to save human lives, save human lives on both sides of the conflict. Therefore, I have concluded that we should see if they are acting in good faith.

. . . . . .

But it should be clear to all of us that the new phase of negotiations which opens on November 6th does not, repeat, does not mean that a stable peace has yet come to Southeast Asia. There may well be very hard fighting ahead. Certainly, there is going to be some very hard negotiating, because many difficult and critically important issues are still facing these negotiators. I hope with good will we can solve them. We know that negotiations can move swiftly if the common intent of the negotiators is peace in the world.[4]

Strategic Guidance from JCS and CINCPAC

(~~TS~~) During September 1966, CINCPAC reiterated the general policy guidance provided by the Joint Chiefs of Staff by promulgating the unilateral US concept for Vietnam which envisaged the employment of military forces of the United States, the Republic of Vietnam, and Free World nations in the war for South Vietnam. The purpose of the concept was to provide strategic guidance and direction to subordinate commanders of the Pacific Command for planning and conducting operations. Included in this guidance was the mission to be accomplished, military strategy to be followed, and military tasks to be executed with respect to the Republic of Vietnam, North Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, and Thailand. This concept had superseded the concept promulgated in June 1966 and continued to be the basic guidance provided by JCS in 1968. The Pacific Command mission, simply stated, continued to be to assist the Government of South Vietnam (GVN) and its armed forces to defeat externally directed and supported Communist subversion and aggression and attain an independent non-Communist government in South Vietnam functioning in a secure environment.

CONFIDENTIAL
RESTRICTED SECRET UNCLASSIFIED
REGRADED
830624

(S) The US military strategy for Vietnam, as enunciated by CINCPAC, involved three interdependent undertakings which together constituted an integrated concept for the conduct of military operations against North Vietnam, in Laos and the Republic of Vietnam. In the north, the strategy would be:

> . . .to take the war to the enemy by unremitting but selective application of United States air and naval power. Military installations and those industrial facilities that generate support for the aggression will be attacked. Movement within, into, and out of North Vietnam will be impeded. The enemy will be denied the great psychological and national advantage of conducting an aggression from a sanctuary. This relentless application of force is designed progressively to curtail North Vietnam's war-making capacity. It seeks to force upon him major replenishment, repair, and construction efforts. North Vietnam support and direction of the Pathet Lao and the insurgency in Thailand will be impaired. The movement of men and material through Laos and over all land and water lines of communication into South Vietnam will be disrupted. Hanoi's capability to support military operations in South Vietnam and to direct those operations will be progressively reduced.

(TS) In the south the strategy would be:

> . . .to seek out and destroy Communist forces and infrastructure by expanded, offensive military operations. United States and Free World Military Forces in coordination with the RVNAF, will take the fight to the enemy by attacking his main force and interdicting his lines of communication on land, along the coast, and on inland waterways. In accomplishing this objective, the existing system of military bases will be extended as necessary. Secure areas will be enlarged with emphasis on the National Priority Areas. Reconnaissance operations into enemy areas will be increased. Intelligence collection will be improved. Bombardment of enemy base areas will be intensified with increased ground follow-up. These operations will result in progressive destruction of enemy forces and infrastructure. Area control will be wrested from the Communists. Enemy forces will be broken up into small bands whose chief concern will be their existence.[5]

(TS) CINCPAC believed that complimentary actions were required elsewhere to enhance our ability to prosecute the war and stated that the capabilities of friendly Laotian forces should be supported to suppress Communist insurgency. Continuing efforts would be made within the constraints of national policy to inhibit Viet Cong and North Vietnamese use of Laotian and Cambodian territory.

(TS) The success of the US military strategy in the Republic of Vietnam would be dependent upon coordinated and persistent effort embracing the three military undertakings:

1. To destroy the war-supporting capability of North Vietnam.

2. To seek out and destroy Communist forces and infrastructure.

3. To get ahead with building the South Vietnamese nation.

(TS) CINCPAC established three main objectives to be accomplished in achieving the desired goal and listed the tasks to support each objective. The first objective was to make it as difficult and as costly as possible for North Vietnam to continue effective support of the Viet Cong and to cause North Vietnam to cease its direction and support of the Viet Cong insurgency.

(TS) The second objective was to defeat decisively the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese armed forces in the Republic of Vietnam and force their withdrawal.

(TS) The third objective was to extend the Government of Vietnam's dominion, direction, and control over South Vietnam. [6]

COMBINED US/RVN STRATEGY

Combined Campaign Plan 1968

(S) The Combined Campaign Plan (CCP) for 1968 was promulgated in November 1967 and provided initial guidance for conduct of ground operations by US/FWM forces and RVNAF in RVN during 1968. The concept of operations was to apply the military offensive power and related resources of RVN, US, and FWM forces to priority areas considered critical to the successful accomplishment of the overall mission: to defeat the VC/NVA forces and assist the GVN to extend control throughout RVN. [7]

(S) US/FWM forces were assigned the primary responsibility for destroying the VC/NVA main forces, base areas, and resources; conducting containment operations along the DMZ and adjacent border sanctuary areas to deny the enemy use of the infiltration and invasion routes; assisting and reinforcing RVNAF as necessary in opening and securing LOCs, providing security for selected priority areas, and protecting national resources.

(S) RVNAF was assigned the primary responsibility of participating in and supporting pacification with priority of effort directed towards providing territorial security for the selected priority areas. ARVN regular forces not assigned to Revolutionary Development (RD) support and the territorial security mission were to be assigned to divisional mobile strike forces which were to conduct coordinated and combined operations against VC/NVA main forces, reaction operations in support of pacification, and other missions as directed by their respective Corps Commanders.

(S) Although RVNAF was assigned the primary responsibility of supporting pacification and the US/FWMAF the primary responsibility of destroying the main VC/NVA forces and bases, this was only a general division of responsibilities. Overlaps or shifts would occur depending on the situation, contingencies, or opportunities to exploit enemy intelligence.

(S) Naval Forces would continue maximum coastal surveillance to deny the enemy use of the sea and inland waterways for infiltration. Naval gunfire would be employed to interdict, support friendly coastal operations, and destroy enemy facilities and forces. Riverine operations would continue.

(S) Air forces would continue to provide maximum close air support to US/FWM, and RVN forces. Tactical air forces would be reinforced by heavy strike forces with increased emphasis on "quick reaction" capabilities. Aerial reconnaissance efforts would be intensified.

(S) CIDG forces would operate from strategically located fighting camps with the purpose of maintaining border surveillance; interdicting enemy infiltration; and providing patrol, fire, and logistical bases.

(S) Psychological operations would be intensified against the VC/NVA, the civilians under VC influence, and those personnel living in areas under friendly control to persuade them to actively support the GVN. Stress was placed on disciplined, well behaved military forces showing a friendly, sincere interest in the people and respect for their rights and property. Civic action programs of US/FWM forces and GVN were to be coordinated at the province level. The people were recognized as the greatest asset to the GVN and the active commitment of the people continued to be the goal of the GVN. With control of the people, the enemy would have most of the ingredients for success: food, supplies, money, manpower, concealment, and intelligence. These assets were to be denied to the enemy.

(S) The majority of the population and major food producing centers and other resources were in territory that was designated by CCP 1968 as the area for priority of military offensive operations. The enemy was to be destroyed or driven from this area into sparsely populated, food-scarce regions so as to permit the GVN to protect the population, control resources, and provide unrestricted use of the major LOCs.

(S) Coordinated military/civilian efforts to identify elements and members of the infrastructure would be intensified and followed up by rapid and incisive reaction to exploit intelligence. Military forces were to participate in the attack on the VC political infrastructure through intelligence collection and by assisting the police in the exploitation phase.

(S) Emphasis would continue to be placed on combined integrated operations based on principles of cooperation, coordination, and close partnership at all echelons. Enhancement of RVNAF, with emphasis on RF/PF, would be sought through force structure revisions, improved logistical support, optimum employment of forces, and combined planning and operations.

(S) In the execution of CCP 1968, the scheme of maneuver for each CTZ would be:

1. I CTZ. Military forces would be committed primarily to anti-main force war to contain the enemy along the DMZ and the Laotian border and to destroy the 2d NVA Div and other enemy forces and bases. GVN pacification activities would continue at about the same level as in 1967, except in Quanh Ngai Province where a 50 percent increase would be made.

2. II CTZ. Containment forces in Pleiku and Kontum would continue to deny the enemy the ability to infiltrate freely from Laos and Cambodia; emphasis would be given to the annihilation of the 3d and 5th NVA Divs and enemy base areas; and pacification would be increased along the coastal plains as more effective territorial security was gained.

3. III CTZ. The 5th and 9th VC Divs and the 7th NVA Div would be destroyed; extensive operations would be conducted against known base area complexes; territorial security would be increased radially from Gia Dinh Province; the 1967 pacification efforts would be doubled; and key land and water LOCs would be opened and secured.

4. IV CTZ. Pacification would be greatly accelerated as territorial security expanded in pacification priority provinces. The principle of mass would be employed in heavily populated and resource-rich provinces where operations by regular forces would be conducted only when based on hard intelligence. The northern provinces of Chau Doc, Kien Phong, and Kien Tuong would be organized into a special zone secured primarily by RF/PF and CIDG forces. Emphasis would be given to the annihilation of the enemy and his bases, and the opening and securing of key LOCs.

(S) Tasks assigned to CGs, I, II, III ARVN Corps and CTZs, in coordination with appropriate US Commanders and other FWMAF, were:

1. Dispose forces and conduct operations to provide territorial security for populous areas, with priority to the pacification priority provinces, and protect the population, resources and the military and civil elements engaged in pacification activities within these areas and within areas previously pacified.

2. Provide territorial security for all provincial capitals, district towns, and logistic and operational bases, and other significant political and economic centers with particular emphasis to those locations identified as areas requiring special security. This defense will be characterized by saturation day and night patrolling, ambushes, and other anti-guerrilla tactics to supplement the static defense of these areas.

3. Open, keep open and secure lines of communications. Prepare and maintain quick reaction plans for restoration of LOCs that are sabotaged by enemy forces or damaged by natural causes.

[redacted]

4. Conduct operations to protect and control the population and resources.

5. Establish an effective program to disrupt the VC tax collection efforts.

6. Provide for prompt, thorough, and effective screening, segregation, and disposition of civilian detainees.

7. Coordinate, assist, and support the Chieu Hoi program.

8. Assist and/or reinforce the National Police, as required, to identify and eliminate the VC infrastructure.

9. Assist, support, and participate in combined integrated civil/military intelligence collection and dissemination.

10. Conduct psychological operations.

11. Maintain active surveillance of the border of the RVN and known land and sea infiltration routes into the RVN.

12. Establish and maintain an active reconnaissance program, particularly long range patrols to locate VC/NVA forces, base areas, and supplies.

13. Utilizing forces not required to accomplish the above missions, conduct operations to destroy the VC/NVA main and guerrilla forces within the area designated for priority of military offensive operations.

14. Conduct refugee control measures.

15. Conduct military civic action in coordination with province and district officials.

16. Conduct offensive ground operations against VC/NVA forces, bases, and supply distribution points outside the area for priority of military offensive operations, utilizing available mobile strike forces. These operations will be conducted primarily against those forces and bases positively located by the reconnaissance directed in 12 above.

17. Maintain liaison with adjacent Corps Commander(s) for the purpose of coordinating all operations in the vicinity of the corps boundary.

18. Coordinate with and provide support as required to CIDG camps.

19. Conduct other operations in accordance with schedules published by RVNAF, JGS.

(S) Tasks assigned to CGs, III MAF and I and II FFORCEVs, in coordination with appropriate ARVN Corps Commanders and other FWMAF, were:

1. On a priority basis, conduct sustained, coordinated, combined ground and air operations to destroy the VC/NVA main and guerrilla forces, and neutralize bases and supply distribution points within the area designated for priority of military operations.

[redacted]

2. Conduct sustained offensive operations, based on hard intelligence, against enemy forces located outside the area for priority of military offensive operations.

3. Open, keep open, and secure lines of communications. Prepare and maintain quick reaction plans for restoration of LOCs that are sabotaged by enemy forces or damaged by natural causes.

4. Maintain active air and ground surveillance of the border of the RVN and known land and sea infiltration routes into the RVN.

5. Maintain an active reconnaissance program, particularly long range patrols, to locate VC/NVA main forces, their base areas and supplies, and conduct operations to destroy positively located forces, bases, and supplies.

6. Assist, support, and participate in combined integrated civil/military intelligence collection and dissemination.

7. Provide combat support of the respective ARVN Corps and FWMAF as required and as available.

8. Coordinate with and provide support as required to CIDG camps within respective CTZ.

9. Maintain liaison with adjacent US Force Commanders for the purpose of coordinating operations in the vicinity of the Corps boundary.

10. Conduct operations to support pacification activities in established TAORs and in other areas.

11. Assist ARVN in the conduct of operations to protect and control population and resources.

12. Assist ARVN to establish an effective program to disrupt the VC tax collection efforts.

13. Provide for prompt, thorough, and effective screening, segregation, and disposition of civilian detainees.

14. Assist and/or reinforce ARVN and the National Police, as required, to identify and eliminate the VC infrastructure.

15. Conduct psychological operations.

16. Conduct military civic actions in coordination with province and district officials.

17. Advise, assist, and support the Chieu Hoi program.

18. Conduct refugee control measures.

19. Conduct other operations.

20. Continue advisory effort to respective ARVN Corps Commanders and Corps

subordinate elements to assist in the accomplishment of tasks assigned to ARVN Corps in keeping with the concept for the conduct of this campaign.

(S) COMNAVFORV, in coordination with Commander VNN, will:

1. Destroy or otherwise immobilize confirmed and designated enemy military waterborne traffic in the coastal waters of RVN and inland waterways of I CTZ, III CTZ, and IV CTZ.

2. Detect and destroy enemy craft attempting waterborne infiltration in coastal and contiguous waters of RVN from the 17th parallel to the Cambodian border and beyond as authorized by the Rules of Engagement.

3. Provide shore bombardment and gunfire support to ground forces operating adjacent to the RVN coastline and the inland waterways.

4. Conduct mine countermeasures operations in the major shipping channels to Saigon, and in other harbors and waterways as dictated by operational developments.

5. Conduct operations on the inland waterways of III CTZ and IV CTZ to enforce curfews and interdict enemy attempts to infiltrate or distribute personnel or material.

6. Assist the GVN to conduct river patrol operations along the inland waterways of the III CTZ and IV CTZ in accordance with goals established in Annex E (Restoration of LOCs) and Annex F (Resources Denial).

7. Provide harbor defense in designated ports to include protection against clandestine surface attacks, swimmers and mines; and protection of shipping in coastal harbors.

8. Conduct Mobile Riverine Force operations in close coordination with assigned Army units along inland waterways in the II CTZ and IV CTZ to destroy enemy forces, bases and supply distribution points.

9. Conduct psychological operations in accordance with Annex H (Psychological Operations).

10. Support pacification in areas where naval forces can be brought to bear in accordance with Annex B (Military Support for Pacification) and Annex H (Psychological Operations).

11. Assist and/or reinforce VNN and other forces engaged in operations designed to eliminate the VC infrastructure in accordance with Annex J (Attack on the VC Infrastructure).

12. Assist VNN to establish an active program to assist National Police resource control efforts in accordance with Annex F (Resources Denial).

(S) Tasks assigned to CG, IV ARVN Corps and IV CTZ, in coordination within SA, IV CTZ and other FWMAF, were:

1. Conduct operations to destroy the VC main and guerrilla forces and neutralize bases and supply distribution points within the area designated for priority of military offensive operations and, based on hard intelligence, against enemy forces outside this area.

2. Execute all other missions assigned the ARVN Corps in priorities listed above, except 13 and 16.

(S) Tasks assigned to SA, IV Corps were:

1. Continue advisory effort to CG, IV ARVN Corps and IV Corps subordinate elements, to assist in the accomplishment of tasks assigned.

2. Provide support to IV ARVN Corps with US combat support units p[illegible]d under operational control of Senior Advisor, IV Corps.

3. Coordination with CG, II FFORCEV in the planning and execution of all operations in IV CTZ involving participation of US forces.

(S) In a reappraisal of the CCP 1968, after the enemy's Tet Offensive, COMUSMACV, in a letter to CJCS on 12 March 1968, stated his belief that the plan's mission, objectives, and goals remained valid:

> I believe that the mission, objectives, and goals for the calendar year remain valid. The plan is sufficiently flexible to permit the corps commanders to establish local priorities for combat units to accomplish destruction of VC units in the vicinity of cities, open and secure LOCs, and support the Revolutionary Development effort as required by the situation in the corps zones. Further, there is no reason why battalions in support of RD cannot be diverted, on a case by case basis, for employment against enemy units in the vicinity of cities. When such employments are no longer required, then these battalions would revert to RD support. However, I believe that such diversions should be held to an absolute minimum and for only short periods of time. As you will recall, paragraph 3c(9) of Annex B (Military Support for Pacification) to the Combined Campaign Plan calls for the ARVN units in support of RD to be assigned a tactical area of responsibility or interest (TAOR/I). This should be accomplished in such a manner that the TAOR/I includes an area larger than the RD campaign area thereby permitting the ARVN unit greater latitude in seeking out the enemy and in providing security to contiguous areas which may require security.

(S) COMUSMACV further emphasized the need for commanders at all levels to remain offensive-minded and to guard against purely defensive positioning of troops:

> . . . I am concerned that recent enemy activities may have influenced our commanders to adopt a purely defensive posture in and around cities, thereby subjecting themselves to repeated rocket and

mortar attacks. I urge that we continue to impress upon commanders at all levels the need to remain offensive-minded and to move troops out of purely defensive positions in and around cities. By utilizing the RF/PF in less mobile defensive positions, ARVN battalions can be freed to conduct search and destroy operations in the area of their TAOR/I. In the end this will assist in expanding the security around cities and villages. [8]

(S) He urged the implementation of those portions of the plan that targeted friendly forces against specific enemy elements and he encouraged the application of force as described in CCP 1968:

> PF will primarily provide local security for hamlets and villages (also securit, for population centers, resources, LOCs, and key static facilities). PF will be targeted primarily against the VC guerrilla units. Besides, PF will participate actively in pacification as retraining occurs.
> RF will support and reinforce PF to provide security for hamlets and villages and is targeted principally against the regional units of the VC, including the province companies.
> ARVN regular units on territorial security missions will support and reinforce RF units in their responsibilities for supporting pacification. They will extend area security where necessary by conducting provincial search and destroy operations against the VC local forces (including the provincial battalions) and VC/NVA main force units where required. [9]

Early 1968

(S) COMUSMACV's basic strategic concept for military operations in RVN during the latter part of 1967 and the first part of 1968 was spelled out on 29 October. The directive reviewed developments, stated operational objectives, discussed the concept of operations, and assigned specific tasks. Developments were reviewed as follows:

> Previous offensives have created a situation which is conducive to initiating an all-out offensive on all fronts -- political, military, economic, and psychological. RVN/US/FWM forces have retained the initiative, spoiled enemy attempts to launch major offensives through the DMZ and in the western highlands, frustrated enemy efforts to disrupt pacification and election activities,

expanded the areas of secure population, and made inroads against enemy infrastructure in several key areas. The establishment of a strong point obstacle system south of the DMZ was initiated and is progressing.

Pacification throughout RVN is expanding. Revolutionary Development Cadre groups and military and paramilitary forces in direct support are gradually, but persistently, becoming more effective.

The war has passed the point at which losses inflicted on the enemy exceed his current replacement input. Air interdiction of the enemy LOCs in RVN and in the extended battlefield of North Vietnam and Laos are hampering enemy resupply efforts. Successive offensives into enemy base areas are reducing his unit effectiveness and morale. The Viet Cong capability to forage, to obtain recruits, and support in-country is decreasing. Except along the DMZ where the war has developed a conventional character, the enemy is resorting increasingly to terrorist activity, and hit-and-run attacks.

(S) The following operational objectives were established:

Increase political, military, economic, and psychological pressures on the enemy in RVN and, to the extent authorized, in contiguous countries and waters.

Expand and accelerate the pacification program with emphasis on improved territorial security, increased military operations against enemy units or bases threatening pacification priority areas, intensified action against enemy infrastructure, and more selective and effective population and resources control.

Increase employment and improve effectiveness of RVN forces with emphasis on RF and PF elements.

Invade enemy base areas, destroy or capture enemy materials and facilities, and defeat enemy organized units.

Interdicting enemy lines of communication both in and leading into RVN.

Open, secure, and use additional land and water lines of communication in RVN.

(S) The concept of operations was stated in the following terms:

> As the containment forces prevent major incursions of the enemy from out-of-country sanctuaries the priority for offensive operations will shift, with the weather pattern changes, to the southern portions of II CTZ, all of III CTZ, and IV CTZ. A series of offensives will be conducted in selected areas. The priority for the GVN pacification program behind the protective shield of the US/FW/ARVN forces will be III CTZ/IV CTZ, II CTZ and I CTZ in that order. Economy of forces and maximum flexibility in force allocation between and within corps tactical zones, coupled with maintenance of a balanced logistics support system, is required.
>
> The overall strategy will contain three basic facets: (1) offensives to keep the enemy off-balance; (2) persistent neutralization of enemy base areas with methodical capture/destruction of his supplies and facilities; and (3) improved and expanded territorial security and other pacification programs. Application of all three aspects throughout RVN will be concurrent, although apportioning the weight of effort among them will vary from area to area. A common requirement is finding and fixing the enemy. Hence, tactics will stress long-range patrolling in and around TAORs and integrated operations by military, paramilitary, and National Police Forces in populated areas.
>
> The key to the overall concept is sustained territorial security for the pacification program. The concerted efforts of the entire military-civil team are required to accelerate improved security conditions. A major effort will be made to implement measures to integrate all aspects of the anti-infrastructure campaign. Similarly, better more specifically targeted population and resources control must be developed and enforced. Planning, as a matter of priority, will provide for the opening and securing of land and water LOCs to enhance inter-community contacts, increase friendly presence in the countryside, and permit uninterrupted flow of civil/commercial traffic.
>
> Pressure will be applied on all segments of the enemy's external and internal support system to reduce the combat effectiveness of his organized forces and to keep him on the move and away from populated areas. Multi-brigade offensives will be launched against major base areas not previously invaded.

Close-in enemy base areas will be neutralized between major offensives with priority against those base areas most seriously affecting pacification priority areas. Previously attacked base areas will be reentered to insure continued neutralization. However, US/FWM/RVN units must be prepared for the enemy to react with increased use of guerrilla and terrorist activities.

Improvement in the overall effectiveness of Vietnamese military, paramilitary, and National Police Force (NPF) will be stressed. The planned RVNAF reorganization program is designed to provide the framework for enhanced effectiveness. Under this program ARVN and RF/PF units will continue to exert primary effort on territorial security aspects of pacification development. Concurrently, the tempo of offensive operations by ARVN, combined US/RVN and FW/RVN forces will increase. Our objective, by the end of the period, is to turn over the internal security of selected areas to PF, NPF, and to some hamlet self-defense forces. US, FWM, and RVN units will provide outer security by offensives against enemy main force units and into enemy base areas. It is vital that during RVNAF reorganization the tempo of ARVN operations not be allowed to decelerate and that improved integration be achieved rather than increased compartmentalization. [10]

(S) Specific tasks were assigned all major subordinate commanders in support of the above concept and objectives.

The YORK Series

(TS) COMUSMACV, in mid-August 1967, updated his guidance to field force commanders, with emphasis on employment of the 1st Cav Div (-) during the northeast monsoon season. The updated guidance was prompted by the planned arrival of additional maneuver battalions during the latter part of 1967. COMUSMACV stated that when these battalions arrived, the 1st Cav Div (-) would be relieved of its mission in northeast II CTZ. The logic of this action was that it would coincide with the beginning of the northeast monsoon and would permit deployment of the 1st Cav Div (-) as a theater exploitation force into selected areas where good weather prevailed. [11]

(TS) The campaign would last approximately 25 weeks (October 1967 - March 1968) and would consist of four phases; Phase I (PHOENIX) to locate and destroy MR 6 HQ and elements of the Tuyen Duc/Ninh Thuan/Binh Thuan/Lam Dong Provinces of southe II CTZ and open Highway 1. Phase II (SANTA FE) to locate and destroy the 5th VC Div elements in the northwest section of III CTZ and support operations to open Highway 1 in that area; Phase III (SAN ANGELO) to block the Cambodian border and seal withdrawal routes from War Zone D in support of Operation DODGE CITY against War Zone D; and Phase IV (YORK) to conduct operations against the enemy in the Do Xa area as a part of a larger force. The initial three phases of the plan were executed with forces other than the 1st Cav Div but during the time frame originally scheduled. However, the enemy chose not to contest our movements into his Military Regions (MRs), resulting in considerably less enemy killed than had been anticipated.[12]

(TS) In early December 1967, the original Operation YORK was modified to include planning for a series of operations to start about mid-February 1968. The new four-phased Operation YORK envisioned a combined task force assaulting successively into western Do Xa (YORK I), the A Shau Valley (YORK II), western Quang Tri Province (YORK III), and, at a time to be determined, the eastern Do Xa (YORK IV). The 1st Cav Div was again scheduled to constitute the basic task force. However, in mid-January 1968 the Div was deployed to northern I CTZ in reaction to the growing enemy threat in that area.[13]

(TS) Operation YORK I was cancelled on 10 January 1968 as planning progressed for the deployment of major forces to northern I CTZ. In December 1967 COMUSMACV had tasked the CG, III MAF to develop detailed plans for operations into the A Shau Valley (YORK II) and into western Quang Tri Province (YORK III). On 24 February 1968, COMUSMACV, in order to avoid duplication of effort and in consideration of their proximity to the scene, directed his newly formed MACV (FWD) HQ to take over MACV level planning for operations in northern I CTZ to include YORK II. The CG, III MAF had submitted his prior planning for YORK II to COMUSMACV on 6 February 1968. However, events were again overtaking our long-range planning.[14]

(TS) The enemy had commenced the seige of the Marine Combat Base at Khe Sanh in January 1968. The outpost guarded the approaches to the cities of Quang Tri and Dong Ha. The loss of this position would provide the NVA with a base from which to outflank our forces defending along the DMZ. These considerations dictated the early relief of this critical outpost. Planning was undertaken to relieve Khe Sanh (Operation PEGASUS) and also to preempt the enemy from massing for further attacks on Hue by attacking his bases in the A Shau Valley (Operation DELAWARE). In consideration of this planning and its close duplication of YORK II and YORK III, the YORK series of operations was cancelled on 23 March.[15]

(U) While the YORK operations were never executed, the prior planning and prepositioning of supplies had proven to be most fortuitous. In addition to supporting to a large extent the rapid deployment of the 1st Cav Div and the 101st Abn Div to I CTZ in January and February, the advance logistical planning aided in making possible the early relief of Khe Sanh and the advance into the A Shau Valley in April and May.[16]

Counteroffensive

(C) As the enemy committed his forces to a major offensive effort throughout RVN on 29 January, COMUSMACV advised his major force commanders to take advantage of the possible opportunities presented by the enemy as he withdrew:

> In view of the major enemy offensive effort throughout RVN during the last 72 hours and the losses he has suffered it is highly probable the momentum and intensity of his action will diminish significantly pending rest, resupply, and reorganization. During this lull or possible withdrawal, addressees will make maximum effort to maintain continuous contact and pressure on enemy forces as he attempts to break off from his present overextended posture.
>
> We must take advantage of opportunities presented by these enemy attempts to withdraw. Interrogations of detainees should focus on planned routes of withdrawal, rallying points, and base areas which the enemy may run for ....Scrutinize the routes of approach used by enemy units in entering their objective area as he may attempt to use the same routes in withdrawal. Terrain analysis will be helpful in directing the search for enemy withdrawal routes.
>
> Additionally, each commander must seek opportunities to out maneuver enemy forces, interdict his LOC, ambush his routes of withdrawal, infest his base areas, and otherwise relentlessly pressure his forces while he is in this vulnerable and disorganized posture. This counteroffensive will be keyed to hard intelligence, focused on major enemy units, and designed to disorganize and destroy his forces, material, and will to fight before he can withdraw and recoup. An aggressive and forceful effort by each echelon of command may yield extraordinary dividends beyond our expectations in shortening the war in RVN.
>
> The effort outlined above should be taken in concert with RVNAF and Free World Forces to ensure the maximum effectiveness in one synchronized drive to destroy the maximum NVA/VC strength in RVN. However, such coordination should not under any circumstances delay the execution of this effort. Commanders at each level will encourage all counterpart commanders to participate fully with the spirit and execution of this directive. [17]

(S) Later on 4 February, COMUSMACV provided further guidance relative to the enemy's capability to re-initiate attacks despite his losses during the Tet Offensive:

> The enemy's current country-wide major offensive has been blunted and stopped. The forces he initially committed have been turned back with enormous losses. I believe it significant to point out, however, that in many areas throughout the country the enemy has withheld many of his main force and NVA units. This is particularly true in III CTZ. Consequently, he continues to maintain a strong capability to re-initiate attacks country-wide at the time and place of his choosing, and most probably in conjunction with what I believe will be his ultimate efforts; a major offensive in the Khe Sanh/Cam Lo/Con Thien area.
>
> I caution all commands to remain particularly alert to this continued enemy capability and to turn the threat to our advantage by aggressive pursuit of beaten units and by preemptive attack, where possible, against enemy forces as yet uncommitted.[18]

Applying the Pressure

(C) On 1 April COMUSMACV reviewed developments since the enemy launched his Tet Offensive two months prior and emphasized the need for placing pressure on the enemy in order to achieve a major turn in the course of the war:

> In the months since the enemy launched his Tet Offensive, the RVNAF and FWMAF have achieved a significant victory in stopping the enemy and restoring the situation. In the eyes of the world, however, this has been a negative accomplishment, a reaction to enemy initiative. We must now take maximum advantage of the current situation, and put relentless pressure on the enemy to achieve what could be a major turn in the course of the war.
>
> We have many indications that the enemy is having serious problems .... Friendly operations which are denying the enemy control of population centers deprive him of access to his recruiting base. By denying him that access, we magnify his personnel problems and keep his strength down, in both quantity and quality. Caches of food, ammunition, equipment, and medical supplies seized by friendly forces intensify his supply and distribution

problems. Captured enemy documents urge continuous attacks and express fear that we will continue to expand our offensive over the rural areas, with the result that they will not be able to "beseige and press" in the cities and towns. . . Continuous pressure applied to the enemy is bound to have additional effect on his already flagging morale.

From a friendly standpoint, the situation is increasingly favorable. For example: The government of South Vietnam is mobilizing. Its leaders are redoubling their efforts to ensure that political, economic, and social direction is pointed toward a common goal. RVNAF Forces have measured up well to the great challenge of the past two months and stand ready to accelerate the fight throughout their areas of responsibility. The FWMAF, to a man, has shown a determination to move against the enemy with increased aggressiveness. Our posture throughout the country is sound. Our forces are now in position to seek decisive battles in Quang Tri and Thua Thien. Throughout the entire littoral and the western highlands our troops are orienting their operations on the enemy to keep him away from population centers and resources. Allied campaigns throughout III and IV Corps are diligently securing and restoring lines of communications and installations (economic lifelines) that are vital to these rich and populated areas. The weather is beginning to break in the north and it will be acceptable for the offensive throughout the central and southern sectors of the country for the next sixty days. The challenge is now ours. We cannot let it slip. We must go after the enemy throughout the country; we must hound him and hurt him. We can achieve a decisive victory and we must do so at once, to restore the perspective with which the world sees this war. We must demonstrate by our actions that we are, in fact, winning the war. [19]

Increased Tempo

(S) It had become evident that the Allied forces had achieved commendable results in preempting, suppressing, and destroying Communist forces when, in late April, COMUSMACV called for an increased tempo and a maximum sustained effort against the enemy:

. . . There remains the potential for inflicting a substantially greater level of destruction on the enemy during the forthcoming weeks.

The enemy is on the run. He is avoiding contact in most areas. He must be kept on the run and not permitted to regroup, resupply, or redeploy. It is essential that all commanders ensure maximum sustained effort in the aggressive employment of all combat assets. The weather now favors the effective use of all of our combat arms in most areas of RVN. The highest order of tactical initiative and imagination in locating and destroying the enemy is required.

Aggressive execution of the general offensive requires response to opportunities on an order beyond that generally achieved to date. Our forces cannot be allowed to bog down in static and unproductive AOs. Every commander must use economy of force measures within selected portions of his area, so as to free a part of his forces. They must move out, find the enemy and preempt his buildups. They must operate at night. Reports of broken contact and incidents without immediate response are too prevalent. Contact must be maintained.

The concept of fixed fire bases is inappropriate in many instances. Artillery is a mobile weapon. It must be deployed to support all tactical opportunities. In this regard, the ratio of unobserved H and I fires (incl NGF) to observed fires remains too high.

The resolves of the RVNAF is on trial before civilian observers. It is of first priority that our efforts be rededicated to spurring RF/PF and ARVN to greater aggressiveness and effectiveness. Close coordination, combined operations, encouragement, and pressure are essential means to this mandatory objective.

The enemy's general posture has presented us exploitable opportunities. All commanders must spare no efforts or no assets in seizing these opportunities. Maximum pay off must be obtained from the full employment of our current forces. [20]

Pursuit of the Enemy

(S) Perhaps sensing the danger of losing the initiative to COMUSMACV's aggressive strategy and the increasing difficulty of regaining it once it was lost, the enemy struck at Saigon, Hue, Quang Tri and Dong Ha on 6 May in his Second General Offensive. With impressive stealth, he again maneuvered his troops to within five miles of the cities without detection. Even so, the

offensive was a "pale replica" of the January-February affair. To overcome the confusion of Tet, the enemy had broadly disseminated his plans among the attacking and coordinating forces with subsequent loss of security. As a result, the advance was met with blocking forces and, although some rather lengthy and fierce fighting took place, the costly assaults proved to be both military and psychological defeats for the VC/NVA.

(S) In any event, the Communist May-June Offensive confirmed COMUSMACV's strategy of relentless pressure on the enemy. On 6 May, the day after the new enemy offensive began, he wrote the CG, III MAF as follows:

> Commencing immediately, our objective will be to make a major breakthrough toward military victory in South Vietnam. We have the assets to do the job; in three years of fighting, we have acquired a level of experience in how to fight this war that must be exploited; today, we have a stronger alliance -- especially on the battlefield -- that must be used. Nothing less than the fulfillment of our potential will be an acceptable conclusion to the fighting which lies immediately ahead.
>
> The fighting will be characterized by an aggressive, unremitting, twenty-four hour application of pressure on all enemy elements throughout RVN. Twenty-four hours includes darkness. This cannot be accepted as a deterrent; in fact it must be adopted as an ally. The enemy will be hounded at night, as in the daylight; he will not be permitted to mass for attacks on the cities; he will be driven from the populated areas, pursued relentlessly, isolated and destroyed. In base areas, where hard intelligence indicates the presence of enemy forces, he will be subjected to the full weight of supporting arms-precisely applied with increased attention to mass. To conserve this mass, supporting arms will not be dissipated on soft targets, nor for the purpose of reassuring friendly morale by dubious device of indiscriminate harassing fire. Although the size of operations will be influenced by the weather, there will be no let up throughout the country because of the season. Only the emphasis will be altered. Techniques that adapt to the season will be utilized.
>
> Success will depend upon intelligence acquisition. This is a command responsibility equal to the employment of combat power. Reconnaissance will be the key. It must be carefully planned around the clock with ingenious employment of every sensor -- human and man made -- so as to provide positive, maximum coverage.
>
> The pay off will be in the reaction to intelligence. In the execution of battle plans, all US/ARVN/FW combat arms will be meshed together to isolate and destroy the enemy and his influence. This will call for a mental attitude that is ready to respond instantaneously to tactical intelligence with mobile fire and maneuver elements. Contacts, whether developed by US, FW, ARVN, RF, PF,

police, or civilians, will be exploited by all forces that can be brought to bear. Contacts gained will not be broken and, if lost, will be considered a tactical error. Pursuit will be second-nature; it will continue until the particular enemy is destroyed.

Allied forces must move out of their camps, go where the enemy goes, badger him and catch him, and move immediately to the next opportunity which our reconnaissance develops. The battle must be a continuum.

US commanders will take the lead in forging a totally coordinated military offensive, in which a full role will be assigned to the RVNAF. This must become increasingly their war. Vietnamese elements must be encouraged, or challenged, to be in the van of the attack. ARVN, RF, PF, CIDG, Sector, Sub Sector, combat, and combat service elements must be marshaled into a cohesive tactical force aimed exactly at the enemy. The enemy must be impressed with the fact that an attack even on RF, PF, or RD Cadre is a hazardous proposition that brings certain defeat.

Pacification operations are inseparable from the main offensive. The military effort required to insure their success will be expended with just as much sense of proprietorship by the tactical commander as he would display in the other facets of his responsibility. These operations must result in driving the enemy from the population and political centers of the country, opening the lines of communications, and giving breathing room to the process of pacification.

Security is what is strived for. It is not a tactic, it is a goal. It will be the result of a dynamically aggressive military campaign and thorough coordination with PHOENIX committees.

The purpose of fighting in the summer of 1968 will be to hound the enemy, destroy his forces, and rid this land of his influence. [21]

(S) Late in July a growing weight of intelligence indicated that the enemy was preparing to launch a strong series of attacks during the middle of August. COMUSMACV published operational guidance on 27 July to all major commanders stressing maximum anticipation of the enemy through an all-out intelligence effort linked with maximum combat reaction. The enemy's apparent offensive intent presented the Allied forces a chance to strike him a crushing blow. [22]

(S) As a follow-up to his guidance of 27 July, COMUSMACV issued further operational guidance to his commanders in mid-August. He warned that the then current estimates indicated that the enemy had achieved a posture from which he was capable of launching a major offensive. These attacks could be expected to be preceded by or in conjunction with infiltration

into populated areas and acts of sabotage, terrorism, and intimidation. COMUSMACV further emphasized the important role that the RF/PF were expected to play in anticipation of these attacks:

> In the enemy's preparation for battle he is customarily preceded by reconnaissance parties and small groups who prepare food and ammunition caches, build or dig CPs, aid stations and similar installations. During the battle he employs couriers, aid men, ammunition and food resupply porters. During withdrawals he employs other small groups to link and support his major units. His dependence on these techniques of employment of individuals and small groups makes him vulnerable to a programmed coverage of the countryside by RF and PF units. This can be done by the RF becoming heavily engaged in aggressive patrolling and night ambushes under the direct supervision of officer personnel. Such actions can preempt surprise attacks on populated areas and installations, and permit application of our forces to preclude the enemy from attaining temporary successes. Because of their knowledge of the people and the local area, the PF can be an invaluable asset in preventing acts of terrorism and sabotage by identifying infiltrators into populated areas and by simply being alert to and reporting unusual incidents.
>
> I therefore charge US advisors at all levels, and particularly those in the position to directly influence RF/PF operations, to exercise all their skills and energies to achieve maximum response to the guidance outlined herein. [23]

(S) With the approach of the northeast monsoon season, COMUSMACV spelled out the need for continuing the tempo of offensive operations in order to deny enemy forces the opportunity to regroup, refit, and reorganize. In his planning guidance to CG, III MAF he directed that a concept of operations, to be conducted throughout I CTZ during the northeast monsoon season, be developed by 15 September. He stated the following planning guidance:

> . . . The difficult weather conditions that will exist during the northeast monsoon must not result in withdrawal of our forces to base camps and thus permit the enemy freedom of movement under the natural concealment that foul weather provides.
>
> We must continue to preempt the enemy's initiative. Our operations must deny him the use of his base areas and infiltration routes. It is expected that the number of US maneuver battalions

> available in I CTZ will remain unchanged during this period. Deployment of these battalions to priority areas should be considered as should pre-positioning of supplies in order to support operations that are not dependent on continuous helicopter support or long lines of communication. We must have plans for monsoon operations that will permit us to outmaneuver the enemy at every turn. Emphasis on US/ARVN combined operations should be increased with the goal of establishing GVN control of every district in I CTZ. [24]

(C) As further intelligence indicated a possible third offensive, COMUSMACV issued guidance directing preparation of a counteroffensive to exploit enemy losses as soon as the peak of his "Third Offensive" passed. One major adverse consequence of the enemy's Tet Offensive had been the withdrawal of many RVNAF units from the countryside to protect towns and cities which resulted in a considerable setback to the pacification effort. Relatively secure population had declined from about 67 percent at the end of January to under 60 percent by the end of February. This setback was of great concern to COMUSMACV:

> It is imperative that a setback of such proportions not be allowed to reoccur. The substantial growth in RVNAF strength and the enemy's greater relative weakness compared to Tet should enhance our ability to frustrate his "third offensive" without sacrificing rural population control. By engaging and attacking main force and local force units, RVN/FWM forces should be able not only to defeat enemy offensive moves directed against cities, towns, and military installations, but also to prevent the effective use of his force to gain control of rural areas.

(C) COMUSMACV directed US Advisors at all levels to impress on their counterparts that a major objective must be to avoid the withdrawal of security from the rural areas. If enemy attacks caused local withdrawals in specific areas, US Advisors were to immediately urge the re-establishment of territorial security at the earliest possible moment. Advisors were also directed to report such withdrawals to next higher headquarters for advisory action if needed at that level. Parallel guidance was to be issued by CJGS through RVNAF channels. [25]

Accelerated Pacification Campaign

(S) In his operational guidance for the 4th Qtr, CY68, COMUSMACV cautioned commanders that, although our tactical operations were punishing the enemy, intelligence reports indicated that the enemy was attempting to compensate for his tactical losses by turning his efforts to a political offensive in order to gain a political victory. Reports further indicated that the enemy was devoting effort to expanding the VC cadre and infrastructure and possibly organizing new VC local battalions so that he might be in a position to take advantage of a situation which

hopefully he would bring about by asking for a ceasefire. COMUSMACV warned his commanders that we must guard against getting into the position where we might lose the war strategically after having defeated the enemy on the battlefield.

(S) Accordingly, each commander was directed to expand his spoiling and preemptive operations, i.e., attacks against the enemy main and local forces, base areas, infiltration routes, LOCs, to include an intensive drive against the VC infrastructure and political apparatus aimed at eliminating it just as rapidly as possible. The drive would support and complement an intensified PHOENIX program and would call for close coordination with all elements of the GVN and USG. COMUSMACV was, in essence, calling for an expansion of intensity across the board to bring all available forces to bear simultaneously against the entire enemy spectrum:

> The concept is that each senior US commander, in conjunction with ARVN corps commanders and province and district chiefs, will cause continuous operations to be conducted which relentlessly screen the area until the VC infrastructure has been removed. 26

(S) Tactical elements were to assist primarily by a continuation of tactical operations, providing area security, and sealing off areas for search, but were not to be held on static missions. The actual screening of the population was to be done by RF/PF, police forces, and other appropriate RVN agencies, all fully coordinated between the local US commander, ARVN commander, province and/or district chief and their US advisors. Emphasis was to be placed on the elimination of the infrastructure from the cities, villages, and hamlets comprising the major population areas of RVN, and through this Viet Cong Infrastructure (VCI) elimination, the enemy's defeat would be assured. It would be difficult for the VC to revive itself within the climate of confidence generated. Local police and Popular and Regional Forces should then be able "to keep the weeds cut out of the garden."

(S) Goals for the Accelerated Pacification Campaign (APC) were to upgrade at least 1,000 contested hamlets to relatively secure ratings by 31 January 69, to neutralize at least 3,000 VCI each month during the three month campaign, to induce at least 5,000 Hoi Chanh to rally under the Chieu Hoi program, to expedite organizing 1,000,000 self-defenders and arming at least 200,000, and to conduct an information campaign to demonstrate to the people and the enemy that the GVN had seized the initiative and was moving rapidly towards the end of the war.

(S) The two campaigns were approved by President Thieu. A crash program began on 1 November 1968 in order to seize the initiative while the enemy was in a vulnerable condition. This three-month campaign would act as a curtain raiser for the year-long 1969 pacification campaign and was expected to show substantial results by Tet (February 1969).

(S) A vigorous counteroffensive by the GVN and FWMAF was to be waged through these campaigns with the objective of bringing about a reduction of the enemy's strength in Vietnam to the nuisance level. 27

THE STRATEGY AND GOALS - II

1. New York Times, April 1, 1968.

2. Msg (U), WASH DC to CINCPAC, 210230Z Aug 68, Subj: President's Detroit Speech of 19 August 1968 (U).

3. Msg (U), President to COMUSMACV, 081154 Apr 68, Subj: Not Stated.

4. Msg (U), SECSTATE to AMEMB SAIGON, 012251Z Nov 68, Subj: Remarks of the President (U).

5. Msg (TS), CINCPAC to COMUSMACV, 280050Z Sep 66, Subj: Concept for Vietnam (U), Gp-3

6. Ibid.

7. Combined Campaign Plan, 1968 (AB 143) (S), MACJ3, 11 Nov 67, Gp-1.

8. Ltr (S), COMUSMACV to GEN Gao Van Vien, 12 Mar 68, Subj: CCP (AB 143).

9. Ibid.

10. COMUSMACV Planning Dir No. 9-67 (S), MACJ3, 29 Oct 67, Subj: Planning Guidance for Senior Commanders for the Period 1 Nov 67 - 30 Apr 68 (U).

11. Bklt (TS), MACJ031, 16 Sep 68, Subj: USMACV Command History 1967 (U), Gp-1.

12. Ibid.

13. Msg (TS), COMUSMACV to Major Subordinate Commanders, 171045Z Dec 67, Subj: Operation YORK Planning Directive (U), Gp-4.

14. Msg (TS), CO 5th SFGA to COMUSMACV, 110900Z Jan 68, Subj: Operation YORK (U) Gp-4 Msg (S), CG, III MAF to COMUSMACV, 060758Z Feb 68, Subj: Concept, Operation YORK II (U), Gp-4; Msg (TS), COMUSMACV to DEPCOMUSMACV FWD, 241433Z Feb 68, Subj: I CTZ North Operations (U), Gp-3.

15. Msg (S), COMUSMACV to Major Subordinate Commanders, 231240Z Mar 68, Subj: Operation YORK (U), Gp-4; Interview (S), COL ARGO with GEN WESTMORELAND, Jun 68, Subj: Classified, Gp-None.

16. Interview (S), COL ARCO with GEN WESTMORELAND, Jun 68, Subj: Classified, Gp-None.

17. Msg (C), COMUSMACV to III MAF, et al, 010625Z Feb 68, Subj: Counteroffensive Operations (U), Gp-4.

18. Msg (S), COMUSMACV to III MAF, et al, 040655Z Feb 68, Subj: Clarsified, Gp-4.

19. Msg (C), COMUSMACV to 7AF, et al, 011403Z Apr 68, Subj: Pressure on Enemy (U) Gp-4.

20. Msg (S), COMUSMACV to III MAF, et al, 250018Z Apr 68, Subj: Allied Forces General Offensive (U), Gp-4.

21. Msg (S), COMUSMACV to III MAF, 061047Z May 68, Subj: Continued Offensive (U), Gp-4.

22. Msg (S), COMUSMACV to CG III MAF, et al, 271139Z Jul 68, Subj: Operational Guidance (U), Gp-4.

23. Msg (S), COMUSMACV to SA I CTZ, et al, 180555Z AUG 68, Subj: Operational Guidance (U), Gp-4.

24. Msg (S), COMUSMACV to CG III MAF, 220040Z Aug 68, Subj: NE Monsoon Planning (U), Gp-4.

25. Msg (C), COMUSMACV to SA I CTZ, et al, 270420Z Aug 68, Subj: Operational Guidance (U), Gp-4

26. Msg (S), COMUSMACV, 280629Z Sep 68, Subj: Operational Guidance - 4th Qtr CY68(U), Gp-4; Report (S), Part I, USMACV Year-End Review of Vietnam - 1968, dtd 4 Dec 68 (U); Msg (S) COMUSMACV, 130955Z Oct 68, Subj: Operational Guidance (U), Gp-4; Msg (C), COMUSMACV, 131045Z Oct 68, Subj: Operational Guidance - 4th Qtr CY 68 (U), Gp-4.

27. Ibid.

THIS PAGE NOT USED

CHAPTER III

THE ENEMY

INTRODUCTION

(U) "However absorbed a commander may be in the elaboration of his own thoughts, it is sometimes necessary to take the enemy into account."

Attributed to Winston Churchill [1]

Enemy Strategic Posture at the Beginning of 1968

(C) By summer of 1967, it became obvious to the enemy that his Phase II insurgency tactics were failing. His losses were exceeding his gains and his units were being soundly defeated. He was also concerned with his loss of control over increasing portions of the RVN population as the pacification campaign progressed. Consequently, in late summer of CY67, the enemy decided it was essential to escalate the conflict immediately into Phase III insurgency. His military posture had deteriorated and he wanted to take advantage of what he judged to be a significant opportunity in light of a considerable decline in public support in the US for the war effort. The enemy planned countrywide coordinated attacks, with emphasis on Saigon and other cities, hoping for heavy attrition of US forces which would further influence the attitude of the American people toward the war. He continued his three-pronged approach: military, political, and proselyting. He expected based on a mistaken estimate, a popular uprising in SVN which would topple the government, cause the collapse of RVNAF, isolate the American forces from the war, and permit the expansion of enemy control in the rural areas. His efforts were to be called the "67-68 Winter/Spring Campaign."

Preparations for the 1968 First General Offensive

(C) Preparations for his Winter/Spring Campaign were underway by September 1967 and included strengthening his command and control arrangements. Actual military operations in the campaign began in late October 1967, continued into November, decreased somewhat in intensity in December, but were heavy in January, involving ground attacks and attacks by fire. The enemy made logistics preparations on an unparalleled scale including the building of new roads and the extensive stockpiling of supplies. Infiltration and recruitment of personnel rose sharply in January. The enemy was now ready to launch his First General or Tet Offensive.

The First General Offensive and Its Aftermath

(C) The larger attacks in the Tet Offensive were aimed at a few selected major urban targets and were supported by smaller ground attacks and attacks by fire in other areas. The most dramatic action was in Saigon but the enemy was quickly ejected from the city. The enemy had hoped to seize Quang Tri Province but his attack on the Khe Sanh Combat Base never materialized and resulted instead in an Allied victory as the enemy buildup was preempted by friendly firepower. The enemy's attack on Quang Tri City was repelled. Hue and Phu Bai were also attacked in the north, with Hue being the last city in the country to be cleared of the enemy. In II CTZ, attacks were launched on Nha Trang and Phan Thiet, as well as the key cities of the Western Highlands. In IV CTZ, action was widespread but individual attacks were smaller. The enemy's new strategy had failed. The GVN and RVNAF did not collapse but gained a new measure of respect. Although the enemy made some gains in controlling rural areas, his achievements were less than he had hoped. He was unable to hold permanently any of the cities he attacked; he lost in certain areas much of the infrastructure he had built up; morale was damaged; and he lost approximately 40,000 men or an estimated one-sixth of his military strength at the time. The enemy's major gain from Tet was in the propaganda field outside RVN. He withdrew from the immediate battle areas, reequipped and reindoctrinated his forces, and reassessed his position in preparation for his Second General Offensive.

The Second General Offensive and Its Aftermath

(C) The enemy realized he could not afford another countrywide offensive of the kind he attempted at Tet. He thought he could exploit the propaganda success he had achieved at Tet by sustaining the pressure on FWMAFs. To do this, the enemy decided to stagger his main blows in time and place, beginning in mid-April. Actually, this offensive did not begin until early May. The attacks on Saigon, the primary target, were on a smaller scale than during Tet but cost the enemy heavy casualties. Other relatively major attacks by fire were equally unsuccessful with many of the later attacks being preempted by friendly spoiling attacks. Overall, the enemy lost almost 30,000 KIA in his second offensive. He then withdrew into his base areas and border sanctuaries in order to refit, retrain, and receive replacements.

The Third General Offensive

(C) The enemy launched his so-called "Third General Offensive" on 17-18 August, with the intent that it would be more violent, of longer duration, and thus have greater impact than his previous major attacks. He planned to concentrate on two major objectives, Saigon and Da Nang, while keeping FWMAF tied down in the DMZ area and harassing friendly elements in the Western Highlands. The attacks either failed to develop momentum or were preempted. Diversionary attacks in III and IV CTZ failed to draw off Saigon defense forces while the enemy drive on Da Nang was blunted. The enemy had nothing to show for his expenditure of manpower. As his effort faded after mid-September, it was again clear that the enemy had not solved his basic problem of achieving his objectives. He had to mass; and, when he did so, he risked destruction by friendly forces' superior mobility and firepower.

The Turn to Negotiations

(C) The Third Offensive was to have strengthened the enemy's hand at the official conversations in Paris; instead, it exposed the essential weakness of his military posture. A reassessment, possibly as crucial as that of mid-1967, probably began as the full implications of the failure of the offensive became apparent to the Hanoi leadership. Militarily weakened, the enemy was forced to put added emphasis on political activity to buttress his position in SVN. He could turn his weakness and defeats to an advantage. He could set the stage for a full bombing halt by combining major withdrawals out of country into sanctuaries with the sharp reduction in activity tactically forced on him by friendly sweep operations, B-52 strikes, cache discoveries, and air interdiction. He had to approach the US, accept her "understanding," make a convincing show of it, and be prepared to slowly move forward in Paris. Thus, he gained a most valuable immediate prize--the bombing halt.

The Enemy Situation

(C) By mid-November 1968, most major enemy units were in border sanctuaries or in remote base areas. The enemy was continuing small-scale attacks against minor objectives, usually isolated FWMAF outposts. Attacks by fire continued, except on Saigon, but were not at a noticeably higher level than before the bombing halt. In general, the enemy was attempting to regroup, refit, and prepare for whatever course of action he might choose to adopt. By virtue of his deployment of forces, he retained multiple options. He was disposed where he could start a full-scale return to NVN. He also had the alternative of returning for attacks in RVN from I CTZ to the Delta. His capability to attack Saigon had been significantly enhanced. Remaining where he was, the enemy posed a counterweight to a possible resumption of bombing, or over the longer period, he was in a position to respond to any military or political opportunity which might appear.[2]

THE ROLE OF NORTH VIETNAM

"One should know one's enemies, their alliances, their country . . ."

Fredrick The Great: Instructions for His Generals, 1747.[3]

The Leadership of North Vietnam

The Party

(U) For years writers, newspapers, and other media have described the political machine of the VC/NVA. Perhaps the best description is one that has been broadcast by the Hanoi domestic radio service:

> As the organizer of all victories of the Vietnamese Revolution, the Party of the Vietnamese Communist,

> through 39 years of struggle, has become a Marxist-Leninist Party, rich in experiences and animated with heroic and inventive spirit . . . . . The main factor of our Party's invincible power is its correct revolutionary lines. Our Party--which is the outstanding representative of the Great Revolutionary Thoughts of our epoch and the intelligence of our people--has closely associated universal principles of Marxism-Leninism with Vietnamese realities, blended the essence of mankind with the essence of our people, and heightened patriotism, the spirit of independence and self-reliance, and proletarian internationalism.[4]

The Party Solution

(U) What were the VC/NVA trying to achieve in thei 8 struggle? No doubt there were many objectives, but a rather vivid picture was presented this "liberation press agency" article:

> If the United States really wants to solve the South Vietnam issue by peaceful means, it must take into due consideration the stand of the NLF as laid down in the November 3, 1968 statement. The United States must cease its war of aggression, withdraw unconditionally all US and Satellite troops and war means from South Vietnam, dismantle US military bases there, and let the South Vietnamese people settle their own affairs in accordance with the political program of the NLF, without foreign interference.[5]

The "People's Representatives" 1968

(U) It is beyond the scope of this narrative to present an all encompassing picture of NVN's political leaders and their influence on the war during 1968. However, a resume of the speeches of key NVN leaders and a brief discussion of other major personalities will provide a better understanding of the policies and nature of the enemy.

> It is essential to know the character of the enemy and of their principal officers--whether they be rash or cautious, enterprising or timid, whether they fight on principle or from chance.
>
> Atributed to Alfred Thayer Mahan[6]

(C) Direction from Hanoi. NVN's President, Ho Chi Minh, issued an appeal to the Vietnamese people on 20 July, the 14th anniversary of the 1954 Geneva Accords. It differed in a

a number of ways from Ho's 1966 mobilization appeal and probably reflected Hanoi's updated thinking on the conduct and goals of the southern conflict. It was geared to the policy of fighting while negotiating. The 1968 appeal was less high-pitched than the 1966 appeal and it was less exhortative. It lacked the almost desperate back-to-the-wall quality which marked the earlier call to arms. US policy was not described as "burn all, kill all, destroy all," nor was the North Vietnamese effort pictured as a struggle for "national salvation." The recital of settlement terms was also less absolute and there was no call for "total victory" or "complete victory." Although the 1966 appeal stated that "there is no alternative" to the Four and Five points (see Figure III-1) Ho's 1968 appeal did not cite either program. Nevertheless, it reiterated the call for an end to the US "war of aggression," for a bombing cessation, and for a withdrawal of US and Allied troops in order to leave the Vietnamese people "to settle their own affairs." Thus, the general character of the new appeal was less frantic, less extreme, and less emotional than the 1966 appeal. The 1968 appeal was more realistic in its expectations and objectives. The war was no longer referred to as a struggle that would last for "five, ten, or twenty years"; instead, Ho mentioned that the war had advanced "into a new period." The short-term character of the appeal was underlined even in the NLF commentary on the appeal which spoke of the "most decisive fighting phase;" Ho suggested that the war would not continue much longer. Instead of indicating that the US was in a "quagmire," as he had done in 1966, he stated that the US troops were being "driven into increasing passiveness" and "were at the end of their tether." In this regard, the new appeal was more confident in tone than the old appeal. It also highlighted the differences between Hanoi and Peking over the conduct and duration of the war. Ho Chi Minh's 1966 call for protracted war had been frequently cited by Peking. The combination of themes could have reflected the calmer attitude of the North under the limited bombing halt. The 1966 appeal had been issued following the first bombings of Hanoi and Haiphong and may also have reflected Hanoi's objective of ending the war quickly through a combination of military and political tactics.[7]

(S) Concerning Hanoi's military/political goals, further understanding may be acquired by examining NVN Premier Pham Van Dong's 1968 Annual National Day speech. His message had a curiously ambivalent character and seemed designed to suit all possible contingencies or policy directions which the Hanoi leadership might choose to follow. It sounded very confident of victory and boasted of alleged Communist military successes over the US in North and SVN. However, it lacked any clear and precise indication of where Hanoi planned to go or how Hanoi would get there. Dong's speech continued to express the DRV's desire for military victory but left the door open for a negotiated settlement. He stated that NVN was fighting "US aggression" on three fronts; military, political, and diplomatic. He explained several theories which appeared designed to justify the diplomatic policy. For example, he defended the 1954 Geneva Agreements by asserting that they had provided for reunification by July of 1956 but that the US had sabotaged these agreements. He claimed that the Paris talks served the useful purpose of showing American "obduracy" to the US and world public opinion. He also asserted that, while the US was only using the Paris Talks "to appease public opinion," the position and attitude of NVN's representatives was "correct and serious." At one point, Dong expressed Hanoi's demand for a bombing halt in very restrained terms, suggesting it not as an absolute condition but as a step which would have "a positive effect on the seeking, step by step, of a political settlement for the Vietnam problem." Beyond a bombing halt (effected on 1 November 1968) he listed three things which the US "must" do: withdraw all US and "satellite" troops, recognize the NLF, and talk with the NLF "on problems of concern to the two sides in SVN." He stated that all the above points "are in conformity with the main content of the Four Point

NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT

FIVE POINTS

1. South Vietnam is determined to strive to realize its sacred rights to independence, democracy, peace, neutrality, and prosperity and to proceed toward the peaceful reunification of the fatherland.

2. The US imperialists must put an end to their war of aggression against Vietnam, withdraw all US and satellite troops and their war equipment from South Vietnam, and dismantle US military bases in South Vietnam.

3. The internal affairs of South Vietnam must be settled by the South Vietnamese people in conformity with the NLFSV political platform, without foreign intervention. The NLFSV advocates the formation of a broad national and democratic coalition government and the holding of free general elections in South Vietnam.

4. The reunification of Vietnam will be settled by the Vietnamese people in both parts of the country step by step, by peaceful means, on the basis of discussions and agreement between the two parts of the country, and without foreign intervention.

5. South Vietnam will adopt a foreign policy of peace and neutrality; will not enter military alliances with foreign countries in any form; will establish friendly relations with all countries on the basis of the five principles of peaceful coexistence; and will establish good neighborly relations with the Cambodian Kingdom on the basis of respect for Cambodia's independence, sovereignty, neutrality, and territorial integrity within its existing borders, and with Laos on the basis of respect for the 1962 Geneva Agreements on Laos.

FIGURE III-1

stand of the DRV and the political program of the NLF, as well as with the 1954 Geneva Agreements on Vietnam." Unlike 1967, Dong did not reiterate Hanoi's standard claim that its Four Points were "the basis for a correct political settlement." His new "conformity" statement could be intended to show flexibility, since it could be read as a suggestion that conformity with those three demands would be equivalent to acquiescence in the Four Points and that the US could thus get around the sticky issue of his original point three (which called for a settlement of SVN affairs in accordance with the NLF program). However, Dong was also raising a very tough Hanoi demand when he asserted that the US had to recognize the NLF and negotiate with it. This demand had not been cited publicly by any top-level Hanoi official since 1966, although it had been voiced on occasion at lower levels in different or indirect forms. It had, however, been cited a number of times in Paris. Hanoi's spokesman in Paris, Nguyen Thanh Le, stated in several press briefings that the US had to recognize the NLF and negotiate with it though he did not indicate any general or specific topic for such a negotiation. On 28 August, Xuan Thuy stated that the US had to recognize the NLF but added that the US had to let the South Vietnamese people settle their own affairs. On July 17, he had said that "world opinion" demanded recognition of the NLF. Even though it could be argued that Hanoi's demand for US negotiations with the NLF acknowledges our voice in SVN's affairs and represented a softer position than Hanoi's assertion that SVN's people should settle their own affairs, the demand was actually quite hard. Hanoi was certainly aware of the political implications of US/NLF conversations and of the prejudicial impact which they would have had on the future political development of SVN. Hanoi was also aware that such conversations would exclude the GVN from a role in a South Vietnamese settlement more clearly than its demand that the South Vietnamese people settle their own affairs. Hanoi's return to this position thus represented a distinct hardening. It was even cynical in its implication that the US should consider US/NLF talks to be a "positive effect" of a bombing halt. Dong's demand, however, conformed to the general 1968 pattern of Hanoi's efforts to push the NLF into the front of the picture after a period of relative neglect, although Dong also hailed the Alliance of National, Democratic and Peace Forces (ANDPF) and welcomed its program.

(S) Dong's speech did not give any clear indications about Hanoi's planning, particularly on the possible duration of the war. He used some phrases suggesting that Hanoi was thinking in terms of an early end to the conflict, with continued VC military pressure. He spoke of the "new period" which the war had entered since the Tet Offensive. He asserted that it was a good time "to win more victories," and stated that "our entire people" are "speeding up the struggle." He also boasted that the US had been forced to abandon the "search-and-destroy" strategy in favor of "clear-and-hold" and suggested that the US pullout from Khe Sanh showed that the US would not be able to hold very long; he also spoke of an "arduous, protracted" conflict, and at one point he stated that victory would be achieved "finally." Dong did not use some of the more militant phrases (e.g., "rush forward") prevalent in Hanoi exhortations over the post-Tet period. He did not speak of a "most decisive fighting phase" as the NLF had done in its commentary on Ho Chi Minh's 20 July 1968 appeal. He did not state that US troops were "at the end of their tether," as Ho had done but asserted that the US was in a "very critical" situation. He also warned of "greater hardships" and "greater sacrifices" and of the need to overcome "shortcomings." The general tone of these remarks accorded with other suggestions that Hanoi was considering the possibility of returning to an earlier strategy of protracted war rather than continuing its post-Tet drive for a quick political/military victory.

(S) Foreign aid to Hanoi received little notice in 1968. Although Dong thanked the "socialist countries" for their "very great and valuable support and assistance," he did not name either the types of assistance received or the countries donating it. This was in sharp contrast to Dong's 1967 remarks on the subject when he cited "moral, material, political, military, and economic aid" and lauded both the USSR and China for their help. In his 1967 speech, he had hailed the Soviets as recording great achievements in building the material and technical basis of Communism, and called the Chinese "brothers, as close to us as the lips to the teeth." In 1968 Dong made no mention of either nation. [8]

(S) After many months of exploiting the propaganda values of the bombing of NVN, Hanoi's leaders had to change their approach when President Johnson ordered a complete bombing halt on 1 November 1968. During the first two weeks following the halt, Hanoi initiated a campaign to strengthen her negotiating position. On 3 November, Ho Chi Minh characterized the bombing halt as a great victory. He praised all of the people who assisted with this accomplishment and included the socialist countries and "progressive" Americans; included in his "apoeal" were his ideas concerning a peace settlement in SVN. He demanded that the US stop the war of "aggression" in the South and that the US troops be withdrawn and said that SVN should be allowed to solve their own internal problems without "foreign interference." Ho Chi Minh appeared to be concerned with the possibility that his supporters would adopt a relaxed attitude toward the war. To preclude such a turn of events, he called for "... compatriots (to) ... carry on their offensive and uprising ... and win complete victory." [9] On 4 November, the official newspaper of NVN, Nhan Dan, reiterated Ho's appeal and called for the armed forces to "constantly enhance their firmly established militant stand and ... to meet ... all requirements of the new situation and tasks." Special emphasis was placed on the total defeat of the US. On 9 and 10 November, Nhan Dan with the assistance of Hanoi radio, called for more emphasis to be placed on public security and high morale. Both media called for loyal supporters to criticize or "handle" anyone who violated state laws and regulations or committed other acts that adversely influenced the "revolutionary" way of life. [10]

(S) Hanoi initiated a campaign to exploit the dissension between the US and GVN. They had used similar tactics in 1954 when friction developed between France and VN. Hanoi insisted that the bombing halt was "unconditional" and that the US had been forced to accept the NLF as an "equal" in the Paris peace talks without first consulting the Saigon "stooges." Hanoi's representative, Xuan Thuy, told a press conference that NVN never had agreed to anything other than "quadripartite" talks. He denied that Hanoi had agreed to a two-party conference at an earlier date. The call for a peace settlement based on the "sacred national rights of Vietnam" was abandoned during this time, but Hanoi stood on her Four Point and the NLF's Five Point programs as a basis for peace. [11]

(S) Throughout November, Hanoi continued to demand two important conditions before the leaders of NVN would consider a cease-fire. NVN's second ranking representative at the Paris peace talks, COL Ha Van Lau, stated that first, all US and FWMAF had to be withdrawn from SVN and that their military bases had to be dismantled and, secondly, he said that the NLF's Five Point Program was the only acceptable plan for a political solution and that a cease-fire prior to its adoption was unrealistic. [12]

(C) Generally, the people of NVN seemed to accept the idea that the bombing halt was a great "victory." All who accepted this idea were encouraged to strive for the complete overthrow of the "US imperialists" and to gain a "final victory." As one captured document stated, party members were not to harbor peace illusions but to advance and defeat the FWMAF/

RVNAF and replace the GVN with a coalition government. [13] Hanoi continued to denounce the US "aggressive acts of war." Ranked in decreasing order, Hanoi's complaints included the following topics:

The US is intensifying the war in the South.
Continued US reconnaissance flights.
Stepped-up B-52 operations in South Vietnam.
Large unit operations, especially sweeps.
Greater pacification efforts.
Increased tactical airstrikes.
Naval operations off the coast of South Vietnam and in the Mekong Delta. [14]

Hanoi made no open threats to abandon the Paris peace talks but let it be known that the VC/NVA were ready to continue the ground war in SVN. In general, the bombing halt compelled Hanoi's leaders to change their propaganda approach to the war, but it did not change their announced objectives to "strengthen the resolve of the armed forces (and) to continue the military struggle." [15]

(C) NVN Personalities. According to Hanoi, the former commander of Viet Cong Military Region (MR) 5 in SVN, MG Gen Nguyen Dou, was reassigned to the Defense Ministry in Hanoi. Dou was identified as a Vice-minister of Material Defense and an alternate member of the Lao Dong Central Committee. He was in Moscow heading the NVN delegation to the Soviet Army Day celebrations. There was some indication that Dou was designated Deputy Commander in 1966 when LTG Hoang Van Thai reportedly went to SVN to take command of the MR. This was not confirmed. Dou's reassignment suggested that, in spite of his rumored resignation, he was still in good standing. His knowledge of the problems of the northern portions of SVN--the focal point of Communist military efforts--would be valuable to NVN's military planners. [16]

(S) Another important NVN leader Le Duc Tho, was born in 1912 in NVN. Bearing in mind that in the DRV the political side outranked the military side, he was considered No. 4 of the Politburo after Ho Chi Minh and Troung Chinh. He was, above all else, a doctrinaire fanatic. He was supported by Troung Chinh who was leader of the hard line and by Hoang Quoc Viet (Ha Ba Cang) who was an old Leftist from the 1930's. He was the only person with as much seniority in the party as Ho and was President of the Supreme Organ for the Peoples Control (a type of super-police which kept an eye on Party as well as population).

(S) Le Duc Tho was the Chief of Resistance in the south during the war against the French and was most qualified to defend the position on the front. He knew and understood the whole of SVN with its political and ethnic differences. He had established intelligence personnel there for more than 20 years. He was a director of the cadre school of the Worker's Party and founder of the People's Revolutionary Party (PRP) which was the working wing of the front in the south and had some 80,000 members. It was at Le Duc Tho's urging that the Alliance of Democratic Forces was presided over by his protege, Trinh Dinh Tao. His presence in Paris was due to the double impact he had on both sides of 17th parallel. He was a humorless Communist who never laughed, was extremely serious, and rarely listened to those with whom he was talking. Since 1967, he had been President of the Committee for the Supervision of the South in connection with COSVN which was the clandestine military and political headquarters through which Hanoi controlled all activities on Front and its military arm, the People's Army of Liberation (VC). Le Duc Tho was an authoritarian and ascetic individual. His enemies

nicknamed him the "Watchdog of the Party" because of his uncompromising ideological attitudes. The PRP which he formed in the south was governed by very strict discipline. All members obeyed, without discussion, the directives of the Central Committee: "there was one cry and millions of echoes." Le Duc Tho personally designated principal members of the DRV delegation to the Paris talks, especially Le Chan, Press Officer; Nguyen Than Le, Spokesman for the Delegation; and Ha Van Lau who was classed among the military with a powerful political base. Le Duc Tho, unlike other North Vietnamese, never spoke French during private contacts. The Communists had a strong sense of rank and when Le Duc Tho spoke, the others remained silent. His return to Paris indicated that the north did not want to break off talks. [17]

(S) Pierre Darcourt, a French reporter, furnished some interesting information about Vietnam's ex-Emperor. He reported that NVN had contacted Bao Dai in order to determine whether or not he would be willing to return to SVN and take charge of electing a constitutional assembly. By elections, NVN was referring to political action which they hoped would result after success at the Paris peace talks. If such an event had taken place, the plan was for Bao Dai to hold elections and then depart SVN. The elections would have been designed to provide two Vice Presidents, one representing the "incumbent" of the GVN and the other would represent the NLF. [18]

Conditions in North Vietnam

(C) As 1968 began in Hanoi, the physical evidence of damage done by air raids on the bridges, houses, and electricity was there for all to see. The partial evacuation of Hanoi was already old history. The meager food and clothing and severe scarcity of any form of commodity for sale was equally obvious and by then routine. The first really cold weather at the end of November 1967 had served to emphasize the poor clothing of the people; faces, which were cheerful in the warm sunshine, looked pinched and lugubrious in the winter. War-like preparations for the worst that might happen continued; deep shelters, installations of small generators, and movement of heavy anti-aircraft guns closer to the center of the city were all easily verified.

(C) The true meaning of this physical evidence was difficult to assess. There was hardship, discomfort, and preparation for further bombing and a long war. It was possible that these preparations were part of an elaborate charade by the Party and that in their innermost councils they were already admitting their failures in the south, recognizing that they could not win in the foreseeable future, and seeking a way out of the impasse. If this were so, they seemed to conceal the fact successfully from visitors and the masses, and if they discounted the possibility of heavy bombing of the city, the charade of deep shelters was certainly a costly and time-consuming deception plan. Against the thesis that the Party knew they were losing and did not intend to protract the war, and thus that the shelters were for show, must be put the fact that the Party seemed to be careful to play down casualty figures. Therefore, the new bunkers could hardly be helpful in the context of quieting the fears of the populace, particularly since there were insufficient deep bunkers for the majority to use.

(C) The testimony of the North Vietnamese was unfortunately severely limited. On the official side, it was more than surprising if there were any deviations from the Party line of defiance. Officials invariably took the line that the war in the north would get worse but they were ready to continue the battle, which had been going on for over twenty-five years, until Vietnam was finally left to settle its own affairs. Unperturbed by the effects of the situation, they were convinced that, however long the war continued, victory would eventually be achieved on the DRV terms.

(C) The few unofficial contacts available had, of course, a very different view. They were probably no more representative of the man in the street than the officials, but their view was part of the whole and was not entirely irrelevant despite their middle class reactionary nature. To them, the war was something which should be brought to an end as soon as possible so as to improve their chances of seeing their families again and, possibly, of improving their standard of living. They were frightened of escalation, easily persuaded that they were in great personal danger, and anxiously clutched at every peaceful straw, such as President Johnson's neutral ship on a neutral sea. They did not cite the Party's rejection of compromise with approval and feared for the future.

(C) It was difficult to get much firm evidence on the man in the street. Unofficial contacts stated that there was no longer a cheerful volunteering for the Army and conscripts worked hard to find one of the normal human gamut of excuses for staying at home. Czech electrical technicians, on the other hand, stated that the young men were more interested in playing soldier than working in their profession. No doubt both comments were true of individuals and there was no Gallup Poll to help construct a more representative picture of the man in the streets of Hanoi.

(C) The propaganda media was available to all students of the Vietnamese scene and could be better assessed in depth by those equipped with larger staffs. Briefly, however, the picture was one of unremitting defiance and exhortation to fight, to train, to form self-defense corps, to mobilize all resources, and to endure until victory was achieved. The radio, the press, the notice boards, and the scoreboards claimed that over 2,600 US aircraft had been destroyed and preached the same gospel of unrelenting resistance to US activity in Vietnam and support for the NLF in the south. Each day the newspapers carried pictures of the heroic soldiery and militia, old and young, male and female, engaged in war-like activities of every sort. The heroes ranged from the NLF guerrillas preparing man traps through the rifleman and women who claimed to have shot down aircraft to the members of anti-aircraft units. The front page of Nhan Dan daily displayed banner headlines on the number of allied troops and units allegedly annihilated and equipment destroyed. Not a day passed without a vivid description of a great victory, either in the air or on the ground, and the inside pages embellished the theme with human interest stories. The entire paper was laced with articles designed to prove that US presence in the south and their failures to win an overall victory after several years was in itself a defeat.

(C) From all sources it seemed that the assessment of the NVN leadership was as follows:

1. The US was unlikely to accept the DRV position on the talks; not because of a guarantee that there would be talks if the bombing stopped, but because the US was not prepared to withdraw from South Vietnam.

2. There would be no qualitative change in the situation before the US presidential elections.

3. There would be escalation, probably including heavier bombing of Hanoi.

4. Mr. McNamara's resignation could only mean escalation.

5. There was not likely to be any invasion of the north since this would affect a qualitative change in the situation entailing imponderable international complications.

(C) The root of the matter was seen by most observers in Hanoi to be not the bombing policy but the US commitment to oppose Communism which, in turn, seemed to entail a long-term US presence in Saigon and thus was directly opposed to DRV and NLF policy.[19]

(C) According to a CDEC summary translation, notes from an indoctrination session, which took place at Hanoi in late 1967 on the subject of security and dealt specifically with the suppression of anti-revolutionaries, indicated that in NVN "230,000 out of 300,000 people who opposed the Hanoi government had been sent to reformatories." The notes also stated that there were 1,500 teen-age pickpockets in Hanoi, most of them the children of cadre, even high-level cadre. These teen-agers were alleged to commit 30 to 40 percent as many crimes as the professional criminals. As many as 50 of the latter were said to be arrested in a single night in Hanoi.

(C) The notes from the indoctrination session also asserted that corruption was the gravest social problem in NVN. "The majority of the cadre are grafters." The notes concluded by enumerating the three types of reactionaries found in Hanoi: supporters of the Saigon Government, Titoists, and neutralist/pacifists. Hanoi was so concerned with the state of affairs, conditions, and problems in NVN that on 21 March 1968 a presidential decree on punishment for "counterrevolutionary crimes" was discussed in the Hanoi press. The 15 such crimes listed were collectively described as those of "opposing the fatherland, opposing the people's democratic power, sabotaging socialist transformation and construction, and undermining national defense and the struggle against US aggression for national salvation." Punishments were said to have ranged from prison terms of two years to life or death. Those who stubbornly opposed the revolution were severely punished; those who were forced, enticed, or misled and those who sincerely repented were treated leniently; those who redeemed their crimes with meritorious acts had their sentences commuted or were forgiven. There was some evidence that NVN had put in effect a series of measures designed to improve security. They may have been needed because of the disruptions to civil life and evacuations from urban areas caused by US bombings. Hanoi was fearful of the presence of "ranger spies and saboteurs." There was no credible information to indicate that Hanoi's measures had been anything but effective.[20]

Conditions following the 1 April Bombing Limitation

(C) With a view of cautious optimism, NVN started to rebuild the country when the US bombing pause began but it continued to give military training to civilians and to relocate government installations. The effect in the Hanoi area was said to have involved primarily the repair and expansion of existing facilities. Factories which had moved to outlying areas had been left there in the event that air attacks were resumed; the facilities were to have served as centers for new industrialization. Government agencies had allegedly been dispersed and operated out of air raid shelters, most of them in a hilly suburb of Hanoi. Communications between the various governmental elements was said to have been very poor. Military training of

civilians continued and the deputy chief of the general staff had reportedly stated that it would be given until the US withdrew from SEASIA. [21]

(S) General conditions in NVN improved considerably following the bombing limitation. Popular morale improved north of the 19th parallel, transportation and communication problems eased, and economic activity had revived considerably. Nevertheless, Hanoi still faced a variety of problems: a degree of war weariness on the part of the people, hints of disunity within the Party (it should be noted that the Party was in no danger of collapse), typhoons and floods, labor and manpower shortages, congestion in Haiphong, inflationary pressures, and poor harvests which necessitated greater reliance on food imports. As of 1 September, little permanent reconstruction of bombed areas had been undertaken but some planning for post war development had begun. Foreign trade contacts and diplomatic overtures to non-Communist states increased. During 1968, the first census since 1960 was completed.

(S) Although morale and other conditions in the Hanoi area had reportedly improved considerably, there had been some signs of an underlying popular disenchantment with the war. Some people living in the bomb-free zone, north of the 19th parallel, were reportedly losing their war psychology and were longing for peace; others, living south of the 19th parallel, were envious of their brothers further north. Early in the summer, rumors circulated in Hanoi diplomatic circles that some Catholics and "bourgeois holdovers" were critical of the government's policies. During the summer and early fall however, Hanoi propaganda appeared to be airing such concern less frequently. After the bombing halt, many people returned to Hanoi and other cities despite warnings from authorities to stay in their evacuation centers in the countryside. Children were much in evidence in Hanoi. It appeared that authorities lacked either the real desire or the ability to prevent the influx of people into the capital city.

(S) Travel restrictions for foreigners were still in effect in Hanoi. They could not visit bombed areas of the city or the port area along the Red River. Some diplomats in Hanoi believed that the Chinese contir o have access to forbidden locations but this could not be confirmed.

(S) By early September, the Doumer and Pont Des Rapides Bridges near Hanoi were operating normally, and the temporary pontoon bridge spanning the river had been removed due to the high water period. Heavy truck traffic continued between Haiphong and Hanoi, and from Hanoi to points south. It could not be determined whether air raid shelters were still being built in Hanoi; there were conflicting reports from on-the-spot observers. As mentioned above, however, the population was frequently exhorted by government broadcasts to maintain vigilance. The frequent appearance of US reconnaissance planes over the capital seemed to cause some anxiety. Air raid alerts generally sounded when these planes appeared.

(S) The Haiphong port continued to be congested; many ships were waiting to unload and a large amount of supplies remained piled on the streets and quays. A western observer said the port situation was "sheer chaos" since the North Vietnamese appeared to be trying to operate it at up to twice its normal capacity. A truck shortage and heavy rains in July and August also combined to hinder the speedy and continuous off-loading of ships. Nevertheless, there was no evidence that these difficulties were preventing adequate supplies from entering NVN. In fact, one east European speculated that the North Vietnamese were receiving more equipment than they needed and were planning to hold the surplus for use in post-war development. Photography showed that systematic repairs and expansion had been undertaken at Haiphong after the end of March. These activities included dredging, construction of a new quay, and replacing of planking. The new quay, when completed, would be able to accommodate at least two additional merchant ships.

(S) Little reconstruction of a permanent nature appeared except for improvements in the port facilities of Haiphong and possibly to the Doumer Bridge and to some factories. The North Vietnamese, however, seemed to be giving somethought to post-war reconstruction. Furthermore, according to a Japanese newsman who spent two years in NVN, "restoration and reconstruction" had become major topics of conversation in government circles. He contrasted this to the slogan of "victory at any cost" which had been the predominant sentiment before the bombing limitation.

(S) According to a report, Hanoi officials told another Japanese that NVN had conducted a comprehensive study on the rehabilitation of war damage and had developed plans for reconstruction. A committee of 34 high-level consultants was reportedly established to promote exports, speed economic growth, and facilitate technical exchanges with foreign countries for the development of natural resources. [22]

Conditions Following the 1 November Bombing Halt

(S) Following the bombing halt of 1 November, NVN expanded efforts to rejuvenate economic construction and to further strengthen the DRV's defenses. The Soviet newspaper, Pravda, described the priority of tasks as "vigilance, military preparedness, increase of production, development of construction, and timely fulfilment of plans." The picture that was presented depicted NVN turning to economic tasks while maintaining partial battle readiness in response to continued US operations. [23]

(S) Ship congestion in Haiphong harbor had decreased considerably from the record level that had been noted on 14 September. There were 38 cargo ships in Haiphong but the number decreased to approximately 28 by the middle of November. Only one ship from the Soviet Union was scheduled to arrive in Haiphong during the month as compared to four Soviet ships the previous month. [24]

(S) Traditionally, Vinh had been a major NVN logistics center. It was served by Route 1A, the major north-south coastal artery; Route 15, the major inland north-south highway; and numerous interconnecting secondary roads. Route 8, which originated at Vinh, was being re-opened as an additional access route to Laos. There were also rail and water routes connecting Vinh and other sections of NVN. Prior to 1 November, Vinh had been unusable but, after 1 November, NVN immediately began to restore the LOCs throughout the Panhandle. By 8 November, Vinh had resumed its role as a major logistical support base for the NVN war effort. Waterborne logistical craft activity increased tremendously as did rail activity. Photographs that were taken on 3 December showed 50, four-axle and 69, two-axle cars at the Vinh railroad yard. This was the first "full-sized" equipment seen at Vinh in over a year. Reconstruction of the rail line included the bridges at Dien Chau and Tam Da which allowed conventional rail traffic to travel directly from Vinh to Hanoi. Prior to this time, it had been necessary to transship cargo by other modes of transportation. Finally, a photo taken on 31 December revealed the location of forty-two 2,000 gallon POL tanks. Thus, from 1 November to 31 December, NVN had succeeded in redeveloping Vinh as one of their most important logistical centers.

(S) The bombing halt also brought about a noticeable rise in the morale of the people. This was particularly true in Hanoi. Another reason for this rise was the decreased military activity in SVN. With this morale boost, the people of Hanoi appeared to adopt a more relaxed attitude during air-raid alerts and officials experienced difficulty in enforcing prescribed procedures. Coinciding with the decline of discipline was a general decrease in the work pace. Both of these reactions to the bombing halt seriously disturbed the leaders of NVN. [25]

Relations With the Communist Bloc

(S) On 28 May, supplementary economic and military aid agreements were signed with Hungary for 1968 and 1969. This transaction was accomplished by NVN Deputy Premier, Le Thanh Nghi, in Budapest. In announcing the accords, Budapest radio noted that Hungary had agreed to furnish "further material and other assistance." A trade and payments agreement was included for 1969 and Hungary agreed to train Vietnamese "specialists." [26] Nghi had also negotiated the Soviet aid pact for 1968. This had been accomplished in Moscow during September 1967. This agreement had provided for the delivery of Soviet planes, anti-aircraft weapons, artillery, small arms, and other military equipment and economic aid.

(U) An NVN delegation arrived in Moscow on 24 June 1968 to open talks on the 1969 Soviet military and economic aid plan. The group was again led by Deputy Premier Nghi who had flown from East Germany after traveling through eastern Europe collecting commitments for 1969 assistance. Although figures were not announced, it was estimated that Soviet aid for 1968 would reach the $1 billion mark. By the end of 1968, it was estimated that the total Soviet investment in NVN would be more than $4 billion. [27]

(C) Nghi's mission was concluded on 4 July with the signing of a new Military and Economic Aid Agreement. This concluded his tour of European Communist countries in the quest for increased economic assistance. The military items covered by the agreement were not announced. It was noted that the mission came far earlier in the year than it had in the past which indicated that Hanoi had exhausted much of the aid that had been promised for 1968 and was faced with a shortage of certain military and economic supplies. NVN may also have wanted the new materiel to help make impressive military gains that would strengthen its bargaining position at the peace talks in Paris.

(C) In early June, a radio Moscow broadcast indicated Hanoi's urgent need for increased assistance. It reported that US bombing had caused considerable damage and that the USSR had to send materials for rebuilding railroads, bridges, and irrigation works. The commentary added that the Soviets were extending interest-free loans to rebuild North Vietnamese industries and provide the country with food and fertilizers. [28]

(C) The USSR was the chief supplier of weapons to NVN and only limited amounts were being supplied by Communist China. Although the volume of weapons had decreased, the quality had improved. The USSR aided NVN considerably with large numbers of new and powerful weapons such as the 23mm anti-aircraft gun and the 85mm field gun. It had been reported that these weapons had been supplied to NVN not only for the purpose of fighting US forces and the SVN government forces but also as a precaution against an invasion by Communist Chinese forces, which was considered as a possibility if peace was achieved. The USSR was compelled to reduce its arms aid to NVN because it had to react to the disorderly conditions in various

East European nations and also to provide assistance to North Korea as well as the Middle and Near East nations. Soviet arms aid routes, by rail and ship, extended from Vladivostok to the ports of Chjongjin and Wonson in North Korea before being transported over sea routes to the NVN port of Haiphong. The Soviet atomic energy naval vessel, based at Wonson, was escorting. Politically as well as militarily, the Soviet influence on the NVN government was far greater than that of Communist China.

(C) Communist China had provided NVN with personnel assistance by dispatching 40,000 to 50,000 troops to serve in transportation and rear service units. However, it was the USSR that provided NVN with arms assistance that proved directly useful against US bombings. The people of NVN appeared to feel more grateful to the USSR than to Communist China. This seemed to be one of the reasons that the NVN government attached greater importance to the USSR. [29]

(S) There was apparently no easing of NVN's food problems and they reportedly asked the USSR to more than double the amount of flour it had been shipping monthly. Hanoi supposedly requested that thirteen ships, loaded with flour, be sent each month during the last quarter of 1968. The Soviets responded with the promise to meet Hanoi's demands if they could unload their ships. As of November, Moscow had sent a monthly average of 22,000 metric tons of bulk foodstuffs to NVN. Most of the flour had come from Vladivostok. [30]

(C) The Chief of the Indochina Desk, at the French Foreign Ministry, informed US officials in Paris that apparently, for the first time in years, Soviet economic assistance to NVN would be greater than military assistance. In the accord signed in Moscow on 25 November, the Soviets reportedly agreed to supply Hanoi with foodstuffs, POL, transport vehicles, ferrous and non-ferrous metals, chemical fertilizers, arms and ammunition, as well as other equipment and materials "necessary for consolidation of national defense and economic development of the DRV." [31]

(S) The relative increase in economic over military aid came about as a result of the partial bombing halt on 31 March and the complete cessation on 1 November. The dollar value of the aid arranged for in November was not announced, but the new agreements were said to have covered free economic and military aid, the granting of long term credits, trade, and other "questions" of Soviet-Vietnamese cooperation. This portion of the agreement was believed to have referred to the possibility of long-range Soviet economic and technical assistance for restoring and expanding the NVN economy. [32]

Relationship With Communist China

(C) Reports indicated that as early as Tet in February 1965, Chinese Communist troops were in the Do Son Township of Haiphong in NVN. NVA cadre said that the troops were members of a Chinese Communist battalion that was assisting the NVA 50th Regiment in the defense of Haiphong City. The Chinese Communists, for their air defense responsibility, were armed with K-53 (7.62mm) AAA weapons. Four or five of these weapons were installed in defensive positions which the Chinese had built. [33] Additional information indicating the presence of Chinese Communist in NVN was provided by a captive NVA Colonel, Vo Thu, Chief of the Quang Da Special Zone. It was reported that during interrogation Colonel Thu stated:

1. If the US increased their military strength in SVN, the Chinese Communists would enter the war and World War III would start.

2. The Chinese Communist had offered two million combat troops to NVN.

3. If an invasion of NVN was tried by either GVN or Allied troops, the Chinese Communist troops would immediately engage the invaders.

4. Because of the Chinese Communist presence in NVN, the VC in SVN would never be eliminated. In December 1967, infiltrators stated that there were numbers of Chinese Communist troops in NVN. These large groups were in Hanoi, Thi Nguyen, the northwest MR, the Viet Boa MR, and along the NVN-Chinese Communist border. [34]

(S) It is probable that Hanoi, in coming to Paris, finally rejected Chinese pressures to continue fighting until final military victory was won, regardless of how Ho Chi Minh propagandized. This decision seems to have been made after Moscow promised Soviet diplomatic and economic support in winning at the conference table. Also, Hanoi probably wanted the bombing stopped before being pushed into complete economic dependence on Communist China. NVN's fairly primitive industries were largely shattered by the bombing. Also, 80-90% of NVN's total foreign trade (excluding military aid) was with China. Relations with China became a particularly sensitive issue in Hanoi following an agreement in the spring of 1967 which stated that North Vietnam should formally take delivery of Soviet military aid as soon as it entered China. Hanoi saw this requirements as completing an uncomfortable, four-faceted dependence on China--geographical, geo-political, economic, and military. There probably were high-placed fears in Hanoi that continued full-scale war would have ended North Vietnam's independence and reduced it to complete subservience to China. Hanoi was, of course, unwilling to have that happen. [35]

(C) Communist China's silence regarding NVN's willingness to engage in peace talks suggested that Peking had only the slightest ability to influence Hanoi's policy decisions on the matter. Not unexpectedly, official news media labeled the partial bombing suspension by the US a fraud and charged that the USSR was the number one accomplice of the US Imperialists. Hanoi was urged to achieve peace by winning a military victory on the battlefield and to drive the US aggressors out but Peiping had given no indication that it planned to exert pressure or employ other methods to block the peace talks. [36]

(S) Notwithstanding press reports, it was unlikely that Communist China threatened to withdraw its economic and military aid if NVN entered into peace negotiations with the US. Peking denounced all US efforts to initiate negotiations as peace talk hoaxes. After the Tet Offensive Premier Chou En-Lai stated that "before the final victory, there is still a hazardous course to travel because the enemy will undoubtedly put up a dying struggle. We are confident that by persevering in protracted war, the Vietnamese will surely defeat the US." Peking had also frequently indicated that it considered the Geneva Accord of 1954 a dead letter and that it would not participate in a new Geneva Conference.

(S) In March 1968, Foreign Minister Chen Yi said that "Peking leaves the decision in full confidence to Hanoi. Experience tells us that Hanoi knows what it is doing. There was speculation abroad on the decisive influence of Peking on Hanoi. One has to know the Vietnamese to understand that even if China wished to do so, neither we nor the Russians could influence Hanoi." [37]

(C) An agreement concluded in Peking on 23 July was signed in the presence of Chou En-Lai, Chen Yi, Wou Yu Seng (Deputy Chief of Staff, PLA) and Han Niem Long (Deputy Minister Foreign Affairs). Le Thanh Nghi signed for Hanoi and the NLF. Representatives of Peking attended the signing ceremony. The agreement covered the 1969 economic, technical, and military assistance aid to be given on a grant basis. It was noted that public announcements made no reference to financial clearing arrangement or to long-term loans. According to an Eastern European Ambassador in Hanoi, CHICOM aid for 1969 to DRV was not above previous aid levels and would even be less than that of the previous year.

(C) The French understood that aid negotiations were difficult and that during a two week period in China (Aug 9-24) members of the NVN delegation made several trips back to Hanoi for consultation. The French also noted that the Hanoi press only twice mentioned aid negotiations with China, when the mission arrived and after the agreement was signed. The complete silence between them may have reflected difficulty in the negotiations. 38

(S) The nature and scope of the assistance rendered by Chinese forces in NVN had apparently been continuing along established lines and there was no evidence of major changes. A number of railroad, bridge, and airfield construction projects appeared to be nearing completion and some new construction projects were initiated. The Hanoi-Dong Dang Rail Line was ready to be entirely converted to dual-guage. The new rail line between Kep and Hon Gai had the potential of being completed that year and the airfield at Yen Bai was serviceable. The road network from China into NVN continued to be improved. NVN would continue to accept existing Chinese air defense, construction, and logistical support. However, the increased factional fighting within China, together with widespread flooding, continued to disrupt rail transportation intermittently in Southern China. Serious disruptions on the north-south rail lines through China to NVN were believed to have commenced in early May. Persistent rail stoppages seriously hampered the overland transport of Soviet military and other Communist aid to NVN but military and economic stockpiles were probably large enough to absorb temporary interruption of deliveries. 39

(C) On July 26 the Hanoi Communist Party daily, Nhan Dan, carried an editorial on the signing of the Annual Aid Agreement with China which was even more effusive than a similar comment on the previous year's agreement. Praise for Mao Tse-Tung and for the traditional closeness of the two peoples was considerably more marked than in 1967. Specific mention was made of the "practical deeds" of the Chinese people (including loss of life of some Chinese sailors) to back up their aid. This came at a time when indications were that Peking strongly disapproved of Hanoi's decision to go to Paris and when there had been reports of recent anti-Vietnamese demonstrations in China and of delays in the transit of supplies traveling from or through China to NVN. It appeared that Hanoi was still attempting to put the best face on things by maintaining a friendly public tone despite persistent frictions. The Nhan Dan editorial hailed the 1968 agreement as "a new, militant expression of the militant solidarity and the relations of friendship and mutual support" between China and NVN. The two countries were linked by a long-standing friendship, said Nhan Dan, and enjoyed "extremely intimate relations between those who are both comrades and brothers, between militant friends sharing weal and woe, going together through thick and thin, supporting each other, struggling together and winning victories together." The 1967 editorial had been less gushy, referring to "an age-old militant friendship" rising out of a "revolutionary struggle" and being constantly "consolidated and developed."

(C) In 1967, the NVN tone, while correct, had been less enthusiastic about Chinese aid contributions. The 1967 agreement was seen as "another manifestation of the heartfelt, great, and valuable support and assistance given by the Chinese people to the Vietnamese people." Nhan Dan thanked the Chinese people for having given "extremely great and powerful support and assistance." However, Peking was reminded that Hanoi equated its contribution with those from other donor nations. "Vietnamese successes cannot be separated from the assistance given by China and other fraternal socialist countries."

(C) In 1968, Nhan Dan was more effusive and went into more detail: "Our people have always enjoyed the valuable support and assistance of the fraternal Chinese people. The Party, Government and people of China have warmly supported and assisted our people in their war of resistance against the French Colonialists and in socialist construction of North Vietnam. The political, moral, and material support, encouragement and assistance of China are very great, valuable, and effective." Mao Tse-Tung's name had been mentioned in the 1967 comment but he had not been described in heroic terms. In 1968, he was lauded as a "Great leader of the Chinese people and esteemed friend of the Vietnamese people." Lin Piao and Chou En-Lai also received favorable comment.

(C) The Nhan Dan editorial also bowed to the Chinese by making no reference to the newly formed Alliance of National Democratic and Peace Forces in SVN, an organization which Peking had not yet mentioned in its propaganda. Instead, Nhan Dan referred, on several occasions, to the NLF and quoted Mao's December 20, 1967 message to the NLF Chief, Nguyen Huu Tho, as well as the latter's reply. Curiously, Nhan Dan did not mention Ho Chi Minh.

(C) In 1968, the subject of Chinese "volunteers" came up more prominently than in 1967. In 1967, Hanoi had asserted that "tens of millions of Chinese youths had registered to go to Vietnam as volunteers." The same number of men was mentioned in 1968 but they were said to have "eagerly enlisted." In addition, Nhan Dan in 1968 said that the Chinese people "have regarded their support for Vietnam as their sacred internationalist duty" and that such sentiments had been turned into "practical deeds" by all sectors of society. Nhan Dan specifically mentioned sailors on Chinese ships carrying goods to Vietnam, saying that "Some of them have courageously sacrificed themselves to insure the steady flow of goods." It also gave favorable notice to the Hong Kong Chinese crewmen who had "chosen to lose their jobs rather than transport war material for the imperialists." While the tone of the Nhan Dan editorial indicated Hanoi's continuing desire to put the best tone on its relations with Peking, frictions and tensions obviously persisted. Neither Hanoi nor Peking announced Le Duc Tho's stopover in Peking on his way back from Paris. Again, Peking, ignoring last year's precedent, did not report the farewell banquet which took place before Le Thanh's departure. There was also a report indicating that NVN's aid delegation to Peking was displeased because the Chinese met them at the airport with signs denouncing Soviet "revisionism." However, Hanoi still wished to preserve good relations with Peking. It needed Chinese military and economic aid, particularly since the 1968 North Vietnamese harvest was expected to fall short of their needs and because it did not wish to find itself entirely dependent on Soviet support. [40]

(C) On 7 October, a Hanoi correspondent, Moalic, stated that the Chinese were withdrawing troops from NVN. He attributed this to DRV convictions that the US bombing halt was final and would not resume. As a result, Chinese repair and anti-aircraft crews were no longer needed. He did not think that the alleged troop withdrawal had anything to do with strained Chinese/DRV relations. [41]

(C) Prior to October 1968, Peking had not formally acknowledged the Paris peace talks. They departed from this line on 19 October when an international broadcast warned NVN against accepting US bombing halt proposals. The broadcast was restrained in tone and only once referred to the alleged proposals as a "big plot and fraud." China's prolonged silence on the Paris talks had indicated her opposition to a negotiated settlement. [42]

(C) After mid-October, Peking occasionally carried a news story, based on western press reports, discussing the negotiations. The CHICOM media sporadically attacked the meeting as a "peace talk hoax." Peking did not, however, make any bold editorial comments. By refraining from comment, she hoped to avoid the pit-falls of denouncing negotiations that she did not control. If the negotiations turned out to be a success, it would be a public demonstration of Peking's lack of authority over NVN. Peking used a more subtle method of displaying her dissatisfaction: the CHICOM news media reproduced US texts and, for the first time, did not ritualisticly denounce their content. [43]

(FOUO) Mao, Lin Piao, and Chou En-Lai's greetings to the NLF on its anniversary was another indication of CHICOM/NVN's strained relations. 1968's treatment of the occasion was very subdued in comparison to 1967's effusive celebration of the 19 December event. In 1967, Mao asserted that the two nations were "lips and teeth. . . brothers, sharing weal and woe" and that the Chinese people would provide "powerful backing." The 1968 message simply noted China's "resolute support" of Vietnamese and their struggle. The picture presented by this message indicated that China wanted to go on record in support of past achievements of the Vietnamese "people's war," and to express its conviction that persistence in such an approach was the way to final victory. [44]

(C) During the latter part of December, CHICOM Deputy Chief of the General Staff, Wu Fa-Hsien, praised the Vietnamese people for their "perservering in the protracted war." He reiterated Peking's belief that final victory would be the product of battlefield confrontations --not the Paris talks. He charged the US and Soviet Union of collusion, and he said that the USSR desired to "sabotage the war against US aggression." [45]

NVN INFILTRATION INTO RVN

(C) Enemy troop strengths in SVN were largely the result of decisions made in Hanoi in mid-1967. At that time, the enemy was losing the war of attrition. In order to offset his losses and to improve his weapons and munitions, the enemy increased both his infiltration rates and the modernization of his LOCs.

(S) Infiltration into SVN increased appreciably in 1968. Estimates of infiltrators entering the country for the first half of the year varied from 90,000 to over 100,000. It was estimated that air strikes, defections, and malaria, collectively, took a toll of 35 percent of this number. A majority of the infiltration packets moved by foot and averaged approximately 12 kilometers per day. Most of the groups were replacement packets with an average size of 300 to 400 men. Some complete combat units, such as regiments and particularly artillery battalions, were also infiltrated. [46] Infiltration of personnel and material into SVN was accomplished by the interchangeable use of main roads, mazes of trails and inland waterways and, to a very minor

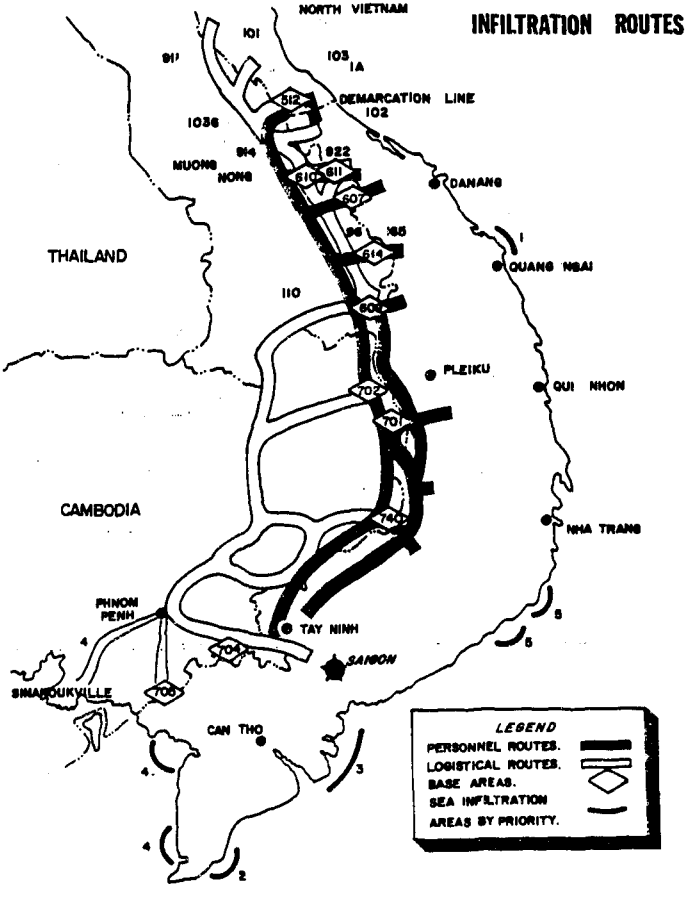
degree, by various sea routes (see Figure III-2). Tracing the infiltrators' exact routes was difficult due to a lack of more definitive intelligence information and the enemy's constant ability to select from the multitude of avenues. Routes employed to infiltrate into the DMZ area were believed to have been Routes 1A, 101, 102, 1036, and to some extent Route 103 which was supplemented by a maze of trails. [47]

(S) Evidence indicated that beginning in 1965 there was an increase of NVA personnel routed through Cambodia. In 1965 and early 1966, the major infiltration trail crossed a short portion of the northeastern tip of Cambodia in the tri-border area into SVN, down the valley of Nam Sathay River, almost to its junction with the Se San River, and crossed Highway 19 before heading into SVN again. From the fall of 1967, there was a noticeable increase in enemy road construction activity along the trans-border infiltration routes. This construction was instrumental in the significant upsurge in vehicular, personnel, and equipment movement into SVN in 1968. During September 1968, information indicated that additional routes had been constructed in Cambodia which gave the enemy a ready alternative to their older approaches to SVN. The southern extension of the infiltration route was not clearly delineated but it appeared to swing back into SVN in the Nam Lyr Mountain area; however, it may have extended on the Cambodian side of the border as it apparently had been extended on the SVN side of Tay Ninh Province.

(S) All material destined for enemy forces in SVN, that crossed the Lao Panhandle, entered Laos via NVN Routes 15 and 137. Within the Panhandle, the main logistical routes were 23A, 911, 912, 91, 914, 92, and 96. Eastward roads leading toward the SVN border were 9, 925, 926, 922, 165, and 110. During the first half of 1968, construction and improvement was detected in most of these areas. Infiltration groups used varying patterns of movement and march discipline. For example, while in Laos or Cambodia under a double or triple canopy foliage, groups proceeded freely during daylight and exercised little or no march discipline. After entering SVN, movement was conducted at night with excellent noise, light, and march discipline. Commo-liaison stations (see Enemy Support Operations) played an important role in the infiltration effort. They functioned as resupply points, provided medical aid to the more seriously wounded or ill, and furnished guides to the next stopover. The stations were located along the infiltration routes but not necessarily on the trails themselves. Infiltration represented a cross section of all types of NVN personnel and equipment required by the enemy in SVN. They probably included not only combat and combat support units but also some administrative service and political personnel. Enemy infiltration in IV CTZ consisted primarily of food and munitions with only minimal personnel infiltration reported. Only an estimated 1,000 troops had entered IV CTZ by mid-1968.

(C) Infiltration groups, particularly those that entered the Saigon area, were not heavily armed during their infiltration or at the time of their arrival. Most elements arrived with just enough weapons to provide a minimum defense capability. This procedure was probably based upon the assumption that infiltration personnel were not likely to encounter Allied units until after their arrival in assigned areas of operations. Many of the infiltrators were soldiers who had been drafted and trained shortly before their departure from NVN. The very young and the older recruit appeared frequently in 1968. Pre-infiltration training lasted from three to four months. It consisted of weapons, tactics, physical, political, and infiltration training. Certain interrogation reports indicated that all infiltration training was not so extensive. In one instance, they had received only one month of training prior to infiltration; in another case the training consisted only of carrying pack loads of increasing weight on long foot marches over a period of weeks. [48]

~~SECRET~~



~~SECRET~~

FIGURE III-2

(C) The nature of the enemy's infiltration of personnel was such that many groups remained undetected for several months. For this reason, infiltration data was subject to continuing reevaluation due to receipt of updating information. Data for the period from 1 July 1968 to 31 December 1968 was considered incomplete and totally inadequate for determining trends. It is emphasized that the estimate of 136,229 NVN personnel who infiltrated SVN from 1 January to 31 October 1968 represents the only valid information available at the time of this report but it is probable that only a portion of the actual infiltration is presented:[49]

	ACCEPTED			POSSIBLE	TOTAL
	Confirmed	Probable	Total		
1. Jan 68	13,850	600	14,450	7,670	22,120
2. Feb 68	8,726	420	9,146	3,682	12,828
3. Mar 68	18,884	700	19,584	4,876	24,460
4. Apr 68	11,729	1,902	13,631	6,237	19,868
5. May 68	7,930	1,500	9,430	6,775	16,205
6. Jun 68	8,753	1,400	10,153	646	10,799
7. Jul 68	5,470	1,550	7,020	2,380	9,400
8. Aug 68	6,486	700	7,186	2,830	10,016
9. Sep 68	1,795	700	2,495	1,100	3,595
10. Oct 68	500	1,100	1,600	1,400	3,000
11. Nov 68	-----	1,180	1,180	1,133	2,313
12. Dec 68	200	500	700	925	1,625

VC POLITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Leadership

General

(C) At the close of 1967, through captured documents and PW interrogation, MACV was able to develop a better understanding of the VC political infrastructure organizations and their missions, from the Central Office for South Vietnam (COSVN) to hamlet level. The war in

Vietnam was really a two phase war. First, it was a military struggle against the VC and the NVN regular military forces; second, it was a political struggle against the VC political administrative apparatus or infrastructure that directed and supported the military forces and front organizations at all levels -- from the military region down to the hamlet. The political infrastructure was the "shadow government" of the VC that directed the insurgency in the south and competed with the legal SVN government for control of the people. This very complex organization was manned and operated by thousands of well-trained and dedicated VC political cadre who sought first to control and then to organize all facets of the South Vietnamese people's lives toward full support of the insurgency. In VC-controlled areas, the infrastructure acted as a civil government. In contested and GVN-controlled areas, it directed a program of intense propaganda mixed with terrorism which was aimed at undermining GVN control. In many parts of the country, VC and GVN officials competed openly for the people's support. For example, the GVN would build roads and collect taxes during the day while during the night the VC collected taxes and committed acts of terrorism. This critical struggle was going on everywhere in SVN and had to be recognized and monitored closely.

Background

(C) After the decisive French defeat at Dien Bien Phu, Ho Chi Minh, under apparent Sino-Soviet pressure, let it be known that he was ready to discuss peace. The resulting negotiations fixed a Provisional Military Demarcation Line roughly along the seventeenth parallel. It provided for the total evacuation of NVN by the French forces and a concurrent evacuation of the area south of the seventeenth parallel by the Vietminh forces. In addition to the truce agreement, a final declaration, commonly referred to as the Geneva Accord, dated 21 July 1954, provided for the holding of general elections throughout both North and South Vietnam in July 1956.

(C) In anticipation of the elections, Ho Chi Minh left a number of "stay-behind" political cadre in SVN to maintain and improve his position among the people. As 1956 approached, it became apparent to Ho that the elections would not be held; therefore, he gave the word for the Vietminh underground, deliberately left behind in the south, to begin building a political infrastructure in preparation for full-scale insurgency. By 1958, this apparatus was well-enough organized to direct small-scale terroristic activities consisting primarily of assassinations of village and hamlet chiefs who had been appointed by the then - President of SVN, Diem. Toward the end of 1959, VC guerrilla units were sufficiently organized to conduct actual armed attacks against GVN installations; by mid-1960, the movement had grown large enough to require a formal, overt, sponsoring organization.

(C) In response to the need for a front organization, members of the southern element of the ruling Lao Dong (Worker's) Communist Party of NVN met to announce the creation of the National Front for the Liberation of South Vietnam (NFLSVN or NLF). The NLF was designed to channel anti-Diem and southern nationalist feelings and groups into a single broad-based organization in support of the insurgency. At the same time, it was to provide a screen behind which the Communists could continue to direct the movement. In a further attempt to disguise Communist control of the Front, the southern branch of the Lao Dong Party changed its name in late 1961 to the People's Revolutionary Party (PRP). Shortly thereafter, the Central Office for South Vietnam (COSVN) was formed by Hanoi to serve as the political/military command and control headquarters for all its activities in the south. COSVN had the mission of implementing directives and policy decisions passed down from the Reunification Department of the Lao Dong Party.

(C) From 1962 until about 1965, the VC infrastructure continued to expand until it included some type of organization in nearly all of SVN's 2,500 villages and 12,000 hamlets. After early 1966, direct US military intervention forced Hanoi and COSVN to shift more emphasis to the military effort at the expense of the continued growth of the political apparatus. At that time, the infrastructure underwent a considerable change in attempting to adjust to US military pressure. During 1968, more emphasis was directed toward consolidation of areas under VC control.

(C) It is important to remember that, while the infrastructure was no longer the largely unfettered, expansion-oriented organization it was in 1965, it was still an extremely well-organized, disciplined, and effective control apparatus that coordinated the war effort in the South with great determination in the face of great pressure from FWMAF operations. Many of its cadre remained convinced of the inevitable triumph of their cause.

Definitions

(C) Infrastructure. The official MACV definition of infrastructure is:

> The political and adminstrative organization through which the Viet Cong control or seek control over the South Vietnamese people. It embodies the Party (People's Revolutionary Party) control structure, which includes a command and administrative apparatus (Central Office for South Vietnam) at the national level, a parallel front organization (National Front for the Liberation of South Vietnam--NFLSVN), both of which extend from the national to the hamlet level. 50

1. The infrastructure included:

a. Membership of the Current Affairs Committee and all subordinate functional elements of each party chapter organization down to and including the hamlets.

b. Leadership only of the parallel Front organizations.

c. Leadership only of the Military Party Affairs element of each echelon party committee (at the village and hamlet levels, this included the guerrilla chief).

2. The infrastructure did not include:

a. Members of organized military units (except village and hamlet guerrilla chiefs).

b. Rank and file members of the Front associations.

c. Persons who were recruited as civilian laborers by the infrastructure to perform a single specific task or to work on an irregular basis.

d. Members of the population base in VC-controlled areas who did not hold specific positions within the infrastructure.

(C) People's Revolutionary Party (PRP). The PRP was the southern branch of the Lao Dong (Worker's) Communist Party of North Vietnam. It was the guiding organization behind all insurgent activity in South Vietnam.

(C) National Front for the Liberation of South Vietnam (NFLSVN). This was the cover or Front organization behind which the PRP carried on the war in SVN. This organization was created by the PRP to act as an agent of the Party in relations with foreign countries and to give the false impression to the South Vietnamese people and to the world that the VC were sponsored by an indigenous southern nationalist organization, not by the Communist Party of NVN. The Front served the additional purpose of providing the leadership for a wide variety of Front Associations (such as farmers', womens', and youth associations) which embraced all age, occupational, or interest groups in SVN under the banner of progressive anti-GVN, anti-American nationalism. In this way, the PRP hoped to organize a great number of people in support of their cause without showing their true Communist ties.

Territorial Organization

(C) The VC organized SVN into nine Military Regions (MR) subordinate to the COSVN. These MRs, each having its own political/military headquarters with 200 to 700 cadre, varied considerably in both size and mission. Subordinate to these MRs were 33 VC provinces (in contrast to 44 GVN) and approximately 230 districts, each with its own party organization. A province headquarters could have between 75 and several hundred cadre while a district organization usually had about 50. (Figure III-3 indicates VC boundaries and names for the political subdivisions, down to province level).

(C) Below the district level, the infrastructure organization included some administrative apparatus in most of the 2,500 villages and 12,000 hamlets in South Vietnam. It was at the village and hamlet levels that the infrastructure was most active in fulfilling its primary mission of providing a popular base for the insurgency.

Structure

(C) Province. Each of the 33 provinces was controlled by a Province Party Committee similar to the one shown on the line-and-block chart (See Figure III-4). The Province Party Committee itself was composed of PRP members who staffed the subordinate elements. While not everyone in the various subordinate sections belonged to the Party, all the important positions were filled by Party members.

1. The Executive Committee met periodically to make broad policy decisions. It was composed of the Party Secretary and other key Party officials, most of whom also held jobs elsewhere in the organization.

2. The Current Affairs Committee carried on the daily business of the Province Committee. Its membership consisted of the chiefs of the subordinate functional sections. The Current Affairs Committee met every day to make specific decisions implementing policy and assigned tasks both to subordinate sections within its own organization and to the districts.

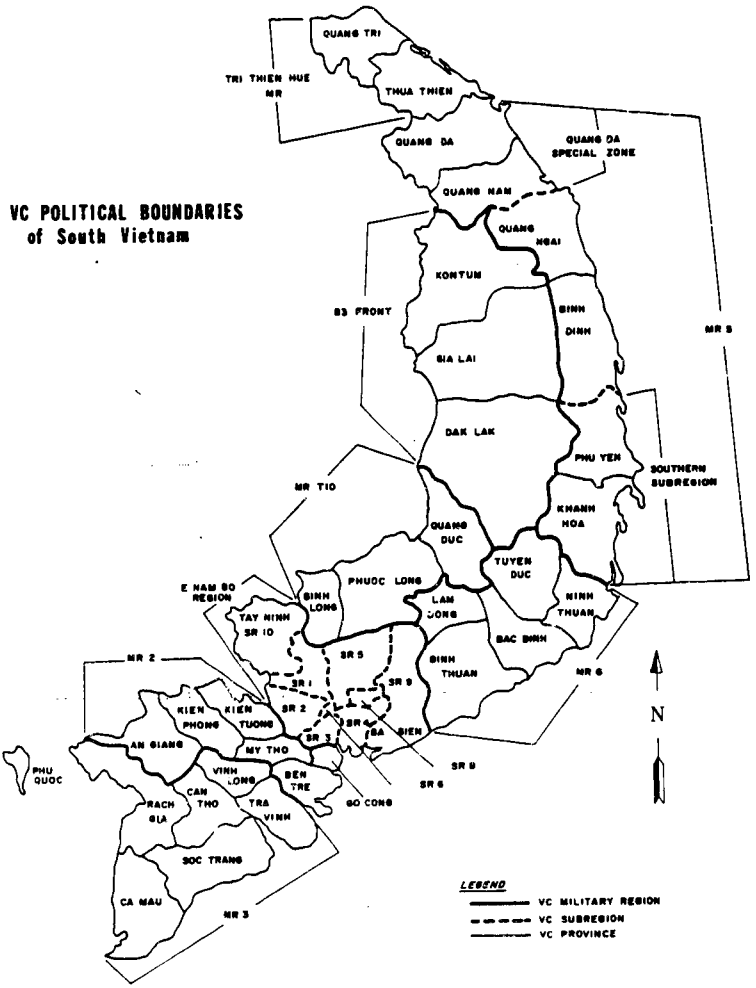

VC POLITICAL BOUNDARIES
of South Vietnam
QUANG TRI
TRI THIEN HUE MR
THUA THIEN
QUANG DA
QUANG DA SPECIAL ZONE
QUANG NAM
QUANG NGAI
KONTUM
B3 FRONT
BINH DINH
MR 5
GIA LAI
DAK LAK
PHU YEN
SOUTHERN SUBREGION
MR TIO
KHANH HOA
QUANG DUC
TUYEN DUC
E NAM BO REGION
BINH LONG
PHUOC LONG
LAM DONG
NINH THUAN
TAY NINH SR 10
BAC BINH
SR 5
BINH THUAN
MR 6
MR 2
SR 1
SR 9
KIEN PHONG
KIEN TUONG
SR 2
SR 4
SR 3
BA
BIEN
AN GIANG
MY THO
SR 8
VINH LONG
BEN TRE
SR 6
PHU QUOC
CAN THO
TRA VINH
GO CONG
RACH GIA
SOC TRANG
CA MAU
MR 3
N
LEGEND
VC MILITARY REGION
VC SUBREGION
VC PROVINCE

FIGURE III-3

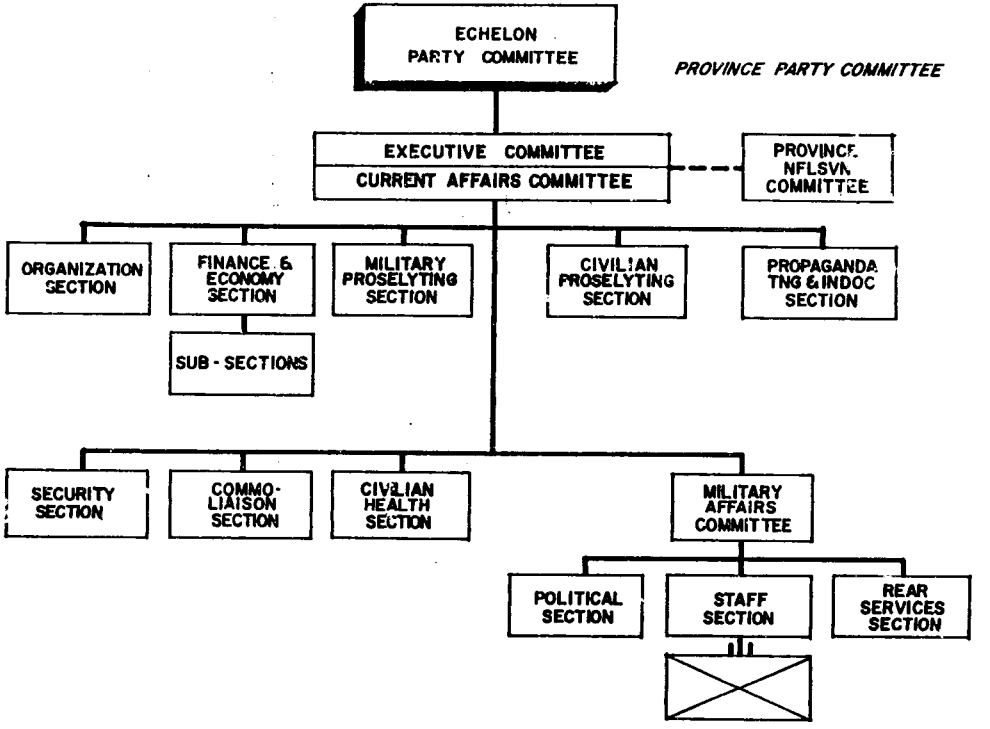

ECHELON
PARTY COMMITTEE
PROVINCE PARTY COMMITTEE
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
CURRENT AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
PROVINCE NFLSVN COMMITTEE
ORGANIZATION SECTION
FINANCE & ECONOMY SECTION
MILITARY PROSELYTING SECTION
CIVILIAN PROSELYTING SECTION
PROPAGANDA TNG & INDOC SECTION
SUB - SECTIONS
SECURITY SECTION
COMMO-LIAISON SECTION
CIVILIAN HEALTH SECTION
MILITARY AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
POLITICAL SECTION
STAFF SECTION
REAR SERVICES SECTION

FIGURE III-4

3. The Organization Section was similar to the adjutant general in our own military organization. This section maintained personal history statements, made Party personnel assignments, wrote efficiency reports and, since this was a Communist Party organization, had the additional responsibility of maintaining Party discipline.

4. The Finance and Economy Section was one of the most active. It prepared an annual budget for approval by the Executive Committee as well as overseeing a complex tax collection and dispersal system which received, accounted for, and allocated scarce resources. These resources included food and war materials as well as money. At the provincial level, this section usually operated a number of production subsections to produce goods for use in the insurgency and to bring in non-tax revenues for the Party officers. For example, in Binh Dinh Province, the Finance and Economy Section ran a blacksmith shop to perform services directly for the Party as well as [illegible]duce revenue by commercial operations.

5. The Military Prose[illegible] responsible for recruiting ARVN soldiers to the VC cause. "Proselyting" wa[illegible] of recruiting, training, and indoctrinating. A common method of operation was to enc[illegible]milies in VC-controlled hamlets to write letters to sons and relatives serving in the A[illegible]ing them to return home.

6. The Civilian Proselyting Section [illegible]d staff supervision over the District Front Committees within the province. This sect[illegible]ed how to organize unexploited interest and occupational groups into some form that wo[illegible]ond support to the VC, such as the organization of an "Old Monks' Association." Care must be taken to differentiate this Civilian Proselyting Section from the Front Committee or NFLSVN Committee which in some areas was the popular name for the entire chapter organization. This distinction depended on the degree to which the Party had successfully shrouded itself behind the NFLSVN. For example, in most areas official Party correspondence was sent on stationery bearing the letterhead of the "National Front for the liberation of South Viet Nam."

7. The Propaganda, Training, and Indoctrination Section had the mission of developing and disseminating the highly refined VC propaganda to which the population of South Vietnam was constantly subjected. The VC did not draw a clear distinction between indoctrination and training. The "training" was actually political incoctrination. Party members and functionaries were given nearly as much attention as the general population and they were quickly sent off to "retraining" courses if their enthusiasm for the insurgency showed signs of waning.

8. The Security Section performed both physical security and counterintelligence functions. As part of its intelligence responsibilities, this section operated an extensive network of agents within and outside of VC-controlled areas.

9. The Commo-Liaison Section was responsible for communications within a province. The VC had established a labyrinth of commo-liaison stations and routes for carrying messages and guiding personnel from one infrastructure element to another.

10. The Military Party Affairs Section was one of the most important elements in the infrastructure. Its mission was to direct the activities of the province military unit, usually a battalion.

a. The Political Subsection was headed by the political officer who insured that all military decisions made by the unit commander were "politically" correct. He was also head of the PRP chapter and cell organization within the province military unit.

b. The Military Staff Subsection performed a combination of the S1, S2, and S3 functions which were similar to those of the US military.

c. The Rear Service Subsection provided logistical support for the military unit and could be compared with the S4 function in a US military unit.

(C) District. At the district level, the infrastructure was organized very much like it was at the province except that it had fewer people and a more compact area of responsibility. The functional elements subordinate to the Current Affairs Committee at provincial level also appeared at district level and their missions and names were similar. This was true even though there was some evidence that the original VC plan for the infrastructure did not include a district echelon. The original intent was for the Province Party Committee to control villages and hamlets directly. This means of control proved to be unworkable however, and the District Committee was created to improve communication with the people. The important difference between the province and district was that at the higher level, "policy" was formulated by interpreting MR directives. At the district level, this policy was carried out by dividing and assigning tasks among the subordinate villages and hamlets. Because of the District Committee's role as an "action" rather than a "policy" organization, it was particularly vulnerable to manpower shortages and reductions in the quality of its cadre.

(C) Village/Hamlet. Because the majority of the South Vietnamese people lived in rural villages and hamlets, the VC placed special emphasis on the organization of the infrastructure at these levels. The great majority of infrastructure cadre in SVN were in village and hamlet organizations, of which there were two basic kinds:

1. GVN-Controlled Area. In GVN-controlled and contested areas, village and hamlet infrastructure was both flexible and covert. It usually included four or five Party members who operated in the village at night and hid outside the populated area during the day. Emphasis was placed on propaganda, terrorism, tax collection, and intelligence gathering; the overall purpose being to undermine GVN authority. In areas of particularly strong GVN control only one or two clandestine cadre would operate, usually under the direct control of the District Party Committee.

2. VC-Controlled Areas. In VC-controlled areas, the infrastructure placed more emphasis on civil government with the mission of fully involving every man, woman, and child in some activity supporting the insurgency. To take full advantage of the natural leaders in the villages and hamlets, the VC held free popular elections for a governing body which was usually an Autonomous Administrative Committee (AAC). The elections were, of course, controlled by the Party, but the idea was to install popular leaders in an apparently legitimate government and then bring them under Party control through intensive indoctrination. The VC preferred to allow the people to govern themselves with a minimum of background Party guidance, thereby releasing Party cadre for other tasks. At the same time, the people's sense of participation in their own government lent legitimacy to the AAC as a legal civil organ and reduced the Party's apparent role in the insurgency.

a. AACs performed all the roles of a normal civil government plus a few additional ones necessary to support the war. According to a captured VC document, their overall mission was divided into three broad areas:

(1) Mobilization of manpower and material resources for the war effort.

(2) Maintenance of security and order in villages and hamlets.

(3) Provision for services in public health, education, culture, and social welfare activities.

b. In addition to the AAC, VC-controlled villages and hamlets had a Liberation Front Committee, usually headed by a Party member, under which virtually the entire population was organized into a broad range of "liberation associations" to which the people were more or less compelled to belong. For example, the Farmers' Association usually controlled the market place which only members were allowed to use.[51]

Military Regions

(C) During early 1968, the VC political infrastructure MRs underwent boundary, district, territorial, and to some degree, infrastructure organizational changes. Two VC reorganizations, involving boundary changes, reportedly took place in the Tri-Thien-Hue MR. The first of these reorganizations included the adoption of interdistrict or subregion echelons (See Figure III-5). The following interdistricts or subregions were reportedly created within the Tri-Thien-Hue MR:

1. Interdistrict or Subregion 1, consisting of (VC) Gio Linh and Cam Lo Districts and the northern part of (VC) Huong Hoa District.

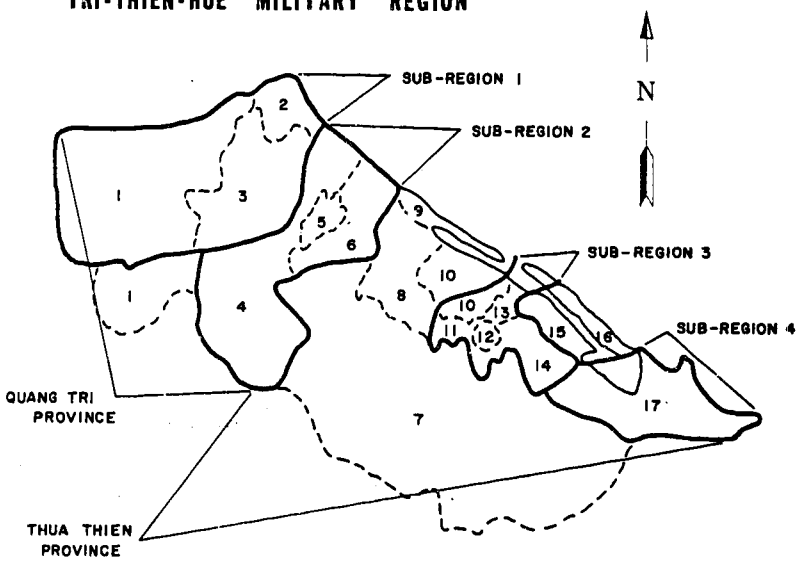
2. Interdistrict or Subregion 2, consisting of (VC) Trien Phong and Hai Long Districts.

3. Interdistrict or Subregion 3, consisting of (VC) Huong Thuy, Phu Vang, and Huong Tra Districts.

4. Interdistrict or Subregion 4, consisting of (VC) Phu Loc District.

(C) As part of the above reorganization, the province-level echelons of both (VC) Quang Tri and Thua Thien Provinces were abolished. These province-level echelons had apparently been replaced by interdistrict or subregion echelons, each of which administered several districts. Thus, four interdistrict-level organizations were administering an area which was formerly administered by only two province-level organizations. The reorganization, therefore, enabled the VC to maintain closer contact with, and better control of, subordinate districts, villages, and hamlets. The reorganization in the Tri-Thien-Hue MR probably was the result of a growing awareness among high level cadre that the past emphasis on military activities had only been possible at the cost of a corresponding de-emphasis on maintenance of a viable infrastructure. The new organization was designed to promote and facilitate greater emphasis on the political activities necessary to regain or increase popular support. The most acute losses in the VC infrastructure had resulted from the large-scale movement of people from rural areas, which were often VC-controlled, to urban areas which were generally under friendly control. The VC recognized the need for strengthening their infrastructure in the rural areas (including the new interdistrict echelon) and were initiating an intensive campaign to reduce damaging emigration. The enemy also hoped to revitalize his urban political apparatus in an effort to gain the support of the city dwellers. It was expected that he would introduce

TRI-THIEN-HUE MILITARY REGION



SUB-REGION 1
1. HUONG HOA (EXCEPT SOUTHERN PORTION)
2. GIO LINH
3. CAM LO

SUB-REGION 2
4. TRIEU PHONG
5. MAI LINH
6. HAI LANG
*7. NAM HOA
*8. PHONG DIEN
*9. HONG DIEN

SUB-REGION 3
10. QUANG DIEN
11. HUONG TRA
12. HUE
13. PHU VANG
14. HUONG THUY
*15. PHU THU (GVN)
*16. VIN LOC (GVN)

SUB-REGION 4
17. PHU LOC

LEGEND

——— SUB-REGION
– – – – DISTRICT
* UNACCOUNTED FOR IN REORGANIZATION

FIGURE III-5

additional cadre into urban areas and organize stay-behind elements into urban guerrilla/political forces.

Significant Enemy Activities

(C) Military Region 5. There were indications that the VC were shifting their emphasis from rural to urban areas in (VC) Khanh Hoa and Phu Yen Provinces. As early as the fall of 1967, a captured document from the Nha Trang City Committee indicated that the VC considered it necessary to extend their control into the urban areas because of the steady emigration of the rural population to cities and towns. Advance units were given the responsibility of setting up political organs in the cities. In support of their plans and as part of the Winter/Spring Campaign, attacks were to be made on Tuy Hoa City, the capital of (GVN) Phu Yen Province, and Nha Trang City in (GVN) Khanh Hoa Province. During the Tet Offensive, attacks on these cities were, in fact, initiated. The attacks were launched in hopes of inducing a sizable number of urban residents to join in the "Khoi Nghia" (general uprising), thus enabling the VC to hold cities or, at least, to impress urban residents and the ARVN/FWMAF with the capability of the VC to penetrate GVN urban strongholds at will.

(C) Military Region 6. As in other areas of SVN, there were reports of "downgrading" cadre from district to village level in MR 6. However, a program of "upgrading" veteran cadre through additional training was also reported. The Province Party Committees were given the responsibility of selecting a number of "winter cadre," (i.e., veteran cadre) to be sent to NVN for training in various service branches and combat arms. Criteria for selection included Party membership and "firm" ideological beliefs, as well as literacy and an unblemished personal history.

(C) Both the widespread "downgrading" of cadre and the "upgrading" of cadre by additional training were symptomatic of two related manpower problems. The first problem occurred when all the more able cadre at a certain echelon had been upgraded, leaving only the incompetent at the lower level. The second problem arose when cadre who had been promoted on the basis of Party fervor or battlefield exploits were later found to be lacking the necessary training and qualifications for higher positions. The Party had attempted to solve both problems by either downgrading competent cadre or by training cadre to a level of competence commensurate with their position.

(C) Military Regions 2 and 3. VC Long An Province in MR 2 had implemented a program for training agents to be placed in Saigon. Because of inadequacies, both in quality and quantity, of the "revolutionary force" in Saigon, COSVN adopted the policy of using rural forces to strengthen the VC element in the city. To that end, the following directive was issued to (VC) Long An Province:

> Each district will establish a Coordination and Operations Committee to take charge of the selection and training of personnel to be sent to Saigon.
>
> The district Party committee will have the responsibility for motivating Party members to comply with the directive.

The district Party committee will have the responsibility for motivating Party members to comply with the directive.

The expense of planting VC agents in Saigon will be paid for by the Province Party Committee.[52]

Strengths and Vulnerabilities

(C) Tri-Thien-Hue Military Region. In the Tri-Thien-Hue MR, emphasis had been placed on civilian proselyting. The insurgents had two possible reasons for this emphasis. First, the expectation that NVN would send needed military replacements decreased the emphasis on military proselyting. Secondly, the insurgents were having difficulty controlling the inexperienced recruits who deserted at the first opportunity as a result of insufficient indoctrination by civilian proselyting cadre.

(C) Recruiting and Shortage of Personnel. In MR 5, the VC recruiting trend was toward younger persons, both male and female, and older males than were formerly recruited. Also, recruiting efforts seemed less concerned with the "charac' r" of the recruits, a quality often stressed in earlier directives. Recruiting difficulties had been reported in (VC) Kanh Hoa Province in MR 5. This difficulty was understandable since relatively self-sufficient Kanh Hoa had never been particularly pro-VC, even in the days of the Vietminh-French struggle.

(C) The increased recruiting of women and children by the VC to fill key infrastructure slots in MR 2 and 3 was evidence of a shortage of male cadre. In the (VC) My Tho Province of MR 2, there was for example, a report of the Province Party Committee recruiting females for province agencies in order to free male personnel for service with the province military unit.

(C) Part of the VC recruitment problem in the Delta stemmed from their failure to utilize personnel resources adequately. Some areas appeared to have an ample supply of recruits whereas other areas had an acute shortage.

VC Political Objectives for the Tet Offensive

(C) The VC political objective for the offensive c paign launched against urban areas in SVN during Tet (30 January to 1 February 1968) was fo an "ultimate" or "final" victory to be achieved militarily by seizing and holding urban population centers in SVN. This objective included the complete takeover of the GVN national and provincial administrative apparatus by NFLSVN people. In this case, there was to be no coalition government or non-NFLSVN participants.

(C) The first step in achieving the ultimate objective was military action to defeat the ARVN and to inflict heavy casualties on FWMAF units. Efforts were to be concentrated on destroying air bases, logistics storage areas, troop base areas, and LOCs in order to restrict the reaction forces available for aiding the cities which would also be under attack. The VC were to attack and seize the cities; most significantly, the attacks were to be aided and supported by a popular "general uprising." In the second stage, the VC expected that the "general uprising," including the VC show of armed strength, would result in the overthrow or

surrender of all the GVN administrative apparatus. In preparing for the Tet Offensive and "general uprising," the VC stressed the need for closer coordination between political and military activities.

(C) The final step in achieving the ultimate VC objective was to be the destruction of the remaining loyal ARVN units and attacks on FWMAF bases by VC units reinforced by deserting ARVN troops. The FWMAF were to be isolated with their LOCs cut. They were then expected to be forced to consolidate in a few heavily fortified enclaves. The enemy believed that political pressure and public opinion within the US would prevent the sending of additional troops to Vietnam to recapture the area lost. Moreover, public opinion in the US was then expected to force the US into negotiations which would result in the complete withdrawal of US troops from Vietnam.

(C) The military result that the VC expected to achieve in the Tet Campaign was the seizing and holding of some of the GVN province and district capitals and overrunning parts of Saigon. This success also was expected to lead to a "general uprising," the formation of a coalition government, and the eventual withdrawal of US forces from Vietnam.

(C) VC military forces, supported by the "general uprising," were to seize and hold the provincial cities. Military action would weaken control of the GVN, leaving the GVN in control of only the few urban areas which were strongly defended by ARVN/FWMAF units. GVN troops would be withdrawn from rural areas to defend the cities and to consolidate the remaining GVN-controlled areas leaving the rural areas and the unprotected urban areas exposed to VC "liberation."

(C) A coalition government was to be formed in VC "liberated areas." Key members of the coalition government would be drawn from the NFLSVN and from those persons from the GVN who "desired peace and neutrality." However, NFLSVN front organization names would not be used. Instead, new names, such as the "United Front for the Struggle of Peace and Democracy," would be used to convey the impression to the world that it was not the NFLSVN but all the Vietnamese people who were participating in the coalition government.

(C) Negotiations with the US were then to follow with the purpose of setting up a broad national coalition government and providing for the neutralization of SVN and the withdrawal of all US troops. Negotiations would be conducted between the US and the NFLSVN but the "puppet" Saigon government would be excluded. The NFLSVN would have a key role in this coalition government and NFLSVN members would hold the key Ministries of National Affairs, Public Security, Economy, and Foreign Affairs. It was expected that public pressure in the US would force the US to accept these negotiations.

(C) The minimum VC objectives in the Tet Offensive were identified as being those results which the VC leadership expected to achieve if their attacks on GVN population centers failed to win either complete or partial domination of the areas. The theory was that the attacks on the cities would still accomplish certain objectives, some of which were:

1. To increase friction and dissension between ARVN and FWMAF units.

2. To cause dissension among South Vietnamese government leaders and discredit the GVN administration.

3. To destroy large numbers of ARVN troops, thereby reducing their will to fight.

4. To cause suffering and hardships for the residents of previously "safe" urban areas, thus reducing their will to continue supporting the struggle against the VC.

5. To demonstrate VC strength to the Vietnamese people.

6. To infiltrate sapper units and "legal" cadre (intelligence agents) into GVN-controlled areas for use in future operations against the GVN.

7. To force ARVN/FWMAF units to leave pacified rural areas in order to defend the cities, thus opening the rural areas for the VC to expand their control.

8. To cause heavy US casualties, thus resulting in unfavorable US public opinion that could force the US to negotiate with the NFLSVN for a coalition government in South Vietnam.

Preparations for the Tet Offensive

(C) The creation of interdistrict or subregion echelons in the Tri-Thien-Hue MR and MR 4 seemed to have been aimed not only at strengthening VC control over districts, villages, and hamlets but also at meeting requirements of the major multipronged offensive on such cities as Quang Tri, Hue, and Saigon.

(C) It appeared that, in preparation for the Tet Offensive, the VC infrastructure organizations in areas surrounding population centers were tasked by nighe: echelons to provide organizational support within the cities themselves. One example was (VC) Long An Province in MR 2; the Long An Province Committee received an extensive directive from the COSVN concerning the use of province forces to strengthen the "revolutionary force" in Saigon. There were also reports of increased infrastructure activities in other South Vietnamese urban centers prior to 31 January. For example, in the Tri-Thien-Hue MR, the VC were revitalizing their urban political apparatus; in Phan Thiet City of MR 6, the residents were urged by the VC to maintain stores of food in preparation for offensive operations.

Objectives

(C) The VC planned to establish a coalition government if the Tet Offensive succeeded in triggering the "Khoi Nghia," or "general uprising," to which the success of the offensive was so explicitly tied. This objective may have been inspired by the long-planned Vietminh uprising against the French in Haiphong in 1946. Fortunately, any VC plans to provoke a similar uprising in the 1968 Tet Offensive were unsuccessful.

(C) While much of the VC infrastructure reorganization appeared to have been directly related to the Tet Offensive, reorganization also appears to have been part of a general VC program to strengthen control over the Vietnamese people. This general program was primarily the result of the movement of people from war-torn, rural, VC-controlled areas to GVN-controlled areas-- particularly urban centers. To counter this movement, lower VC echelons had been strengthened, VC boundaries were realigned, and VC elements in urban areas were expanded.53

Infrastructure Losses During the 1968 Tet Offensive

(C) One expected result of the heavy casualties suffered by the VC during the Tet Offensive was the loss of individuals who held leadership positions within the infrastructure. As of 2 March 1968, 47,014 of the enemy had been reported killed as a result of the Tet Offensive. Reports indicated that a significant portion of these fatalities (possibly several thousand) were VC political cadre. Most of these cadre were probably replaced by recruitment or infiltration; consequently, the losses could not be subtracted directly from total infrastructure strength. Nevertheless, such a large attrition in a relatively short period of time placed a severe strain on VC recruiting capabilities, probably resulting in an actual net loss in total strength. It should be noted, however, that strength figures alone mean little. Far more important were the early indications that a larger number of district and higher level cadre had been captured or killed during the Tet Offensive than at any other comparable time of the insurgency. These losses almost certainly had a significant impact on the overall quality of the political cadre and on the effectiveness with which the infrastructure would be able to direct and support the insurgency.

(C) In anticipation of a general uprising in the cities, large numbers of "legal cadre" infiltrated into and around urban areas to motivate the people and to lead them in demonstrations against the government of SVN. By such actions, the cadre became vulnerable to friendly military and police operations and initial reports indicated that a considerable number were captured or killed. At the same time, organic infrastructure organizations, already operating in the cities, sacrificed their relatively covert status for overt activities in support of the anticipated uprising. In Saigon this activity included preparations for a provisional coalition government and explained why the VC were willing to risk the presence of General Tran Do, Deputy Political Officer of the Central Office for South Vietnam, in the Saigon area where he was killed on 11 February.

(C) All of the above indicates a particularly serious loss for the clandestine city or municipal political infrastructure organizations (equal to the district echelon in the infrastructure chain of command) throughout the country. Most initial attacks on government installations, National Police headquarters, and ARVN compounds in and around the cities were conducted by elements of various sapper units directly subordinate to the city political apparatus. At the same time, city and other legal cadre conducted open propaganda directed at organizing demonstrations to complement the sapper attacks. When no uprising materialized, many political cadre were rounded up by the National Police, along with the sapper units. Subsequent interrogations led to still further arrests as the National Police set up special teams to exploit leads and capture members of the surfaced city organizations before the VC could realize their miscalculation and return to underground operations. For example, information obtained during interrogation of a prisoner in Nha Trang was the basis for a police raid that netted four cadre, including two members of the Nha Trang Municipal Committee. In turn, their interrogation led to the arrest of a member of the Khanh Hoa Province Committee and one other cadre. The interrogation of the Province Committee member then led to the arrest of two other cadre. This chain of arrests was completed in about 72 hours. The Khanh Hoa ICEX Coordinator stated: "It is possible that before the police are through, the entire VC Nha Trang organization will be destroyed." Similar police successes were possible in Qui Nhon where reports included the Secretary and Assistant Secretary of the Qui Nhon City Committee as being among the VC eliminated in the 30 January attack on that city.

(C) It appeared that the VC plan for the general uprising was to have been carried out primarily through the leadership of district and city echelon cadre. These cadre were to have led the people through the uprising and then established provisional local governments to fill the vacuum resulting from disintegrating GVN authority. In place of their anticipated success, the VC were then faced with the possibility of a temporary breakdown of infrastructure control in certain urban areas. This breakdown was expected because losses suffered at the district and city echelons played a very critical role in the chain of command for the VC infrastructure.

(C) The district or city Party Committee was particularly vulnerable to manpower shortages because it was the highest "action" level in the Party political structure. At the province echelon, where policy was still being interpreted and formulated, the loss of key cadre undoubtedly detracted from the quality of long-term planning but only in a few cases would the loss be immediate or critical. The province Current Affairs Committees generally met once a month, allowing sufficient time to adjust responsibilities or to replace lost members.

(C) At the village and hamlet levels, no individual cadre's responsibilities were so great that they could not be absorbed, either temporarily or permanently, by another member of the local infrastructure. Furthermore, these local organizations were usually sufficiently flexible to allow for the shift of missions between various elements. For example, if the village Party chapter was destroyed, the Farmer's Association Executive Committee could take over its functions, perhaps under the general direction of a single Party member from the district level. In addition, local guerrilla units could be used to collect taxes and conduct armed propaganda sessions. Self-defense and secret-defense elements could be similarly utilized.

(C) At the district level, however, the sudden loss of key cadre (e.g., Finance and Economy, Military Party Affairs, or Security) had immediate and far-reaching effects. District cadre usually had many years of Party experience, proven leadership capabilities, and commensurate responsibilities that required day-to-day active supervision of a large segment of political activity in all the villages and hamlets within the district. District cadre were not policy makers or functionaries that carried out detailed instructions but rather "action" cadre who bridged the gap between the two. As such, their loss placed a critical strain on the infrastructure and their replacement was given the highest priority.

(C) Some temporary adjustments were made in the structure of district organizations. These adjustments included changes in the balance between military and political activities. For example, in the Delta during Tet when GVN Revolutionary Development (RD) cadre were temporarily withdrawn from the countryside into the cities, VC district organizations expanded their propaganda and proselyting elements (at the expense of military operations) in an intensive effort to bring villages abandoned by the GVN into the political sphere before the return of RD cadre. By contrast, districts that had taken heavy casualties among their subordinate local force units as a result of the Tet fighting were under considerable pressure from the province committees to place the highest priority on recruiting. Some military leaders were recruited directly from the infrastructure ranks, thereby further weakening the political organizations to strengthen the military.[54]

The New Front

(C) In order to further their cause, the VC/NVA leadership created a new front, the Alliance for National Democratic and Peace Forces (ANDPF). This organization was, apparently, formed in Ban Me Thuot as early as mid-February 1968 but its membership was to remain secret until after the VC had won a military victory. 55 Therefore, the formation of the Alliance was not announced until 20 April 1968 in Cholon. The following day, the Liberation Radio began a propaganda campaign which was immediately picked-up by Hanoi. Within a week, the momentum was building and the Alliance received the praises of a Politburo member, Truong Chinh. He stated that Hue and Thua Thien were two locations where "people's power" had been installed. By 29 April, the new front had been recognized by Moscow through the Tass International Service. Trinh Dinh Thao was installed as the head of the Alliance while the Vanh Han region chairman, Thich Don Hau, was promoted to the vice-chairmanship. 56

(S) During the first month of existance, the Alliance appeared to have had a very limited affect on the people of SVN. It did, however, attract certain student groups, intellectuals, and "militant" Buddhists of central Vietnam. Two of the more prominent Saigon students who supported the new organization were Tran Trieu Luat and Ho Huu Nhut. Both were "officers" in student activist circles. Luat's support of the Alliance was viewed as a significant triumph for he was widely respected in the student community of Saigon.

(S) The formation of the Alliance also succeeded in creating some doubt in the minds of GVN leaders concerning the "good faith" of US intentions in SVN. For example, Tran Thuong Nhon, Secretary General of the Free Democratic Forces, stated that the Alliance may have been "American-inspired." He believed that this could have been a creation which was designed to facilitate the imposition of a coalition government on SVN. Thus, although the Alliance had an unstable beginning, it was not a total failure. 57

> The Alliance's action program, as outlined in . . . Liberation Radio communique, was to put an end to the war, restore peace, achieve national independence and sovereignty, build South Vietnam into an independent, free, peaceful, neutral, and prosperous nation, and advance toward unifying the country peacefully on the basis of equal discussions between North and South. 58

(C) Members who were elected to the Alliance Central Committee were overtly non-Communist. This, along with the adoption of an official flag and anthem, was designed to foster its "independent" image, but the mask that was created was very thin. A national "salvation" appeal was passed by the conference that had announced the formation of the Alliance. This appeal was very similar to programs that had previously been supported by the NLFSVN. Thus, the Alliance exposed itself as a creation of the NLFSVN, and it was labeled by the US and GVN as a disguise of the NLFSVN. 59

(S) As a result of the close association of the Alliance and the NLFSVN, the Alliance was still experiencing difficulty in attracting popular support in mid-July. This was significant because the people of SVN were obviously favoring a peaceful solution to the war and many believed that a third force was necessary for the accomplishment of this goal.

(C) On 12 July, the GVN took a bold step which was designed to further discredit and expose the Alliance as a front organization. The GVN sentenced the top ten leaders of the Alliance to death, in absentia. 60 But, the Communists were not idle, for during the same month they initiated a concerted effort to gain support of the Alliance on the international scene. Their approach coincided with a decline in military activity. The Alliance was given new prominence in their propaganda and it was even mentioned in relation to the negotiations which were taking place in Paris. 61

(C) On 15 August, Liberation Radio explained the Alliance's political program in terms that were almost identical to those of the NLF. The conclusion of the program gave a hint as to why the Communists did not adequately disguise the Alliance's function as a NLF organization. It noted that the Alliance "consistently sides with the NLF." It further asserted that the program served the formation of a "comprehensive anti-US, national salvation, national unified front." Only the addition of capital letters to these words would have been needed to "merge" the Alliance and the NLF. Further, on 3 September, Nguyen Huu Tho stated that "the Liberation Front asserted its attitude of coalition with the Alliance." Thus, the chairman of the NLF paved the way for any future unification plans that either organization may have had. 62

(C) On 10 November, Liberation Radio broadcasted a statement which was made by the Alliance leadership. It attacked the GVN for refusing to participate in the Paris talks and for being a "lackey" of the Americans. There was one departure from their traditional broadcasts. The Alliance called for the GVN to be overthrown and replaced by a "peace cabinet which will negotiate with the NLFSVN with a view to the early ending of the US war of aggression and the restoration of peace. . . ." 63

People's Liberation Committees

(C) Further reflecting traditional Communist doctrine, political forces expressed their authority through state or government mechanisms. In 1964/65, the Communists had developed "Autonomous Administrative Committees" to give an appearance of legitimacy to their control of the population. This innovation included theoretical elections of such committees although it was clear that the PRP maintained control of them. As an element of the preparations for the 1968 Winter/Spring Offensive, the Communists revived this concept and began the process of developing "Liberation Committees." They experienced difficulty and very little was accomplished prior to Tet. During this phase, the practice of appointment usually replaced the theory of election. 64 In contested areas, or areas under GVN control, VC cadre who had good relationships with the people were directed to establish Liberation Committees at all levels except district and provincial. They were also to form a VC governmental structure which, administratively, paralleled the governmental structure of the GVN. These committees were to act as the governing body in the event that a coalition government was formed. Liberation Committees also had the mission of inciting the people to join in a general uprising against the GVN. According to the 6th COSVN Resolution of March 1968, ". . . people in the rural areas should be steadily mobilized to rise up and topple the whole administrative apparatus of the enemy . . . to seize power for the people." 65 The directive explained the purposes, organization, duty assignments, tasks, and work regulations of the Liberation Committees at village and hamlet level. It emphasized that COSVN was attempting to institute a fighting machine as well as an administrative organ. The directive also called for elections of village People's Liberation Councils (PLC). The councils were to consist of representatives from the various people's groups and from guerrilla and militia organizations. Further, the councils were to elect village PLCs from among the members of the councils. 66

(C) Missions of the Liberation Committees varied at different levels. A hamlet Liberation Committee was to report regularly to the village Liberation Committee on activities in the hamlet and to effect Party policies in the hamlet. In turn, the village Liberation Committee executed the orders of the village Liberation Council, strengthened Party solidarity in the rural areas, aided the guerrilla warfare proselyting activities, expanded "Liberated" areas, increased community work projects, provided health services and improved education, and guarded against revolutionary traitors and counter-attacks. The mission of the district and province Liberation Committees was to recruit, transfer, promote, and dismiss local cadre; to establish administrative staffs; and to issue policy directives received from higher commands. [67]

(C) Additional insight into the enemy's tactics can be gained by considering enemy propaganda after phase one of the General Offensive. The main propaganda themes emphasized the fact that Liberation Committees did exist and that they exercised administrative control over large areas of SVN. On 9 April, Liberation Radio announced that within 45 days, 1.6 million people and 600 villages had been liberated and numerous administrations had been established. For the most part, these were "shadow" entities which did not exist, but some village Liberation Committees began to appear late in April and in early May. The implementation and intensity of the effort suggested an association with the anticipated peace talks between the US and NVN. [68]

(C) By mid-June it was obvious that COSVN and Hanoi's goal to create effective Liberation Committees had fallen short of their intended mark. Some had been created in IV CTZ, the traditional base for Communist organizational activities, and there was the existing structure in I CTZ, which had remained after Tet; but in II and III CTZ almost nothing appeared to have been accomplished.

(C) Despite the lack of reported successes, the Communists boomed their "progress" in forming such committees. This organizing effort picked up steam during the summer. It became clear that the Communists were going on with the creation of such committees at the district and even provincial level, whether or not they had organized the hamlet and village base. It appeared that some areas actually got ahead of COSVN in creating these bodies; for example, a Communist document issued 3 June by RF 2 laid out the approach to take in forming district committees "while waiting for the official decisions from Nam Truong (COSVN)." [69]

(FOUO) As the summer progressed, the Communists pushed even harder to create their committees. On 28 August, Liberation Radio added another chapter to the establishment of Liberation Committees and revolutionary governments in SVN. The broadcast announced that the (VC) Cau Mau Province had established the country's first "temporary Provincial People's Liberation Committees." This announcment differed from earlier Liberation Radio statements by tying the committees to the NLF. The broadcast put forth this statement: "Attending the meeting were all representatives from the NLFSVN Provincial Committee. . . ." There was no mention of the ANDPF. [70]

(C) On 2 September, Liberation Radio broadcasted a commentary concerning the successful establishment of revolutionary administrations at the village and district levels throughout SVN, including the province level. Though this claim left sections of the country unorganized, it did represent a substantial move toward the completed formation of a new administrative system on paper. There was no confirmation that these committees actually existed but enemy directives indicated that a number of them may have, in fact, been formed. [71]

(C) Any success of the 1968 summer campaign was due to the initial emphasis placed on establishing PLCs in VC/NVA controlled areas. By October, about 1,700 PLCs were estimated to have been functioning at all echelons in these areas. As of 15 October, 1,186 were confirmed. About 25 to 30 percent of the total area under VC/NVA control was under the jurisdiction of PLCs. The fact that the VC/NVA were able to form PLCs reflected a lack of security and development rather than popular acceptance. In a majority of the hamlets, 60.7 percent, the general security status was estimated to be poor. 72

(C) With 1968's ending, a December estimate stated that the significance of these committees was threefold:

1. In future offensives the VCI can be expected to follow up any gains in the countryside with either VC occupation or the formation of PLCs.

2. As a government-in-being, they can demand representation in peace talks, negotiations, and in any future coalition government.

3. By posing as a legitimate government, the VCI will be able to exploit the resources of the areas they control more efficiently. 73

VCI Personalities

(U) Throughout 1968, as a result of document screening, monitored broadcasts, intelligence activities, etc., much was learned about many of the military and political leaders of the VCI.

(S) The following is a list and brief description of certain military/political leaders within the VCI:

1. GEN Hoang Van Thai was a full member of the Lao Dong Party Central Committee; 1st Deputy Minister of Defense; 1st Deputy Chief of Staff of the NVA and Director of the NVA's Training Directorate. While operating in SVN, he used the code name of Tahi. Reportedly, he was the commanding officer of the MR 5 area.

2. GEN Tran Van Tra was an alternate member of the Lao Dong Party Central Committee and 4th Deputy Chief of Staff of the NVA. In SVN, he was the chairman of the COSVN Military Affairs Committee. He used the code name of Tu Chi.

3. GEN Chu Huy Man was a full member of the Lao Dong Party Central Committee; 3rd Deputy Chief of the NVA General Political Dept.; and Political Officer of the NVA's Northwest MR (Thai Nguyen). He commanded the B-3 Front in SVN.

4. GEN Tran Do was an alternate member of the Lao Dong Party Central Committee and was the Political Officer of Right Bank MR (Nam Dinh). He used the code names of Chin Vinh and Tran Quoc Vinh while serving in his capacity as a deputy Political Commissar of the Communist military forces. He was reported KIA in Saigon during February.

5. GEN Tran Luong was a full member of the Lao Dong Party Central Committee. He once headed the COSVN Military Affairs Committee. He was also identified as the head of the NLF's Military Affairs Committee.

6. GEN Nguyen Don was an alternate member of the Lao Dong Party Central Committee. In SVN, he was the former head of MR 5. With the arrival of GEN Thai as Regional Commander, Don became Thai's deputy. Don used the code name of Do Mau.

7. GEN Ha Ke Tan was an alternate member of the Lao Dong Party Central Committee and was listed as the DRV's Minister of Water Conservation. In the South, he was a member of the COSVN Military Affairs Committee and a deputy commander of Communist military forces.

8. GEN Tran Guy Hai was an alternate member of the Lao Dong Party Central Committee; 2nd Deputy Minister of Defense; 2nd Deputy Chief of Staff of the NVA; and was the Communist Military Commander of a sub-region in Quang Tri/Thua Thien zone in SVN.

9. GEN Le Trong Tan was the 3rd Deputy Chief of Staff of the NVA and once commanded the 312th NVA Division during the 1954 Dien Bien Phu campaign. In SVN, he was a deputy commander of the Communist military forces and used the name Ba Long.

10. GEN Hoang Minh Thao was the Director of the NVA's Military College and once commanded the 304th NVA Division during the Dien Bien Phu campaign. It was reported that he held a "high" position in SVN's B-3 Front.

11. GEN Le Chuong was reported to be the "top" Commanding Officer of the Quang Tri/Thua Zone. He was a native of Quang Tri Province and had been a member of the Lao Dong Party since the mid 1930's. 74

(S) The following is a brief description of certain NLF political officials:

1. Nguyen Thi Binh was the head of the NLF delegation to the Paris peace talks until 11 December 1968. She was an avid, doctrinaire Communist, according to a French journalist, Darcourt. She was a political revolutionary activist during much of her lifetime and was reputed to be one of the few women to achieve prominence with the NLF. Her political career dated back to at least 1950 when she was active in organizing a terrorist campaign in Saigon. Activities of her terrorists included the raising of the Viet Minh flag over the Saigon city hall and the fatal stabbing of a French colonel who tried to prevent the demonstration. Among other acts, she was also credited with arranging the execution of two 15-year old students and a school teacher. As a result of her activities, she was imprisoned by the French. During her imprisonment, she recited Marxist Doctrine for extended periods in order to counter interrogation attempts by her French captors. She did assert that she was the daughter of a Vietnamese national leader, Phon Chan Trinh. 75 Darcourt said that Trinh had one son and no daughters. As a result, he probed deeper and discovered that Madame Binh's real name was Ngueyn Thi Sa (or XA). He said that she was actually the daughter of Nguyen An Ninh. 76

2. Tran Buu Keim replaced Madame Nguyen Thi Binh as head of the NLF Paris peace delegation. This occurred on 11 December. Kiem had been the Chairman of the External Relations Commission and had spent much of his time in Cambodia for three years prior to this appointment. He was involved in attempts to win Cambodian diplomatic and materiel support for the VC. He was believed to have been a close associate of members in the PRP and had many contacts with members of the Propaganda and training section of COSVN. He was one of the founders of the New Democratic Party in 1945 and he had joined the Communist Party toward

the end of the resistance. Besides his other duties with the NLFSVN, Kiem was the Chairman of the Liberation Students and Pupils Association. There were times when he used the aliases Chin Kiem and Chin An. 77

3. Nguyen Van Tien was the NLF's representative to Hanoi. He had been in this position since December of 1966. Tien was reported to have been directly associated with Ho Chi Minh, rather than the NVN government. He was a tireless speaker and he was always ready to grant interviews in order to explain the aims of the NLF. One of Tien's principal themes was the NLF's independence from Hanoi and it's heterogeneous political makeup. At the same time, he would usually mention the "brotherhood" between North and South and the mutual assistance each extended to the other in political, economic, and military matters. Tien believed in a transitional period after the war's end during which time the North and South would not unite. Then, he felt that a gradual transformation would take place and the two would become one, "without foreign interference."

4. Madame Do Thi Lien -- also known as Le Thi Mai, Thi Tu Om, and Sau Thu -- was a hard core VC cadre member. A former member of the Central Executive Committee of the Association of Women for the Liberation of SVN, she was bitterly anti-American. She became involved in anti-government activities in 1949. Madame Lien was arrested in 1951 and imprisoned for 30 months. In 1957, she joined the Communist Party. During 1960, she worked for the Civilian Proselyting Section of COSVN. In mid-1966, she transfered to the Saigon Market Party Committee (SMPC). While a member of the SMPC, she was arrested in 1967 and released during June 1968. At this time, it was believed that she moved to Hanoi.

5. Dinh Ba Thi became the NLF's representative to Hungary on 15 December 1965. Prior to this assignment, he had been the deputy head of the NLF mission in Prague. He led delegations of the NLF to meetings of the World Peace Council (WPC) in Helsinki, July 1965; Geneva, June 1966; Prague, 1967; and Nicosia in 1968. In October, 1968, he accompanied a joint NLF/NVN delegation which made a public relations visit to France. Observers pictured him as a hard-core Communist professional who was unwavering and dedicated to his work. 78

6. Pham Van Ba and Ha Thanh Lam were the number 1 and 2 NLF Information Office representatives to the Paris peace talks. Ba was born in Gia Dinh in 1921. He joined the resistance movement in 1945 and by 1964 had become "Head of NLF for Eastern SVN." In 1968, Ba was the Director of the NLF's Information Bureau in Prague. Lam was born in Saigon in 1922. He also joined the resistance in 1945. From 1966 to 1968, he served as the NLF's Deputy Chief in Prague. 79

7. Finally, there was Tran Nam Trung who was the Vice Chairman of the NLF. Actually, the Vice Chairman was the real leader of the NLF. Most interesting, however, is the fact that there was no such "person" as Tran Nam Trung because the name was a designation that was held at various times by two or three NVN Generals. One former Tran Nam Trung was identified as Tran Luong, a member of the Communist Central Committee. The Communist military effort in SVN was directed by Hanoi's Central Office which appointed a staff officer to the Tran Nam Trung position. 80

December 1968 Political Situation

(C) During the last quarter of 1968, there were reports that the NLF, like the Indo-Chinese Communist Party of 1945, would fade into the background in Vietnam. A directive from the Political Bureau to VC Provincial and District cadre urged that a propaganda campaign be initiated and it requested that the name of the NLF be changed to the "People's Anti-American Political Striving Front." Also, it appeared that Liberation Committees were taking over many of the NLF's functions at province level and below. If successful, these committees might give the impression that most of SVN was not under GVN control. Therefore, the VCI had political roads open to them that could produce their desired results:

> A national level coalition, dominated by representatives from the Liberation Committees and including other groups such as the NLF and the National Alliance for Democratic and Peace Forces, could be formed by the enemy to challenge the legitimacy of the GVN. 81

(S) As the World waited for the Paris negotiations to yield some evidence that the Vietnam crisis would be solved, the following summary of the situation was presented:

> In present negotiations, the Vietnamese Communists face difficult situations both in Vietnam and on the international scene. As always, their goals are ambitious ones. However, unlike 1954, their Communist allies are less able to exert pressures upon them, and no specific deadline for reaching an agreement has been set nor have pressures been applied to this end. . . . These factors suggest they can and will negotiate slowly. But it must be remembered that they also face a formidable and unpredictable enemy in the United States as well as stronger and more coherent Vietnamese non-Communist opposition. 82

Morale and Recruitment

Morale

(C) At the end of 1967, morale of the VC/NVA troops in South Vietnam was declining, and it appeared that this decline would continue. Many factors contributed to this decline; however, the primary factors appeared to be friendly sweep operations, air and artillery raids, and severe hardships. This loss of morale was beginning to affect the enemy's ability on the battlefield. Captured documents revealed that forces were being withdrawn from combat without appropriate orders for withdrawal and that the enemy was unable to conduct operations due to the low morale of the units involved. Morale appeared to be affected most adversely by Allied

sweep operations in what the enemy considered to be VC-controlled areas. The enemy was often forced to move hurriedly when he was confronted by units possessing superior firepower, leaving behind the stores he had cached to support himself in future operations.[83] When sweep operations were not being conducted, the enemy was continually harassed by air and artillery strikes which were demoralizing to him since they deprived him of safe refuge. He was ostracized by the local villagers who feared reprisal by Allied air and artillery raids if they gave refuge to the VC/NVA.[84]

(C) A shortage of logistical supplies also caused severe problems for the enemy. The enemy normally maintained enough ammunition to remain in contact with Allied forces for about three days. In addition, he usually maintained caches in the immediate vicinity with a reserve sufficient to enable him to fight for periods up to thirty days. If, however, he lost control of the area or if his local caches were uncovered, his situation became critical. Interrogation reports showed that such incidents were frequent and were expected to occur with increasing regularity. The lack of medical supplies, especially medicines to counteract malaria, had further lowered morale and physical strength. Numerous interrogation reports stated that malaria affected eighty percent of some units during infiltration. Other diseases, such as cholera and beri-beri, were also reported. Crude means of evacuating the wounded from the battlefield and primitive medical treatment offered the wounded soldier little hope of total recovery.

(C) The enemy soldier found that the situation in SVN was not as favorable as he was led to believe before leaving NVN. The infiltrator was told that the Allied forces were poor fighting units and did not have the support of the people in the US. He was informed that the people of SVN would welcome him with open arms. He had also been told that he would soon return home because the US was near defeat. The infiltrator quickly realized he had been deceived.

(C) As the SVN government gained control of the population, VC recruitment became more difficult and was frequently accomplished through coercion. The once available manpower pool in NVN was reduced due to personnel requirements in air defense, coastal defense, and construction units. The infiltrators and the recruits no longer appeared to be well-trained and highly qualified personnel; rather, they were young and unprepared for the rigors of survival in SVN. The morale of the young soldier was more difficult to maintain since he was more susceptible to homesickness and the fear that he would never see his loved ones again. This same fear affected the older personnel to a lesser degree. Cadre at all levels, but particularly among the lower levels, became disillusioned with the cause. This necessitated their replacement. Many of these replacements were regroupees who were given positions superior to individuals who had worked for the cause in SVN for years. This, in turn, created hard feelings and distrust among the cadre. An analysis of interrogation reports and captured documents indicated that the VC had realized they had to increase their political training; the soldiers were losing confidence in their leaders. Many cadre had been lost, and there was a shortage of qualified replacements. The high-level cadre still appeared to be effective, as did the company and battalion commanders; however, lower cadre squad leaders were considered only adequate.[85] With the decline in confidence, came dissension between NVA and VC personnel. This may have been the result of the ever increasing number of NVA troops in the South. Prior to 1967, the NVA soldiers were often in the minority in mixed units. 1968 saw a change in this situation, with the VC troops becoming the minority in many instances. As a result, there were times when NVA troops found that the people were withholding support, citing the need to support their own relatives in VC units. Mid-level defectors had spoken of strain between the VC and

the NVA, as well as the NLF resentment of Hanoi's journey to Paris. These differences peaked in May when Hanoi ordered "second wave" of assaults on RVN urban areas. The weakened VC/NVA attacked friendly positions which were in a high state of readiness and consequently suffered exorbitant casualties again. This operation was militarily inadvisable, but Hanoi hoped that it would strengthen its position in Paris. Both of these situations tended to lower the morale of the NVA and VC troops. [86]

(C) The enemy's morale problems even arose prior to his forces becoming engaged in combat in SVN, as indicated in a captured notebook of a political cadre of the D-2 Unit (possibly the 2d Bn, 36th Regt, 308th NVA Division). The notebook revealed that during the trip only 15 men were left at way stations as compared to other units which left 300 men behind and 60 who died. During preparations for a mission, the unit encountered a serious desertion problem. The author wrote, "Desertion is alarming, they deserted in masses." [87] One of the first indications of low morale, which resulted in mass defection of VC/NVA troops, occurred on 18 June 1968. Beginning at about noon on this day, large numbers of the VC Quyet Thang (Resolved to Win) Regiment, and the 273d Regt, began rallying to GVN in the Gia Dinh/Go Vap areas of suburban Saigon. Their action was in response to broadcast appeals from their former Executive Officer, Captain Phan Van Kuong, who had rallied the day before. Confirmed reports indicated 119 men were involved; unconfirmed reports said 148. The ralliers were reported to have brought in 96 weapons. ARVN and press sources had claimed that virtually the entire group was NVA, but this was not confirmed. There was no doubt that a mass defection had occurred and that it was most probably the largest to date. A complete breakout of this defection was listed as follows:

> On 18 June 1968, a total of 113 detainees of the Quyet Thang Regiment were taken by the 1st and 6th Battalions of ARVN Marines with the following breakdown:
>
> 1. 42 - 1st MF Bn.
>
> 2. 53 - 2 LF Bn.
>
> 3. 18 - Wounded and hospitalized: Battalion designation not yet known. ARVN considered these personnel detainees. Classification as PWs or Hoi Chanh was pending. Approximately 50% of the group were NVA who were in Infiltration Group 273. One detainee was 14 years of age; two were 16 years; 7 were 17 years; 7 were 18 years; and the remainder were between the ages of 19 and 33. The group had no food, no ammunition, no medicine, and morale was low. [88]

(C) On 8 September a continuing decline in VC/NVA morale was noted during the interrogation of the former Assistant Chief of Staff of the D-1 Regiment. He stated that the morale of the VC officers and soldiers was very low due to serious casualties inflicted by Allied forces, a shortage of personnel, and a lack of popular support. He claimed that the continuous and numerous operations launched against the D-1 Regiment's base camps had consistently countered enemy attack plans. He stated that an enemy battalion could not accomplish the same mission which before Tet had been successfully completed by a company size unit. [89]

(C) A September analysis of captured enemy documents revealed a marked deterioration in the morale and determination of the VC. VC/NVA operational reports prepared by subordinate units and forwarded to higher headquarters continued the facade of reporting sweeping successes against the FWMAF/RVNAF. However, they also included candid statements, which reflected a growing disillusionment with the course of the war. A classic example of this defeatist attitude was reflected in a letter captured on 18 September 1968. The letter, dated 5 September, stated that both the civilian population and the underground cadre were convinced that the "enemy" was "too strong to be defeated." This was the first recorded instance where VC/NVA cadre admitted that a military victory was not possible. [90]

(S) On 22 October, an agent report stated that certain villages in I CTZ refused to furnish supplies to the VC because of their hatred for the NLF. The (VC) Can Tho Province Commissioner stated that the situation throughout the country was tragic and that if the Allies persisted, the war would be lost by the end of the year (1968). These were two, of many, low-level reports that indicated the enemy's morale was deteriorating. [91]

(C) An enemy notebook, with entries dated from 6 to 12 November 1968, hailed the 1 November bombing halt as a great victory; but, it also admitted that even this had not raised the morale of the VC/NVA to any great extent. The document related that the cadre and district members, possibly of Darlac Province, were ". . . still displaying a low fighting spirit, fear of hardships, and lack of discipline." It noted that large numbers of the cadre and members had deserted their units to return to their families or to surrender to the enemy for fear of hardships and the rigors of war. [92]

(C) The enemy was aware of a morale problem among his troops; to counter the decline and bolster morale of the VC/NVA troops, a directive, dated 10 June 1968, was published by the Forward Command Post, Hq, SVNLA, concerning the Second General Offensive:

> One month after Climaxing Phase 2 was started, the Current Affairs Committee of COSVN and Hq, SVNLA met to assess the situation and to set forth the policy lines to be observed by the Armed Forces . . . After the implementation of the Second Climaxing Phase, we have recorded great successes which were tremendous contributions and support to our diplomatic struggles. At present, the Americans and Puppet (Army and Government) are extremely embarassed, passive, and demoralized. All units, such as Airborne, Marines, Field Police, and Special Forces committed to protect Saigon, sustained heavy casualties (which are reportedly reaching 50 to 70%). . . The US units have also suffered bitter defeat and the morale of their personnel has also lowered while reinforcements fail to arrive. The US and puppet troops only relied on air and arty fire power. But bombs and ammunition have been exhausted . . . The Central Puppet Government was shaken and many of their high-ranking cadre were either killed or wounded. They planned

> to move TRAN VAN HUONG's Cabinet and foreign embassies out of Saigon because our art, inf, and Special Action Forces, coming from various directions, have conducted attacks right in the heart of the Capital. . . Contridictions arose within the internal ranks of the Puppets and disension prevailed between the US and Puppet authorities. . . The US and Puppet troops can no longer trust one another. Continue to attack the enemy in the Capital and the outskirts. . . Cadre ranking from Co level and up should study the Directive of R pertaining to the betrayal of X. . . cadre of Subregion X. The purpose of this Directive is to encourage everybody to improve his morale and revolutionary pride.[93]

(C) Probably the most effective technique for motivating and controlling the VC/NVA soldier was the three-man cell. This unit is formed early in the training stage and, theoretically, remained intact throughout the individual's service. Each cell was generally commanded by a squad leader, an assistant squad leader, or a senior combat veteran. The three-man cell was the backbone of the VC military organization. The individual soldier usually considered the cell to be a distinct advantage during combat but a hindrance to free thought and movement during times of peace.

(C) The self-critique system also played an important part in the VC control of its forces. These sessions were primarily used to impress upon the individual the knowledge that he "must" be diligent in his conduct and duty and "must" be prepared to make sacrifices. Individual hardship and suffering were not considered. As a result, the VC/NVA soldier underwent intensive political indoctrination. He attended lectures and discussions which reminded him of his patriotic duty in fighting for a just cause and the side of right. Political officers continually strove to indoctrinate individuals with a will to win and reminded them of the sacrifices they had to make.

(C) The morale of the VC/NVA troops fighting in SVN was certainly on the decline. The lack of food, medical and military supplies, all combined to impose unacceptable and frustrating constraints. In addition, there was a growing realization that the counter-insurgency would be much more than a brief struggle. Understandably, these factors, together with the successes of FWMAF and expanding GVN control, had greatly aggravated recruiting problems. The future for VC/NVA forces had assumed a bleak character and enemy morale was reflecting this. However, it should be noted that although there were instances when low morale may have produced poor individual battlefield performance or "mass defection," analysts estimate that this was not a general rule. For the most part, those that remained continued to be an effective fighting force.[94]

Recruitment

(S) The NVA recruiting and induction standards appeared to originate at the MR level. The province and its subordinate districts were tasked with meeting quotas set by the MR headquarters and NVA high command. The NVA male was told to report to his district head-

quarters upon reaching draft age, which at the beginning of 1968 was believed to be 17. At this time he was examined, tested, and required to fill out a biographic questionnaire. He was then placed in a draft category corresponding with his acceptability and physical condition. The potential recruit was then told to return to his home and wait until notified. When the final notice of call-up was received, the new recruit, along with other members of his village, was told to report to district headquarters. He and the other personnel from his village were joined by individuals from other rural villages in the district. These individuals were then directed to the province town for final induction processing and assignment to training units where they received basic military training and political indoctrination.

(S) The recruitment policy of the NVA had changed drastically after 1964. Prior to 1964, draft calls were held semi-annually; during 1964 quarterly; and in 1965 monthly. The length of enlistment had also been changed from a three year commitment to an indefinite status. Rejections for physical reasons were apparently few. Examples of lowered physical standards became evident when one PW stated he had not been allowed to fire his squad's machine gun because he was blind in one eye. Another PW reported he knew of an NVA soldier who had suffered a heart attack but was not released from active duty. Still another PW stated he had been examined several times for the draft in 1964 and 1965 and was rejected for bad health; in 1966 however, he was ordered to report for induction without another physical examination. Further review of PW reports indicated that persons previously deferred or considered exempt from the draft were being drafted into the armed forces.

(S) The NVA training program appeared to have gone through several phases due to rapid expansion of the NVA and increased troop requirements in SVN. Basically, the changes were:

1. 1964: Basic infantry training was conducted by the training battalion of the division. The length of training varied depending on the type and mission of the unit to which the individual was assigned. Prior to 1965 the basic infantry cycle appeared to have lasted four to six months.

2. 1965 to 1966: During this period the basic infantry training cycle appeared to have been reduced to three or four months. Basic infantry training was conducted by both divisions and independent training battalions and regiments subordinate to the military region. During this period, infiltration training, which previously had been the responsibility of the divisions and training units, was largely accomplished by the 338th Infantry Brigade.

3. Late 1966 and 1967: In 1966 the NVA established at least three basic infantry training centers. Review of PW reports indicated that many personnel drafted into the NVA in late 1966 to mid-1967 received six weeks or less basic training while assigned to training units or centers. PWs trained by regular NVA units during 1966-67, however, reported that they received six to eight months of basic and advanced infantry training prior to receiving infiltration training. Training subjects taught were governed by the length of the training cycle and the mission of a recruit's intended unit. The training program generally consisted of the following:

a. Political training: Detailed instructions in Communist doctrine and the political situation in both NVN and SVN.

b. Military training: Disassembly and assembly of automatic and semiautomatic weapons. Marksmanship training and firing of organic weapons. Squad, platoon, and company tactics.

c. Physical training: Considered the main subject of the training program. Training consisted of long marches with the recruit carrying heavy loads to prepare him for infiltration.

(S) Officer training was conducted in division OCS classes of two or three months duration. Classes were composed of either recalled senior NCO's or personnel who completed at least seven years of formal schooling. NCO training was no longer mandatory, but some divisions offered short courses. Soldiers who had good records and exhibited political zeal were eligible to hold NCO rank. It appeared that the NVA lacked properly trained personnel to fill the ranks of platoon leaders, sergeants, and squad leaders. The overall level of company grade leadership had declined over the previous two years as a result of the expansion of the air defense effort; the upgrading of several brigades to divisions; and the necessity for the creation of divisions, regiments, and supporting elements to infiltrate into SVN. It appeared that this qualitative decline would continue in the future, despite attempts to accelerate officer and NCO training programs.[95]

(C) 1968 witnessed increased enemy recruitment activities. Agents reported that the enemy was intensifying his proselyting activities throughout the IV CTZ. Enemy documents had indicated that, following Tet, more proselyting was a prerequisite to total victory. COMUSMACV reported that the VC were bringing pressure to bear on government employees and the families of government employees and soldiers. In many instances this pressure was in the form of applied terror. Although terror tactics could provide the manpower needed, the VC risked popular resentment. People in the countryside were said to be pressing the VC concerning the welfare and whereabouts of family members who took part in the 31 January attack on Ca Mau. On several occasions VC cadre had been denounced and even killed by the peasants when it was learned of the death of a relative.[96]

(C) Reports were continually received during the year with reference to inadequate military and political training in both main and local force units which continued to weaken the VC's effectiveness. For example, in the Delta two 18 year old soldiers from the 516th Local Force Battalion claimed that they were forcibly recruited by the VC and after one month of training, they were given rifles and assigned to a reconnaissance platoon. Elsewhere in the Delta, in Kien Tuong Province, a captured document disclosed that the enemy continued to have problems recruiting civilian laborers. The document stated that after complete failure one cadre of the DT-2 Regiment considered employing organic troops but, because of pressing military matters, was unable to do so. Instead, the troops were sent in every direction to locate civilian laborers. This extended impressment of civilian laborers by the VC resulted in increased anti-VC sentiments in the Delta.[97]

(C) Recruiting problems for the enemy were not limited to the Delta areas alone. In August 1968, enemy documents captured from Binh Dinh province indicated that district units in MR 5 were having recruiting difficulties and that the unfilled quotas of district units were the result of Allied operations. Bombings and the use of defoliants had caused many casualties, forced guerrillas from their normal operating areas, and created famine conditions in base

areas. Of the 4,000 recruits that were required (apparently referring to 1967,) less than 200 were provided by Hoai Nhon and Phu My districts. Other district units apparently had similar problems in meeting their quotas.[98]

(C) The quality of many of the NVA soldiers was reported as very poor, according to a rallier and a prisoner taken on 28 September. The rallier claimed to have received but one month of training in NVN and another month after joining the NVA 95th Regiment in the Kontum-Cambodia border area in July. After firing mortars at a hamlet near Duc Lap, members of his battalion fled and became lost; he surrendered because he was sick and afraid to fight. Another NVA soldier stated that he was drafted in May at the age of 33, received one week of tactical training, never fired a weapon, and was immediately sent to SVN. He stated that all soldiers in his infiltration group were under 20 or over 30 years of age and that the maximum draft age in NVN had been raised from 30 to 33 years during the previous six months. Morale was very low, since men drafted into the NVA never returned.[99]

(C) In order to reduce the problems surrounding recruitment, the VCI developed a system of gradual recruitment. Under this system, a youth of 14 or 15 years was induced to join a youth association in his village. Later, perhaps in two or three years, he joined the village defense force and then was recruited into a local guerrilla unit. When there was a need for troops in local or main force units, the guerrilla was upgraded. This upgrading had two advantages. First, the soldier reached the main force unit after he had received some training. Secondly, he was gradually induced to leave his home and fight for the VC, regardless of where he was assigned. However, gradual recruitment was not always followed. Villagers were recruited directly into local and main force units. Even political cadre were known to have become soldiers prior to a large offensive.[100]

(C) There were indications that the VC had increased their recruiting efforts in the last quarter of 1968; however, there was evidence that he had experienced considerable difficulty in achieving recruitment goals. Geographically, the bulk of the recruitment was centered in the Delta provinces, although I CTZ had experienced a recruitment drive. The amount of increasing NVA strength in VC local units, in the area around and north of Saigon, indicated that he was exhausting the eligible manpower in this vicinity.

(C) The VC recruitment rate was derived from an analysis of field reports, which described the amount of recruitment in each district of SVN. The analysis and resulting estimates considered the GVN control in a given area, local population, previous recruiting trends, captured enemy directives, reports, recruiting difficulties, and the general hostile environment:[101]

Period	I CTZ	II CTZ	III CTZ	IV CTZ	TOTAL
Jan - Apr	2,350	1,300	450	2,900	7,000
May - Jun	1,700	850	350	2,100	5,000
Jul - Sep	870	360	450	1,320	3,000
Oct - Dec	860	500	540	1,600	3,500*

*Estimated.

(C) Recruitment Factors. During 1968, enemy strength input came from two sources: infiltration and recruitment. Nearly all enemy recruitment was conducted within SVN and was intended to include the induction of South Vietnamese personnel by force or persuasion into the military components of the enemy force structure. Quantitatively speaking, recruitment differed in various areas and at varying time periods throughout the country. These variations were caused by a number of factors; four of the most significant factors were:

1. The enemy's requirement for replacement personnel in accordance with the existing military situation at the time.

2. The degree of control he exercised over a geographical area.

3. The total exploitable population within that area.

4. The extent to which he had already depleted this recruitment pool.

(C) Recruitment System. Normally, the recruit was brought directly into a guerrilla unit. Often, he had previously been a member of a non-military VC organization and once within the structure, the recruit could have been upgraded in status from a guerrilla to VC LF or MF. Although personnel were "enlisted" by the VC into the political structure and "acquired" for utilization in part-time support activities, he was considered to have been recruited only when he was brought into the MF, LF, or guerrilla force.

(C) Recruitment Input. Changes in the recruitment picture became apparent during and just after the 1968 Tet Offensive. Indications were that the enemy resorted to heavy recruitment just prior to the Offensive; he extended this drive through February, March, and April 1968. Approximately 36 percent of the total recruitment during 1968, or about 21,700 personnel, were believed to have come from the 13-17 year age group.[102]

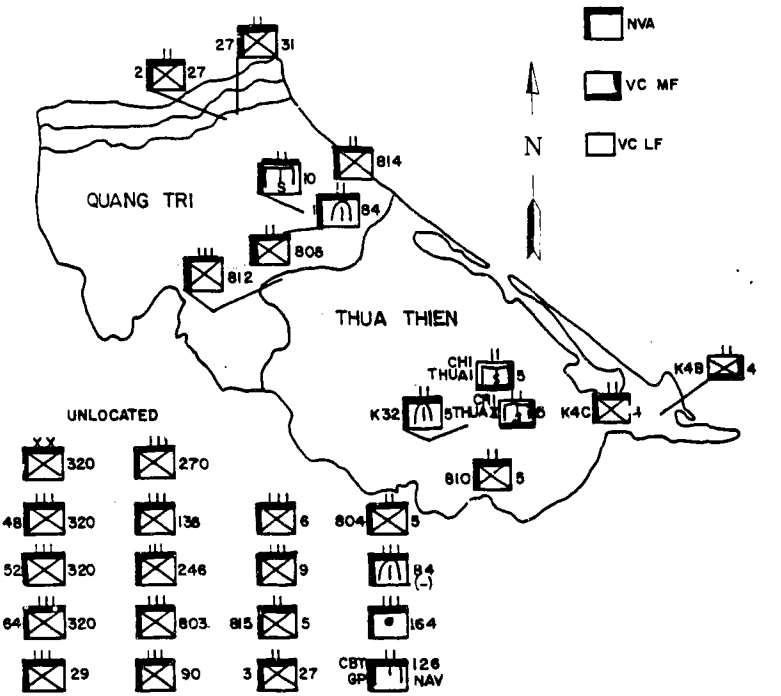
VC/NVA Operational Structure

(S) As of 31 December 1968, the total VC/NVA threat to SVN was estimated to have been 259,000:

1.	NVA:	121,000
2.	VC:	37,000
3.	Admin Svc:	42,000
4.	Guerrillas:	59,000

(S) These figures represent troops within the territorial borders of SVN and those in the contiguous areas of Laos, Cambodia, the DMZ, and immediately north of the DMZ. The units north of the DMZ included, but were not limited to, the 304th and 320th NVA Divs, and the 88th, 90th, and 102d Regts. 103 (See figures III-6 through III-11 for the enemy's in-country Order of Battle and disposition by CTZs.) 104

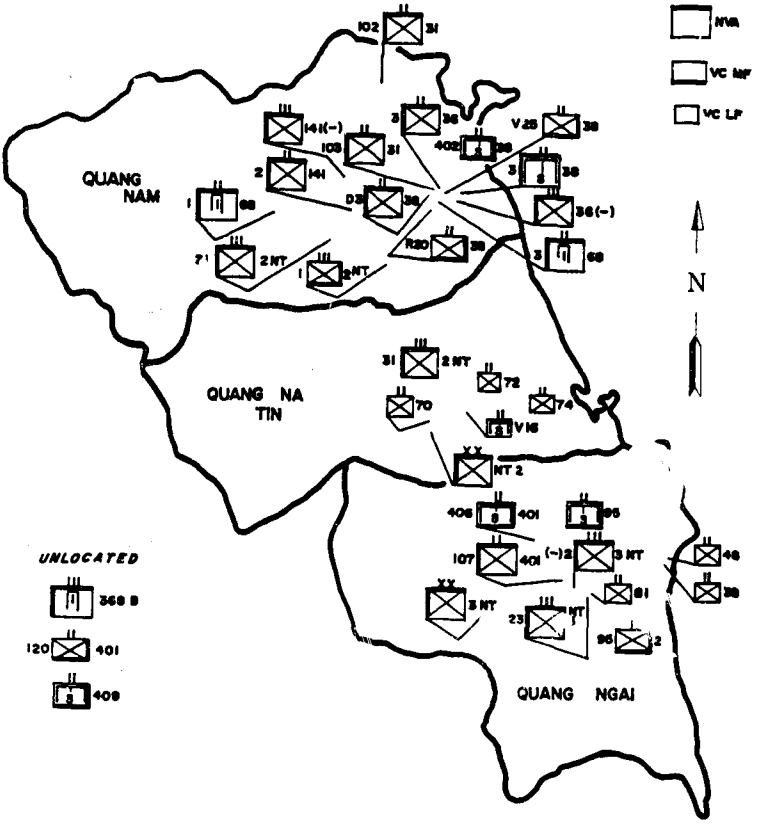
I CT[illegible]NDER OF BATTLE
NORTHERN HALF



~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ FIGURE III-6

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

I CTZ ORDER OF BATTLE
SOUTHERN HALF

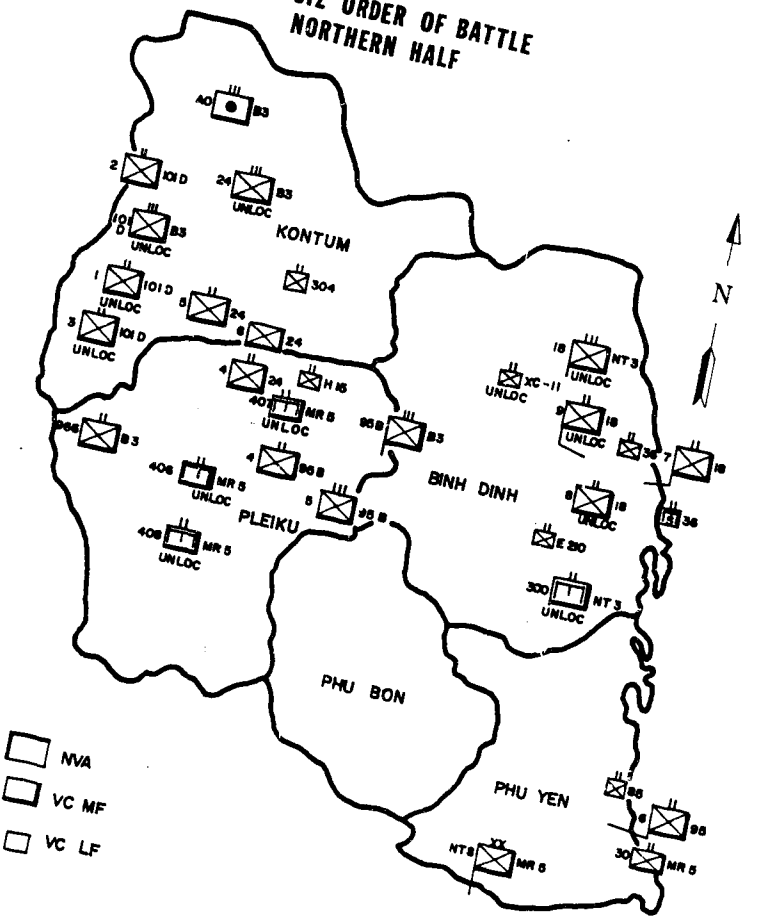


~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

FIGURE III-7

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

II CTZ ORDER OF BATTLE
NORTHERN HALF

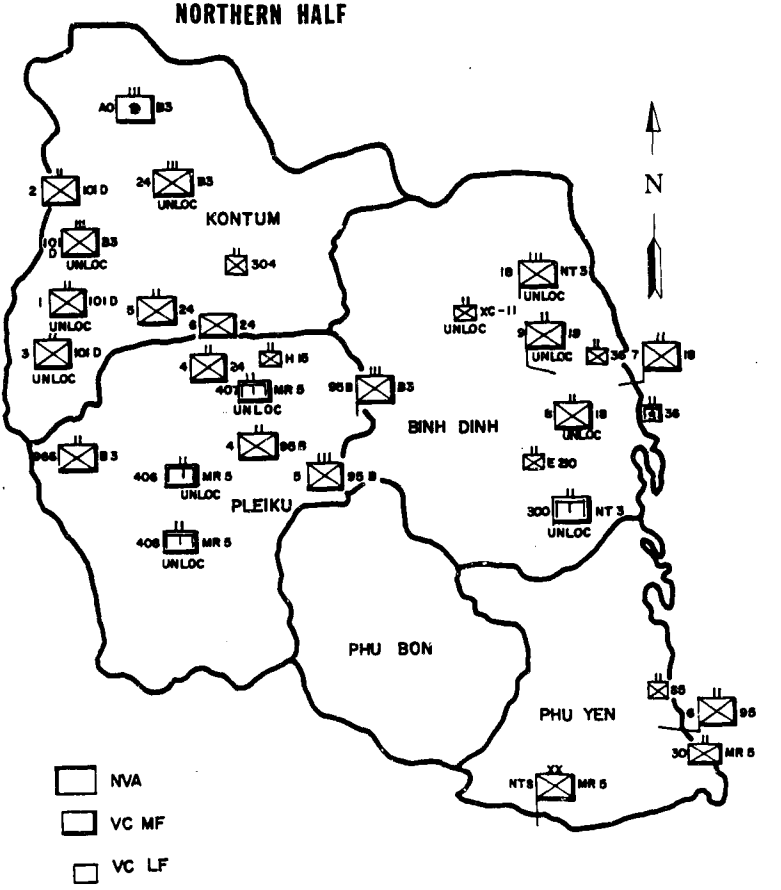


~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

FIGURE III-8

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

II CTZ ORDER OF BATTLE
NORTHERN HALF



~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

FIGURE III-8

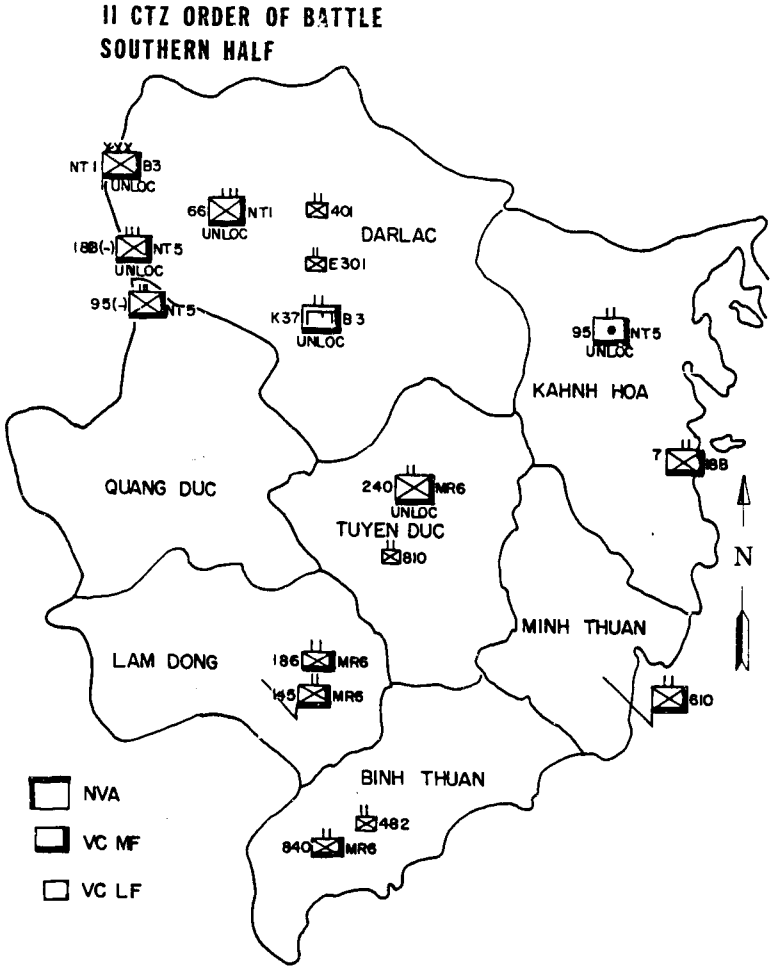

II CTZ ORDER OF BATTLE
SOUTHERN HALF
NT1
B3
UNLOC
66
NT1
UNLOC
401
DARLAC
18B(-)
NT5
UNLOC
E301
95(-)
NT5
K37
B3
UNLOC
95
NT5
UNLOC
KAHNH HOA
7
B
QUANG DUC
240
MR6
UNLOC
TUYEN DUC
810
N
MINH THUAN
LAM DONG
186
MR6
MR6
610
BINH THUAN
482
840
MR6
NVA
VC MF
VC LF

FIGURE III-9

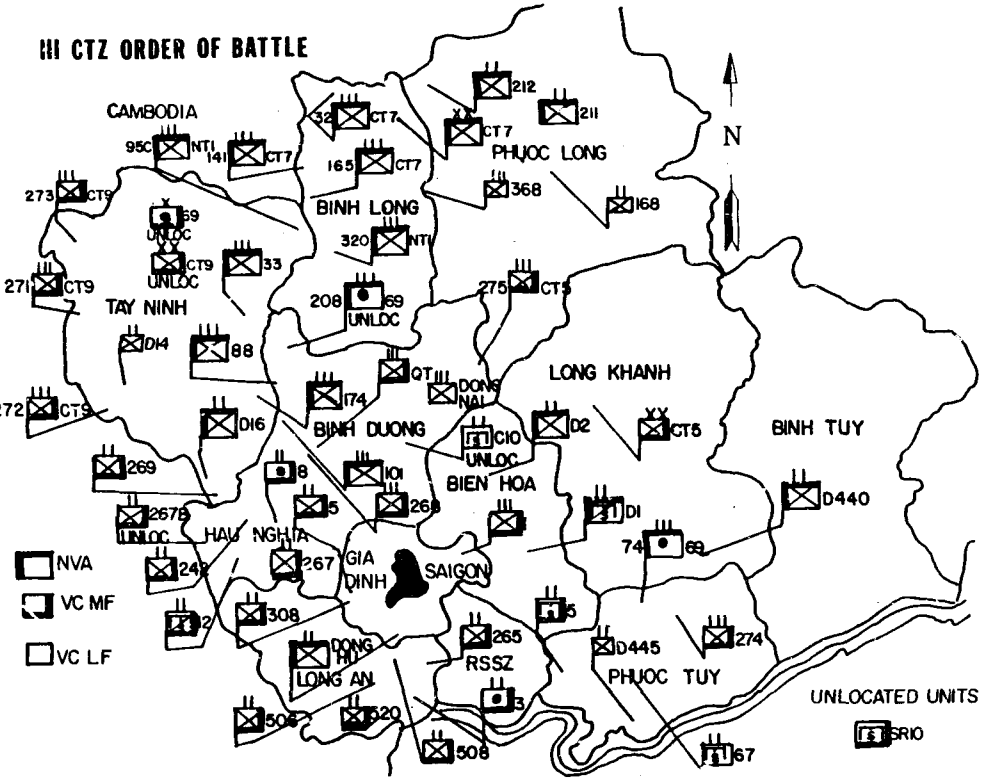
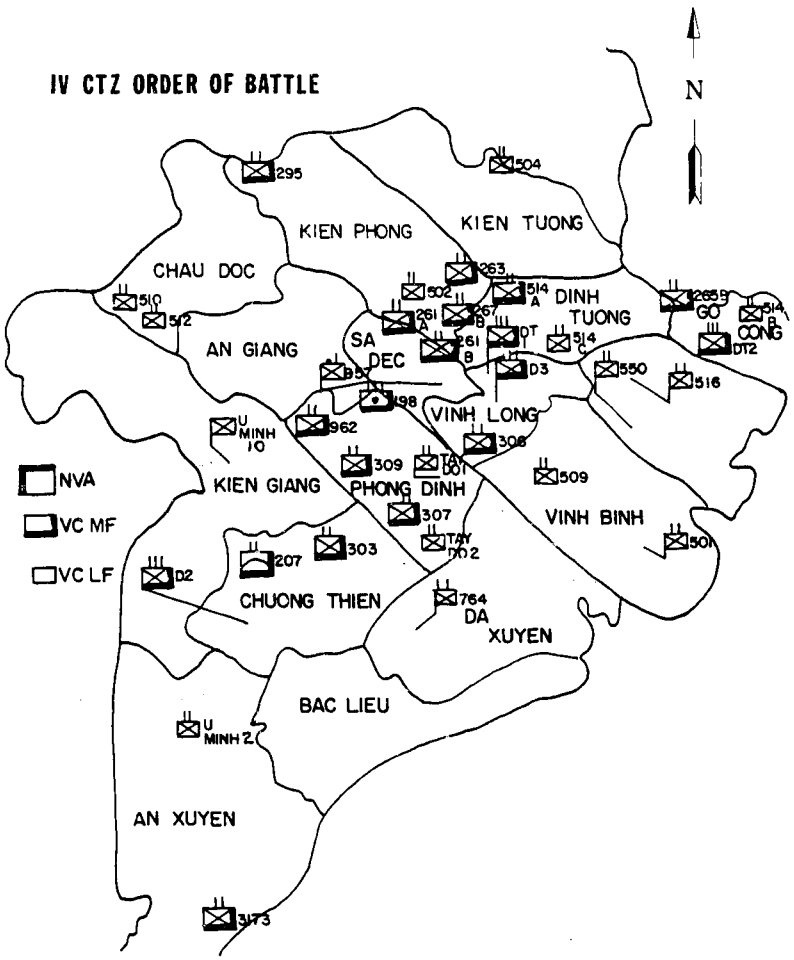


FIGURE III-10



CONFIDENTIAL

FIGURE III-11

VC/NVA Base Areas

(C) A VC/NVA Base Area was a section of terrain which contained installations, defensive positions, or other facilities used by the enemy to support control elements and to conduct training, staging, logistics, or combat operations. It met the criteria of a small war zone and was similarly organized, but was of lesser importance. Natural terrain was conducive for defensive operations; and, the VC/NVA considered Base Areas to be inviolable. The enemy maintained Base Areas in all CTZs plus Laos and Cambodia (see figures III-12 through III-17).[105]

ENEMY SUPPORT OPERATIONS

Logistics and Tax Collection

General

(C) The VC supply system was a highly complex, but efficient system (See figure III-18). The organization of the system was as complex as the system's physical operation. The exact control of logistical supplies was not known; however, it was believed to function in the following manner:

1. The highest level of guidance concerning logistical matters probably originated from the Lao Dong Central Executive Committee in Hanoi. From there it went through both a political and a military chain of command. The political chain went to the Politburo, from there to the Reunification Department, and then to the MR Headquarters for Tri Thien, B3 Front, and MR 5. For the remainder of the VC MRs, the political chain led through the Reunification Department to COSVN.

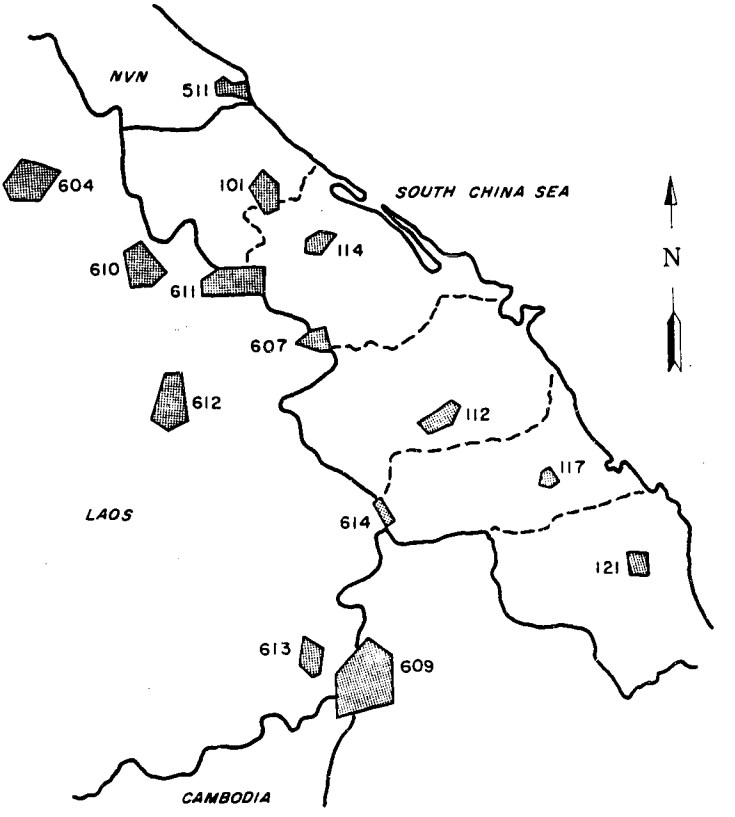
2. The military chain of command went from the Lao Dong Central Executive Committee to the Council of Ministers, to the Ministry of Defense, to the NVA High Command, then directly to the Military Party Committee of both COSVN and the three northern MRs.

3. There was a slight difference in the organization of COSVN and the three northern MRs. The Current Affairs Committee was under COSVN. A Forward Supply Council was on the same level with, but separated from, the Current Affairs Committee. There were several organizations under the Current Affairs Committee; two of these were Finance and Economy ction and the Military Party Committee. Under the Military Party Committee was the beration Army with its three staffs, one of which was the Rear Services Section.

4. There was a definite political organization (Forward Supply Council and the Finance and Economy Section) which augmented, and in many instances duplicated, the work of the military organization (Rear Services). The three basic organizations which were held responsible for logistically supplying the VC forces within SVN were the military Rear Services Section, the

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

I CTZ VC/NVA BASE AREAS
as of 31 DEC 68



~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

FIGURE III-12

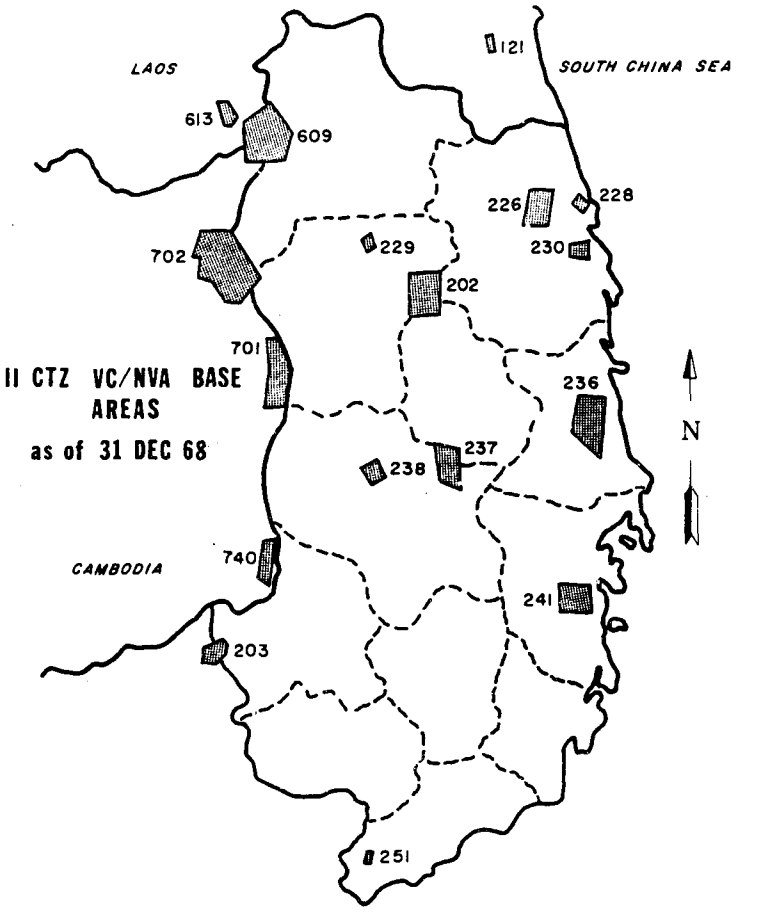


FIGURE III-13

III CTZ VC/NVA BASE AREAS
as of 31 DEC 68

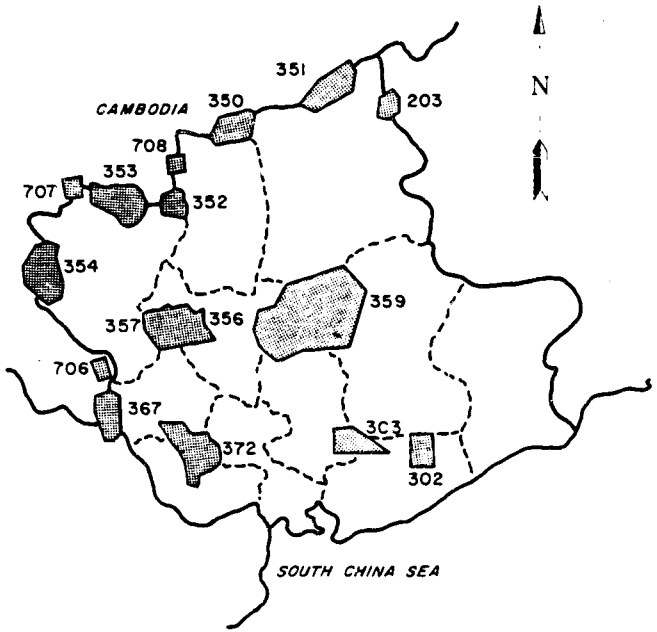


FIGURE III-14

IV CTZ VC/NVA BASE AREAS
as of 31 DEC 68

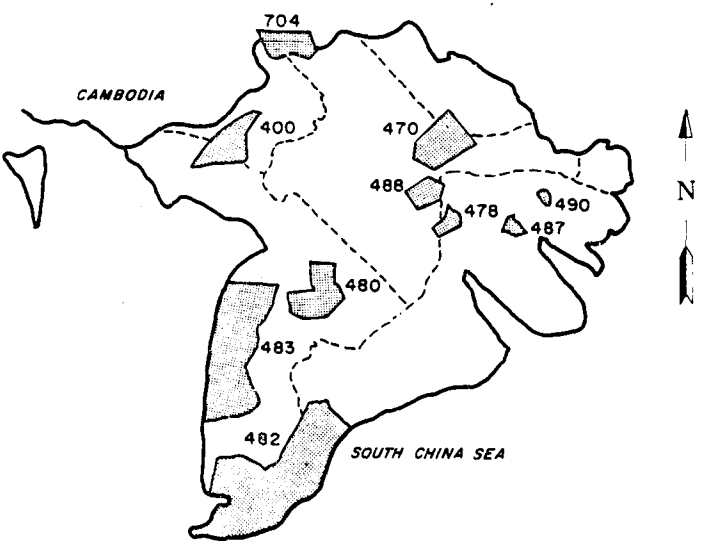
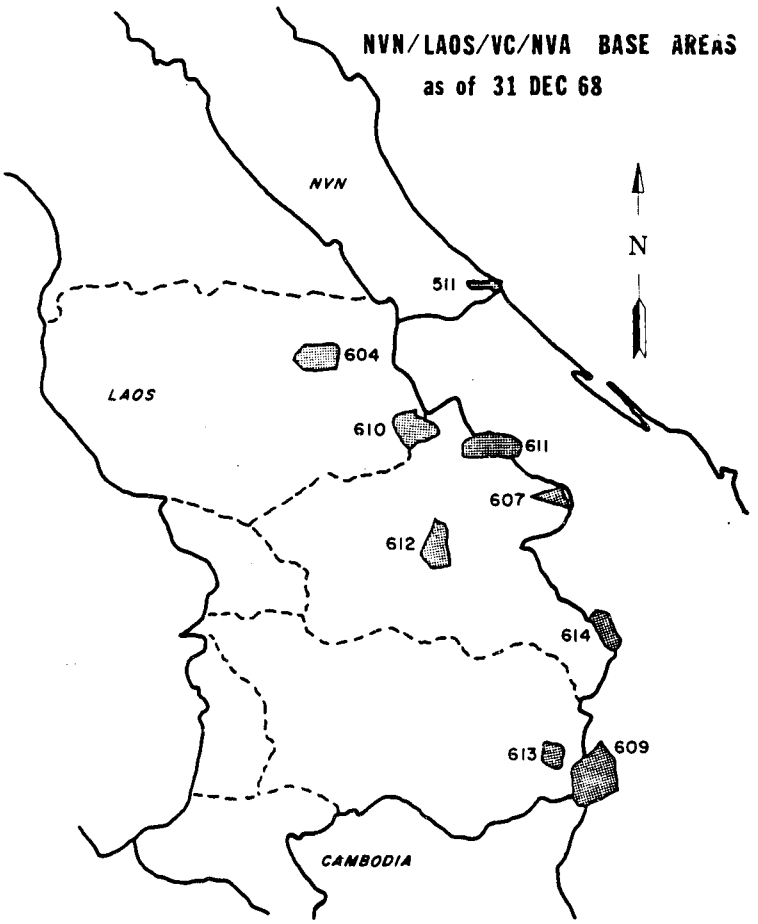


FIGURE III-15

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~



~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

FIGURE III-16

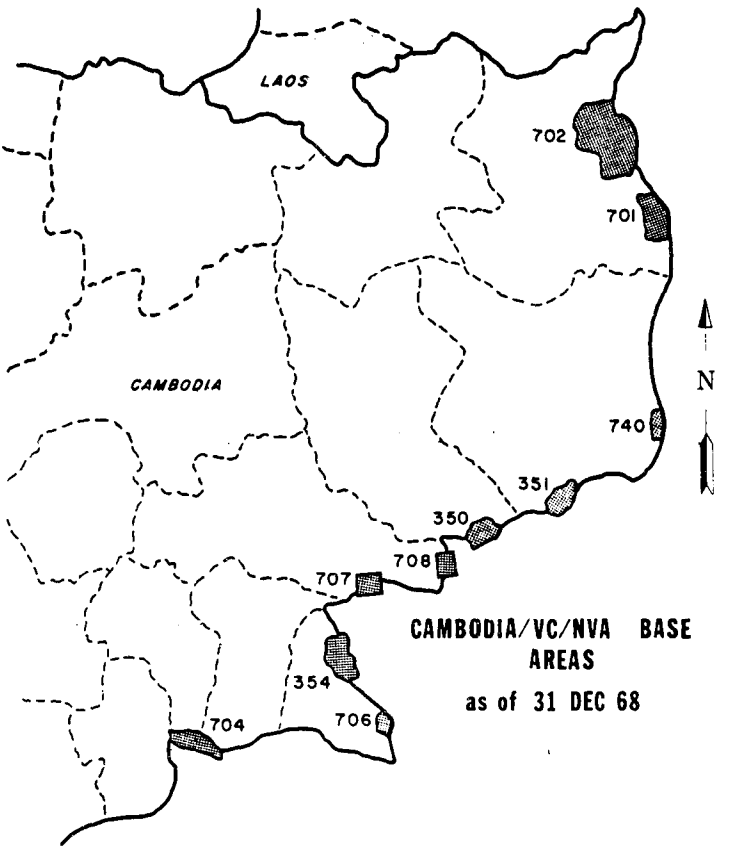


FIGURE III-17

VC/NVA SUPPLY SYSTEM--CHAIN OF CONTROL

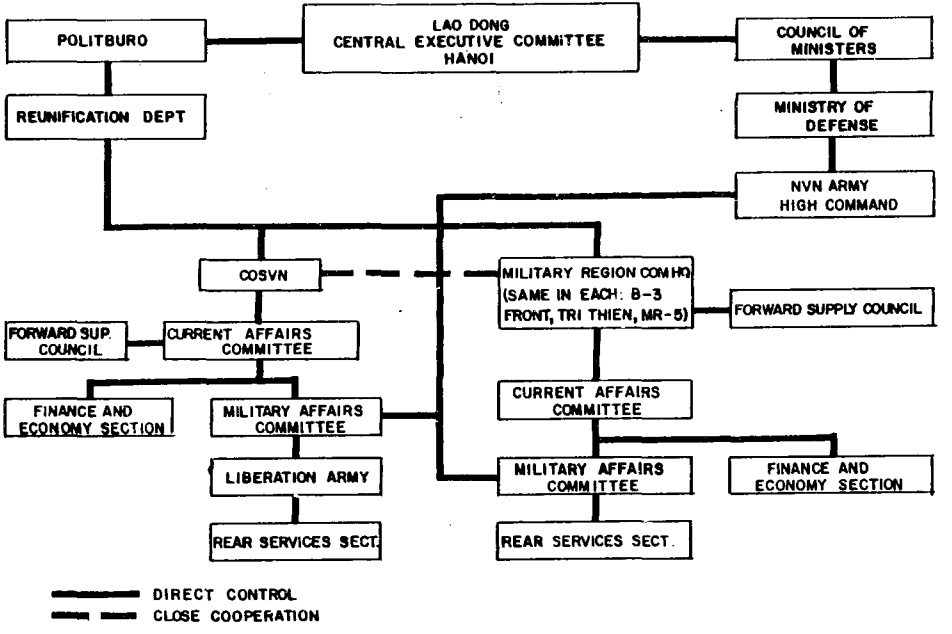


FIGURE III-18

political Forward Supply Council, and the Finance and Economy Section. The Forward Supply Council, Finance and Economy Section, and Rear Services Section often performed identical tasks. Generally, however, their specific functions were delineated as follows:[106]

a. The Finance and Economy Section was subordinate to the Current Affairs Committee at all echelons from COSVN or MR to the hamlet. It provided technical supervision of COSVN's finance and budgeting and supervised the finance activities of lower echelons. In formulating the budget, COSVN economists considered the estimated budgets received from lower echelons, anticipated surpluses and deficits of the various VC administrative areas, and programmed operations for the fiscal year. Following the development of the budget, annual tax collection quotas for each of the MRs were established. Along with planning, the section was charged with the procurement and distribution of supplies, collection of taxes, management of sales of VC bonds, operation of some businesses, and the forwarding of funds to higher headquarters.[107]

b. The Rear Services Section was subordinate to the Military Affairs Committee of the Current Affairs Committee. It was responsible for the production, storage, and security of material. The Rear Services Section was separated into functional elements charged with supply management responsibility for separate categories such as ordnance, clothing, equipment, medical, transportation, storage, and production sites. The section operated a number of Rear Service Groups (only in III CTZ) that were best described as area support elements for main force units. At region and province levels, the Rear Services Section supervised the operation of workshops that fabricated mines and grenades, reworked weapons, and manufactured uniforms or individual items of equipment.

c. The Forward Supply Council was formed in late 1965 in an attempt to meet logistical requirements of battlefield units. Its development had been erratic, but it continued to assume increasing responsibility and to functionally overlap the rear service organizations. The council consisted of two main elements: the Standing Section, concerned with the recruitment of laborers (including Assault Youth) used in building secure storage locations and in the transportation of material and a Military Affairs Public Health, and Security Section that discharged responsibilities as implied by their titles. The Assault Youth Group's responsibilities included getting supplies to units under battlefield conditions and the evacuation of dead and wounded from the battle area, in addition to normal porter duties. The council was found at all levels from COSVN and MR to hamlet level. These duties were normally performed under the control of Rear Services; however, necessary coordination existed between the particular party committee and the council so that both were mutually supporting.[108]

(C) From the time they were formed, the Forward Supply Councils were plagued with numerous problems. Most problems resulted from two serious shortcomings. The most serious was the inability of the Councils to obtain competent cadre. The other was that no clear definition was made to relate their functions to those of other VC logistical organizations. Other factors hindered the operations of the Councils. The damage caused by Allied military operations, which interdicted supply routes, killed or wounded laborers, and destroyed storage areas, was very harmful. Labor recruitment was a constant problem. For example, in 1965, a plan called for 6,500 cadre, but only 1,788 were recruited. There were numerous other incidents.

(C) In order to solve some of their problems, COSVN considered the possibility of unifying the Forward Supply Council and the Rear Services organization. The organization was designed to streamline the administrative bureaucracy of the VC logistical system by reducing overlapping functions and cadre requirements. All efforts to make the Council a satisfactory logistical organization apparently ended in failure. An undated VC document, captured in April 1968, referred to a COSVN directive deactivating Forward Supply Councils at all levels; also, the functions of the Councils were transferred to other organizations. The document noted that the members of the Councils felt that they were being ill-treated and that a better remedy would have been to provide members with the necessary explanations required for a successful operation. [109]

(C) A document, dated 29 November 1968, which was published by the Current Affairs Committee of COSVN, directed that Forward Supply Council personnel at MR and province level "immediately" reactivate Councils down to district and village level. Expeditious implementation was stressed, due to the support requirements of the "Winter/Spring" campaign. The Councils were to be responsible for: overseeing the implementation of general logistical policy; organizing and planning rear service activities; food procurement; and responsibility for civilian laborers and youth assault teams. [110]

Procurement

(C) When or where possible the VC purchased their supplies from the people or from GVN open-markets. When buying from the people, troops were given money from the unit supply agency (usually the Rear Services Section) to go into a village or hamlet and buy the food they needed. When buying from the open-market, the VC used civilian purchasing agents to go to the markets, purchase the needed supplies, and provide transportation of the supplies to the unit. Instances had been reported where these agents resold the supplies to the VC at a higher cost than they paid at the market. However, the agents were usually given money by the VC prior to the purchase, and the supplies were later transferred directly to the VC. If the VC could not obtain rice or the revenue to buy rice through taxation or purchase from the population, they sometimes resorted to extortion, theft, or confiscation. The VC usually labeled the confiscation as a form of taxation. If the people refused to pay, they were considered GVN sympathizers and measures were taken to collect taxes by less friendly means. VC in the border provinces of SVN obtained a large amount of supplies from Cambodia, especially in II and III CTZ. Rice was the most important commodity from this source. It was purchased by the VC; transported to the border, usually by Cambodian laborers or trucks; and then picked up by VC transportation elements for delivery to the units. [111]

(C) During the latter part of December the enemy forces experienced food shortages, thereby forcing him to devote a large portion of his time during early January 1968 to food procurement. An intensive effort was made to get the people in rural areas to purchase food for VC/NVA forces. Part of the food shortage probably resulted from the large influx of enemy troops into SVN. [112]

Production

(C) The VC placed very strong emphasis on the self-production of food, with lesser emphasis on the production of munitions, clothing, and medicine. Most combat units were

expected to assign a certain number of their personnel to the task of growing food. These units were expected to be totally self-sufficient during periods of combat activity. During these periods of self-sufficiency, the units were provided little outside support in obtaining food supplies. The VC were experiencing increasing difficulties in their food production mission. Allied air, artillery, and defoliation missions were hampering agricultural production and distribution, resulting in increasing food shortages. Agent and PW reports indicated that during June and July, parts of the civilian population under VC control in Quang Nam Province were starving. Other captured documents revealed a food shortage was affecting main force NVA troops during August. A notebook provided information that Quang Tri Liberation Front units were hampered by food shortages caused by Allied operations. A document dated 2 August revealed that elements of the Quang Tri Liberation Front were unable to obtain food due to the lack of transportation. Reports revealed that troops were starving in the jungles rather than face the certain death of a food forage into the lowlands. MR 5 units in southern I CTZ faced a similar situation. Letters dated 30 July indicated that troops in Quang Ngai Province were starving in the highlands. The letters stated that they preferred starvation to being killed while collecting rice in the lowlands. [113]

(C) Most of the munitions used by the VC/NVA were produced in Communist Bloc countries and infiltrated into SVN. Although the amount of munitions produced in SVN was believed to be minimal, they could not be taken for granted, since many friendly casualties resulted from locally produced weapons. VC munitions production facilities were organized at four levels: regional, provincial, district workshops, and village armament cells. Each was directed and supported by COSVN through the Rear Services organization. Shops met their own local requirements and contributed to the overall VC munitions supply and distribution program. Material used in the workshops was purchased from local dealers, confiscated, or obtained from the battlefield. Some villages had research sections that surveyed and collected unexploded bombs, ammunition, and other material for use in production. [114]

(C) The primary mission of the regional workshops was the production of water mines, mortar shells, rocket launchers, shaped charges, hand grenades, anti-vehicular mines, fuzes, and rifle grenades. They also reloaded various types of empty cartridge cases. Their secondary mission was to manufacture anti-personnel mines and booby traps, repair weapons, provide raw materials, and train personnel for village cell shops.

(C) Workshops at province and district level had a primary and secondary mission similar to that of the regional workshop. The district shop repaired weapons for guerrillas and local force units and assisted village armament cells in the establishment of shops. A mobile repair, or contact team, service was also provided by the provincial workshop. The structure of a typical district shop (See Figure III-19) probably corresponded to that of the province, except that the province shop was larger.

(C) Village cells produced homemade rifles, anti-personnel mines, punji stakes, and reloaded cartridges. The inter-village cell usually produced limited quantities of one or two different types of weapons or munitions. Village cells usually had about fifteen men, organized in three sections. [115]

DISTRICT WORKSHOP

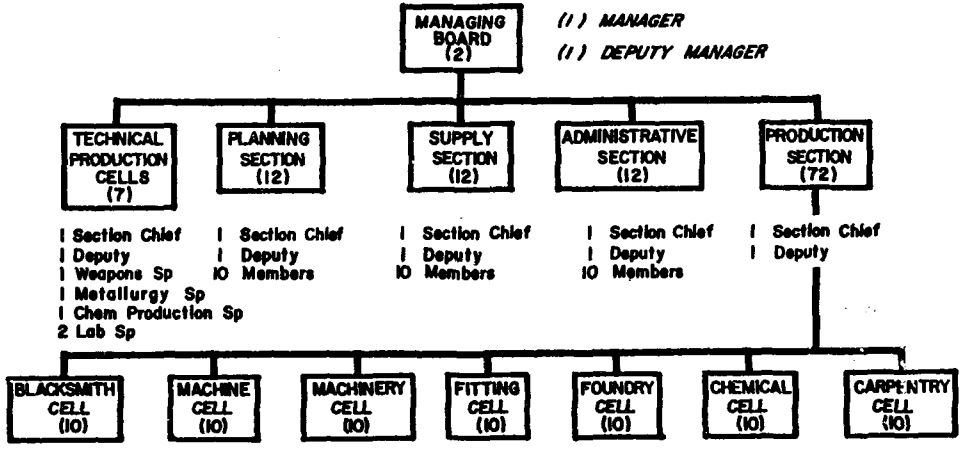


FIGURE III-19

Transportation/Distribution

(C) The enemy used an intricate system of caches and depots from which supplies were distributed to the units. He used large central caches at locations which provided quick and easy access to units in the field. As Allied operations found and destroyed these large depots and caches, the enemy found it necessary to disperse his caches to avoid detection and destruction in large quantities. The VC appeared to be storing rice in homes of private citizens, but there were still instances where they maintained large central depots. Most caches served as temporary consolidation points for out-of-country supplies coming into SVN for distribution to a unit. All caches and depots came under the control and supervision of the various Forward Supply Councils and Rear Services Sections. Although details were not available, these agencies apparently maintained highly accurate records of supplies in the caches and supplies disseminated from the caches. However, there was little reference to cache locations.

(C) When a particular unit needed supplies, it usually contacted its control and the Forward Supply Council which coordinated with the Rear Services Section and arranged transportation of the supplies to the unit. The means of transporting supplies varied according to terrain, weather, and security. Generally in I, II, and III CTZs, the primary mode of travel was by foot, with trucks, small water craft, bicycles, and ox carts used in isolated instances. Due to the large number of small canals and rivers running through the area, the primary means of moving supplies in IV CTZ was by small water craft.

(C) To insure security in supply movements, a unique system for the use of civilian laborers was devised and proved extremely effective in preventing discovery of supply routes. Laborers were conscripted from the local populace and used to carry shipments of supplies along a small portion of a larger route. When a group of laborers reached an intermediate point, they discharged their loads, were dismissed, and another group of laborers picked up where the previous group left off. The last leg of the journey was normally covered by combat troops. The civilians seldom knew the origin or destination of supplies they carried and were of little use to Allied interrogators in attempts to learn of the routes used by the VC.

Taxation

(C) In South Vietnam the VC had to cope with the problems involved in supporting and financing the activities of an 85,000-man infrastructure and the military operations of a 225,000-man army, including 38,000 administrative service personnel and 72,000 guerrillas. Although most enemy war material came from Communist Bloc countries, the VC were, for the most part, dependent upon the people and land of SVN for their other needs. To acquire the necessary support, the enemy had developed a comprehensive and complex taxation system, which amounted to extortion. Since 1963 the "shadow government" of the VC infrastructure, acting in the name of the NLF, had made use of a tax system resembling that of a legitimate government. There were extensive annual budgets, complex tax rates, exemptions, penalties, and tax collectors. Nearly every form of economic activity in SVN became the object of attempted VC taxation. The VC tax system was so extensive that one product, such as a bushel of rice, was taxed in many different forms from the time it was shipped from the farmer's field until it reached the consumer.

(C) The types of taxes imposed on the people varied. Examples were liberation tax, agricultural tax, troop support tax, savings bonds, resistance support tax, battlefield support, and other titles that were simply variants in name only. They all existed in the VC tax structure to provide money and materiel supplies for the combat troops. Taxes on agriculture, transportation, and plantations produced the majority of the revenue for the VC. Other sources of revenue were businesses, goods moving into and out of VC areas, and personal property taxes. Tax rates varied and usually depended on the needs of a particular agency. The principal collection periods (under normal conditions) were during the harvest seasons in March and October. But, the collection effort was not limited to these periods and was often a continuous process. This was noted more in areas where the VC encountered shortages of food.

(C) For taxation purposes, the VC classified the population into two categories: inhabitants of "liberated areas" which were VC-controlled and inhabitants of "occupied" areas which were US/GVN-controlled. The VC collected the majority of their revenue from the "liberated" areas. To further enhance his tax collection efforts the enemy devised a new taxation method designed to hinder GVN efforts to recover or stop the transport of VC rice. Two district chiefs reported that the VC forced peasants in GVN-controlled areas to borrow money against unharvested rice crops and to give the money to the VC. The VC used this money to purchase rice in VC-controlled areas. By using this simple system, the VC were able to eliminate transportation, security, and storage problems, while maintaining the necessary rice support from the people. However, the enemy encountered problems with this taxation method, which resulted in his conducting a meeting in June 1968 to discuss the tax collection problems. During this meeting, it was indicated that a change in the taxation system was necessary because the old system was causing supporters to turn away from the VC. Under a new system, the VC were to have taken according to the amount the individual produced. The VC also wanted their supporters to have contact with GVN security and intelligence agents and offer them a share of their earnings for information.[116]

(C) Tax collection stations were usually located in areas where the terrain surrounding the LOC favored the security of the tax collector(s) and where rapid escape was available if the location was discovered by Allied forces. Normally, the VC operated their highway tax collection points in the following manner. One or two armed men of the collection team provided security; the driver of a halted vehicle was then taken to the side of the road to a table, while the other VC inspected the passengers on buses or examined the cargo of trucks. If the driver had already paid a tax, he showed his receipt which served as a pass. If it had not been paid, the tax was then settled and the name of the individual or company operating the vehicle, its cargo (in the case of trucks), and the amount paid was logged in a register. The frequency of tax collections by the enemy along the highways was dependent on the security offered him, volume of traffic, and manpower available.

(C) Tax collection points were usually in operations from about 0500 to 1700 hours. This time period enabled the VC to collect taxes on vehicles between non-curfew hours when road traffic was heaviest. VC transportation tax rates varied according to the type of vehicle, cargo, ownership of the vehicle, and the VC's revenue requirements. Passenger vehicles such as busses, taxies, and lambrettas were taxed by the month, if such an agreement could be reached with the owner. Private vehicles were generally not taxed unless the VC had an unusual

need for money. Cargo hauling vehicles were taxed on a per trip basis, according to the value of the cargo being carried. Indications were that the enemy preferred to be paid by traders in a regular manner, for example on a monthly basis. A captured document stated that: "If the traders regularly paid their monthly taxes, we would not have to make many countings and block routes."

(C) Although reports have cited up to two hundred enemy located at a tax point, tax stations were usually manned by about ten to twenty men armed with machine guns and rifles. There were no indications that NVA personnel had been involved in collecting transportation taxes; all collection personnel had been reported as VC main and local forces. In addition, taxation was generally a function of the Finance and Economy Section of the VCI. Province Finance and Economy Section personnel planned, organized, and operated a few tax collection stations. In addition, the province Finance and Economy Section organized and designated locations of district operated stations. Cadre, probably of the district Finance and Economy Section who had training in computing taxes, were normally present at district collection points. There were no reported locations where tax receipts had been repeatedly collected by successive echelons in the VC/NVA financial system. Such locations were as flexible in movement as the enemy personnel themselves. It was possible that cash receipts were first turned over to the district Finance and Economy Section. Tax collections in the form of goods were taken to enemy base areas for storage or distribution.[117]

(C) The VC/NVA experienced internal security problems in the form of theft. Captured documents indicated that embezzlement on the part of tax collectors, in one province alone, had resulted in the loss of 10,000,000 $VN (US $84,746), for the first nine months of 1968. Such acts reportedly caused serious losses to rear service organizations and probably caused the VC/NVA logistical problems. The VC/NVA were aware of the losses incurred through corruption and employed various measures to reduce such activity. These measures included public shaming, interrogation lasting several weeks, and the issuance of revised guidelines on collection, control, and disbursement of funds. These measures had limited results. Depravity, especially in handling of funds, was not a new problem for the VC/NVA; but the degree to which corruption flourished in 1968 indicated that the VC/NVA had to utilize less trustworthy personnel for fairly responsible positions.[118]

Medical Service

(C) In theory, the enemy had both a military medical component and a civilian medical component. The former consisted of the medical sections which were subordinate to the rear service staffs of most divisions, regiments, battalions, and of the hospitals and other facilities maintained by the rear service staffs of some MRs. Most enemy doctors were in the military establishment. The civilian health section consisted of medical facilities which were scattered throughout the countryside and were manned mostly by civilian medical personnel. To prepare for an offensive, the VC used all available medical facilities, both military and civilian. Many medical facilities were expanded. For example, at the B3 hospital, which was located in Cambodia, staff members prepared for phase one of the "General Offensive" by building facilities for fifty extra patients, which increased the capacity to 150 patients. Prior to phase two of the offensive, Hospital "5" in SR 5 was enlarged with the addition of four aid stations and a mobile surgery unit.

(C) VC wounded and dead were carried from the battlefields by civilians. Some of these people were impressed by the Forward Supply Council while others were hired or recruited. The evacuation effort was enormous; for instance, during phase one of the "General Offensive", it was estimated that 31,000 civilian laborer workdays were needed to evacuate wounded and sick soldiers to the rear from dispensaries in the northern area of the city of Hue. Wounded were carried to the rear by two to four men, and in some cases, evacuation took 12 days or longer. The enemy dead were evacuated by civilians to burial units or to hired gravediggers. Evacuation teams were subdivided in order to prevent disclosure of the number of KIA.[119] An interrogation of a former NVA doctor, chief of a regimental medical section, produced the following information on the VC/NVA front line medical program: There were normally four VC wounded for each KIA. All wounded were immediately evacuated to field medical stations; these were normally located an hours walk from the battle area. Seriously wounded personnel were routed to hospitals according to the seriousness of their wounds. Light cases were sent to village stations, medium cases to district hospital, and serious cases to regional hospitals. When the VC picked the battle area, the hospitals were located in nearby areas, usually a two day walk away.

(C) Critically wounded soldiers received "heart support" injections of sodium, coramine, and pressine. Patients were normally immobilized until their blood pressure returned to normal. Plasma was usually in short supply during offensive operations. It was received as foreign aid, and the VC preserved it with ice; if ice was not available, it was wrapped in banana leaves. When their plasma deteriorated beyond the safe transfusion point, it was mixed with water and fed to the patients.[120] On 27 December 1968, a casual source carried a relative of his to a VC hospital. The source's relative complained of feeling weak and was treated by the doctor in the following manner: The doctor made a small incision in his leg, put a piece of membrane from a woman's afterbirth in the incision and closed the incision. The source reported this was the standard VC medical cure for TB and other ailments.[121]

VC/NVA Weapons

Indirect Weapons

(C) During Operation CUU LONG 73A, from 3 to 6 January 1968 in Dinh Tuong Province, a weapons cache was discovered which included 58 120mm mortar rounds and 57 120mm mortar fuses. On 4 January, a VC was captured who professed to be Deputy Commander of an MR 2 Transportation Company. The PW stated that he had issued two 120mm mortars to the 261st VC MF Bn. This was the first time that the use of the 120mm mortar had been confirmed in IV CTZ. There were also indications in IV CTZ that the enemy had used 75mm pack howitzers in My Tho Province. In the I CTZ many artillery units were reported moving into the Khe Sanh area during January. Friendly forces reported that they had received fire from 81/82mm mortars and 105mm and 150mm artillery. Unit sightings also indicated the possible presence of 122mm rockets in the area. On 24 January, a dud round, later confirmed as being of 152mm caliber, was found in the Khe Sanh area. Due to range limitations this round obviously was fired either in SVN or from Laos.[122]

(S) On 23 January, a report confirmed that the VC/NVA were using long-delay 82mm fuzes in SVN. The delaying action was accomplished by the solvent action of Acetone on a cellulose-acetate timing disc. Before the round was fired, the upper nose section of the 82mm fuze was unscrewed and an ampule of solvent inserted. The ampules were color coded to indicate how much delay that each would provide. The time varied from 2.5 to 8 hours. When the nose section was replaced, it crushed the ampule, which in-turn started the delaying action. When the projectile was fired, the setback force armed the fuze and this allowed it to function. These fuzes were designed primarily for use against rear area installations. [123]

(C) The first recovery of a CHICOM ammunition component which could be associated with 130mm artillery ammunition occurred on 6 March following an enemy artillery attack on the Dong Ha Combat Base. The fuze was identified as a CHICOM 429 PD Type and appeared to be a copy of the Soviet V-429 PD fuze which had been discovered on numerous occasions in SVN. [124]

(During early February the Quon Loi Base Camp was attacked with a CHICOM spin-stabil ed, 107mm type 63 rocket. It was again employed during the latter part of the month against the Tay Ninh airstrip. The latter attack resulted in three complete rounds being captured. The weapon was 33 inches long, weighed 42 lbs, and was equipped with a contact fuze. Its maximum range was estimated to fall between 8,700 and 9,800 yards. This rocket could have been launched from a single tube launcher or from a mound of dirt. In any case, the 107mm rocket did not significantly add to the enemy's firepower; however, it did appear to be easily carried by infiltrators. [125]

(C) Crater analysis of the 5 March attack on the 5th ARVN Div command post northwest of Tam Ky indicated that the enemy used 70mm howitzers in addition to 122mm rockets. Later, a sweep of the area located a firing position where five 70mm shell casings were recovered. This was the first reported use of howitzers in southern I CTZ. [126]

(C) The first firm indication of the existence of 140mm rockets in MR 2 or IV CTZ came from PW Nguyen Than Mau. The former XO of the 2d Regional Forces Company of Dinh Tuong Province was captured on 25 April 1968 and revealed that he had seen a sampan carrying six 140mm rocket launchers and rockets in Dinh Tuong Province in mid-March. Mau examined them and noted the letters "DKB" stamped on a plate on which the rockets sat. He was told that two other sampans, each with six launchers and rockets, were following. [127] On 31 January 1968, an interrogation of another PW, Nguyen Trinh Dong, who was a senior LT in the VC Main Force revealed that 140mm (SIC) rockets (DKB) were to have been used in an attack on the Bien Hoa Air Base. The source stated that he had seen the rocket on 25 January but it became lost and was not employed in the attack. [128] Another source, Nguyen Phi Hung, explained that he had observed the DKB as it was used against the Long Binh complex on 30 January. He described the rocket and said that it consisted of four basic parts: launching tube, rocket projectile (two parts), aiming mechanism, and tripod base. The rocket was employed in a battalion salvo, at night, against area type targets. Only four to six rounds could be fired because of the excessive heat build-up in the tube and a one hour interval was required before the tube could be moved as a result of this heat. [129]

(C) A 1 August message reported the capture of four large caliber rockets in the vicinity of Bien Hoa City and Katum Special Forces Camp. These rockets were unique in that they were

fitted with a large caliber, homemade warhead. Similarly, large caliber stabalizing fins were fitted over the rocket motor. The warheads were 200mm and the fins were 270mm in diameter. The basic propulsion device used was the 107mm rocket and it was estimated that the 122mm rocket was also modified for this purpose. The warhead used on the 107mm rocket contained 30 lbs of TNT and had an estimated range of 1,500 to 3,000 meters. The normal range of the 107mm rocket was 8,300 meters. [130] A complete 122mm over-caliber rocket was recovered by the Navy EOD team along the Long Tau River in September. The rocket consisted of three major components: Soviet 122mm rocket motor, complete with folding fin assembly; a 400mm shaped-charge warhead containing approximately 170 pounds of explosive; and a 400mm shroud-type tail fin mounted over the folding fins. The warhead possessed a conical nose that received a Soviet DKZ-B 122mm rocket fuze. The warhead was made of various thicknesses of sheet metal riveted together and was capable of HE and HEAT effects with some fragmentation. The rocket was 83 inches long, weighed 281 pounds--unfuzed, and had a maximum range estimated at 1,000 meters. The launcher recovered with the rocket was approximately one half the length required to produce an accurate flight path. The over-caliber 122mm rocket could have been launched from a mound of dirt or a metal launch trough. Due to poor accuracy, this rocket presented primarily a psychological threat. [131]

(C) On 15 September 1968, elements of the 46th ARVN Regt recovered a 12-tube 107mm rocket launcher. The rocket launcher consisted of twelve 107mm launch tubes, in three banks of four tubes each. No firing cables, power source, or fire-control equipment were recovered. [132] An enemy document dated 29 February 1968 stated that the launcher had a maximum range of 8,300 meters. The document revealed that the 107mm rocket contained seven propellant charges, a very sensitive detonator, and had a combat effective range from 300 to 4,000m. [133]

(C) An over-caliber 107mm rocket was recovered by elements of the 5th Special Forces Group in the vicinity of An Loc. The over-caliber 107mm rocket--the first known recovered in SVN--consisted of three major components: a complete standard-production, unfuzed CHICOM 107mm rocket; a 200mm warhead containing 27.75 pounds of plastic explosive; and a VC/NVA homemade PG-2 warhead in a shaped-charge configuration. The warhead employed two fuzes, either of which could have detonated the over-caliber warhead and caused HE/HEAT effects and fragmentation. The rocket appeared to have been launched from field expedient mounds of dirt or from a reinforced metal trough of sufficient length to stabilize the rocket during initial thrust. Maximum range was estimated at between 1,500 and 2,000 meters. The warhead and drogue were VC/NVA homemade. [134]

(C) The 1st Bn 68B Rkt Regt moved into the Suoi Dac Huych zone of Phuoc Long Province on 20 October and, an unconfirmed report noted that they had been equipped with six 140mm, 6-tube rocket launchers. The 140mm rocket launcher was manufactured by the Soviet Union and supplied to NVN via the Military Aid Program. It consisted of three major components: launch tubes, traverse and search mechanism, and water leveling device. The launch tubes were 1.2m long with a weight of 10.9 kg each. This weapon was significant for two reasons:

1. It was supplied to a unit that had a primary mission of reconning and performing missions against Saigon.

2. This was the first known report of a 6-tube 140mm launcher manufactured by the Soviet Union. [125]

Direct Fire Weapons

(C) On 24 January, a Royal Laotian BV 33 Bn outpost in Laos was overrun by elements of the 325C Div, forcing the occupants to flee to the Lang Vei Special Forces CIDG Camp in western Quang Tri Province. This attack on the Laotian outpost was reported to have been supported by tanks. On the same day, an Air Force FAC spotted 5 tanks on Highway 9 and called for TAC air to destroy them. One of the five was reportedly destroyed and the remainder scattered.[136] On 7 February, enemy forces overran the Lang Vei camp. In this attack, the enemy used nine PT-76 tanks, seven of which were destroyed. This attack marked the first confirmed time that the enemy used armor in SVN. On 26 February, 22 kilometers west of Tay Ninh City in III CTZ. elements of the 5th Special Forces Group contacted an estimated enemy company reinforced with three tanks, reportedly T-34/85s. One tank was reportedly destroyed but this report was not confirmed. There had also been several unconfirmed reports of tanks in the Tri-Border area of II CTZ and elsewhere in SVN. The existence of additional armor was not confirmed by aerial photography; it was possible, however, that the enemy would utilize armor in the border areas of SVN wherever the terrain was suitable and where his LOCs could support armor activity.[137]

(S) The NVA order of battle (OB) consisted of two armored regiments at the time of the attack on the Lang Vei Special Forces Camp. The 202d Regt had approximately 40 T-34/85 and 40 PT-76 vehicles, while the 203d had 40 T-34/85 and 40 T-54 tanks. It was believed that the NVA could have employed his entire force against FWMAF in I CTZ. However, major deterrents were his lack of air superiority, the performance of FWMAF armor-defeating weapons, and his strategic requirement to maintain a large strike force in the Red River delta.[138] The UBR-354B AP-T cartridge had a high-explosive bursting charge and a base detonating fuze with tracer. The Soviet 76mm UO-354AM fragmentation charge was used. It had a HE loaded projectile which was fitted to a brass cartridge case. The PT-76 was also capable of being armed with the Soviet UBP-354M HEAT and the UBR-354P HAVAP-T hypervelocity, armor-piercing, tracer rounds.[139]

(C) On 15 May, two VC APC's and two tanks (probably recon vehicles) were sighted in the vicinity of Chii Hpu and the Sai Da Woods. The APCs were painted olive and mounted one 50 Cal MG and two 30 Cal MGs. Both appeared to have a radio communications capability. Both tanks were old, four-wheeled French models and they too were equipped with radios. One source stated that there were 40 men equally distributed among the four vehicles.[140]

(C) A US pilot reported that he had observed enemy tanks in the Tri-Border area on 6 November. He explained that he initially thought the tanks were PT-76s but later stated that at least one of them was a T-62. After the debriefing, there was still some doubt that the pilot observed a T-62 and it was surmised that he could have sighted a T-54 which the NVA were known to have in their arsenal at that time.[141] On 11 November, members of a long-range recon patrol reported the sighting of what they believed to be tank tracks and heard what could have been tank engines in the Plei Trap Valley. Thus, it appeared that there was enemy armor in Kontum Province.[142]

Grenades

(C) On 3 October 1968, two types of grenades not previously discovered in SVN were seized in Base Area 470. The grenades, partially made of plastic, were well constructed. The find contained fragmentation and concussion type grenades.[143] Both types contained CHICOM-type homemade fuzes with a five second delay characteristic. Positive origin of manufacture was not determined but markings indicated that the grenades were manufactured in 1968. The fragmentation grenade had a soft plastic body and was filled with a mixture of TNT and approximately 400 steel fragments. The concussion grenade was of similiar design, but smaller, and was filled with TNT.[144] On 4 December, a NVA rallier Nguyen Cuan Tan stated that his unit, the 7th NVA Div, had "recently" been outfitted with a new type grenade. It was shaped like a beer can and contained a high explosive. The grenade was hand launched and could have been designed as an anti-tank weapon.[145]

Antiaircraft

(C) According to a prisoner, Nguyen Van Van, the 4th NVA Bn arrived in RVN in mid-January 1968. He stated that he was an ammunition handler and identified photographs of the 12.7mm AA (CHICOM) shells as the type rounds that he helped transport from NVN. According to Van, 12.7 AA guns were manned by four-man crews and the weapons were employed individually. At this time, the weapons were believed to be in Bien Hoa Province.[146]

(C) A photograph taken on 17 March revealed that 57mm anti-aircraft guns had been introduced in the Laotian Panhandle. There were three light-tracked artillery tractors pulling three of the 57mm guns south of the Ban Karai pass along Route 912. Coinciding with this incident, there were also reports of the 57mm guns on Route 9 west of Khe Sanh.[147]

(S) A Marine pilot reported that he was fired upon by an unidentified missile northwest of Khe Sanh on 1 April. He stated that the object produced a 10-15 foot orange flame while in flight and exploded in an orange fireball at an altitude of approximately 1,000 feet. There were no electronic indications that the missile was a SAM; thus, it was concluded that it was an unguided rocket. A reconnaissance was performed but no clues were found that could aid in the identification of the weapon.[148]

(C) A high-explosive incendiary cartridge for use with the Soviet 14.5mm ZPU series of heavy antiaircraft machineguns was found in SVN. This round consisted of equal amounts of RDX (high-explosive) and aluminum and was detonated by a simple aircap, contact fuze. The mixture was unusual in that the amount of incendiary material was higher than that found in ammunition for larger Soviet antiaircraft guns. The primary damage mechanism was fire, ignited and spread by the high-explosive content. The availability of this ammunition for enemy ZPU-machineguns appreciably increased their ability to down aircraft.[149]

(S) A CMIC interrogation report dated 8 November described a VC anti-helicopter weapon. The construction of the weapon was described as follows:

Four long nails are placed through a 40cm X 25cm board and four fragmentation grenades with pins removed are slid down on top of the nails. The board is then placed on top of a small hole filled with TNT. A string as long as the altitude desired secures the board to the ground. As the helo arrives overhead the TNT is electrically detonated and weapons fly skyward releasing the four grenades when the securing string length/altitude is reached. [150]

Chemical

(C) With 1968 approaching, the enemy appeared to be stepping up his intended use of chemicals in his war effort. A document captured in late November 1967 revealed that a provincial chemical shop in Binh Dinh had been ordered to accelerate its efforts and to produce over 2,000 grenades per month. A special forces camp in Darlac Province was attacked on 28 December 1967. During the course of the action, tear gas was delivered on the camp by means of 82mm mortar rounds. On 16 January 1968, a patrol near the Duc Co Special Forces Camp was engaged in a brief fire-fight in which the enemy used tear gas. [151]

(C) Prior to February 1968, incidents had been low. However, on 7 February tear gas was utilized in the attack on the Lang Vei Special Forces CIDG Camp. Again, on 19 February in Quang Nam Province, 14 kilometers east of An Hoa, a USMC reconnaissance team was attacked by an enemy force utilizing CS gas. Also, on 26 February, the enemy broke contact utilizing CS gas in an engagement in Thua Thien Province, four kilometers east-northeast of Phu Loc.[152]

(C) In April it was reported that an 7th ARVN Div operation in Dinh Tuong Province uncovered four model LPO-50 flamethrowers. Information indicated that the flamethrower was a CHICOM-manufactured copy of a weapon of Communist-bloc origin. Its distinguishing characteristics were three identical upright cylindrical fuel tanks and a swing-out bipod on the flame gun. The flame gun had sights and resembled an automatic rifle. The weight of the weapon was 50.6 pounds filled and 30 pounds empty, with a capacity of 2.7 gallons. Range with thickened fuel was 70 meters and with unthickened fuel, 20 meters. [153]

(C) In early July 1968, six kilometers west-northwest of the Dak Pek CIDG Camp, D/38th Infantry found an 82mm recoilless gun position and 21 metal and 2 plastic 82mm recoilless gun round containers. Also, it was reported that the VC/NVA used rocket-delivered CS gas in northern Phuoc Long Province. Though the use of CS gas was not new, this was the first report that RPG-2 rockets were being used as the delivery system. [154]

(S) During the month of September, the enemy apparently used a chemical agent against ARVN troops. Ten 60mm and two unknown caliber mortar rounds fell on a PF platoon near Quang Ngai City in I CTZ. All of there rounds contained an unidentified chemical agent. The gas reportedly tasted bitter, had an unpleasant odor, and produced coughing and vomiting. Twenty minutes following the attack, four of the PF troops lost consciousness and one remained in that condition for an hour. Adamsite (DM) or Apormorphin were suggested as possible chemical fillers but neither produce the same exact effect as experienced by the PF forces. Two or more agents may have been mixed in order to achieve such results. [155]

(C) Late on the evening of 1 October, the enemy employed a chemical antipersonnel agent in Cua viet. At this time, odor similar to insecticide was detected. A similiar incident occurred on 2 November. During this latter attack, a PBR crew experienced a burning sensation of their eyes and runny noses. This incident differed from the first in that there was no detectable odor. The dispersal of the agent covered an area of at least 500 meters. When the PBR crew returned to the area 20 minutes later, no symptoms of chemical usage were experienced. Due to the fact that both attacks were conducted after darkness, the color of the chemical used could not be determined. The delivery method was thought to have been grenades.[156]

(C) The 9th Inf Div recovered a homemade CS grenade in November. It was shaped like a crude rocket and consisted of three components: a delay activated fuse, a projectile body containing black powder and CS, and a fin stabilizer. The design of this CS "grenade" indicated that it was probably fired from a grenade launcher or a mortar tube. When the black powder exploded, the chemical agent was dispersed.[157]

Mines

(C) From the time of the Vietminh conflict, the VC/NVA were extremely efficient in the art of mine-warfare. They used mines to produce casualties, harass, impede movement, and demoralize their enemy. They relied on a variety of mines and mine configurations, ranging from grenades to artillery rounds to technically manufactured antipersonnel/vehicular mines.[158] During February 1968 in Gia Din Province on the Dong Nai River near Nha Be, a PBR discovered six floating mines. These mines were "home-made", formed from US five-gallon trash cans. The cans were equipped with conical covers and each contained four 75mm recoilless-rifle shells. The detonating device for each was a simple contact fuze.[159]

(C) The first Limpet mine recovered in SVN was discovered in a weapons cache west of CRB on 14 March. However, it had been suspected that the enemy employed this type of water mine on occasions prior to its actual intact discovery. The Limpet mine weighed about 10 pounds and was encased in a half-cylinder which measured 3 x 10 inches. It contained a "horseshoe" magnet on both ends of the flat side and possessed a dual detonation capability. Either a chemical pencil or a mechanical detonator could have been used. The discovery of a sophisticated, factory produced Limpet mine confirmed the enemy's improved threat to FWMAF shipping.[160]

(C) On 16 May a previously unencountered non-metallic, anti-vehicular mine was found in Kontum Province. During the following month, the mine reappeared in Kontum and Pleiku Provinces. At that time, the country of origin was not known but it was thought to be of Soviet or European Communist manufacture. Descriptions and schematics contained in a document captured on 31 August in Quang Tri Province identified the mine as the East German PM-60 anti-vehicular mine. In appearance the mine resembled a small tractor wheel. It contained enough explosive (22 lbs) to disable any FWMAF armored vehicle in SVN. A secondary fuze-well on the bottom of the mine was designed for booby-trapping.[161] This mine was made of a black plastic, was painted olive green, and had a pressure plate located on the same level with the top surface of the mine.[162]

(C) The 9th US Inf Div, on 1 August, captured a chemical time delay fuze in Chuong Thien Province. It was believed to be produced by the VC/NVA and that its manufacturers were highly skilled technicians. The fuze consisted of a glass, acid-filled, ampule, a pressure type cap to crush the acid ampule, plastic and paper washer gaskets, an explosive compound composed of Diethyleneglycol Denitraten (DEGN), and a detonator. The device was activated by forcing the papered plunger downward, crushing the glass ampule. The acid in the ampule flowed downward by gravity until it pooled on the plastic and paper gaskets. These gaskets acted as the delay elements. The larger the number of gaskets, the longer the delay prior to explosion. When the acid had sufficiently corroded the gasket, it flowed into the DEGN flash charge. This reaction caused the DEGN to flash, which initiated the blasting cap and in-turn any explosive charge the the device was employed with. The total time delay provided by the fuze was believed to be used primarily with terrorist employed explosives. [163]

(C) A mine found at Bu Prang on 25 August was designed to kill or disperse its intended target by the combined action of tear gas and composition "B". When exploded, it made a hole approximately five feet deep and about 6 feet in circumference. The mine was placed in a hole tnree feet deep which was dug at a 45 degree angle toward the intended target. The delivery system was about 49 pounds of TNT buried under the mine. One mine traveled 350 meters from the point of detonation to landing. [164]

(C) On 3 September, the VC/NVA introduced a new method of delivering floating-water-mines. A "C" ration box was used to provide camouflage. This method of delivery was again employed on 3 October and 19 November. A concussion grenade was used in the 19 November incident while an unidentified explosive was used in the other two discoveries. The latter two mines were detonated and produced geysers approximately 150 feet high. Mines such as these attracted enemy use because they could be placed in a river at any point and they would drift with the tide. They presented an acute recognition problem in that discarded boxes, cartons, and other rubbish were commonly found floating in rivers. [165]

(C) For some time, the VC had been manufacturing the MDH series of directional anti-personnel mines, the MDH-3, MDH-5 and MDH-40, but during September information confirmed that they were producing miniaturized versions of these mines. These mini-mines were designated the DH-3, DH-5, and the DH-5 rectangular model. The sizes of the mines varied from 2 1/2 to 4 1/2 inches in diameter and from 1 to 2 inches thick. Explosives fillers were cast tritional or H-6 and the fuzing was accomplished with a blasting cap. The killing affect was created by fragments consisting of pieces of nails and iron bars. These mines appeared to be well constructed and it was estimated that they had an effectiveness comparable to a 12-guage shotgun shell. [166]

(C) On 7 October a patrol from the 25th Inf Div suffered four casualties from a mine. The fragments were of a new type, approximately 0.5 inch in length, 0.7 inch in diameter, slightly curved, triangular in cross section, and tapered at the ends. The mine was probably a directional device for the projectiles impacted in a definite pattern. The fragments bore a thin ridge along the side which indicated that they had been manufactured by molding. This mine indicated that the enemy had not given up his attempts to improve and refine his weapons. [167]

(C) On 15 October in Binh Duong Province, it was reported that the VC were employing a new technique in mine building. They were discovered to be building time-bombs from tea boxes (Ma Tran Ky Chuong Tea). The mines contained 500 grams of TNT and 800 pellets. The pellets were taken from US BLU 3B bomblets. These mines were detonated by a chemical time fuze which was encased in aluminum. The mines were not sophisticated and were locally produced throughout SVN. [168]

Communications and Electronics

Exploitation of US/FWMAF Communications

(C) In previous years, a prevalent misconception among US/FWMAF pictured the enemy as being unsophisticated in his technical communications progress. But during 1968, a great amount of evidence was gathered which indicated that he was placing increased emphasis on exploiting US/FWMAF communications through intercept, imitative communications deceptions (ICD), jamming, and wire tapping. All recorded instances are not discussed here but those mentioned serve to emphasize the magnitude of the enemy effort directed against Allied communications. [169]

(C) The simplest and most expeditious method of gaining an intercept capability is to use captured communications equipment. As of 6 August 1968, the VC/NVA were believed to have approximately 900 captured American radios which included the AN/PRC-10 and AN/PRC-25. He also used the Soviet R-105, frequency-modulated radio set. The enemy was credited with having the capability to intercept in all frequency ranges except FM 20-75.9mc and AM 2-12mc. [170]

(C) There were many interrogation reports that supported the fact that the enemy had an intercept capability; one such report described the 263d VC Bn. This Bn had four radio operators who spoke and understood English; they used small, battery operated tape recorders to record intercepted US/FWMAF and RVNAF radio and telephone transmissions. Another report came from a member of the 5th VC Div who stated that from one to four monitor teams worked at regimental level, depending on the need for monitoring. He said that at least one team was permanently assigned to both regiments of the division. Another PW claimed that "all" company-size or larger units in the Phan Thiet area of MR 6 had at least one person who could understand English well enough to monitor FAC tranmissions. [171]

(S) According to one source, the VC were able to exploit the following types of messages: conversations between officers of different units; operators discussing "in the clear" portions of messages that they had difficulty decrypting; answering questions about information previously encrypted; and the use of plain text with encrypted text. In MR 2, the enemy was believed to be able to read 70 percent of ARVN's three-letter group traffic and 50 percent of the four-letter groups, but they were unable to read traffic consisting of five-letter groups. Another report revealed that the VC considered voice communications to be relatively easy to exploit. This report noted that codes used by many lower Allied units were broken in as little as two hours. This success was attributed to an Allied habit of using slang instead of more complicated code systems. [172]

(S) Through his monitoring capability, the enemy was able to gain early warning of impending Allied operations. At times, intercept allowed him to gauge the size and intent of the operation. A PW noted that there was a noticeable increase in communications, beginning with FAC, when an operation was about to occur. The broadcasts were correlated with US maps, and this allowed the enemy the option of either engaging the Allied forces by ambush or avoiding them entirely. In addition, the monitoring of these transmissions was the best means of avoiding tactical air strikes. [173]

(C) Complementing his ability to intercept Allied communication was the enemy's imitative communications deception (ICD) capability. Such activity was designed to harass Allied troops, divert air and artillery strikes, forward false tactical and logistical information, and avoid contact with Allied troops. As early as 5 January 1968, an incident was recorded during an operation of the 4/49th Inf. A voice, with an Australian accent radioed a request that the commander of the 4/49 Inf refrain from further artillery firing in the area. The requestor claimed to be a member of an Australian team which had been inserted by the "173". A check with the 1st Australian TF confirmed that no personnel were out of their area of operations and the fake request was not honored. [174]

(C) Three incidents were reported by the 9th Inf Div during the month of March. On 13 March, an enemy station entered the 2d Bde command net. Speaking good English, the enemy operator attempted to establish contact with other stations in the net. On another occasion, the enemy entered the net and stated, "Don't worry about resupply, you won't be alive in the morning". Finally, in the third incident, an enemy unit walked into an ambush and then came on the air with, "Don't shoot, this is Charlie Company!" [175]

(C) During May, the enemy frequently attempted to enter Allied communications nets. One such incident was reported on 19 May. The 1st Bde, 1st Inf Div received a call from "Castle 65," transmitted on the brigade's command frequency, asking for any "Devil" station. After "Devil Zulu" answered the call, "Castle 65" broke contact. [176]

(C) During an operation in the vicinity of Tan An, a helicopter attempted to sit down in a LZ but aborted when a T-28 made a napalm strike on it. At this time, a voice speaking fluent English immediately reported that the napalm had struck a friendly position. The helicopter started its approach a second time and received automatic weapons fire just prior to touchdown. No codes had been used by US forces who had previously requested a pick-up. Thus, the enemy had marked their ambush site in the manner discussed by the US transmission and set the stage for their ambush. [177]

(C) On 23 June, US elements in a helicopter sighted a group of VC and called for an artillery strike. While observing the results, an unknown station broadcasted the following message on the friendly frequency: "SWAMP FOX, this is HAWKINS PISTOL 15. We are friendly and are returning to BTT. Do not fire." The helicopter crew engaged the unknown station in conversation and used radio direction finding equipment to pinpoint the transmissions. A friendly reaction force was inserted into the area and made contact with the enemy. [178]

(C) Similar incidents occurred throughout the remainder of the year. In July, one ICD broadcast requested a situation report in Bien Hoa and four other reports were received asking for information concerning patrol operations. In August, there were four incidents of ICD. On

30 October, near Kontum, radio contact was established with a station using the call-sign "Red Ranger." This station provided a description of VC units and equipment in the area; but when a check was made, there was no unit in the vicinity with a call sign "Red Ranger." One very interesting account of ICD was reported on 25 August 1968:

> An unknown person speaking perfect English and utilizing the call word "Golf Delta," entered the Sector Defense Net, which is also the Bravo CMD Net of 3d Brigade, 4th Infantry Division. The unknown person attempted to get sector defense to open their rear gate in order to allow him entrance to the compound. Sector Defense challenged Golf Delta and asked for identification. After being challenged, Golf Delta left the air for approximately three minutes and then came back on the air saying that he was an observer for an I FFV unit and that he had lost contact with them. One and a half days later, Golf Delta again contacted Sector Defense and was told to wait while Sector Defense checked him out. Approximately two minutes later, Golf Delta transmitted the following: "Control 3d Brigade, be advised that I am a Papa Oscar Whiskey." After stating that he was a POW, he gave a "death" type scream, and left the air. Sector Defense tried to make contact without success. One minute later Golf Delta transmitted the following: "Help me, somebody help me!" After his plea for help, Golf Delta gave another scream of agony and left the net. Golf Delta came on the air for the final time and moaned for a few seconds without speaking. [179]

(C) Radio jamming was very similar to ICD, but its only purpose appeared to be to disrupt Allied transmissions. Two such instances occurred on 11 March and 7 July. The first involved the 42st Arty Gp which reported that their command net was jammed daily from 1300 to 2000 hours. An enemy transmitter broadcasted a melody continuously on their command frequency during that period. The 7 July incident was not a true case of jamming, for when friendly transmissions were made, the jamming was broken. This indicated the enemy was using low power. When the friendly forces were not transmitting a female voice spoke English on the net. She made references to American advisors who had been killed on 12 May and to a hepatitis case that had been discussed by US troops 48 hours earlier. [180]

(C) The enemy's interest in wire communications intelligence was periodically noted in 1968. The communications platoon of the 1st Bde, 1st Inf Div discovered evidence of possible line tapping while running a line check. The tap consisted of alligator clamps in two places on the land line. The tap wire was not in place at the time of discovery. In another instance near Kontum City, a wire running from the main line was discovered and traced to a foxhole. The end of the line at the foxhole had been stripped so that a telephone could be connected. Similarly, an artillery operations officer in the vicinity of Lai Khe was talking to division

artillery by telephone and was cut off by a loud squeal. Prior to being cut off, he heard voices speaking Vietnamese. A similar incident was reported by the 101st Abn Div. The enemy tapped an ARVN division line and requested a check fire at specified coordinates. The request was complied with for half an hour before it was determined to be a false message. [181]

The VC Commo-liaison System

(C) The first phase of the Winter/Spring Campaign involved closely coordinated attacks on cities throughout SVN. This illustrated the importance of communications to the VC/NVA insurgency effort. To operate effectively, they had to be able to maintain timely communications between Hanoi, COSVN, MRs, Fronts, and major units in the field. They also had to have continuous communications between their military units and the Party civil apparatus, as well as between various echelons of the political infrastructure. To meet their requirements, they organized an elaborate commo-liaison system which extended from NVN through Laos and Cambodia into SVN. The primary mission of the commo-liaison system was two-fold. First it was to provide continuous communications and liaison between VC/NVA military units, political elements, and insurgent elements. The second mission was to guide the movement of personnel and equipment between NVN and SVN and between headquarters elements and storage points within SVN. In performing this mission, elements of the commo-liaison system maintained detailed records of all individuals passing through commo-liaison stations.

(C) In Laos the commo-liaison stations were reportedly permanent and well-equipped. Interrogation reports indicated that small stations had at least one bomb shelter where as the larger ones had as many as four. Some stations were even equipped with dispensaries which were used for the treatment of sick and injured infiltrators as well as for the care of wounded evacuees on the way back to NVN. Reports indicated that each of these stations was staffed by twenty to thirty personnel. This staff included a chief of station, his assistant, a ten-man evacuation team, cooks, medics, and approximately ten guards who also performed the duties of guides.

(C) This system also functioned as a postal agency for handling official documents, correspondence (personal and official), parcels, and money orders. Elaborate procedures were followed when an item was received or distributed. The stations inspected, classified, and logged the mail. Mail was categorized as "Flash," "Urgent," or "ordinary correspondence." A "Flash" letter, which contained information concerning the enemy situation, OB, and troop/equipment movement, was marked with the letter "N" in a box. The letter "N" circled indicated information such as the notification of a meeting that "would take place in the near future." A letter "B" in a triangle indicated that the letter was to be opened only by the chief of the Command Committee to which it was addressed. Such letters contained orders, dates/times for combat operations, or internal affairs pertaining directly to the commander. A letter "B" circled denoted a secret letter and generally contained information concerning VC/NVA capabilities, planning concepts, and long-range diversions. The letter "G" in a circle indicated that the correspondence was of a routine nature and required no special handling. "Flash" mail had a maximum delivery time of eighteen hours. Naturally, this time element varied with the effectiveness of ARVN/FWMAF operational success in the area at the time. [182]

(C) The Office of Postal Service and Communications was the commo-liaison system staff agency at COSVN and was under military control. At lower levels, it was under a mixture of

political and military control, but the trend seemed to be for the military to assume responsibility for the entire system. Elements of the commo-liaison system at MR level were in the process of transforming from political to military control during the month of June 1968. Formerly, the Commo-Liaison Section had been responsible for maintaining routes, guiding personnel, carrying messages, and directing the flow of goods into SVN. The Postal, Transportation, and Communications Sections co-existed with the Commo-Liaison Section. As a result of consolidation, a single Postal Service and Communications Section was formed.

(C) At province level, as a result of the transfer of control, the Postal Service and Communications Section was placed under the Command Committee of the province military unit. While the province undoubtedly played an important role in the system, it was the district element that was most actively engaged in performing the commo-liaison functions. It was the "action echelon" where Party plans and programs were executed. It was the district that physically maintained communications among the provinces, the districts, and the villages. The commo-liaison element was responsible for the establishment and maintenance of the stations and routes within its district boundaries. While the province may have provided a few cadre to assist the district, the provincial role was primarily supervisory.

(C) The system apparently had no elements at village and hamlet level. Commo-liaison services for the villages were generally supplied by the district; however, the village was required to supply personnel for commo-liaison duties. In addition, there may have been a commo-liaison cell at village or hamlet level for the use of the local chief to transmit messages, but this cell would not have normally maintained communications with higher echelons.[183]

Intelligence Operations

Objectives

(C) Throughout 1968, the enemy continued to increase his intelligence and counterintelligence operations in RVN. There was also considerable evidence pointing to an increase in the enemy's attempts to use local nationals for the collection of such information. Penetration of US and ARVN military installations remained among the primary objectives of enemy intelligence collection. A reliable source also reported that the COSVN Military Intelligence Service (MIS) had 38 subordinate units charged with the task of contacting fifth column agents within GVN administrative organizations and ARVN. The majority of these units were reportedly in the Saigon area.[184] Although the enemy continued to rely greatly on low-level intelligence collection efforts, he also developed a more sophisticated intelligence gathering capability. A document captured in late September provided a comprehensive summary of COSVN's intelligence collection requirements (ICRs). These ICRs placed special emphasis on the collection of data pertaining to US and RVNAF intelligence organizations, the US Embassy, and the SVN Special Police.[185] A source also reported that the VC underground cadre members in Gia Dinh Province received orders to conduct surveillance and collect information concerning the PHOENIX program. The cadre was advised by their higher headquarters that PHOENIX had been established to identify and exterminate the VCI. It was noted that COSVN apparently understood the command relationships of the PHOENIX program and it appeared that their intelligence collection effort was the base on which they desired to build a sabotage program.[186]

Training

(C) During interrogation in January 1968, a rallier admitted that he was an espionage agent. He stated that in August 1967 he was one of 40 members of the 1st Regt, 250th NVA Div, selected to attend a two-month course at an intelligence agent training school. At the school, he and six others were briefed on the general activities of intelligence agents and were trained to be "false" ralliers. The students were instructed to cross the DMZ and were given cover stories to use when surrendering to enemy forces. Upon reaching a Chieu Hoi center, they were to carefully select their friends with the purpose of recruiting them as "in-place" agents. Their mission also included learning the activities and future plans of other ralliers, including the identity of those released, those sent into the RVNAF, or those used as Kit Carson Scouts. In addition, they were to listen to news broadcasts and attempt to distort the information, praise the VC/NVA victories, and print and distribute propaganda leaflets. They were to accurately record the locations of Chieu Hoi centers and military compounds, including personnel billeting areas, and to note the activities and daily habits of the Chieu Hoi directors. Entrances and exits of the Chieu Hoi centers were to be noted so that, in case of an attack, the "in-place" agents could be evacuated. After receiving this training, the agent rallied for the first time in October 1967 to a US Marine Corps unit, was interrogated at a combined interrogation center, and was later transferred to the local Chieu Hoi center. At the end of November 1967, he was released. He then underwent a detailed debriefing by VC intelligence personnel. He was subsequently ordered to re-rally, which he did on 11 January 1968. [187]

(C) The VC continued to favor the use of females as secret agents. Reportedly, the VC sent a large number of female cadre into Saigon to collect information and conduct a terrain survey in connection with a planned second VC offensive. Other VC were allegedly infiltrating into the city disguised as refugees. Additional reports indicated that the VC adopted new tactics in an attempt to penetrate GVN agencies. The NLF reportedly ordered that selected VC be trained so that they would be able to apply and be selected for service within GVN agencies. Still another report reflected that the VC committee in Duc Hoa District, Hau Nghia Province, had conducted two of these training courses in December 1967. One of the courses was for cadre selected to infiltrate the National Police or the military police. The second course was designed to train cadre to rally to the SVN government. After rallying, these cadre were to attempt to recruit agents for the VC in the Saigon area. [188]

(C) Several reports were received that teen-age youths and females were trained for espionage purposes. Allegedly these personnel were trained in the use of signals, disguises, and techniques of collection and observation. Upon completion of training, they sought employment on US installations where, in addition to their espionage activity, they were required to observe and report the results of mortar and rocket attacks so that fire adjustments could be made. Another report indicated that VC female cadre carrying babies would be used for reconnaissance of Allied defensive positions. The use of babies as cover was intended to increase the agents' chances of success due to the average serviceman's kindly feeling toward women with children.

(C) In October, an agent report reflected that young men of draft age were given special espionage training at an enemy school in Dinh Tuong Province. After graduation they were placed in various branches of ARVN military and administrative installations to participate in

low-level intelligence gathering missions. This method of operation provided the enemy with an excellent means of penetrating ARVN military installations and pointed up the sophisticated development of the VC/NVA espionage effort.

(C) Another training program was conducted for female cadre. The location of the training center was undisclosed, but it was reported that females were being presented a course entitled "City Operations for Female Cadre." The primary objective of the course was to teach the technique of obtaining intelligence information from US military personnel. Following this course of instruction, the women were sent back to their homes and were instructed to learn English. Eventually, they were to have infiltrated into Saigon and obtained employment on US installations where they were to gather intelligence data. [189]

Selected Reports of Activities

(C) The interrogation of a captured enemy agent disclosed an unusual degree of sophistication in the intelligence operations in the Nha Trang area. As a member of the VC Nha Trang City Committee, this agent reportedly directed extensive intelligence activities in the area including an unsuccessful attempt to establish contact with a VNAF pilot. Other activities included the recruitment of agents; the establishment of letter drops in suburbs for passing documents, weapons, and equipment; assignment of targets for terrorist attacks; and the reconnaissance of targets in preparation for the Tet Offensive.

(C) In Khanh Hoa Province, II CTZ, the enemy was reportedly attempting to penetrate Korean intelligence. They identified two Korean intelligence agents and were monitoring their actions in hopes that they could be recruited. If recruiting attempts failed, a VC sapper/assassination unit in Ninh Hoa District had been ordered to kidnap or assassinate the agents. Another report from II CTZ indicated that VC soldiers and cadre were studying the Korean language as an aid in their proselyting activity directed against ROK forces.

(C) A captured VC cadre stated that he had been sent to Saigon in early January to gather information on RVNAF and FWMAF installations. He was assigned a section of the city and told to map avenues for approach and withdrawal. Upon completion of that mission, he furnished the information to another VC in the city who forwarded it to the source's military unit. After the Tet Offensive began, he was assigned an identical mission in a second area but was captured prior to completing his reconnaissance. The value of this type information was illustrated by the capture of enemy documents on 23 March. Among these documents were maps of Saigon, Cholon, and Gia Dinh. These maps marked key US and GVN offices and installations including airfields, police stations, harbors, bridges, and POL and other logistical depots. VC penetration agents, reconnaissance personnel, and underground cadre reportedly used forged GVN credentials for movement within GVN controlled areas. One report stated that VC in Bac Lieu Province were using false documents allegedly prepared by RVNAF, GVN Security Agencies, or the National Police. On 10 March, 11 members of a VC unit operating in Saigon were captured. Among the items in their possession were four stamps used for falsely authenticating GVN documents. The stamps, although homemade, were of excellent quality and had been used to provide VC agents with documents purportedly authenticated by either the GVN National Technical Center, the 43d ARVN Inf Regt, the Administrative office of Tay Ninh Province, or an ARVN company commander. Another VC cadre, part of a cell that specialized in forging ID cards for agents, was subsequently apprehended in Gia Dinh Province. In this instance, the police also seized a quantity of weapons and explosives, and an investigation led to the arrest of

seven additional members of the VC cell. [190] A captured enemy plan of attack disclosed a high degree of accuracy in the intelligence concerning the Bien Hoa Air Base. There were a total of 27 targets listed, including aircraft areas, runways, command and message centers, and crew quarters. With few exceptions, the coordinates given for each target were accurate. In addition, the report reflected the number of rounds and type of ammunition to be used against each target. The document reflected exceptional intelligence capability and indicated the existance of a hostile intelligence net on the base or in the area.

(C) A captured membership list of the VC in the Nha Trang area led to the arrest of a VNAF NCO stationed on the Vietnamese side of the Nha Trang Air Base. He admitted that since 1964 he had furnished the enemy with supplies and information concerning troop and aircraft strengths, base defense systems, and methods of penetrating the base primeter. He was asked to develop a source net and was instructed in a method for secret writing with an extract of cooked rice which could be "developed" for viewing by using a solution of water and a common French medicine identified as "Teinturediod." He denied having established a source net but stated he had furnished the enemy with the name of a co-worker considered a suitable candidate for recruitment. He also stated that he had sent several letters to his control agent via his father-in-law who was a VC. In October 1967, he was requested to obtain maps of Nha Trang City and the air base. He subsequently found six such maps in a trash can on the air base. The maps, along with an additional detailed map of the base, were furnished the enemy. Interrogation disclosed the NCO's wife was employed as a maid on the US side of the base. She admitted delivering one letter from her father to her husband but denied knowledge of its content. The furnishing of maps in October 1967 corresponded with reports of a series of mortar and recoilless rifle attacks against the base beginning on 10 October 1967. Also, in February 1968, the base was penetrated by VC sapper personnel and one US Army helicopter was destroyed and seven others damaged. These incidents indicate that the intelligence and maps furnished by the NCO were of immediate value to the enemy. A search of a tunnel complex in Binh Duong Province by a regional force unit resulted in the capture of two individuals and several VC documents. Among the documents was a detailed map of a US infantry division combat support base. An inquiry disclosed that one of the captured persons was formerly employed at the base. [191]

(C) Interrogation of Nam, a captured NVA company commander, indicated that the enemy had an effective espionage operation on or near the Tuy Hoa Air Base. Nam stated that he had planned an attack on the airbase and, due to unfamiliarity with the area, had contacted the local VC sapper unit. One of the local sapper cadre, whom Nam believed was employed on the Tuy Hoa Air Base, provided him with a detailed map of the base showing locations of all buildings, supply areas, security posts, bunkers, fences, and roads. Nam was also provided with information concerning the times for changing security guards and the routes used by the mobile security patrols. Nam stated that his plans called for destroying a portion of the fence, entering the base, and using grenades to destroy as many aircraft and supply areas as possible. This information further indicates that the enemy had established an effective liaison system near the Tuy Hoa Air Base for coordinating operations between local VC units and NVA forces.

(C) A colored tourist guide map was captured on 5 May. The map was marked to show the locations and possible direction of attacks on key RVN and Allied installations in Saigon/Cholon area. Among the US installations identified on the map were the US Embassy, the Tan Son Nhut Air Base, and the Five Oceans BOQ. [192]

(C) Indications were that the enemy, in conjunction with his proposed Third Offensive, was developing a broad base of low-level collection activities, emphasizing US and ARVN military installations. A US source reported that two Vietnamese employed on a US air base had admit-

ted gathering information for the VC for three years. The threat that Vietnamese employees posed on the security of US facilities and personnel had been reported many times. The ability to obtain the necessary paperwork and sponsorship through illegal payments and the difficulty in screening personnel continued to be problems. The overall situation enhanced the easy collection of intelligence data by the enemy. The sabotage threat became acute where Vietnamese worked in the vicinity of munitions and POL storage areas. In June 1968, two Vietnamese base employees admitted that prior to their employment they had aided the VC. In April 1968, approximately 100 VC female cadre, who had learned English at a training center in Kontum Province, reportedly infiltrated Pleiku City to obtain employment as bar girls and prostitutes in order to elicit information from US servicemen. An ARVN intelligence agency conducted several investigations of Vietnamese employees of foreign contractors and US military organizations. These employees had allegedly obtained construction maps of US installations. RVN interrogation revealed that the maps were obtained by the subjects at their places of employment or given to them by US personnel. While the maps were not designed for military purposes, they contained sufficient details concerning scales and occupied areas to be of assistance to VC intelligence agents charged with the updating of air base schematics. There had been several confirmed incidents of VC use of this tactic in the past. In May 1968, a Vietnamese female employee was apprehended while attempting to leave Da Nang Air Base with a map of the base and its environs. Investigation revealed that the woman had obtained the map from a US airman assigned to the 366th Civil Engineering Squadron. [193]

(C) On 2 September 1968, three suspected VC females employed as barracks maids on Phu Cat Air Base were apprehended and interrogated by GVN authorities. The maids were identified as Do Thi Tung, Phan Thi Suong, and Nguyen Thi Nho. Tung stated that she could offer no explanation for not possessing a Vietnamese identification card. She further stated that her father had regrouped to North Vietnam in 1954 and that he was possibly operating in Binh Dinh Province (in which Phu Cat was located) as an NVA officer. Tung had 15,000$VN ($130 US) in her possession which she claimed she had saved. Suong stated that her immediate family and husband were deceased and claimed that her boy friend was employed by a GVN security service. Suong possessed 7,890$VN ($67 US). Nho identified her husband's father as possibly being the chairman of the NLF committee in a village near the Phu Cat Air Base, but she denied having any contact with either her husband or his father for the past four years. All three suspects, who were discharged from employment, denied having any other VC/NVA connections, being members of the VC, or furnishing information concerning Phu Cat Air Base to anyone. This was the second apprehension of suspected VC female employees at Phu Cat Air Base. Interrogation of Van Thi Lieng, also employed as a barracks maid and formerly a member of the VC, disclosed that she had obtained employment at Phu Cat in 1967 under the name Doan Thi Tu. Lieng stated that her father had regrouped in Binh Dinh Province.

(C) There were approximately 1,500 Vietnamese Nationals employed at Phu Cat Air Base. It should be noted that prior to a 5 May attack against the base, Allied forces captured a detailed hand-drawn map of the installation, including notations for key defensive and priority areas. Although interrogation of the above individuals did not reveal any information which indicated that these maids were involved in intelligence activities, employment of such individuals on US installations in RVN posed a significant threat. [194] In November, a map of the Tan Son Nhut Air Base was captured by a US infantry unit. It showed the locations of the Hawk sites, air defense radar station, officers' living quarters, VNAF Headquarters, POL facilities, and MACV Headquarters. It was a known fact that such collection activities were aimed at every US installation in SVN. Also, there were indications that enemy sappers in the Hue area attempted to gain employment on US installations in order to carry out sapper and reconnaissance missions. A similar attempt was reported at Phu Bai Combat Base. [195]

(C) Counterintelligence activity increased during December 1968, as the enemy continued to recruit and t. in females for low-level penetration of Allied military installations. A returnee, who had been an underground cadre member, provided the following information. Each member of the underground team was assigned a specific area of operation (AO). Within their respective AOs, the cadre members were to establish nets targeted primarily against Allied activity within the AOs. These cadre were instructed to recruit young men of draft age to join ARVN units and, subsequently, to report on the activities of these units. Cadre members were further asked to recruit and train women as observation agents to operate in the vicinity of Allied installations. The returnee admitted that he was unable to accomplish his mission. His greatest difficulties were the absence of sufficient operational funds and his lack of intelligence training. He originally had been promised 1,200$VN monthly for operational expenses, but he stated that at times he received no funds for three months. This situation made his recruiting task virtually impossible because the potential agents insisted on large sums of money prior to accepting recruitment or a mission. This last situation is interesting because it clearly indicated that the enemy was experiencing difficulty in recruiting sources who would work for the VC on a purely ideological basis. Apparently the younger people being recruited had little or no belief in the Communist line; personal gain seemed to be the primary motivating factor.[196]

ENEMY OPERATIONS IN RVN

Strategy and Tactics

(U) The war in the beginning of 1968 was essentially a continuation of that which was occurring throughout SVN during the last quarter of 1967. The enemy had been defeated in every main engagement in 1967, and it was clear that he was losing control of both the people and the land areas of the Republic. He would continue his shift to the mobile "War of Decision." Attacks on Loc Ninh and Dak To were just the preliminary steps of the 1967-68 Winter-Spring Campaign. As the year started, the enemy was planning a buildup and an attack at Khe Sanh in northwestern Quang Tri Province as another one of his peripheral attacks. It was another move to draw-off and destroy a US unit and seize western Quang Tri Province for use as a major base from which to support his next campaign toward Quang Tri City. Evidence suggested that Khe Sanh was staged as another spectacular battle for political propaganda as well as military purposes.

(U) In January the enemy moved in strength on the border out-post at Khe Sanh. Two NVA divisions--the 304th and 325C were marshalled in northwestern Quang Tri Province and a major enemy logistics base was organized in Laos to the west of Khe Sanh. Khe Sanh was fairly isolated and the road running from it to the coast had been closed since September 1967, as much by the weather as by the enemy. At Khe Sanh, Hanoi hoped to achieve the same military-political victory that it had gained at Dien Bien Phu 14 years earlier.

(U) Khe Sanh was an outpost on a plateau and a significant military asset for several reasons: it guarded the approaches from the west to Quang Tri City and Dong Ha and with them

the two northern provinces of Quang Tri and Thua Thien; loss of Khe Sanh would provide the enemy with a base from which to strike out during the bad weather and seize these areas, outflank the forces defending along the DMZ and bombard the installations with artillery, rocket, and mortar fire from both the west and the north; and the seizure of the two northern provinces was a long-term aim of Hanoi, one to be exploited at any future negotiating table where battlefield possession would be a telling point of strength. Moreover, control of the ancient imperial city of Hue would prove an enormous propaganda victory for Hanoi.

(U) The battle for Khe Sanh was but one of several major campaigns in the enemy's first phase of his 1967-1968 General Offensive. In violation of his announced cease-fire, and in contempt of the sacred Buddhist Lunar New Year--Tet--the enemy, on 30 January, launched a countrywide attack of unprecedented intensity.

(U) Why the enemy decided to go on a general offensive was fairly evident. Hanoi and the NLF were rapidly losing their military position. The enemy had been driven to remote areas; his main forces were being defeated; his local guerrillas and political cadres were being steadily reduced; and pacification was succeeding. The war had taken a turn against him and prolongation of his then constant pattern of warfare would mean a further and continued weakening of his ranks. Fed by his own propaganda and perhaps by roseate reports from his political cadres in SVN the enemy believed that in one all-out attack he could capture the Republic's major cities, seize the control apparatus of the government, create a massive popular uprising, cause large defections from the RVNAF, and defeat the RVNAF while isolating the US and FWMAF.

(U) This nationwide city-offensive was a reckless undertaking and a gross miscalculation on the enemy's part. Aggravating Hanoi and the NLF's position were the extravagant claims they made to their troops that the Tet Offensive was the last big, victorious push. Specifically, the Tet Offensive was the first ...ve of the enemy's Winter-Spring Campaign. The battle for Khe Sanh was the option play. While attacking the cities, he hoped to overrun the hill out-posts in a matter of days under cover of low fog that blanketed the area during January, February, and March. This would then open lines of communication from his logistic base in Laos. If he did not succeed in seizing the Khe Sanh plateau immediately, he planned gradually to strangle the base as he had the garrison at Dien Bien Phu. After seizing the area, the large number of troops concentrated there would move immediately to exploit his planned Tet Offensive successes in the coastal areas.

(U) The GVN and the Allies had declared a unilateral 36-hour stand-down for Tet from the evening of 29 January through the early morning of the 31st. On the 28th, I CTZ, the DMZ, and infiltration routes in NVN south of Vinh were excluded from this cease-fire because of the enemy activity in these areas which endangered friendly positions. The VC declared a seven day Tet truce from the 27th of January through 0100 on 3 February. The coordination and extent of his attack, when it became clear, evidenced the basically false intent of this truce. Mounting such wide-scale attacks required weeks, if not months, of prior planning.

(U) Beginning at 0300 hours on 31 January, the enemy launched a series of coordinated attacks in I, III, and IV CTZ. Through poor coordination his forces in the II CTZ had prematurely begun their attacks the previous night. During the period 30-31 January, he attacked by fire and ground action: 27 of the republic's 44 province capitals, five of its six autonomous cities, 58 of 245 district towns, and more than 50 hamlets. These attacks were carried out without regard for loss of civilian lives or property. In fact, the VC's patent disregard for the civilian community was blatant evidence of the hollowness of their "People's Revolution" claim.

(U) A major attack on the cities was a new strategy by the enemy. In preparation for these attacks the enemy went to unprecedented lengths to assemble supplies and weapons and infiltrate troops into the cities. After the loss of his major base areas in the vicinity of Saigon in 1967, the enemy made extensive use of Cambodia to establish covert bases and smuggle in great quantities of arms, supplies, and troops. Along the Cambodian border north of Saigon, he established MR-10 to coordinate the buildup of a major logistics base in that area. Also, in the Plain of Reeds and the "Parrots's Beak" section of Cambodia--just 30 miles west of the South Vietnamese capital--he had established clandestine sanctuaries and undertook a major long-range program to stockpile supplies to support his operations in the III and IV CTZ's. In preparation for the Tet Offensive against Saigon and the larger cities of the Delta, he smuggled munitions and weapons to forward cache sites hidden in isolated areas or in underground installations.

(U) Enemy troops disguised as civilians slipped into the cities (particularly Hue and Saigon) in the midst of crowds of holiday travelers, on public conveyances, on produce trucks, and in everyday traffic. In Saigon he used funeral processions to smuggle in weapons and arms. Other quantities of arms and ammunition were smuggled in by way of market baskets, in vegetable trucks, under lumber, or in false-bottom sampans.

(U) For the first time the enemy smuggled rockets into the Saigon area. Some were to have been used in the initial attack on the Bien Hoa Air Base but, because of poor training, the VC rocket units failed to reach their positions before the ground attack commenced. However, Tan Son Nhut and Saigon were rocketed during February.

(U) The enemy primarily used his local force, rather than main force units, to infiltrate the cities and conduct the attacks. The larger main force units were held in reserve, waiting for the popular uprising (which did not occur) before being committed as reinforcements and exploitation forces. Some of them had actually planned victory parades in the cities.

(U) In the areas surrounding Saigon, infiltration by large size enemy units was facilitated by the nature of the terrain. Except for the few radial roads emanating from Saigon, the city is bounded to the north, west, and east by a combination of paddies, jungles, and swamps. The latter are interlaced with many capillary waterways. Both the jungle and swamp, with their streams, provided excellent avenues for clandestine approach to the city. Given the enemy's great skill at camouflage, concealment, and his ability to construct tunnels to store arms and supplies, it was virtually impossible to cover all avenues of approach.

(U) In most cities the VC were pushed out within two to three days, in some cases within hours. In only two cities, Saigon and Hue, were the battles of greater duration. Control of these two cities was critical. Saigon obviously was the heart of the nation--economically and politically. Hue had sentimental and psychological importance as the ancient imperial city as well as being geographically the key to the two northern provinces. It sits astride Route 1 and is in a central controlling location between Da Nang and the DMZ. Control of Hue by the enemy would have meant that Allied forces along the DMZ would have been cut off by road.

(U) In Saigon, the enemy's attack began with a sapper assault on the American Embassy, a move of dubious military value but an excellent propaganda target. This abortive attack was rapidly followed by assaults on the Tan Son Nhut Air Base complex, the Presidential Palace, the RVNAF Joint General Staff (JGS) headquarters compound, and other installations in Saigon.

(U) The enemy force, which consisted of elements of 11 local force battalions, had infiltrated the city over a period of several days but did not succeed in taking any of their objectives except the undefended Phu Tho Race Track which they used as a base area. Except for breaching the wall and entering the grounds of the US Embassy, the only successes against a government target were brief incursions into the rear of the JGS compound and into two remote portions of the Tan Son Nhut Air Base. Enemy main force reinforcements attempting to enter the city were decimated. A similar fate met those few scattered enemy elements which attempted to withdraw from Saigon. In the Hue area the enemy had ready access to the city from his base in the A Shau Valley. Consequently, enemy regular units, eight VC/NVA battalions under the command of the 6th NVA Regiment, were able to infiltrate Hue under cover of low fog and with the help of well-organized agents in the city. They quickly captured the city's northern half, the Imperial Citadel, and most of that portion of the city on the south bank of the Perfume River. They were driven out of the latter in a few days. In the bastion of the Imperial Citadel, the battle was a fierce contest. Under the cover of persistent low fog, the enemy was able to hold until 25 February, having been continually reinforced by elements of the NVA 324B Division which infiltrated from the west. Before the battle was over, some 16 NVA battalions had been identified in the city.

(U) Concurrent with the Hue and Saigon battles and throughout the late winter, the enemy continually attacked air installations, mostly by mortar or rocket fire, rather than by ground attack. He recognized that air logistic mobility, flexibility, and firepower were the awesome keys to his defeats. Despite damage inflicted on aircraft and air installations, close air support and aerial logistic supply campaigns were not slowed. Counter-mortar and counter-rocket plans, coupled with aggressive patrolling, reduced the effectiveness of his attacks to negligible proportions in short time.

(U) Throughout the country the Tet Offensive was exceedingly costly to the enemy. Between 29 January and 11 February, the enemy suffered some 32,000 men killed and 5,800 detained out of an estimated force of 68,000 committed to the Tet Offensive, as well as the loss of 7,500 individual and almost 1,300 crew-served weapons. By the end of February, the number of enemy killed rose above 37,000, and overall enemy casualties approached 65,000. In the same period the enemy lost over 13,000 weapons. In the first two months of 1968, the VC/NVA lost over 55,000 killed; two-thirds as many as in all of 1967. But in spite of this catastrophic defeat on the battlefield in Vietnam, the enemy's Tet Offensive did obtain an unprecedented psychological success abroad, particularly in the United States.

(U) While the enemy was conducting his Tet Offensive and the battles during February for Saigon and Hue, the surrounded Khe Sanh Combat Base continued to come under attack. On the 6th of February, the Khe Sanh Combat Base and the Lang Vei Special Forces Camp, a few miles to the southwest, came under concentrated artillery attacks. During the night, Lang Vei was attacked by elements of the 66th NVA Regt, 304th NVA Div which used flamethrowers, 152mm artillery pieces, and mortars, as well as some 12 Soviet PT-76 tanks. This marked Hanoi's first use of tanks in South Vietnam.

(U) In his Tet Offensive the enemy had sought to overthrow the GVN, engender a popular uprising, gain the support of the people, and cause the disaffection of RVNAF. It had the opposite effect; it created an atmosphere in which extreme danger was faced and had to be overcome. This event unified and catalyzed the South Vietnamese people, military and civilians

alike, as never before. The Tet Offensive was clearly seen by one and all for what it was--an attack on the government, the armed forces, and the civilian population.

(U) The enemy's ruthless disregard for non-combatant lives and property alienated large segments of the populace. Instead of creating a popular uprising, his wanton assaults caused a major loss of sympathy for the enemy. The people in the cities, many of them seeing the VC/NVA brutality close at hand for the first time, rallied to the government. They began volunteering information on the enemy's activity and movements which before this time had been most difficult to obtain.

(U) Through the first part of his Winter-Spring Campaign, the enemy suffered severe military defeats. Having failed to achieve a single major victory over FWMAF in almost three years, he had attempted a bold stroke and failed. At this point, having been defeated on the battlefield, the enemy elected to enter into diplomatic discussions. He then resolved to fight while talking. To enhance his position at the conversations in Paris, he launched the second wave of his Winter-Spring Offensive in May. The primary area of operations was the III CTZ and, for psychological and propaganda purposes, the primary objective was Saigon. Secondary attacks were launched elsewhere in an effort to divert Allied strength.

(U) Although of greater strength than the attacks in mid-February, the Communists' second wave attack (popularly dubbed "mini-Tet") was still a pale replica of their Tet Offensive. Beginning on 5 May, the first thrust of the attack was aimed at Saigon. In the remainder of the country, except for the Hue-Quang Tri-Dong Ha area, the enemy generally avoided contact. Again, as in the Tet attacks, the enemy was able to bring units within five miles of the Capital before being detected. As before, he accomplished this by moving at night, approaching through the uninhabited jungle and swamps via the capillary canals which interlaced the cut-up terrain that surrounds the city. Although many enemy sampan convoys and foot units were intercepted, a number did get through. Above all the problem of distinguishing one Vietnamese from another was still with the Allies.

(U) During the Tet Offensive, tight security measures used by the enemy to achieve surprise had resulted in a great lack of coordination among his units. In the 5 May attack he attempted to correct this deficiency by wide dissemination of his plans. This resultant loss of secrecy was very much to the Allies advantage. At the same time, he still failed to achieve the desired coordination because RVNAF/FWMAF operations disrupted his movements and prevented his units from concentrating. As a result of this security loss, Allied forces around Saigon were particularly well situated and formed a protective ring around the city. These forces, through aggressive day and night reconnaissance, patrolling, and ambushes, inflicted heavy losses upon the enemy well beyond the city as he attempted to infiltrate. As a result, only small units, principally from the west, survived to reach the city and most of these were intercepted and destroyed as they approached the outskirts.

(U) After a brief lull, the 5 May attack was followed by a similar attempt on Saigon on 25 May. The result was equally one-sided. The latter attack had no apparent or achievable military objective. It was mounted strictly for psychological and political purposes. A few enemy elements attempted to penetrate the city, this time from the east and south. As in the earlier attacks, these units were stopped and decimated at the city's outskirts. The only persistent fighting by these elements occurred in the vicinity of the "Y" Bridge over the Kinh Doi Canal, along the southern edge of the city, where rather one-sided fighting lasted for several days. The casualty ratio during these attacks favored Allied forces by more than ten to one. For

the most part, however, rather than attempting to gain control of a portion of the city which was clearly beyond their capability, the Communists attempted to infiltrate small guerrilla bands into the city and disperse them over a wide area to present an appearance of strength. These small groups, frequently only four or five men strong, entrenched themselves in strongpoints and conducted holding actions against Vietnamese police and army units who had to root them out, position by position. The fighting against these pockets of enemy guerrillas once again centered in the Cholon sector of Saigon. Periodically these groups conducted small but tenacious attacks employing large volumes of random small arms fire. During the Saigon fighting, enemy artillery units in central III CTZ fired to support VC/NVA ground attacks and to harass friendly forces. They hit Saigon, Tan Son Nhut, Bien Hoa, and Cu Chi. These were mainly rocket attacks, which were sporadic, inaccurate and did little tamage. The objective of these attacks was to create an image of a "Saigon under seige" for psychological purposes and to provide propaganda support for the discussions in Paris.

(U) Recognizing his inability to seize and hold any appreciable part of Saigon, the enemy attempted to discredit the GVN. Enemy elements in the city brought about destruction from fighting or by setting fires thereby causing a refugee problem which the Communists hoped would overburden the government. By feeding on the refugees' grievances and capitalizing on their plight, the enemy hoped to propagandize the people and incite the public uprising long sought by Hanoi. In this he was unsuccessful. By 29 May it was apparent that the enemy had ceased his attempts to infiltrate the city. Although the fighting soon thereafter flickered out, for several weeks enemy elements, mostly North Vietnamese, continued to emerge from hiding within the city and surrender in groups.

(U) By the beginning of June, the tremendous price Hanoi had paid for her decision to move to a mobile war of decision was apparent and she had nothing to show for what it had cost her. On the contary, she was faced by a SVN more united and fighting with greater resolve than ever before. Although friendly casualties had been high (twice the 1967 rate) they in no way approached the increased losses in life and treasure that the Communists had sustained.

(U) Militarily bankrupt and with no ability to mount sizeable ground assaults on Saigon but with orders from Hanoi forcing him to continue to press the attack to support political purposes, the enemy in June resorted to random rocketing of the city. The population as a whole, rather than military installations, became the target. His objective continued to be to portray a position of strength and power to the people of SVN; to discredit the central government's ability to protect them; and, above all, to display an image of strength for its propaganda impact abroad. Although he may have achieved some transitory success with the latter, he showed his true color within SVN and the population reacted against him.

(U) In June the VC boasted that they would deliver "100 rockets a day for 100 days" on Saigon. However, due to our counter-actions the threat failed to materialize. In fact there was a noticeable drop in rocket attacks following this announcement. A total of 102 rockets were fired at the city during the month, killing 58 civilians and four military personnel. The most rockets fired on one day were 25 on 11 June. The last attack occurred on 21 June. 197

(S) Subsequent to June 1968, the enemy changed his strategy and tactics in the conduct of the war. Intelligence that was available after mid-year provided MACV with a general outline of the enemy's plan for a Third Offensive. First, initial attacks were to be conducted against secondary targets in the outlying areas as an attempted diversion from his primary objectives. Second, the initial phases of his offensive would be preparatory to a later main event. Third,

Saigon would undoubtedly be his main target. Some units of the subregions were in close proximity to the capitol but the infantry divisions which would provide the major punch for an attack of any magnitude were still some distance from the city. [198]

(C) There were to be no spectacular attacks on cities or major installations during the first phase of the Third Offensive. Small attacks were to be directed at those targets that most affected the local population. By destroying Saigon's hold on the countryside, the VC desired to demonstrate that Allied military forces were ineffective. Also the VC could keep attacking Allied units to test their strength and destroy their morale. One objective was to so demoralize the Saigon government and the US that a coalition with the NLF would be acceptable. [199]

(C) The Third Offensive, in sharp contrast to Tet and the May Offensive, was to build up gradually and was expected to be more prolonged than the previous two. The final objective of the Third Offensive was once again to attack Saigon but the enemy was approaching the objective in a different manner. He was concentrating his forces in attacks on US troops and installations to draw the US forces away from Saigon and to destroy small portions of the US combat forces. The enemy then apparently intended to place local force battalions and sapper units in Saigon and eventually to commit main force regiments to the city if this course of action could be successful. To prolong the offensive and preserve his strength, he committed battalion size units in attacks at a rate of two attacks every two days. The number of attacks increased and were combined with attacks by fire on friendly installations.

(C) A captured notebook discussing missions ordered during a political reorientation course provided the following information as to the resolutions and directives for VC/NVA units to complete their missions:

> 1. An all out effort would be made to harass US and RVNAF combat forces and concurrently to maintain control of the areas surrounding the cities.
>
> 2. Extensive attacks would be launched on cities, especially those where US mobile forces were deployed.
>
> 3. Various strategic routes throughout the country should be 'enveloped' and blocked.
>
> 4. VC-controlled rural areas should be enlarged by the People'. Forces and especially by the local units.
>
> 5. VC/NVA forces should be consolidated. [200]

(S) The Third Offensive was designed to accomplish what the Tet and May Offensive had failed to do, primarily to "destroy the GVN and secure the Popular Uprising." It was apparent that the enemy had desired to initiate the Third Offensive between 10 and 15 August. However, it was delayed until the night of 17 August, when he launched attacks on Tay Ninh, Loc Ninh, and a number of smaller targets in II CTZ. By 26 August, it was possible that even the enemy realized that his Third Offensive was failing. He made a large ground attack at Duc Lap on the 26th and a weak attack on Ha Thanh on the 28th; then, his activity decreased rapidly. [201]

(C) Though the enemy continued his attacks on towns and military installations in various areas, his main objective continued to be Saigon. He felt that operations on the outskirts of Saigon would have a critical and direct effect on the combat activities of VC/NVA units within the city. The control of the outskirts would insure the procurement of personnel replacements, ammunition resupply, provisions, and evacuation of the wounded. The enemy reportedly contended that the FWMAF/RVNAF continued to display many weaknesses and that there were larger gaps in the blocking positions established along the outer perimeter of the city. The VC/NVA units were to consolidate their positions by moving the civilian population from other areas into the outskirts of Saigon. In the VC areas adjacent to Saigon, the guerrilla movement was to have been promoted to contain FWMAF/RVNAF encroachment activities and in the rear area, combat units were to have lured the US mobile units into pre-selected areas to destroy them. 202

(S) A real breakthrough in understanding the strategy change of the enemy came from a controlled American source translation of a captured document. The undated, "top secret urgent," directive was signed by "7 Hong," a possible alias for Pham Hung, [illegible]VN Party Secretary. It was addressed "COSVN to all zones" and annotated "this documen[illegible]uld be destroyed after reading." The document directed that all armed forces were to conc[illegible]- activities in cities and towns on a permanent basis. It emphasized hard-hitting, small- and medium-scale attacks to wear down and destroy FWMAF. These were to have been combined with guerrilla actions along the defensive belt to sabotage communications lines and blockade the GVN economy. Surprise attacks by small units and special action forces upon key friendly organizations were called for. The COSVN policy required seizure of every opportunity to liberate the countryside, including a number of district towns, even if a part of the main forces had to be used for the task. The directive set forth specifically that important LOCs leading to Saigon, "must, by all means be cut off and destroyed, especially the important bridges." COSVN wanted complete control of these important LOCs, especially national Route 4 and the Bien Hoa superhighway. The Main Force, a probable reference to the 5th, 7th, and 9th NVA Divs, was directed to be mobile and flexible and keep the initiative; the "Lone Main Force" units, a probable reference to the subregion regiments and battalions, were to have been used to attack towns. Tactical doctrine was for one battalion to attack with a major element outside the town to intercept friendly counterattacks. If friendly troops were massed to protect towns, attacks were to have been made in the rural areas by "major armed units." If gaps in friendly forces were noted, COSVN directed that forces mass, launch "destroy" actions, and then withdraw to evade the friendly counteroffensive, leaving a small element behind to harass and confuse friendly forces. COSVN further stated that the most important matter was for their leadership to maintain strong action on a permanent basis to expedite the collapse of the FWMAF. To this end, armed and political forces in the towns were to have been strengthened and the main force units mainta[illegible]ed at full strength. 203

(S) During the latter two weeks of September the enemy probably became aware of the fact that his Third Offensive had failed to that point. As a result, he appeared to readjust his forces and his approach to the war. The 320th NVA Div withdrew from action in order to regroup for possible future action. Other units withdrew to Laos while enemy forces around Duc Lap moved to new locations. There was no real evidence that the enemy was permanently withdrawing or de-escalating, but he was shifting his forces. 204

(C) Prime examples of the enemy's change in strategy were the attacks on Tay Ninh and Binh Long. The primary mission was the diversion of US/GVN troops from their Saigon defense positions. The VC used only a few regular troops in the attacks and retained their large main force units in reserve. Recruiting and training continued throughout the first step of the Third

Offensive. Step one was to have been completed by 30 September after which, 15 October to November, troops were to infiltrate into Saigon. The primary route was to have been through Phu Hoa District in Binh Duong Province. The infiltration could not begin until 15 October because the rains raised the water table and many of the infiltration routes were under water. The VC anticipated that the water table would drop by 15 October enabling them to use the routes.

(C) COSVN ordered attacks in Tay Ninh and Binh Long Provinces. They were to have continued until all supplies and troops had infiltrated into SVN from Cambodia. Plans called for Binh Duong Province to be under rocket and mortar attacks which were to have been conducted against all Allied base camps in the province and against Binh Duong Province's district towns such as Ben Cat, Tri Tam, and Lai Thieu. The purpose of these attacks was to allow the VC/NVA to build new base camps and supply caches and to open the Binh Duong Province infiltration routes to Saigon. COSVN ordered the 1st Forward Headquarters to conduct the attacks in order to create ideal conditions for the movement of the Dong Nai Regts and the 165th NVA Regt into Binh Duong Province. The mission of the two regiments was to conduct ground attacks in Binh Duong Province between 27 and 30 September 1968.

(C) COSVN ordered sapper units to infiltrate into Saigon by any means available, such as disguising themselves as oxcart drivers, truck drivers, ARVN soldiers, merchants, etc. The sapper units were to stay under cover until the 5th and 9th NVA Divs were able to infiltrate near the outskirts of Saigon. At that time, sapper units would go into action by conducting sabotage and terrorist activities. It was the hope of COSVN that this would cause the ARVN and US forces stationed around the outskirts of Saigon to be drawn deeper into the city, thus allowing the VC/NVA divisions easier access. Weapons and explosives for the sapper units were to be smuggled into Saigon by oxcarts, boats, trucks, and lambrettas carrying wood, fish, rice, and sand, etc. The weapons and explosives were to be stored in sapper units when the divisions were in place. It was later reported that the reason the earlier attacks on Saigon did not take place was that VC/NVA base camps, troop concentration points, and supply caches had been badly damaged or totally destroyed by artillery fire and B-52 bombings, but the attacks on Saigon "would" take place sometime between September and the end of November 1968. [205]

(S) The original intent of the Third Offensive had been to deliver hard blows on Da Nang and Saigon. Because of initial failures, the enemy changed his tactics. Lesser targets were selected with the hope of gaining a "cheap" victory; however, this was not achieved. From the very beginning, his Third Offensive did not measure up to his expectations. His efforts to create diversions failed; he experienced heavy losses in men and materiel; and his support in the DMZ was far from satisfactory. Sometime between 20 and 24 September, COSVN offically called off the Third Offensive. Everywhere, except Thoung Duc, enemy operations returned to a period of reduced activity. [206]

(C) As of 13 October, the enemy had failed to initiate any significant actions. However, PWs, agents, and captured documents reflected that he planned to renew his offensive. Enemy propaganda and documents stated that the VC were winning great victories, that Allied forces were on the defensive, and that only a greater enemy effort was needed to achieve a final victory. Friendly intelligence indicated that the enemy had scheduled numerous attacks, to include attacks on Saigon, but they failed to materialize. Friendly initiated activity caused the enemy heavy losses in men and materiel. His plan to draw forces away from the Capital failed. A lack of coordination between the various enemy units, particularly the subregions, caused the enemy to postpone or cancel his attacks.

(C) Documents stopped referring to a "climaxing offensive" and both PWs and documents were beginning to refer to a Fourth Offensive and a Winter/Spring Campaign. Propaganda referred to great victories; however, the goal of winning the war in 1968 was abandoned. Nevertheless, the enemy needed to make a determined effort or lose his support. He still planned large-scale attacks.

(C) At this point, the enemy appeared to be confused. His strategic doctrine told him he was winning; however, his commanders on the ground could not count a single, significant victory. The flooded conditions west of Saigon and friendly efforts forced him to pause and reassess his position. This postponement caused additional delay as new reconnaissance had to be performed and new plans formulated. COSVN could not have reached a decision on a future course of action at this time since the VC military effort had failed and there had been no general uprising. [207]

(S) The enemy modified his strategy and focused on the attainment of political objectives: to bring about a cease-fire, the formation of some form of coalition government, and the withdrawal of US forces. To gain these objectives, he desired first to counter US strategy and, second, to lay a political base for representation in a coalition government. The enemy specified three requirements in countering Allied strategy: the destruction of outposts and operating Allied military units, the destruction of war facilities, and the strengthening and expanding of control over the population. His principal objectives were weakly defended outposts, small military units, villages, and hamlets. This activity indicated that the enemy was resorting to guerrilla warfare once again with main force units trying to avoid contact. These tactics were consistent with the enemy's reported weakened condition. They permitted him to obtain political and psychological victories with a minimum expenditure of troops or munitions. His political aims were also reflected in the proliferation of Liberation Committees (See VCI Leadership). With these, he attempted to legitimize the assumption of government functions by the VCI. [208]

(S) As of 21 November, enemy offensive activity was continuing at a very low level. As substantial numbers of enemy units were located out-of-country or in remote, in-country, base areas, there were no serious indications that the enemy intended to launch any large-scale, country-wide, offensive activity at that time. It did appear that he would continue to launch attacks against selected targets. [209]

(S) Even though the enemy was not making any significant offensive moves, he continued to make and set forth grandiose schemes. A very reliable source reported that the first phase of the enemy's Winter/Spring Campaign was to culminate on the night of 12-13 December. COSVN was to wait for the results of the attacks before it would order attacks on Saigon. [210]

(C) Documents captured in Binh Dinh Province urged VC units to increase indoctrinations, demonstrations, and proselyting activities. These documents also urged the VC to be prepared to meet the requirements of the commemoration of the 20 December anniversary of the NLF's founding and the 22 December anniversary of the NVA. A military campaign was to have been launched and it was to have lasted until 31 December. [211]

(C) It must not be forgotten that the VC/NVA were waging a war of propaganda as well as a military war. Many of their actions were directed at influencing segments of the SVN population and world opinion, rather than securing military victory. Toward this end, they historically used holidays and anniversaries as a basis for terror, sabotage, ground assaults, and attacks by fire. By specifying dates, they intended to show the world their capabilities. Their major

targets were usually provincial capitals or large historically significant cities such as Hue, Saigon, and Da Nang. In almost all cases, the plans of the VC/NVA did not materialize in the scope announced nor were they carried out on time. There were three reasons for this: Allied vigilance made targets less susceptible to the enemy, the enemy usually overestimated his own ability and his popular support, and he had a different concept of time. The enemy did not have to strike on a certain day in order to celebrate or commemorate that date. [212]

(C) During early December, it appeared that many units were preoccupied with resupply. As a result, there was very little action in the two northern provinces of I CTZ. There were, however, reports of VC movement intentions. Intelligence felt that the enemy allowed "discovery" of these plans in order to prompt Allied leaders to commit their forces in defense of population centers and weakly defended military installations. In this way, the enemy felt they had a better chance to successfully collect rice and taxes from the rural population. A similar campaign was used during the 1967 rice harvest. [213]

(S) More enemy plans were revealed by a 12 December rallier, who claimed to be a Major. He said that he was a former member of the COSVN Strategic Intelligence Section. He revealed that he was familiar with the 8th Resolution of COSVN and the "Assessment of the US Situation." The rallier stated that the "immediate" objective was to overrun the Capital. The main attack was to be launched through Hau Nghia Province by the 9th NVA Div. The 4th NVA Div was located within Saigon and was to have a strength of 600 special action troops. He estimated that only 400 had succeeded in infiltrating the city by 12 December. COSVN was attempting to conceal these troops in order to create a factor of surprise which they believed would be two-thirds of the victory. The second objective, which was assigned to local forces, was to "annihilate the rural development effort by the end of February, 1969." [214]

(S) In a speech on 21 December 1968, NVN's Defense Minister, General Vo Nguyen Giap, reiterated his views that Communist military and political victory in Vietnam was all but assured. He derided US strategy, while praising the battlefield performance of Communist forces. He claimed that US forces had been forced to adopt positions of "passive defense" in response to superior Communist strategy of "attack and encirclement." He also praised the VC strategy of balancing large unit, conventional actions with wide-spread guerrilla warfare. He reasoned that this strategy could completely defeat an enemy having a superior economic and military potential.

(S) The significance of Giap's address was the fact that, in the eyes of military leaders of NVN, the military strategy in SVN had undergone no appreciable change since his last review of the war in September of 1967. It should be noted that the speech ignored the Paris talks and gave no indication of official expectations of a political settlement. [215]

Terrorism - Sabotage and Propaganda

Terrorism

(FOUO) In mid-1966, the following statistical criteria for terrorism was adopted:

> An incident directed against government officials or employees or other civilians who are not engaged in military duties, in which the primary objective is to intimidate. Terrorism is an all-inclusive term, which includes assassinations, kidnapping, mining, bombing, etc.

The key word in this definition is intimidation. Vietnamese civilians who were victims of VC acts, which had intimidation as their purpose, were included in the reports. 216

(U) Heavy military and police pressure in 1967 resulted in a decline in VC terrorism in Saigon and other cities throughout SVN during early 1968. Communist cells and cadre were identified and broken up. Hundreds of members of the VC's secret military and political organization were arrested or killed. Bases and permanent facilities were overrun or destroyed, communications with higher headquarters were disrupted, and the underground organization was crippled, though not destroyed. Reports tracing the history of the use and decline of terrorism stressed that "sustained pressure on the VC offers the best, if not the only, hope of keeping them in a state of disarray." Communist theory had long held that a general uprising of the people in the cities of SVN would insure the ultimate triumph of the insurgency. Thus, Saigon, as the Capital, was always a major target and the C had organized the city and its surroundings into special areas.

(S) Terrorism had played an indispensable role in VC operations following the Viet Minh days and probably had a greater demoralizing effect on the SVN individual than an overt attack where he had an opportunity to strike back. The VC themselves were not hesitant in admitting their employment of violence and terror, although they generally attempted to cast their activities in military terms. At times, terrorism was directed toward a specific objective, such as preventing the flow of foodstuffs from the countryside. In other instances, it was merely designed to create fear or panic. Whatever their motive, the VC had shown an utter disregard for the safety and well-being of innocent SVN civilians.

(S) The primary goal of the VC terror campaign was to force the people to support, or at least cooperate with, the VC movement and to neutralize or eliminate loyalty to the GVN. It was violence at the "rice-roots level" that best taught the peasant to fear the VC. Priority targets were village and hamlet officials and social or other natural leaders. Other government workers, such as Revolutionary Development (RD) personnel, RF/PF commanders, teachers, and policemen were also favorite targets, as were their families. The pattern of assassinations seemed to include the very worst and the very best officials. By striking down officials who were notoriously corrupt, the VC were able to play the role of champions of the people. By wiping out popular and competent leaders who worked effectively to improve the lives of the people, the VC hoped to leave the SVN citizens leaderless and demoralized. Indiscriminate actions were also employed and included ambushing civilian vehicles and bringing harassing fire on villages and hamlets. Visits by armed propaganda teams also disrupted village and hamlet life and served to discredit GVN security in rural areas.

(S) According to estimates, the magnitude of terrorism would grow in proportion to the increasing intensity of the Allied military and pacification programs. The RD program achieved substantial progress in many areas. Accordingly, as the number of pacification workers and relatively secure areas increased, the VC and NVN forces in the South attempted to retaliate through attacks on isolated posts and hamlets and assassinations and abductions. These acts

were designed to make the enemy's presence known and enable the Communist propaganda apparatus to use them as examples of the success and prowess of the enemy's "Liberation Armed Forces."

(C) During early 1968, as a part of their effort to gain control of the people and to generate unrest and dissension within the RVNAF, GVN and the US, the VC resorted to intimidation of civilians with relatives serving with RVNAF or working for GVN or US agencies. One enemy-instigated demonstration march in Tuy Hoa Province was composed of villagers formed into columns. Villagers with relatives in RVNAF were placed in front so that they would be vulnerable if GVN forces opened fire. The villagers claimed that the enemy threatened to shoot anyone refusing to march. In another incident, inhabitants of two villages in Phong Dinh Province were told that those with relatives in GVN or RVNAF would be forced in front of VC troops in the next attack on Can Tho City. In still another incident, a person whose family worked for Americans in Da Nang received a message which described her family as spies and lackeys of American imperialists and warned that they would be eliminated if they continued such work. [217]

(C) From 26 December 1967, to 25 January 1968, there were 1,075 terroristic type incidents in SVN (one incident may involve more than one person). This included 601 assassinations, 1,030 wounded and 593 abductions. Fifty-eight of the assassinations were government officials and 39 of those abducted were government officials. Thus, as 1968 began, the trend of enemy terror pointed to liquidation of government officials, National Police, and civilians working for Americans. [218] This trend continued during February, but there were thousands of civilian casualties during the 1968 Tet Offensive. Due to the lack of detailed information on casualties, there were no records concerning what percentage of casualties were the result of terrorist attacks during this month. [219]

(C) In March, the enemy continued his efforts to interdict lines of communication (LOC) in an attempt to isolate cities and retain control of the populace. He attempted to interdict LOCs and cut off Saigon from its sources of supplies in the Delta by prohibiting the movement of buses and oxcarts between Dinh Tuong Province and Saigon. Owners who disregarded instructions were subjected to having their equipment destroyed. [220] During the month, there were 821 incidents of terror which resulted in 438 assassinations, 785 wounded, and 935 abductions. [221]

(C) The period 26 March to 25 April witnessed 710 incidents of terror. This included 317 incidents which occurred in II CTZ. There was a reduction of 59 percent in the number of assassinations with a total of 287 for the reporting period. Of this number, 21 were government officials and 11 of these were officers at the hamlet or village level. Twenty officials were abducted during the same period. [222]

(C) During the reporting period 26 April to 25 May, 974 incidents occurred; of these, 310 were in II CTZ. There were 479 assassinations and 871 abductions. There were 28 government officials assassinated which included 18 hamlet, 9 village, and 1 district official. The VC bombed Saigon, Cholon, and many capital cities with mortars and rockets which were fired indiscriminately and landed at random. The VC expected to use terror to drive the people to a spontaneous uprising against the GVN, demanding protection from such attacks, thus strengthening the VC's bargaining position. [223]

(C) On the morning of 11 June, the Communist launched their most destructive series of mortar and rocket attacks on Saigon to date. Twenty-eight rounds exploded at about 0620 hours in Saigon's First, Second and Third Precincts - a governmental, commercial, and residential

area. Eighteen civilians were killed and 78 injured. For the following three nights the shellings were restricted to the Tan Son Nhut Air Base and other areas on the outskirts of the city. On the 15th, approximately 42 mortar rounds were fired on a police station in Saigon's Eighth Precinct, injuring a number of police and civilians. From 5 May to mid-June, over [illegible] rocket and mortar rounds were fired into Saigon, Cholon, and the adjacent urban areas of Gia Dinh. During this period over 100 civilians were killed and over 460 injured due to these shellings.

(C) Although far less destructive than the VC ground attacks of the Tet Offensive and early May, the VC rocket and mortar attacks, striking without warning at the heart of the city, touched a more sensitive nerve among Saigon residents, Vietnamese and foreign alike. Widely circulated rumors of enemy plans for intensification of pressure on the city added to the uneasiness. The shelling of Saigon created not only uneasiness but also a further growing resentment against the VC. [224]

(C) In June, intelligence indicated that the VC/NVA were placing renewed emphasis on terrorist/assassination groups. There was an increase in the recruitment of girls as assassination agents and the use of RVNAF uniforms by the enemy to gain access to ARVN and FWMAF installations was detected. Although no specific information was available to indicate implementation of these plans, there had been two reports of enemy plans to smuggle poison into US installations. Plans called for an increase in terrorism in order to create the impression that the enemy could strike at will. This impression was intended to strengthen the enemy's negotiating position at the peace table. [225]

(C) During the period 26 May to 25 June, there were 934 incidents of VC terrorism. Eighty percent of these incidents occurred in II CTZ, III CTZ, and the Saigon/Gia Dinh area. Assassinations showed a slight increase, with a total of 568, while abductions decreased by 30 percent, with a total of 588. Twenty-five percent of all abductions occurred in and around Saigon. Of the 28 government officials assassinated during this period, 22 were hamlet officials. There were 12 government officials abducted, eight on the hamlet level and four on the village level. The National Police were diverted from their routine law enforcement endeavors and were used as armed defense groups to protect government facilities. They were also an integral part of the defense systems in the towns and cities. However, as the attacks diminished, most of the National Police were again able to return to their regular duties. Continued successful performance of the National Police during this time frame earned them more respect from the people. This was evidenced by a greater number of persons providing information to the police which resulted in increased VC apprehensions and seizures of cached weapons and ammunition. [226]

(C) During July, the VC stepped up their abduction activities against the people in order to retain control and provide the manpower required to support their operations. The VC kidnapped 20 civilians from the district town of Duc Ton in Sa Dec Province on 20 June because the people refused several times to build roadblocks for them. Prior to this, the VC had committed several acts of terrorism in the area because the population had refused to follow orders. These actions further reduced VC influence in an area where considerable disaffection had previously been reported. In Kien Giang Province, the VC attempted to force PF soldiers to defect by kidnapping their families. Thirteen families from a PF outpost northwest of Cao Lanh District, Kien Phong Province, were abducted. Not being satisfied with this method of military proselyting, the enemy resorted to harassment of the families of GVN soldiers in an attempt to induce their defection. [227] In An Xuyen Province, their approach was more severe. They arrested relatives of GVN employees and forced them to attend a one-week indoctrination

course. At the end of the course, those arrested had three weeks to persuade their relatives to defect to the VC. Failure was punishable by permanent arrest; other similar incidents were reported during the month.[228] There was an overall decrease in the number of incidents for the thirty-day period ending on 25 July. Forty percent of the 617 incidents occurred in II CTZ. There were 35 percent fewer assassinations, 363, and a slight decline in the number of abductions, 328. Forty-five percent of the assassinations were in I CTZ, and 50 percent of the abductions were in II CTZ.[229]

(C) Between 26 July and 25 August, there were 735 incidents which was an increase of 16 percent. There were 376 assassinations and a 20 percent decline in abductions for a total of 429. Almost 40 percent of the assassinations were in I CTZ while 40 percent of the abductions occurred in II CTZ. There were 28 governme officials slain during this period. There was a marked increase in all categories of VC terror during the last five days of the period during which time the VC launched rocket and mortar attacks against several urban areas.[230] On 22 August, the VC resumed their shelling of Saigon. This was the first shelling of the city since 21 June. Initial reports indicated that 20 rounds of mortar and rocket fire fell on the city. Of the 17 persons killed, 16 were Vietnamese and one was a Japanese newsman; sixty-nine people were wounded. The shelling started fires in the First, Second, and Fourth Precincts; the National Assembly and Chinese Embassy were damaged. Also reported during this same period was an attack on the Dong Thai refugee camp in Than Binh District, Quang Tin Province. Ten refugees were killed, 35 wounded, and 250 homes were totally destroyed.[231] A total of 123 civilians were killed by such attacks throughout SVN. Along with the rocket and mortar attacks, the VC continued to interdict LOCs. Forty incidents were reported which included four bridges destroyed, six bridges damaged, nine roads damaged by mines, and the establishment of 26 road blocks by the VC.[232]

(C) Throughout the period 26 August to 25 September there was a significant increase in VC terrorism with the exception of a 33 percent drop in abductions in III CTZ. Over 41 percent of all assassinations and abductions occurred in I CTZ. As compared to the previous 30-day period, assassinations increased by 120 percent. VC incidents directed at hamlets, villages, National Police, and RD teams doubled from August to the end of September. But VC terrorism had no discernable effect upon the GVN other than the usual limitations on extending GVN presence in the countryside. It was noted, however, that VC attacks against GVN officials and employees were continuing without a pause. Another trend, noticeable during the month of September, was the increased terrorist attacks directed against refugee centers throughout the country. In 72 incidents, 22 refugees were assassinated and 34 others abducted. Assassinations of National Police increased from 12 to 24 while RD workers sustained 27 assassinations compared to 11 during the previous month. There were 49 incidents involving VC roadblocks. The VC destroyed 13 bridge culverts and damaged 19 others which represented a 100 percent increase over the previous month.[233]

(C) Between 25 September and 26 October, there were 909 incidents of VC terrorism, a decrease of 312 (26 percent) compared to September. Assassinations decreased by 52 percent while abductions increased by 50 percent. Of the 1,430 abductions, 536 victims were taken from one village for use as cargo carriers and released shortly thereafter. Assassinations of National Police decreased to 11 (54 percent) during October compared to 24 during September. The greatest increase in abductions occurred in II CTZ and the most significant reduction in assassinations occurred in I CTZ. VC terrorist activities directed against local government officials decreased during October. There was no indication of any significant change in the pro-GVN attitudes of the officials. Further, there was no evidence to indicate that VC attacks

on refugee centers had adversely affected local government. Terrorism directed against refugees substantially decreased. Prior to this time, the VC had depended on assassinations and abductions as a means of developing certain advantages by intimidating the populace. There were growing indications that these tactics were beginning to produce more and more anti-VC civilians. The sharp increase in the number of abductions may have been an indication of voluntary recruitment difficulties, but it should be noted that the majority of the victims abducted were used for forced labor and then released. The VC continued to concentrate their efforts against the progress of the RD program, self-defense units, and the National Identification Registration Program (NIRP). [234]

(C) There were 845 reported VC incidents during the 30-day period 25 October to 25 November, which was a decrease of 64 from the preceding period. A slight decrease in assassinations was also reported while abductions decreased by 1,000. Selective assassination of government employees and the general populace reflected no significant change. The total number of VC incidents during the period following the bombing halt did not exceed previous monthly averages, but there was a moderate increase in the VC targeting of the National Police, civil self-defense groups, and Hoi Chanhs. There was a general decrease in grouped enemy forces operating against civilian targets in all CTZs. [235]

(C) From 26 November to 25 December, there were 776 reported VC incidents of terror which represented a 69 percent decrease. Assassinations decreased 20 percent and abductions increased 65 percent. One half of the 708 abductions occurred in II CTZ. This figure included villagers who were abducted, used as cargo carriers, and then released. For the first time in several months, VC terrorism directed against local government officials increased; however, VC incidents, nationwide, continued to decrease. Although most assassinations were in hamlet or villages, there were no indications that the efforts of GVN officials at this level had been impaired. Apparently, there was no difficulty in filling vacancies.

(C) During 1968 there were 9,483 incidents of terror in South Vietnam (see Figure III-20). As the year ended, there was no indication that this tactic of the VC/NVA would decrease. From the time of the bombing halt on 1 November most acts of terror were in the form of rocket and mortar attacks; an intensive propaganda and harassment campaign was also directed against civil self-defense groups in conjunction with these attacks. VC documents and Communist pronouncements indicated that greater emphasis was being placed on the role of the VC guerrilla in the cities with the accent being placed on terror and harassment; this trend was expected to continue. [236]

Sabotage

(C) During January 1968, several reports were received indicating that the VC were to infiltrate additional cadre into the larger cities in order to increase sabotage and terrorist activities during the Vietnamese Lunar New Year (Tet). One such report concerned the apprehension of a VC by an ARVN Ranger in Da Nang on 20 January. When apprehended, the VC had a Russian F-1 fragmentation grenade and several blasting caps in his possession. A subsequent sweep of the area by National and US Navy units disclosed two .50 caliber ammunition boxes containing approximately 25 lbs of composition "C"-type plastic explosive. Interrogation led to an admission that approximately 100 VC sapper personnel had infiltrated into Da Nang to conduct a campaign of sabotage and terrorism prior to Tet. Investigation led to the arrest of 14 additional suspects (9 of whom were indentified as VC sapper cadre) and the capture of five additional grenades, one pistol, one 60-volt battery, assorted grenade pull

1968 INCIDENTS OF TERROR

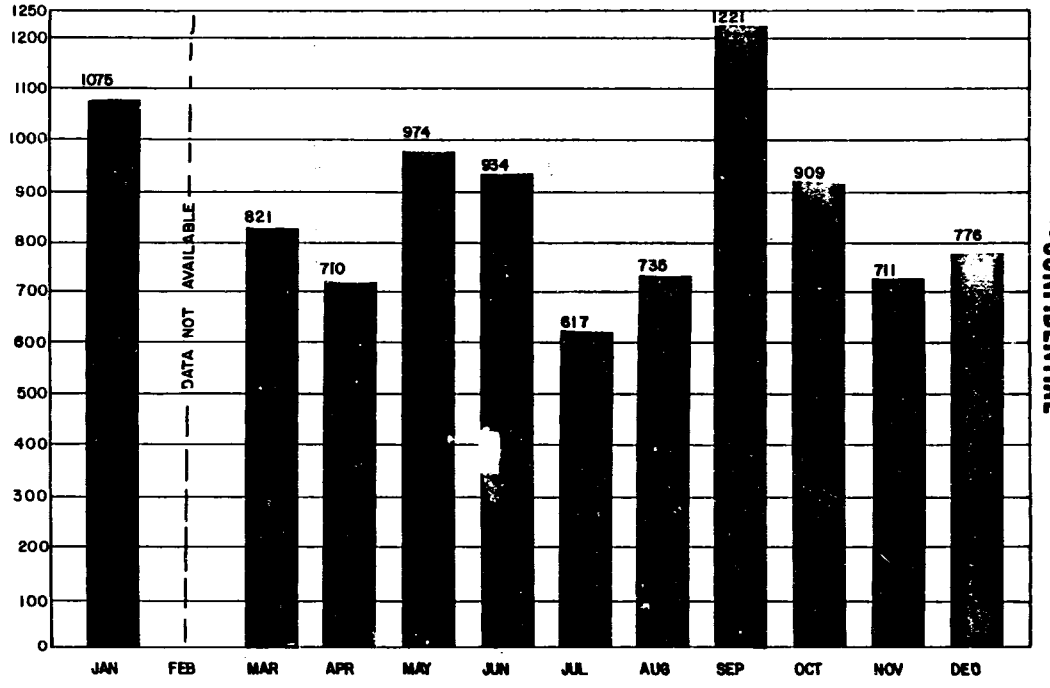


FIGURE III-20

strings and fuses, and miscellaneous items. Comparison by EOD personnel of the captured grenades with the fragments of a grenade used in a 15 January 1968 incident in Da Nang disclosed that they bore the same lot number. [237]

(C) After an explosion near a bridge in Quang Tri Province (I CTZ), the bodies of three swimmers were recovered along with a set of scuba equipment consisting of two small tanks, regulator, back pack, face masks, and fins. This, coupled with a previous sighting in Vinh Long Province (IV CTZ) of a swimmer clad in a full rubber suit, face mask, and single air tank, indicated that VC/NVA swimmer/sapper personnel were being provided more sophisticated equipment. [238]

(C) The enemy continued to regard POL dumps and pipelines, storage areas, and LOCs as prime sabotage targets. On 21 and 23 March, the enemy placed satchel charges on POL pipelines in Binh Dinh Province which resulted in the destruction of 14 sections of pipeline and the loss of several thousand gallons of fuel.

(C) In March, a Vietnamese teenager was apprehended while attempting to locate the communication lines of an ARVN outpost located about three kilometers east of the Tan Son Nhut Air Base. He admitted that he had been recruited by the VC, along with numerous other youths, to cut communication wires and to conduct other acts of sabotage against ARVN and US communication facilities. He stated that the VC had given him some rudimentary training on the methods of detecting and cutting telephone wires. [239]

(C) The enemy was particularly active in Binh Dinh Province. In nine sabotage attacks during April, the enemy successfully destroyed 23 sections of pipeline, resulting in a loss in excess of 10,000 gallons of JP4 and diesel fuel. In another incident, satchel charges were detonated under a US Army barracks. As the troops left the barracks, they received small arms and automatic weapons fire which resulted in five friendly KIA, 23 friendly WIA, and three barracks, one orderly room, a BOQ, andan ammunition bunker destroyed. Also reported was an unsuccessful sabotage attempt against the merchant ship, SS Cape Edmond. On 7 April, while the ship was anchored at Qui Nhon, an MP security guard observed three swimmers near the bow. A search disclosed a mine attached to the ship's anchor chain. The mine consisted of a suitcase containing 100 pounds of plastic explosive. Attached to the suitcase was a US .30 caliber ammunition box containing a timer (alarm clock), power source (13 flashlight batteries), and 4 blasting caps. The timer and batteries were wrapped in plastic. The mine was booby-trapped in such a manner that if the wires which held the suitcase together had been unwrapped, rather than cut, the explosive would have detonated. The ship's cargo consisted of 1,500 five-hundred pound bombs and 2,324 tons of napalm. The first known successful penetration of the perimeter of the Tuy Hoa Air Base, Phu Yen Province, was reported in April. Several enemy (believed to be sapper personnel) were observed near the munitions storage area. They escaped but left one undetonated stick grenade in the area. On 26 April, in Binh Duong Province, an unknown number of satchel charges were detonated at a helicopter pad at the base camp of the 1st Inf Div at Lai Khe. These explosions resulted in the destruction of two vehicles and the main hangar. An unexploded satchel charge was later found in the operating room of "B" Company, 1st Med Bn, also located in the camp. [240]

(C) Enemy sabotage attempts against US/FWMAF facilities continued at a low level although there was an increase in the number of reports of swimmer/sapper activities in I, II, and IV CTZs. There were several instances of grenades being discovered on civilian trucks that were attempting to enter US installations. Five members of a sapper cell captured in

Quang Nam Province on 2 May stated that their mission was to sabotage the radar facilities on Monkey Mountain (Hill 696), Da Nang East, and warehouses at the base of the hill. Three two-man teams had been assigned the mission which was to have been completed by 5 May. Numerous reports and captured documents indicated that GVN lines of communication, water and power facilities, radio and TV stations, and GVN administrative offices were assigned as primary sabotage targets during the enemy May Offensive. These industrial targets were selected in order to create chaos among the people in SVN as part of the continuing enemy plan to disrupt the GVN machinery. The formation of new Special Action Units in Saigon was also reported. Lending substance to these reports was the capture of a PW on 4 May who stated that he was a demolition expert assigned to a four-man unit scheduled to operate in the Saigon area. [241]

(C) Enemy sapper units infiltrated the Da Nang area on sabotage and terrorist missions. Two incidents provided evidence that their targets included US installations and personnel. One included the detonation of an explosive charge in the Da Nang Consolidated Procurement Office on 13 June. Preliminary investigation by Naval Investigative Service Office Vietnam (NISOV) indicated that approximately 40 pounds of C-4 plastic explosive was detonated by a chemical time fuse. It was believed that the charge was brought into the office in a satchel carried by an oriental female dressed in western style clothing. The explosion caused extensive damage to the interior of the building and injured seven US and two Vietnamese personnel. The second incident occurred in Da Nang on 26 June when an estimated 2.2 pound block of C-4 plastic explosive was detonated on a US military bus in transit. This charge had been placed under the dashboard of the bus. The explosion caused major damage to the bus, and 22 US personnel were injured. There were also two reports of pipelines in II CTZ being destroyed by satchel charges, resulting in the loss of approximately 19,000 gallons of fuel. [242]

(C) In July, reports were received indicating that special action cadre had been infiltrated into the Saigon/Cholon area to carry out a campaign of sabotage and terrorist attacks against US/RVNAF personnel and installations. These units had been ordered to mix and establish themselves with the local residents, expecially in the slum area. While the configuration of VC/NVA forces in the Saigon/Cholon area did not indicate an immediate Third Offensive, a renewed terrorist program in and around the Capital Military District (CMD) did begin. On 12 July 1968, an Army SP5 was assassinated by two terrorists who successfully escaped capture on a Japanese motorbike. On 14 July, two female agents shot and killed a returnee who was working in Saigon as a pedicab driver. Also on 14 July, 15 blocks of TNT were discovered in front of a power station in the Fifth Precinct. On 21 July, the VC set off approximately ten kilograms of plastic explosive, destroying a snack bar which was normally frequented by RVNAF personnel. On 26 July, in Cholon, four terrorists, two of them female, entered the A Chau newspaper office, ordered the evacuation of the building, and planted a plastic explosive charge which caused heavy damage to the building. [243]

(C) Although no major sabotage incidents were reported, several captured documents and an attempted sabotage incident pointed to enemy intensification of his sabotage and terrorist effort in conjunction with the Third Phase Offensive. On 6 July 1968, an Allied intelligence agency in Da Nang City informed the OSI Detachment at Da Nang Air Base that a VC sapper cell had made plans to place an explosive device in the OSI off-base residence on 7 July. The explosive was to have been brought to an intermediate point by an unidentified VC male and then transported to the OSI residence by an unidentified VC female. During the period from 12 to 23 July, the unidentified VC female was to deliver the explosive in time for a 23 July attack on the OSI residence. On 23 July at 1750 hours, a Vietnamese woman identified as Thi Xuan was arrested as she was about to enter the side gate of the residence. She was carrying 10

kilograms of C-4 plastic explosive and two pencil-type fuses. Interrogation revealed that she had planned to deliver the explosives to the side gate where she was to be met by Nguyen Thi Bon (the OSI maid) who would assist her in placing the device in a trash container at the rear of the building. It should be noted that VC units had previously attacked facilities housing US intelligence and investigative agencies. On 10 June 1967, the US Army CID offices and quarters in Pleiku City were attacked by an unknown enemy force. And on 10 September 1967, one OSI agent was killed during a VC attack on the OSI Detachment Office in Pleiku City.

(C) During the lull in activity following the May Offensive, the VC conducted a series of terrorist attacks directed at both US and Vietnamese personnel. On 2 August 1968, a loaf of bread containing a grenade was thrown into a truck transporting ARVN personnel, causing four to be wounded. Another incident occurred on 7 August in the Third Precinct, Saigon, when a grenade was thrown into a Military Police jeep, killing one MP and wounding another. On 9 August, an M-26 grenade was thrown into a coffee shop frequented by policemen in Saigon's Second Precinct, resulting in the wounding of 12 civilians, one serviceman, and eight policemen. The VC had employed plastic explosives and booby traps in other terrorist bombings of the Khong Tu and Binh Tay administrative offices in the Fifth and Sixth Precincts of Saigon. Terrorist attacks had also taken place against the residences of Vietnamese officials. The possibility exists that the VC/NVA forces were unable to mount a large-scale ground attack against the Capital Military District (CMD). The enemy in the field faced many complex problems, from logistics to troop morale. This being the case, the Third Offensive in the CMD was expected to take the form of sabotage and terrorist attacks. While the enemy's situation in the field had apparently remained somewhat unstable, he had consistently maintained his sabotage-terrorist capability. The adverse effect of these attacks on the morale of the South Vietnamese populace was serious, as was its effect on US public opinion and on the Paris peace talks. The resumption of the terrorists attacks maintained pressure on the GVN with a minimal cost in manpower and material while preparations for a Third Offensive were completed. Information received from the NP indicated that VC cells in the Saigon area had been issued quantities of K54 pistols. This probably presaged an increase in assassination attempts, since the weapon was only suitable for terrorist activity. The introduction of this weapon, however, did pose a threat to the security of US forces personnel in the Saigon area. [244]

(C) The apparent frustration of the enemy's proposed intensification of activities had given added impetus to his desire to move aggressively in other areas. It was natural that the VC/NVA thrust had taken the direction of sabotage and terrorism. Captured documents indicate that the enemy's plan for the initial intensification included assassination of key Allied personnel and sabotage attacks against Allied installations. To implement this plan of attack, sapper units had been ordered to infiltrate the CMD by any means available and then to remain under cover until the initiation of the offensive. Sapper units were to conduct terrorist and sabotage activities in the CMD in an effort to draw Allied forces back into deeper defensive positions within the city, thus allowing enemy units easier access to Saigon.

(C) The advantages of an increased enemy sabotage offensive cannot be underestimated. It remained the least costly and generally the most productive of the options open to the VC/NVA forces. Incidents reported indicated that the enemy intended to fully exploit this capability by utilizing existing personnel supplemented with newly infiltrated groups. The information available on these sapper units indicated that a degree of specialization had been achieved by the enemy, at least in the planning aspect of his sabotage effort. During September, the Vietnamese National Police uncovered and apprehended personnel of two sapper cells whose targets were US Military BOQs and BEQs in the Saigon area. The National Police were working to neutralize

another cell allegedly targeted against US military billets. This targeting may have been an indication of a new direction in enemy terrorist activity.

(C) The Ninh Thuan VC Provincial Headquarters directed female VC sympathizers, who were either employed or were seeking employment on Phan Rang Air Base, to sabotage unidentified targets on the base by using small explosive charges. The females were to smuggle the explosives onto the base by carrying them on their person. Once on the base, they would arm the demolition charges with delay fuzes. One of the females had been indentified as Lan, a resident of Tu Tam Hamlet, 10 kilometers from the base.

(C) During 1968 there had been no reported act of sabotage on a USAF installation in SVN. Enemy agents apprehended on bases had been primarily involved in low-level intelligence collection activity, and their primary mission had been to report information about aircraft parking areas, key personnel, traffic patterns, and base defenses. Sapper demolition teams, frequently having female members, had been targeted against USAF personnel and billets in cities such as Nha Trang, Pleiku, Da Nang, and Saigon. The enemy had preferred to use artillery weapons to damage USAF equipment and assets on bases. However, the large number of indigenous employees who were subject to coercion as a result of living in VC-controlled areas were logical targets for sabotage recruitment. Although records at Phan Rang did not indicate that a female named Lan was employed, propaganda units and guerrillas had been active in Tu Tam and other hamlets south of the base. Earlier in the year, VC attempts to locate Phan Rang Air Base employees with ID passes were reported several times. It would not be necessary, once passes were obtained, to rely on untrained sympathizers to perform sabotage acts. [245]

(C) As an adjunct to the enemy's desperate need of victory for morale and propaganda purposes, there was an increase in sabotage during the month of October. There were reports of VC/NVA plans to conduct extensive sabotage and terrorist activities in the Cholon area during the US elections in November. Additional reports indicated that the enemy desired to use students for the throwing of grenades and planting of explosives in predetermined locations at or near US installations.

(C) A SVN source reported the existence of an underwater sapper team in the Saigon area. The alleged mission of this team was to conduct sabotage against the Saigon dock area and the Capital drain system. Additionally, this team reportedly had the capability of planting mines in the Saigon River to disrupt commercial shipping. [246]

(C) In November, there was a slight rise in activities in the CMD while activity in the other CTZs remained generally unchanged. Naval intelligence reported that there were indications of expanded enemy sabotage capabilities against Allied shipping. The majority of the month's incidents involved the use of mines. An attempt to mine a POL tanker moored at the Esso Tank Farm in Nha Be was believed to be a positive indication of a vigorous enemy mining campaign directed against ocean going vessels. As of 15 November, 101 mining incidents had occurred compared to 42 incidents during all of 1967. Fifty-eight percent of the detonations in 1967 resulted in damage while 83 percent of the 1968 total had been effective. [247]

(C) Reports indicated that the enemy was conducting a country-wide training program to teach the "latest" sapper techniques. A report from the Da Nang area stated that numbers of 14 and 15 year old sappers were trained as procurers of female companions for US military personnel. Their mission included observation of US activities and placement of explosives adjacent to

selected targets. In the Delta area, the VC were reportedly training frogmen. In Saigon, a program was initiated to replace sappers in that area with young men and women. This was designed to enable the incumbent sappers to withdraw to enemy base areas for further training.

(C) Another report of VC/NVA sabotage training discussed the recruitment of hoodlums (male and female) in the Saigon/Cholon area. The recruitment was for the purpose of forming "suicide cells." Allegedly, each cell consisted of six to nine persons. Immediately after their recruitment, the cell members were given a one week course in various sabotage tactics. After this, the cell members were assigned missions using grenades and explosive charges.[248]

Propaganda

(C) During 1968 the enemy's propaganda machine was almost as active as his sabotage and offensive operations. The major themes of his propaganda campaign emphasized major VC victories, withdrawal of US Forces, and a general uprising to overthrow the GVN.

(C) Propaganda activities in the I CTZ were aimed at US forces. On 8 January, a group of 84 civilians, mostly women, staged a demonstration in Da Nang in protest of US aerial bombing and aid given to Vietnam. The demonstration was led by a confirmed VC who was immediately arrested by the National Police. On 10 and 11 January, approximately 200 people demonstrated at Lai Nghi Hamlet, Quang Nam Province, requesting that the US stop the bombing, firing of artillery, and use of defoliation chemicals against their village. There was an increase in the use of VC propaganda leaflets in Quang Nam Province directed toward US Negro military personnel. The Negroes were being urged to oppose being sent to Vietnam, to refuse to fight in Vietnam, and to demand to be sent home to participate in the "Afro-American Struggle" in the US. One leaflet stated that if they crossed over to the NLF they would be helped to return home "as was Claude McClure, RA14703075, the Negro sergeant who was released not long ago."

(C) One source reported that the Provincial Committee of the NLF met on 10 January and ordered the propaganda units to lecture to the people that the Binh Phuoc battle would result in a major victory for the VC and end the war since all US forces would then be withdrawn from SVN. This was only one of several reports in which VC propaganda predicted that a major VC victory in the Winter/Spring Campaign would end the war. Propaganda leaflets were also discovered in Saigon on 15 January appealing to the local people to protest against the Mobilization Order, to rise up and seize power in towns and cities, and to demand direct negotiations between the US and the NLF to end the war.

(C) A captured VC circular, dated 27 December 1967, stressed that the holiday truce announced by the NLF was a political move designed to "isolate" the enemy, gain the sympathy and support of the world, and create a favorable situation for proselyting enemy soldiers and their relatives. The document pointed out that, in those areas where proselyting activities were actively conducted during the holiday truces, the ratio of desertion and defection on the part of the VC enemy was substantially increased. Therefore, receiving units were directed to coordinate closely with local elements to step up armed propaganda activities during the holiday truces. Local populations were to be motivated to participate actively in enemy proselyting activities. All VC whose relatives were working for RVNAF were urged to contact their relatives and induce them to defect or desert. The document cautioned all personnel to be especially vigilant against enemy subversive and Chieu Hoi activities during those contacts.[249]

(C) Prior to , and during the Tet Offensive, VC propaganda activities and incidents increased. There was also an increase in VC leaflet dissemination and display of VC flags and banners. During the height of the fighting in Saigon, a rumor was circulated that the VC had been able to infiltrate the city with the cooperation of the US military. Prompt denial by US authorities and the evident participation in the fighting by US combat forces helped dispel this rumor. Available information indicated that the GVN operated radio stations in Saigon and other major cities were among the main targets of the VC during their attacks against the cities. Reportedly, the translation of a captured tape, which the VC planned to broadcast over the radio station in Qui Nhon City, was evidence that the VC hoped for a popular uprising when they began their attacks against the major cities on 29 January. The tape claimed that there was a great uprising among the people in SVN and that VC forces were in control of the cities of Saigon, Hue, and Da Nang, while a VC document captured in Da Nang on 30 January disclosed a plan to use propaganda in an attempt to assume control of that city. After creating discontent among the populace, the VC were to lead demonstrations, VC cadre planned to assassinate SVN government and armed forces officials, and take over the local government. One of the three reported demonstrations in I CTZ on 30 January occurred in Da Nang and involved an estimated 5,500 civilians. Due to prompt action by the National Police, the crowd was dispersed before a serious disturbance could occur. The second incident was led by six VC who were subsequently apprehended. In the third incident, 30 of those arrested were identified as VC guerrillas.

(C) The VC continued their campaign of claiming great victories during the Tet Offensive. During a VC propaganda meeting conducted by VC cadre in Duc Hoa District, Hau Nghia Province, the people were told that the attacks against some of the South Vietnamese towns demonstrated that the fighting spirit and capabilities of the Liberation Front soldiers were at a high level and that the cooperation between the GVN and Americans during the attacks was not effective. The propagandists claimed that great VC victories were won at Saigon, Hue, Da Nang, Kontum, Pleiku, and other province towns. The claim was also made that the North Vietnamese were shooting down more American airplanes and capturing more American pilots every day.

(C) In early 1968, the VC increased their campaign of subversion activities directed against RVN, US, and other FWMAF servicemen in Vietnam. The receipt of unsolicited anti-war correspondence by US servicemen increased and came from such diverse locations as Italy, France, and the United States. In October 1967, within RVN, the VC established the Committee for the Promotion of Solidarity between the South Vietnamese and American peoples. The expressed aim of the committee was to incite and aid US servicemen to desert or defect rather than fight in Vietnam. Propaganda leaflets and radio broadcasts were directed at US, RVN and ROK soldiers. The VC made special efforts to create racial unrest within the Negro minority serving in SVN. There was reportedly a program for VC cadre to meet with dissident Allied servicemen to encourage their desertion or defection and to make arrangement for their escape. Investigation revealed that, on several occasions throughout the RVN, US servicemen were approached by Vietnamese males who offered assistance in deserting from military service.[250]

(C) The enemy also forced villagers to attend propaganda lectures. During these lectures, the speakers extolled the virtues of their cause while impugning the motives and actions of the GVN and the Allies. The people were told not to cooperate with the GVN or ARVN forces and to support a move for a coalition government and an end to the war. The enemy continued to claim great victories in the Tet Offensive and alleged that many civilian and military personnel joined their cause. Other reports indicated that entertainment groups and movies were being used in the propaganda campaign. One propaganda/entertainment unit reportedly gave performances

at four different locations in Hau Nghia Province on the nights of 12 to 15 March. Although these propaganda tactics may have had some effect on the populace, particularly in remote areas, indications were that the majority of the people doubted the validity of the propaganda.

(C) The capture and subsequent interrogation of five VC in Pleiku City in early March disclosed that they were members of a propaganda team that had infiltrated the city. Each had been assigned to conduct propaganda lectures in a specific section of the city in an attempt to gain support in preparing for the next offensive. The captured VC did not know when the next attack would come but had been told to have the people prepared by May 1968. A related report also indicated a deadline of 1 May 1968 for VC propaganda units in Khanh Hoa Province to prepare the people to support a general strike. [251]

(C) VC propaganda teams urged the people to support the VC cause by contributing food, money, and manpower. The people were also told that their support would lead to the formation of a coalition government and bring an end to the war. Reportedly, one VC propaganda cadre stated that the coalition government would be formed by the end of 1968 while another propaganda cadre stated that peace talks were then being held in Saigon between the NLF and the US.

(C) Throughout the year, there were numerous reports of receipt, through the mails, of unsolicited copies of Veterans Stars and Stripes for Peace (VSSP), an anti-Vietnam War publication. Envelopes forwarding the publication were postmarked Chicago and bore the return address of a post office box rented to Leroy Wolins, Veterans for Peace. The Veterans for Peace in Vietnam, whose Chicago office initiated publication of the VSSP in September 1967, was a small, marginally influential organization, founded in November 1965 by veterans whose avowed aim was to "speak out for peace." Besides publishing the VSSP Monthly, the Veterans for Peace in Vietnam conducted or took part in anti-war meetings, rallies, parades, and demonstrations to achieve its goals. It was composed of veterans heavily influenced and infiltrated by the Communist Party and Communist front groups. Wolins, who had been a prime mover of the organization since its inception, became a Communist in May of 1967. The Chicago Office of the Veterans for Peace in Vietnam was co-located with the Chicago Peace Council, a group dominated by members of the Communist Party and the national headquarters of the Students for a Democratic Society. [252]

(C) Enemy propaganda increased concurrently with the agreement for peace talks to be held in Paris. Daily propaganda broadcasts by Hanoi Radio and the clandestine Liberation Radio continued the claim that the US was forced to attend the peace talks due to the glorious victories being won by the Liberation Army on the battlefield. Reports also indicated an increase in the distribution of enemy propaganda leaflets and in the number of VC-led propaganda meetings. Some leaflets addressed military personnel and suggested that they return to their families. Other leaflets were addressed to the general populace and local government officials. Most of the leaflets and the propaganda meetings were designed to motivate the people to stage demonstrations or uprisings in support of the VC cause. Indications were that the increased enemy propaganda efforts had little or no effect upon the population of SVN.

(C) The VC distributed a number of propaganda leaflets in Da Nang City. Although the majority of the leaflets contained the usual anti-GVN/US propaganda, the Korean forces in SVN were the object of the enemy's most severe propaganda. One leaflet attempted to influence RVN servicemen to cease all support of the Thieu-Ky government and to support the "Liberation Forces" by citing alleged atrocities inflicted by ROK troops on the families of servicemen. There was also an increase in the number of English language propaganda leaflets found around

US installations. During mid year several reports were received of VC propaganda cadre using public address systems for propaganda broadcasts in the vicinity of US troop emplacements. In another instance, the enemy fired four 82mm mortar rounds containing English language propaganda leaflets into a US compound. As in the past, the propaganda themes stressed that the war should be settled by the Vietnamese. US troops were urged to refuse to take part in sweep operations, to demand an end to the war, and to be returned home. Although the enemy's effort against US troops appeared to be somewhat more sophisticated than past attempts, there were no indications that it had any appreciable effect on US troops. [253]

(C) During the month of June, available information pointed to a decline in the number of people in the countryside being forced to attend VC propaganda lectures. The enemy's propaganda directed toward the South Vietnamese was anti-GVN and anti-US in nature and appealed to the people to rise up against the GVN, demand the withdrawal of US troops, and press for a coalition government. The slogans "Down with American Aggressors" and "US go home" appeared on a wall along a street in Saigon which carried heavy US traffic. Four English language leaflets found near Pleiku appealed to US and Allied personnel to oppose the war and promised that those who came over to the NLF would be granted favored treatment. One of the leaflets contained a "Radio Broadcast Schedule for US Servicemen" and was also intended as a safe conduct pass if presented to NLF or Liberation Army personnel. There were no indications that the enemy propaganda directed against US and FWMAF personnel was effective. The VC continued to spread rumors of third phase attacks against Saigon and other major cities. They warned people to leave the urban areas and stay away from military camps and GVN installations which would be primary targets. Most of the rumors and some PW interrogations indicated that the attacks would take place the latter part of June or in July; however, a 13 June letter from one cadre member in the headquarters, SVN Liberation Army instructed another to send agents to the First, Second, Third, and Fifth Precincts of Saigon. The addressee was directed to consolidate terrain feature data files on the precincts and was ordered to make a maximum effort to complete the assignment by the 1st of August 1968. Rumors such as these created unrest and dissension among the populace and raised doubts as to GVN ability to protect them. [254]

(C) Following the First and Second Offensives, the enemy realized that general support of the urban populace was necessary to maintain a sustained offensive in the larger cities. He began to propagandize and prepare the basis for his proposed Third Phase Offensive. One facet of the propaganda offensive was an attempt to convince the populace that the VC gained substantial victories in phases one and two of the general offensive, and that these alleged victories served as formal proof that the VC had the strength and the capability to control the rural area around the CMD and some of the provincial capitals. If this fact was believed, then it naturally follows that the enemy had the capability of launching a successful, sustained attack on the capital city and several of the province capitals. The second arm of the propaganda offensive was an effort to exhort the urban population to rise up against the RVN and the so-called American "aggressors." A captured document stressed that the peace negotiations in Paris were merely a propaganda forum being used to isolate the US on the international scene. This document pointed out that the alleged VC military and political successes compelled the US to go to Paris for peace negotiations. Additionally, this writing urged the VC armed units and the people to lead an offensive and uprising in order to assure the success of the NLF. [255]

(C) VC/NVA policy directives strongly urged North Vietnamese and VC to fight harder than ever, even though talks with the US were underway in Paris. This exhortation not only reflects Communist doctrine but it also reflects a genuine concern on the part of the Communist leadership that VC/NVA troops would become victims of "peace illusions," a mistaken belief that the

war in Vietnam could be settled through negotiations rather than on the battlefield. The leaders felt that if the VC/NVA troops harbored those illusions, their combat capability and determination would be impaired. Political officers and propagandists sought to convince the VC/NVA troops that the US had no "good will" for peace, that diplomatic talks with the enemy were merely a tactic in support of the military struggle, that the revolution in SVN could be wondecisively only by military means, and that a great opportunity existed to achieve final victory through a general offensive and uprising. The VC/NVA troops were told to seize the moment, struggle more resolutely for the final military victory, and place no false hopes on a decisive settlement emanating from Paris. Although they had been advised of the Party line, captured documents and prisoner interrogation reports indicated that VC/NVA troops were not enthusiastic about fighting while negotiating. Evidence indicates that some were falling prey to the "peace illusions" which their leaders fear. [256]

(C) Although there had been a slight decrease in enemy propaganda and proselyting activities, the theme during September continued to propagate exaggerated accounts of his alleged military victories and his achievements in the "international political struggle" at the Paris peace talks. It was significant that the VC propagandists had continued to advocate a coalition government. This proposition may well have been an indication that the enemy desired to establish his offensive capability on the political plane. [257]

(C) As anticipated, there was an increase in enemy propaganda during October. Thus, the trend of turning from the battlefield toward the political plane and of ultimately broadening the VC/NVA political power base was established. Emphasis was placed on the "people's uprising movement" with the VC/NVA frequently claiming that they had the support of workers, students, intellectuals, etc.

(C) One tactic designed to build morale was the theme of a revitalized NLF:

> The NFLSVN's influence and prestige have soared in urban communities where the recent political platform (by the NFLSVN) represented a new hope. Moreover, the birth of the National United Front for Democracy and Peace has added new stamina to the common fight for national salvation. Though freshly created, this front has rapidly been developed and gained larger and larger influence in the cities. No matter how "wicked" the US/GVN's counterplan may be, they could never stop the growth of such a sound and stable political force. [258]

(C) The obvious intent of such propaganda efforts was to heighten the morale of the Communist cadre and to revive the infrastructure. There was a continued effort to propagandize the establishment of People's Liberation Councils and People's Liberation Committees. The reference to a "coalition government" was resounded, as it had been during the previous months. It was expected that this line of propaganda would increase during the following months. [259]

(C) The tone of the enemy's propaganda effort during November was set by the US decision to halt the bombing of NVN. As anticipated, the halt was proclaimed a "great victory" by the enemy. It afforded the VC an advantage in the propaganda field for it raised questions and doubts in the minds of the populace who had no previous reason to question US intentions. In

order to back up their claims of victory, the enemy claimed that the following factors caused the US decision:

1. The lack of American success in the war in SVN.

2. The failure of the bombing in NVN to obtain the intended results.

3. Pressures brought to bear upon the US by world opinion and "progressive" Americans.

(C) Armed with their new propaganda theme, the enemy steadily increased his efforts against the GVN. He asked for the people to demonstrate against the GVN, strive for withdrawal of FWMAF from SVN, and push for the end of the war. The content and trend of the propaganda indicated that their efforts to broaden their political base and popular support would continue. [260]

(C) An interesting but not wide spread propaganda theme was noted in Ninh Thuan Province. The VC/NVA told the local populace that the "Americans had run out of bombs, were losing the war, and would leave SVN shortly." This was the first reported instance of the VC claiming that the US forces were leaving SVN. The area chosen for this type propaganda was good for it was generally considered to be under VC/NVA control. [261]

(C) During December, the enemy continued to advocate the establishment of a coalition government and the withdrawal of US forces from SVN. The duality of the propaganda campaign exposed enemy goals and some of his problems. His constant emphasis on the promulgation of VC political doctrine indicated that the purposes of the NLF required a broadening of its political base. Given a broadened political base with its implied "grass root support," the establishment of the coalition government would have provided an adequate springboard for full political/governmental participation by the NLF. This was probably the ultimate aim of VC/NVA propaganda. The enemy's theme did not represent any appreciable variation from his original aim. At the outset of the struggle in the South, COSVN predicted a period of "Independence, Democracy, Peace and Neutrality." This period was projected as a transitory one which would provide the basis for a nationalist and democratic revolution leading to the reunification of the North and the South under absolute socialism. Thus, the trend toward the establishment of a coalition government containing NLF representation was merely a perpetuation of the enemy's original aims and objectives. Coupled with these objects, the terms "general uprising" and "general offensive" appeared in several enemy directives, with an additional plea to the VC cadre to "overcome the illusion of peace, poor vigilance, low fighting spirit and fear of sacrifice and hardships." This appeared to constitute a de facto admission of a low morale condition existing among VC/NVA forces. However, the enemy was expected to continue his old propaganda themes in 1969. [262]

Operations in I Corps Tactical Zone

January

(C) The level of enemy activity fluctuated during the month. In the DMZ area, elements of the 803d NVA Regt were deployed in the area north of Con Thien and Gio Linh and in the

coastal area northeast of Dong Ha. Elements of the 270th NVA Independent Regt supported elements of the 803d NVA Regt and sustained heavy casualties in contact with friendly forces on Operation NAPOLEON. Elements of these same two enemy units conducted reconnaissance and probing actions in the Con Thien and Gio Linh area. The 164th and Van An Arty Regts supported these actions with attacks by fire on the strong point defenses. The 27th NVA Independent Bn remained in its normal operating area conducting reconnaissance and interdiction of LOCs. The 325C and 304th NVA Divs were deployed north and south of the Khe Sanh Combat Base respectively. In the Tri Thien MR, enemy activity was at a low level. Documents and agent reports indicated a general movement of enemy units toward the Hue and Phu Bai area with the intention of seizing the Thua Thien Province capital. Elements of the 4th NVA Regt continued to launch attacks against the Phu Loc District Headquarters and to interdict Route 1 in the Hai Van Pass area. On 3 January, in central I CTZ, the enemy conducted several coordinated small-scale attacks southwest of Da Nang and in the Hoi An area, probably as diversions for the 3 January rocket attack on the Da Nang Air Base by probable elements of the 368B NVA Arty Regt. Also on 3 January, in the Que Son area, elements of the 2d NVA Div attacked friendly forces at several landing zones supporting Operation WHEELER/WALLOWA. Two of these were supported by 122mm rocket fire, probably from elements of the 68th NVA Arty Regt. Reconnaissance, attacks by fire, and probing actions continued throughout the month and climaxed on 21 January when Khe Sanh Village and the Huong Hoa District Headquarters were overrun. Enemy activity during the remainder of the month was generally at a low level until the onset of the Lunar New Year. Beginning in the early morning hours of 30 January, the enemy launched a series of coordinated attacks against all major military installations and population centers in MR 5. The tempo of enemy-initiated activity was expected to increase during February, and large-scale attacks were expected through I CTZ, especially in the DMZ/Khe Sanh area.

(C) Large-scale Significant Attacks. On 2 January in Quang Ngai Province, the 406th VC Sapper Bn and Local Force elements attacked Nghia Nanh Subsector which was manned by two companies of the 3d Bn, 6th ARVN Regt, the 288th RF Company, RD Team #18, two PF Platoons, and a squad from the Province Reconnaissance Unit. Friendly losses included seven ARVN, two RF, eight PF, and one RD KIA; 19 ARVN, 20 PF, and one RD WIA; and 12 civilians wounded, seven houses destroyed, and six individual weapons. Enemy losses consisted of 72 KIA, five detainees, 14 individual weapons, one 57mm recoilless rifle, four B-40 rocket launchers, one .30 caliber machinegun, two BARs, four Thompson submachineguns, three AK-47 rifles, two M-79 grenade launchers, three carbines, and miscellaneous documents.

(C) On 7 January in Thua Thien Province, an estimated two enemy battalions, tentatively identified as the 802d NVA Bn and the K4B VC MF Bn, employing mortars, recoilless rifles, small arms, and automatic weapons assaulted the Phu Loc District Headquarters and the USMC/PF Combined Action Platoons H/5, H/6, and H/7, the command post of the 1/5th Mar Regt, and Co D of the 1st Bn, 5th Mar Regt in and around Phu Loc District Town. Friendly losses included one USA, 18 USMC, five ARVN, seven PF, and 15 RF KIA, one civilian killed; five USA, 87 USMC, nine ARVN, and 22 PF WIA; one civilian wounded, one ARVN MIA; one 60mm mortar and fifteen individual weapons. In addition, all buildings of the headquarters were destroyed; one bridge was destroyed and two were heavily damaged. Enemy losses were 91 KIA, 13 individual weapons, three crew-served weapons, and 13 explosive charges.

(C) On 18 January in Quang Ngai Province, an estimated enemy battalion, employing 82mm mortars, small arms, and automatic weapons, attacked elements of the 711 RF Co. Friendly losses included five RF KIA; 11 RF, nine ARVN, and two PF WIA; one .30 caliber

machinegun, five BARs, and 19 individual weapons were either lost or destroyed. Enemy losses were 40 KIA. One .30 caliber machinegun and one carbine were seized.

(C) The 812th NVA Regt and the 808th and 814B Bns of the 5th NVA Regt attacked the province capital of Quang Tri Province on 31 January. Enemy losses were 868 KIA and 87 detainees; 196 individual and 36 crew-served weapons were seized.

(C) On 31 January in Thua Thien Province, the 6th NVA Regt and elements of the 4th NVA Regt, employing small arms and automatic weapons, attacked the province capital and the MACV compound. Friendly losses were 16 US KIA and 59 WIA. Enemy losses were 300 KIA.

(C) The province capital of Quang Tin Province was attacked by the 72d VC LF Bn on 31 January. Friendly losses were three ARVN KIA and 56 WIA. Enemy losses were 282 KIA and 70 detainees. Eighty-six individual and 14 crew-served weapons and one AN/PRC-10 radio were seized.

(C) On 31 January in Quang Ngai Province, elements of the VC 406th Sapper, 120th Montagnard, 81st MF, 107th AA, 409th Sapper, 38tn and 48th VC LF Bns attacked the province capital. Friendly losses were 51 KIA, 140 WIA, and 16 weapons. Enemy losses were 642 KIA and 35 detainees; 190 individual and 42 crew-served weapons were seized. 263

February

(C) The enemy launched coordinated attacks by fire and ground assaults on military installations and population centers throughout I CTZ on 30 and 31 January. He was quickly repulsed from Quang Tri City, Da Nang, Hoi An, Tam Ky, and Quang Ngai City suffering heavy casualties. Fighting persisted in the Hue Citadel, however, until 25 February. The NVA 270th Independent, the Van An Artillery, and the 164th Artillery Regts remained in the DMZ area conducting sporadic harassments and attacks by fire against Allied positions. Elements of the 320th NVA Div and 27th NVA Independent Bn attacked friendly forces at Cam Lo on 2 and 7 February and remained in the Con Thien-Gio Linh-Dong Ha-Camp Carroll area. The 325C and 304th NVA Divs continued their encirclement of the Khe Sanh area. On 6 February, elements of the 95C NVA Regt unsuccessfully assaulted Hill 861 while artillery, mortars, and rockets pounded the Khe Sanh Combat Base. On 7 February, elements of the 304th NVA Div overran the Lang Vei Special Forces Camp and again attacked the combat base by fire. The enemy again attacked the combat base by fire on 23 and 25 February but did not launch any sizable ground assaults during the remainder of the month. The 803d NVA Regt, after deploying to the coastal area south of the DMZ, crossed the Cua Viet River and remained in an area approximately 10 kilometers north-northeast of Quang Tri City. Elements of the regiment harassed Allied shipping on the Cua Viet River in an attempt to isolate Dong Ha from waterborne resupply and to secure a personnel/logistics resupply route. The 5th and 812th NVA Regts remained in the vicinity of Quang Tri City. Interrogation of a PW indicated that the 812th NVA Regt was resubordinated to the Thien MR. In mid-February, the enemy, using 122mm rockets, attacked friendly forces by fire in the vicinity of Base Area 101, confirming the presence of a U/I rocket battalion in the area. Rocket attacks also confirmed the presence of a U/I rocket battalion in the Hue/Phu Bai area. Beginning 31 January at Hue, the 6th NVA Regt, the 804th Bn of the 4th NVA Regt, the Hue City NVA Sapper Bn, and the 810th VC LF Bn attacked the city from the west and south. There were 2,500 prisoners released from the Hue City Jail, of which at least 500 were probably immediately impressed in order to compensate for high casualties. The

enemy was finally ejected from the Citadel on 25 February; however, his forces still remained on the outskirts of the city. Interrogation of PWs indicated that enemy units in the area had received an unknown number of replacements, mostly of poor quality. The enemy morale in the area was low. Captured documents indicated the presence in the Hue area of the 29th Regt, 325C NVA Div from the Khe Sanh area and the 90th Regiment, 324B NVA Div from the central DMZ. In the Phu Loc area, elements of the 804th Bn of the 4th NVA Regt attacked and overran the district headquarters on 31 January. The battalion then returned to the mountains in the Phu Loc District. Except for intermittent interdiction of Highway 1, the battalion remained in this area. Elements of the 402d VC Sapper Bn, R-20 Local Force Bn, and the Da Nang City Unit made an unsuccessful attempt to overrun the I CTZ Headquarters in Da Nang. The 368B NVA Arty Regt launched attacks by fire in the Da Nang area on 30 January and 3 February. At Hoi An, elements of the 3d Regt, 2d NVA Div and the V-25 VC Local Force Sapper Bn unsuccessfully attacked the 51st ARVN Regt. The V-25 VC Local Force Sapper Bn returned to its island base area 10 kilometers southwest of Hoi An. The 3d NVA Regt sustained over 250 KIA in early February and returned to the vicinity of Base Area 116. On 31 January, the newly created Quang Tin Provincial Force, consisting of the 70th, 72d, and 74th VC Bns, attacked Tam Ky but were driven back almost immediately, sustaining heavy losses. Towards the end of February, they were again contacted in the Tam Ky area and once again sustained heavy losses. The 68th NVA Rocket Regt (-) split its two battalions. The 1st Bn remained inactive throughout the month in the mountains in the Quang Tin/Quang Nam border area. The 3d Bn remained in the vicinity of Base Area 117 with the exception of its 5 and 14 February rocket attacks against Chu Lai. Elements of all battalions in Quang Ngai Province were involved in the 31 January attack on the Province Capital. This included local force companies and platoons from as far south as Duc Pho District. The enemy sustained over 800 casualties in the attack. A PW, who was a company commander in the 48th VC LF Bn, stated that the assistant battalion commander and three company commanders were killed in the action. In an attempt to fill its depleted ranks, the 48th VC LF Bn upgraded local force companies and platoons and guerrillas. PWs substantiated the formation of the 401st Sapper Regt from the 107th NVA AA, 120th VC MF, and 406th VC Sapper Bns. A captured document disclosed the possible formation of a 328th VC Regt from the 81st VC MF Bn, the 38th VC LF Bn and two separate companies. During the remainder of the month, enemy activity was at a low level in southern I CTZ.

(C) Large-scale Significant Attacks. On 8 February in Quang Nam, the 3d Bn, 31st Regt, 341st NVA Div attacked Combined Action Platoon E/4. Friendly forces suffered 15 KIA, 57 WIA, and six MIA. Enemy losses consisted of 152 KIA with 20 individual weapons, one mortar tube, CHICOM grenades, and four B-40 rockets. 264

March

(C) Enemy-initiated activity was at a relatively low level throughout I CTZ, although attacks by fire continued. In the DMZ area, two enemy track vehicles, reportedly destroyed by artillery on 5 March, were later identified as wooden dummies fitted with pipe sections to resemble quadmounted guns. The 52d and 64th Regts, 320th NVA Div were deployed north of Route 9 from Camp Carroll to the Cua Viet River. Agent reports indicated that the 48th NVA Regt moved to a position southwest of Quang Tri City. The 164th and Van An Arty Regts conducted repeated attacks by fire on Dong Ha and Cua Viet facilities. On 16 March, the enemy employed 107mm rockets for the first time in I CTZ in an attack by fire on the Dong Ha Combat Base. Elements of the NVA 52d, 270th Independent, and the newly infiltrated 27th Regts were involved in interdiction of Allied shipping on the Cua Viet River. These units sustained heavy

losses in contact in the coastal area northeast of Dong Ha as they attempted to counter Allied sweep operations which threatened their resupply route. In the Khe Sanh area, elements of the 325C and 304th NVA Divs extended their trench and tunnel systems while the combat base was subjected to daily attacks by fire. During the last week of March, attacks by fire and construction of field fortifications sharply decreased and ground activity was limited to several probes. Photo reconnaissance on 18 March provided the first confirmation of 57mm AAA weapons in the Khe Sanh area. In the Tri Thien MR, the enemy generally avoided contact in order to resupply. The 5th NVA Regt remained around the periphery of Quang Tri City while elements of the 812th NVA Regt were deployed east and southeast of the city and in Base Area 101. The 803d NVA Regt deployed to positions north and northwest of Hue and conducted small unit countersweeps and interdiction of Perfume River traffic. Elements of the 29th and 90th NVA Regts were deployed west of the city. The 90th NVA Regt probably conducted the 21 March attack on friendly positions 6 kilometers north west of Hue while the enemy generally avoided contact in order to resupply and refit. Route 547 from the A Shau Valley developed into a major enemy supply route, and truck movements intensified despite limited friendly operations in the area. Along this route to Hue, Special Forces teams discovered caches containing assorted small arms, antitank, and artillery ammunition. Photo reconnaissance of 22 March revealed a possible T-54 tank on Route 922, west of the Laotian border. In central I CTZ on 4 March, the 368B NVA Arty Regt conducted rocket attacks on military installations in the Da Nang area. The simultaneous attacks against a number of targets indicated that the regiment was divided into several firing detachments to avoid the danger of massing battalion-sized firing elements. This tactic greatly increased the enemy's capability to launch coordinated attacks on separated targets. Agent reports continued to reflect the buildup of enemy forces near Hoi An where the R-20 and V-25 VC Bns reportedly had been reinforced. Major elements of the 2d NVA Div were deployed west of Base Area 116 and avoided contact. Visual and photo reconnaissance disclosed motorable sections of Route 548 extending into Quang Nam Province. Interrogation of a detainee revealed that the enemy formed Special Zone 44 in late November or early December 1967. It had since developed into a major headquarters subordinate to MR 5 and possibly controlled all tactical activity in central I CTZ. On 1 March, a trawler loaded with munitions made an unsuccessful attempt to resupply enemy forces in southern I CTZ. During the remainder of the month, the enemy, through recruitment and impressment, continued attempts to replace personnel lost during the Tet Offensive.

(C) Large-scale Significant Attacks. In Thua Thien Province on 21 March, an estimated enemy battalion (probably an element of the 90th NVA Regt) attacked the night defensive position of the 2d Bn, 501st Abn Inf. Friendly losses were seven KIA and 15 WIA. Enemy losses included 22 KIA, three detained, two crew-served weapons, 26 rounds of 60mm mortar, and seven blocks of TNT. [265]

April

(C) During the month, the enemy placed maximum emphasis on the collection of rice and the improvement of LOCs to support the next phase of his offensive. Enemy tactical activity was at a relatively reduced level throughout the corps area. At Khe Sanh, Operation PEGASUS/LAM SON 207 encountered light resistance and found evidence that enemy battlefield discipline had declined. PWs indicated that the 325C NVA Div had abandoned the Khe Sanh area, leaving the 2d Bn, 101D Regt and the 8th Bn, 29th Regt to augment the 304th NVA Div. After sustaining heavy casualties due to air and artillery strikes, major elements of the 304th NVA Div had withdrawn from the immediate battlefield to resupply and refit in Laos. Small, ineffective raid

parties harassed outposts in an attempt to contain Allied forces in the area. In the eastern DMZ, major elements of the 320th NVA Div had withdrawn to the north to resupply and train. Toward the end of the month, the enemy began massing his forces north of Dong Ha with a view towards attacking that Allied logistical hub. Allied sweep operations inflicted severe casualties on elements of the 320th NVA Div and blunted the unit's plans. In the Quang Tri City area, the enemy was occupied in protecting his base area. A PW identified the rocket unit located in Base Area 101 as the 1st Bn, 84th Arty Regt, AKA, the Van An Arty Regt). These were previously considered to be two separate artillery regiments. From his statements and from captured documents, the 4th Bn, 84th Arty Regt was identified as the rocket unit which had been operating in the area north of Dong Ha. On 19 April, Operation DELAWARE/LAM SON 216 was launched as a spoiling action in the A Shau Valley/Route 547 area, a logistic base and infiltration route used by the enemy since March 1966. The enemy, consisting primarily of engineer and support units, chose to evade major confrontation and allowed friendly forces to seize valuable equipment and ordnance. The discovery of a cache containing 122mm D-74 ammunition provided the first evidence of the enemy's medium field artillery capability south of the DMZ. Other items identified were 23mm and 37mm AAA, 76mm tank, 85mm artillery ammunition, and a previously destroyed PT-76 tank. The denial to the enemy of this main infiltration route and logistics base had a substantial effect on his capability to support offensive operations. Northwest of Hue, US and ARVN forces conducting Operation CARENTAN II inflicted heavy casualties on elements of the 90th and 803d NVA Regts which had massed for an attack on the city. In central I CTZ, the enemy continued to construct the new road leading from the A Shau Valley and Base Area 607 into Quang Nam Province. It was completed to a point approximately 35 kilometers west-northwest of Thuong Duc. Agent reports indicated that the enemy was preparing to launch the next phase of his offensive and that participating units were to be in position near the end of April. Several PWs, captured while on reconnaissance missions, pointed toward Da Nang as a primary targ t. In Quang Tin Province, several PWs indicated that the 72d VC Local Force Bn had been experiencing recruitment difficulties and had not yet recovered from the losses suffered during the first phase of their offensive.[266]

May

(C) In I CTZ on the morning of 5 May, the enemy launched wide-spread attacks by fire and limited ground probes, primarily in the southern three provinces. The number of targets and the timing of the attacks gave the appearance of a major offensive, but the level of activity was considerably less than that encountered during Phase I of the general offensive. Throughout the month, enemy activity remained at a high level as he attempted to maintain an active presence in as much of I CTZ as possible. By the middle of the month, the regiments of the 304th NVA Div had returned to the vicinity of the Khe Sanh Combat Base from Laos where they had been refitting. In the eastern DMZ, the 320th NVA Div continued to suffer extremely heavy casualties. Large numbers of replacements were received by the division. Some infiltration groups were used to fill out battalions which had been decimated; others were broken up and assigned to different units. The quality of replacements was often low since some were given only a few days of training before commitment to battle. In the Quang Tri City and Hue areas, enemy units concentrated primarily on rice collection, refitting, and harassing actions. A large training camp, probably belonging to the 803d Regt, was discovered northeast of Hue. ARVN units operating in Base Area 114 uncovered two enemy headquarters containing communications equipment, numerous documents, and a sand table model of the Hue Citadel, indicating that Hue remained the enemy's objective. In the A Shau Valley, documents were discovered identifying two artillery and two antiaircraft battalions of the 65th Arty Regt and 3d Bn of the 280th Arty Regt. Operation DELAWARE/LAM SON 216 terminated on 17 May. On 22 May in the A Shau Valley, an aerial observer sighted five or six heavily loaded trucks, five of which were

subsequently destroyed. This indicated that the NVA were again using the A Shau Valley as a logistics route. In central I CTZ, documents and prisoners established the presence of the newly infiltrated 36th NVA Regt in the Go Noi Island area of eastern Quang Nam Province where a series of sharp engagements occurred throughout the month. After a period of refitting in the Quang Tin Province/Laos border area, the 1st VC Regt and 2d NVA Div attacked the Kham Duc Special Forces Camp and nearby CIDG camp in eastern Quang Tin Province on 10, 11, and 12 May. By the end of the month, the 1st VC Regt had rejoined the 3d Regt in eastern Quang Tin Province. The location of the 21st Regt, 2d NVA Div was still unknown. In Quang Ngai Province, enemy activity remained at a low level as his units continued to be reported as understrength.

(C) Large-scale Significant Attacks. On 10 May in Quang Tri Province, the 1st VC NT2 Regt attacked and overran Kam Duc and Ngok Tavak Special [illegible] camp. Friendly losses included 14 KIA, 21 WIA, two crew-served weapons, and an [illegible] of miscellaneous equipment and structures destroyed.

(C) On 28 May in Quang Tri Province, an unidentified enemy battalion [illegible] sibly an element of the 9th or 66B NVA Regt) attacked the night defensive position of Co F, [illegible] Marine Division. Friendly losses included 13 KIA and 14 WIA. The enemy lost 2 [illegible] and 58 individual and five crew-served weapons. 267

June

(C) Throughout the month enemy initiated activity was very light. In Quang Tri Province lack of contact with elements of either the 320th or 304th NVA Divs suggested that the divisions may have withdrawn from their respective areas of operation to assimilate replacements and to resupply. At Khe Sanh, however, enemy-initiated activity remained moderate with elements of the 88th and 102d Regts, 308th NVA Div conducting small-scale assaults on Allied outposts. Prisoners revealed the presence of the 83d Engr Regt south of Khe Sanh which had the mission of building a road from the Laos border toward Hue, probably as an alternate route for the A Shau Valley/Route 547 complex to support infiltration into Base Areas 101 and 114. Attacks by fire in the eastern DMZ remained high as the enemy attempted to destroy the logistics complexes at both Dong Ha and Cua Viet. The 27th Regt remained in the Con Thien-Dong Ha area to ambush and to counter Allied sweep operations. Rice denial operations inflicted significant casualties on elements of both the 7th Front (AKA Quang Tri Liberation Front) in the coastal zone of eastern Quang Tri Province and the 5th NVA Regt east of Phu Bai. Major enemy forces in Military Region Tri-Hue, however, had withdrawn to traditional base areas only to come under increasing pressure from friendly operations. There, as in the remainder of the I CTZ area, the enemy chose to avoid major confrontations and was forced to abandon several headquarters areas as well as rice and ammunition caches. Terrorist activity in the southern half of I CTZ increased. In Da Nang the incidents were chiefly aimed at US installations and troops, yet ARVN and GVN facilities were also targets. Reports indicated that the enemy would attempt to reestablish control of the Go Noi Island area using the 2d NVA Div as its main force. This action was designed to allow other forces to mount offensive operations against district towns and cities in the Quang Nam lowlands. Da Nang remained the enemy's chief objective. In Quang Ngai, a province-wide propaganda campaign was initiated while terrorist activity was directed against refugee and Revolutionary Development programs. A detainee revealed the deployment of at least two regiments of the 3d NVA Div (2d VC and 22d NVA) to Quang Ngai from Binh Dinh Province.

(C) Large-scale Significant Attacks. On 18 June in Quang Tri Province an estimated enemy battalion, possibly elements of the 88th or 120th NVA Regt, shelled and then attacked the 3d Bn, 4th Mar. Friendly losses were 11 KIA and 30 WIA. Enemy losses included 128 KIA, 29 individual and nine crew-served weapons. [268]

July

(C) During the month enemy-initiated activity was very light. Throughout I CTZ enemy forces generally avoided contact and concentrated on receiving supplies and replacements in preparation for further offensive activity. In western Quang Tri Province, Allied forces completed withdrawal from the Khe Sanh Combat Base. Continued lack of contact with the 304th NVA Div suggested that it had permanently withdrawn from the area. Lack of significant contact with the 88th and 102d Regts, 308th NVA Div indicated that these units were also withdrawn from the area. Their status was uncertain but, with the lessening of Allied presence in western Quang Tri Province, they may have been preparing to join their sister 36th Regt in eastern Quang Nam Province. The 320th NVA Div remained north of the DMZ refitting; however, by the end of the month agents and prisoners indicated that battalion-sized elements had returned to the central and eastern DMZ areas. Prisoners and documents captured in contacts from 5 to 7 July revealed that the 138th NVA Regt was in the Gio Linh area. In MR Tri - Thien - Hue, major elements remained in their traditional base areas and came under heavy pressure from friendly operations JEB STUART and NEVADA EAGLE. These operations led to the discovery of numerous weapons and ammunition caches as well as the main hospital in the military region. A 25 June Party Committee resolution complained of "grave logistics problems because supply lines are being threatened." Despite significant contacts along Route 547, the enemy attempted to defend his supply routes, something he did not do in April when the routes were threatened by Operation DELAWARE/LAM SON 207. A village Party Secretary rallier stated that July was set aside for training and refitting. August was reserved for the "decisive battle for revolutionary history" emphasizing the goal of enemy units throughout the CTZ. In central I CTZ, all reports indicated that Da Nang remained the main objective of the next enemy offensive. At the end of the month, rocket attacks against Allied installations near and within the city increased. A reconnaissance squad was captured within Da Nang. A large cache of explosives and arms was found in the city. Several documents revealed that Front 4 had initiated a counter-famine movement in July and August. A prisoner indicated that the 21st Regt, 2d NVA Div left the Quang Tin - Laos border area to rejoin the other two regiments of the division in central Quang Tin Province. In Quang Ngai Province ground activity remained light although there were numerous attacks by fire on ARVN and Popular Force installations. The 2d VC and 22d NVA Regts of the 3d NVA Div remained in the Song Be Valley. [269]

August

(C) During August the enemy increased preparations for offensive activity. On 23 August widespread attacks-by-fire and ground assaults throughout the CTZ ended the lull in I CTZ. Significant contacts with enemy forces continued for the remainder of the month. In northern Quang Tri Province, the 320th NVA Div and the 27th and 138th NVA Regts moved into offensive positions south of the DMZ and Route 9. The 138th suffered heavy losses in an engagement on 16 August near Gio Linh and it was believed to have withdrawn into North Vietnam. Subsequently, the 270th NVA Regt moved into positions south of the DMZ, apparently replacing the 138th Regt. Although friendly forces made several significant contacts with enemy forces in the

DMZ area, the enemy failed to launch a major attack against Allied installations in northern Quang Tri Province. Captured documents and PW interrogations revealed that enemy units in MR Tri - Thien - Hue remained in their base areas and were suffering severe food shortages. This may in part account for the light enemy activity in Thua Thien and eastern Quang Tri Provinces. On 26 August, US elements possibly penetrated the main base area of the 5th NVA Regt, 25 kilometers south of Hue. After a series of hard-fought engagements, a large amount of weapons, ammunition, and communications equipment and two field hospitals were seized. Da Nang was the principal objective in the enemy's current offensive in central I CTZ. Large concentrations of enemy troops had been observed in the coastal lowlands of eastern Quang Nam Province. On 23 August, enemy forces in coastal MR 5 launched rocket, mortar, sapper, and ground attacks on Allied installations throughout the Da Nang/Hoi An area. These and numerous other contacts in the same area during the last week of August resulted in over 1,200 enemy killed. An agent reported that from 13 to 19 August elements of the 29th NVA Regt were deployed in an area 30 kilometers northwest of Da Nang. On 29 August, a significant increase in the number of people in Elephant Valley was detected, possibly reflecting additional enemy movement toward Da Nang. In Quang Tin Province, on 24 and 25 August, friendly elements inflicted heavy losses on elements of the 2d NVA Div during engagements west of Tam Ky. These heavy losses may have inhibited the intended enemy offensive activity against Tam Ky and Chu Lai. In Quang Ngai Province enemy units, including elements of the 3d NVA Div, massed in the mountains west of Quang Ngai City. During the final week of August, the Ha Thanh Special Forces Camp received heavy rocket, mortar, and small arms attacks. These attacks were probably designed to cover movement of enemy troops and equipment into the Quang Ngai lowlands in anticipation of offensive activity against Quang Ngai City.

(C) Large-scale Significant Attacks. On 2 August in Quang Ngai Province, an unidentified enemy battalion attacked Combined Action Platoon 1-3-3. Friendly forces suffered 13 KIA, one civilian killed, and nine WIA. Enemy losses consisted of 29 KIA and 20 individual weapons seized.

(C) On 23 August in Quang Nam Province, the R-20 VC LF Bn attacked the Marble Mountain Air Facility. Friendly forces suffered 16 KIA and 125 WIA. Enemy losses were 32 KIA.

(C) On 23 August in Quang Nam Province, an unidentified enemy battalion (possibly the 402d VC MF Sapper Bn) attacked D Co, 1st MP Bn (USMC). Friendly forces suffered 11 KIA and 68 WIA. The enemy lost 152 KIA, three detainees, 45 individual and one crew-served weapon, and 440 kilograms of TNT.

(C) An unidentified enemy battalion attacked Dien Ban District Town in Quang Nam Province on 24 August. Friendly forces suffered seven KIA, 26 WIA, and 193 houses destroyed. The enemy lost 10 KIA, three individual weapons, and 20 hand grenades. [270]

September

(C) During the month of September, enemy activity remained fairly heavy. In the central DMZ there were numerous light contacts with the 320th NVA Div and many large ammunition and weapons caches were discovered. However, by the end of the month, prisoners' statements and decreasing opposition to friendly sweep operations indicated that elements of the 320th NVA Div had relinquished their offensive posture and were evading or possibly withdrawing. In the eastern DMZ, the 270th NVA Regt probably remained in North Vietnam. Friendly forces made several significant contacts with the 27th and 138th NVA Regts which prevented these units from

launching any major attacks on Allied positions in northern Quang Tri Province. In MR Tri-Thien-Hue, major enemy units remained in their base areas and activity continued to be extremely light. Documents and prisoners indicated that enemy units in MR Tri-Thien-Hue were suffering from severe food shortages. Operations east of Hue on Vinh Loc Island and in Phu Vang District were highly successful in disrupting the enemy's rest areas and reducing the effectiveness of his local forces. In central I CTZ, enemy pressure on Da Nang decreased. West of Hoi An, heavy contacts with the 36th NVA Regt greatly reduced its strength. One prisoner stated that the companies in his battalion had only 35 men each. In central Quang Nam Province, prisoners and documents indicated that the 21st Regt, 2d NVA Div had deployed into the province from the Kham Duc area in Quang Tin Province. The presence of the 141st NVA Regt in Quang Nam was also confirmed. At the end of the month these two new units, the 21st and 141st Regts and possibly the 31st NVA Regt, were threatening the Thuong Duc Special Forces Camp. In Quang Tin Province the 1st VC Regt, 2d NVA Div suffered heavy losses in contacts west of Tam Ky just as it had experienced in August. On 22 September, the 3d Regt of the 2d NVA Div unsuccessfully attacked Hau Duc District Headquarters and suffered over 200 killed. In Quang Ngai Province, the two regiments of the 3d NVA Div and the 401st NVA Sapper Regt continued to pose threats to Quang Ngai City and Ha Thanh Special Forces Camp but no significant activity occurred.

(C) Large-scale Significant Attacks. On 17 September in Quang Nam Province, an unidentified enemy battalion (possibly the 103d Bn of the 31st NVA Regt) attacked the night defensive position of the 39th ARVN Ranger Bn. Friendly losses consisted of 27 KIA, 55 WIA, 21 MIA, and 15 individual weapons. The enemy lost 134 KIA, eight individual and five crew-served weapons.

(C) On 22 September in Quang Ngai Province, an unidentified enemy battalion (possibly the 120th VC MF Bn) shelled and then attacked the Ha Than Post manned by RD cadre. Friendly losses were five KIA and five WIA. The enemy lost 50 KIA, three detainees, and 19 individual weapons.

(C) In Quang Tin Province, on 22 September an unidentified enemy battalion (possibly elements of the 3d NVA Regt) shelled and then attacked Hau Duc District Town. Friendly forces lost 14 KIA and 20 WIA. Enemy losses consisted of 91 KIA, 11 detainees, and 33 individual and four crew-served weapons. 271

October

(C) During October, enemy activity decreased significantly from that of September. In the central DMZ, the 320th NVA Div engaged in squad-sized contacts during the early part of the month. Indications were that the 320th NVA Div had withdrawn into NVN. In the eastern DMZ, elements of the 138th NVA Regt and possibly the 270th NVA Regt were engaged just south of the Ben Hai River. There were no significant contacts in the western DMZ. In MR Tri-Thien-Hue, major enemy units remained in remote base areas and activity remained extremely light. Captured prisoners and documents continued to indicate that Allied operations caused a shortage of food and a deterioration of infrastructure in MR Tri-Thien-Hue. In central I CTZ, enemy activity was centered around Thuong Duc Special Forces Camp. Elements of possibly the 141st, 21st, and 31st NVA Regts were deployed around the camp until about 20 October. Allied operations conducted near the camp inflicted heavy losses on the enemy forces, particularly on the 141st Regt. Friendly reconnaissance elements northwest of An Hoa observed large numbers of

enemy troops engaged in transporting ammunition. Artillery and air strikes inflicted heavy casualties on these enemy troops which were possibly elements of the 21st NVA Regt. In Quang Tin and Quang Ngai Provinces, the 2d and 3d NVA Divs remained in their base areas and did not engage in any significant activity. [272]

November

(C) During the month enemy activity increased significantly from that of October. Allied positions south of the DMZ received attacks-by-fire from within and south of the DMZ. The enemy increased his troop movement and preparation of fortifications within the eastern DMZ and continued his interdiction of the Cua Viet River LOC. In the DMZ area there were no significant ground contacts because enemy forces subordinate to the B-5 Front remained out of contact. In MR TTH, major enemy units remained in remote base areas and avoided contact. A PW indicated that MR TTH cadre, troops, and wounded personnel were to be returned to the mountain areas for a reorganization of forces. In northern MR 5, enemy activity increased significantly, climaxing in coordinated attacks by fire and ground probes throughout central and southern I CTZ on the night of 16 November. A main assault against Da Nang by the 38th Regt, scheduled for 19 November, was probably preempted by the failure of two enemy ground attacks during the early morning hours of 17 November. The 3d Bn, 31st NVA Regt failed to seize and hold the Tuy Loan Bridge 11 kilometers southwest of Da Nang. A 36th NVA Regt assault against Dien Ban Town and District Headquarters, 9 kilometers west-northwest of Hoi An, was repulsed. A Hoi Chanh revealed that the mission of the 2nd Bn, 141st NVA Regt was to maintain pressure against the Thuong Duc Special Forces Camp. This tactic was intended to draw Allied forces out of Da Nang to facilitate further attacks against the city by the 31st and 36th NVA Regts. PWs and captured documents, however, revealed that the 31st, 36th, and 38th NVA Regts were probably incapable of major offensive activity at this time. The 36th NVA Regt suffered 305 killed on the night of 15 November when it attacked Dien Ban District Town in Quang Nam Province. In Quang Tin Province, the 2nd NVA Div remained in its base area; it was not involved in significant activity. PWs located the 2nd VC Regt and the 22nd NVA Regt, 3d NVA Div southwest of Quang Ngai City. The 22nd NVA Regt reportedly received 300 replacements in October, possibly in preparation for attacks against Quang Ngai city. [273]

December

(C) During the month, enemy activity increased from that of November. Friendly positions south of the DMZ in the Rockpile area received harassing mortar and rocket attacks from within and south of the DMZ. In the eastern DMZ, aerial and ground observers reported several sightings of the enemy in groups as large as 30 men. However, there were no significant contacts reported in the DMZ during the month. On 18 December, suspected elements of the 31st Gp, 27th NVA Regt attacked the Vinh Dai Village southwest of Cam Lo with small arms and B-40 rocket fire. This attack was characteristic of most enemy-initiated incidents throughout the CTZ. In MR TTH, the enemy increased his harassing attacks on population centers and Allied positions. On 4 December, the Phong Dien District Headquarters and Nhi Vien Orphanage received an estimated 50 rounds of 82mm mortar and rocket-propelled grenade fire. In northern MR 5, the enemy increased his attacks-by-fire, harassing attacks, and ground assaults on Allied installations. The air facilities at Da Nang and Chu Lai underwent rocket attacks twice during the month. On 18 December, the enemy conducted three harassing attacks within Tam Ky City, resulting in minor casualties. Captured documents and PWs revealed that the

enemy completed the K-1 phase of his Winter/Spring Campaign and he was conducting the K-2 phase. In Quang Nam Province, Operation MEADE RIVER terminated on 9 December with more than 1,000 enemy killed. As a result of this successful cordon operation, the 2d and 3d Bns of the 36th NVA Regt were considered to be combat ineffective. During the period 23 to 26 December, the enemy suffered an additional 350 killed near An Hoa. The enemy unit was identified as the 21st Regt, 2d NVA Div. An additional 70 enemy were killed just north of An Hoa on 31 December. [274]

Operations in II Corps Tactical Zone

January

(C) During January, enemy activity in the western highlands was characterized by attacks by fire, interdiction of LOCs, sapper attacks, and large-scale infiltration of enemy units into major cities. In the coastal areas, friendly units contacted elements of the 3d NVA Div in Binh Dinh Province, resulting in a significant reduction in enemy combat effectiveness. On 30 and 31 January, the enemy conducted simultaneous attacks on principal areas of population throughout the CTZ. On 14 and 15 January, Ben Het and a nearby fire support base received 99 rounds of 82mm mortar fire. In early January, captured documents, detainee statements, and agent reports indicated enemy plans to conduct offensive activity in the Kontum/Pleiku City areas. On 10 January, possible elements of the 304th VC Local Force Battalion attacked Kontum Airfield with satchel charges. On 11 January, possible elements of this battalion attacked a village northwest of Kontum City. On 15 January, in central Kontum Province, elements of the 4th Bn, 24th NVA Regt ambushed a friendly convoy traveling on Highway 14. On 30 January, the enemy initiated offensive activity in the Kontum City area with attacks by fire and large-scale infiltration into Kontum City. This high level of enemy activity continued throughout the rest of the month. In the Pleiku City area on 1 January, friendly forces contacted possible elements of the 4th Bn, 95B NVA Regt and the H-15 Local Force Bn ambushed a 40-vehicle convoy traveling on Highway 19 east of the city. From 19 to 27 January, enemy units conducted attacks by fire and attempted ground attacks in the Pleiku City/Camp Holloway area. On 30 January, friendly installations in the Pleiku City area received attacks by fire followed by enemy infiltration into the city. By 31 January, the city was again under friendly control. During January, probable elements of the E-301 VC Local Force Bn conducted three attacks by fire against friendly installations in the Ban Me Thuot area. On 21 and 24 January, enemy forces attacked friendly hamlets northeast and southeast of Ban Me Thuot, resulting in a total of 51 friendly deaths. On 30 January, enemy forces entered Ban Me Thuot. On the coast, heavy contacts were made with elements of the 3d NVA Div in Binh Dinh Province. Friendly sweep operations, conducted between 29 December and 4 January, resulted in a total of 212 enemy killed, probably from the 2d VC and 18th NVA Regts. The 93d and 95th Bns of the 2d VC Regt were identified in contacts on 10 and 23 January near Phu My. On 24 January, south-southeast of Phu Cat, friendly forces contacted elements of the 9th Bn, 18th NVA Regt, resulting in 240 enemy killed. On 30 January, elements of the 5th Bn, 95th NVA Regt attacked Tuy Hoa North Airfield. On 30 and 31 January, enemy forces initiated mortar attacks against LZ English, an ARVN compound at Phu My, and an army supply depot in Qui Nhon. On 30 January, elements of the 18B NVA Regt and the K-90, K-91, and T-88 Sapper Bns attacked military installations and villages in Ninh Hoa and Nha Trang. In MR 6, enemy activity remained at a low level. However, on 31 January, elements of the 482d VC Local Force Bn attacked Phan Thiet with mortar fire and a ground assault, resulting in 120 enemy killed.

(C) Large-scale Significant Attacks. On 10 January in Phu Yen Province, the 93d Bn of the 2d VC Regt and one artillery company subordinate to the 3d NVA Div, employing mortar, B-40 rockets, small arms, and automatic weapons, attacked the 2/41st ARVN Regt. Friendly forces suffered 14 ARVN KIA, three US and 35 ARVN WIA, and 21 ARVN MIA. Also, one 81mm mortar, one 60mm mortar, one .30 caliber machinegun, one 57mm recoilless rifle, one BAR, and 27 individual weapons were lost. Enemy losses were 41 KIA, one detainee, one 81mm mortar, two B-40 rocket launchers, and three M-1 rifles.

(C) An estimated enemy regiment, employing mortar and automatic weapons fire, attacked the province capital on 30 January in Kontum Province. Friendly losses were 17 KIA and 55 WIA. Enemy forces suffered 625 KIA and 12 detainees.

(C) In Pleiku Province on 30 January, the H-15 VC LF Bn, 407th VC Sapper Bn, 408th VC Sapper Bn, and possibly the 4th Bn of the 95B NVA Regt, employing small arms and automatic weapons, attacked the province capital. Friendly forces suffered one US and six ARVN KIA and 22 ARVN WIA. Enemy losses were 164 KIA and 94 individual weapons.

(C) Also on 30 January in Khan Hoa Province, an estimated enemy battalion, possibly the 7th Bn of the 18B NVA Regt, assaulted the province capital. Friendly losses were 14 US, 36 ARVN, and 14 CIDG KIA; and 13 US, 60 ARVN, 14 CIDG, and seven ROKA WIA. Enemy losses were 200 KIA, 60 detainees, and 82 individual and 15 crew-served weapons.

(C) Meanwhile in Darlac Province, on 30 January, an estimated two or three enemy battalions attacked the province capital. Friendly losses were nine US and 53 ARVN KIA; 58 US and 81 ARVN WIA; and one US MIA. In addition, three tanks were damaged. Enemy forces suffered 238 KIA, 113 detainees, and the loss of 100 individual and 13 crew-served weapons.

(C) An estimated enemy battalion, possibly the 5th Bn, of the 95th NVA Regt, attacked the north airfield of the province capital on 31 January in Phu Yen Province. Friendly losses were 17 US and seven ARVN KIA and 68 US and 29 ARVN WIA. Enemy losses were 207 KIA, 31 detainees, and 36 individual and eight crew-served weapons.

(C) In Binh Thuan Province on 31 January, an estimated two enemy battalions, employing mortar, small arms, and automatic weapons, attacked the province capital which included the MACV compound. Friendly losses were six ARVN KIA and 14 US and 31 ARVN WIA. Enemy losses were 120 KIA, 20 detainees, and 36 individual and seven crew-served weapons. 275

February

(C) On 30 January, the enemy initiated offensive actions in Kontum, Pleiku, Ban Me Thuot, Qui Nhon, Tuy Hoa, Ninh Hoa, and Nha Trang Cities. On 31 January, Phan Thiet was attacked. Dalat was attacked on 1 February. Ground attacks were generally preceded by attacks by fire aimed at GVN and US facilities. In the larger cities, the enemy infiltrated his forces into the populated areas and launched his attacks from within. Pleiku, Qui Nhon, and Ninh Hoa Cities were secure within a day after the enemy attacks. In Kontum and Ban Me Thuot Cities, where the major forces consisted of NVA units, the fighting continued for almost four days. After initial failures in Tuy Hoa and Phan Thiet, the enemy returned to the cities on 3 and 5 February respectively. Except for Dalat and Phan Thiet, the enemy withdrew to safe areas after being repulsed. In Dalat, the enemy held strong points within the city for almost three weeks. In

Phan Thiet, the enemy continued probing actions around the city. In Kontum City, the two NVA Bns of the 24th NVA Regt and the 304th VC Local Force Bn withdrew to the northwest and northeast after suffering heavy losses early in the month and remained relatively inactive. The relocation of two battalions of the 174th NVA Regt to the Kontum City area by 23 February enabled him to renew attacks in that area. The two sapper battalions and the local force battalion involved in the Tet Offensive in Pleiku City suffered heavy casualties and have not been identified since. The 4th and 5th Bns of the 95B NVA Regt were not identified in the Pleiku City action although they were located in the vicinity There was little contact with any of these units during February; however, standoff attacks by fire continued sporadically. In Ban Me Thuot, the two battalions of the 33d NVA Regt and the E-301 VC LF Bn suffered heavy casualties in early February. Although the K-101 NVA Bn was identified in contact, the degree of its involvement is unknown. After the battle, the 33d NVA Regt withdrew from the Ban Me Thuot area. During the remainder of the month, attacks by fire against Ban Me Thuot continued sporadically. The battles during the Tet Offensive in the coastal provinces were not as heavy as those in the western highlands. Nha Trang was the scene of the most significant action as the 7th Bn, 18B NVA Regt attacked the city. By 6 February, all units had withdrawn to their normal base areas and remained there during the remainder of the month. On 11 February, in Dalat, elements of the 186th and 145th VC MF Bns were finally expelled from holding actions within the city. They entered the city on 18 February, and after once again being repulsed, they withdrew and were not contacted during the remainder of the month. In Phan Thiet, the 482d and 840th VC MF Bns failed in their initial attempts to penetrate the city. Between 3 and 18 February, sporadic contacts continued in the outskirts of the city. On 18 February, the enemy again attacked and held sections of the city until they were repelled on 20 February. Sporadic contacts continued near the city during the remainder of the month. Throughout II CTZ, the enemy withdrew from the urban areas after his initial offensive. Minor attacks against hamlets, villages, and regional and popular force outposts near the large cities and attacks by fire on friendly installations continued throughout the month. Although there were no major contacts after the initial offensive, the enemy maintained his presence near the urban areas. In II CTZ, over 7,000 enemy were killed from 30 January as a result of the enemy's Tet Offensive and subsequent friendly sweep operations.

(C) Large-scale Significant Attacks. On 1 February in Kontum Province, an estimated NVA battalion (possibly the 2d Bn, 174th NVA Regt) attacked Dak To District Town and the adjacent Tan Canh Airfield. Friendly forces suffered four WIA while enemy losses were reported as 47 KIA.

(C) An estimated enemy battalion (possible elements of the 2d Bn, 174th NVA Regt) attacked the 42d ARVN Regt on 8 February in Kontum Province. Friendly losses were two KIA and 32 WIA. The enemy suffered 152 KIA and three detainees.

(C) In Kontum Province on 17 February, an estimated NVA battalion (possibly elements of the NVA 24th Regt) assaulted an RF outpost. Friendly forces lost 15 KIA, four WIA, 53 MIA, and an unknown number of weapons. Enemy losses are unknown. 276

March

(C) In II CTZ, occasional ground contacts and more frequent attacks by fire occurred while the enemy prepared for larger attacks. Enemy forces in Kontum Province conducted 12 attacks by fire on friendly installations. On 4 March, Kontum City Airfield received 18 to 20

rounds of 122mm rocket fire. On 13 March, 100 rounds of 82mm mortar fire were directed on Kontum Subsector Headquarters. On 17 March, Kontum Airfield received 37 rounds of 122mm rocket fire. Five more rockets were directed against the airfield on 20 March. On 28 March, the city received 35 rounds of 82mm mortar fire. On 20 March, a PF outpost 21 kilometers northeast of Kontum City received 100 82mm mortar rounds. The attacks by fire were relatively unsuccessful, resulting in only light casualties and minor property damage. On 6 March, possible elements of the 174th NVA Regt attacked a convoy on Highway 14, 12 kilometers south of Kontum City. Fifteen of the enemy were killed in the engagements. On 5 March, friendly forces contacted an estimated enemy battalion 24 kilometers west-southwest of Kontum City, killing seven of the enemy. On 25 March, a significant attack occurred when possible elements of the 24th NVA Regt assaulted an outpost 21 kilometers northeast of Kontum City. The largest engagement of the month occurred on 26 March when two to three NVA battalions attacked the fire support base of the 3d Bn, 8th Inf 31 kilometers west of Kontum City. Prisoners and documents captured during the engagement, in which 135 enemy were killed, point strongly to the establishment of a newly infiltrated regiment in the province. Its designation could not be firmly determined, but documents suggest that it may have been the 209th NVA Regt. Other documents, referring to E-320, indicated that one battalion of the 32d NVA Regt would either accompany or constitute a part of the new regiment. Friendly installations in Pleiku Province received 12 attacks by fire during the month. As in Kontum Province, the common weapons were 82mm mortars and 122mm rockets. Resulting casualties and damage were light. On 13 March, north of Pleiku City, probable elements of the 174th NVA Regt ambushed a convoy on Route 14. The enemy suffered 48 KIA while friendly losses were 16 KIA and 10 WIA. On 15 March, probable elements of the 5th Bn, 95B NVA Regt ambushed a convoy on Highway 19, east of Pleiku City. A PW, captured on 25 March, indicated that his unit, the 408th VC Sapper Bn, had attacked a PSYOP radio station near Pleiku City on the previous day. Darlac Province was the scene of large unit contacts on 5 and 6 March when ARVN forces engaged the 3d Bn, 33d NVA Regt, 11 kilometers north-northeast of Ban Me Thuot. Enemy losses were 34 KIA while friendly forces suffered 10 KIA and 43 WIA. On 18 March, ARVN forces contacted an enemy company 12 kilometers northwest of the province capital, killing 12 enemy and capturing one. Another battalion-sized contact occurred on 20 March when US and ARVN forces engaged the 3d Bn, 33d NVA Regt and the regimental mortar company 17 kilometers northwest of Ban Me Thuot. Thirty-five of the enemy were killed and two detained. On 26 March, a mobile strike force company contacted an enemy battalion 21 kilometers north of Ban Me Thuot, killing eight. Enemy units in the area included the 1st and 3d Bns, 33d NVA Regt; the probable K-39 Bn, a new element of the 33d NVA Regt; the K-101 Bn, and two battalions of the 32d NVA Regt in addition to local force units. Installations and units in the Ban Me Thuot area received seven attacks by fire during the month. The enemy employed 60mm and 82mm mortars and 75mm recoilless rifles in these attacks, producing only minor damage. In Binh Dinh Province, enemy forces were contacted on 23 occasions, most of which took place in the Phu My, Phu Cat, and Qui Nhon areas. Various field reports indicated that 812 enemy were killed in the province during March. One of the largest contacts occurred on 4 March when the 8th BN, 18th NVA Regt attacked Tuy Phuoc District Headquarters. In Phu Yen Province, Tuy Hoa was the scene of an attack on 4 March in which 206 enemy were killed. The southern provinces of II CTZ experienced only sporadic, light contact. Interdiction of LOCs was the principal enemy activity.

(C) Large-scale Significant Attacks. On 4 March in Binh Dinh Province, the 8th Bn, 18th NVA Regt employing mortar and small arms attacked Tuy Phuoc District Headquarters. Friendly losses were six WIA while enemy forces suffered 125 KIA, three detained, and 24 individual and 14 crew-served weapons.

(C) The 8th Bn, 22d Regt, 3d NVA Div employing B-40 rockets, small arms, and automatic weapons attacked the 1st Bn, 50th Inf (Mech) on 9 March in Binh Dinh Province. Friendly losses were two KIA, 13 WIA, and one armored personnel carrier and one helicopter destroyed. Enemy losses included 32 KIA, one detained, four B-40 rocket launchers, and six individual weapons.

(C) On 13 March in Pleiku Province, an estimated enemy battalion (probable element of the 174th NVA Regt) employing small arms and automatic weapons ambushed a convoy from the 4th Inf Div and 585th Engr Bn. Friendly losses were 12 US and four ARVN KIA; eight US and two ARVN WIA; 29 trucks and two tanks sustained light to heavy damage.

(C) In Tuyen Duc Province on 17 March, the 145th VC MF Bn (reinforced) attacked Thanh Binh Hamlet. Friendly losses included 27 PF KIA, four civilians killed, 17 PF WIA, four PF MIA, 16 small arms and three radios, and 10 houses destroyed. Enemy losses were 21 KIA.

(C) Also in Tuyen Duc Province on 18 March, an estimated enemy battalion attacked the 266th and 308th RF Companies, 46th PF Platoon, and an ARVN intelligence platoon. Friendly losses were 16 WIA and 54 MIA. Enemy losses were unknown.

(C) On 26 March in Kontum Province, an estimated two to three enemy battalions (one identified as the 7th Bn, 209th NVA Regt) attacked the fire support base of the 3d Bn, 8th Inf. Friendly losses were 19 KIA, 51 WIA, and three MIA. Enemy forces suffered 135 KIA, four detained, and 45 weapons lost. [277]

April

(C) Enemy activity in II CTZ during April was at a relatively low level. In the western highlands of southwestern Kontum Province, the enemy continued to maintain pressure on Allied installations. During the latter part of the month, elements of the 4th Inf Div made several contacts approximately 40 kilometers west of Kontum City where the enemy deployed for offensive action in the vicinity of the Polei Kleng Special Forces Camp. In addition, there were occasional attacks by fire against Kontum City Airfield and Pleiku City installations. Enemy activity in the remainder of Pleiku Province and in Darlac Province remained at a low level. A rallier indicated that the 32d NVA Regt withdrew to Cambodia for possible refitting, resupply, and training. On 25 April, ARVN forces attacked an enemy strong point 4 kilometers southeast of Ban Me Thuot and killed 23 enemy. On 26 April, Ban Me Thuot City Airfield was attacked by fire. Enemy-initiated activity in the coastal provinces was at an unusually low level. In Binh Dinh Province on 6 April, ARVN froces engaged elements of the 7th Bn, 22d NVA Regt west of Phu My. Friendly losses were 11 KIA and 19 WIA. Enemy losses were 67 KIA. During the period 20-27 April, ROK forces conducted Operation MAENG HO 11 in southeastern Binh Dinh Province and contacted units identified as the 8th Bn, 18th NVA Regt, 50th LF Bn, and the 300th NVA Sapper Bn. Friendly losses were two KIA and 10 WIA. The enemy lost 206 KIA, 85 detained, and one returnee. In Phu Yen Province, during the period 5-7 April, ROK forces engaged elements identified as the 4th and 6th Bns, 95th NVA Regt. Friendly losses were 16 KIA and 51 WIA. The enemy lost 281 KIA, 24 detainees, and two returnees. In the southern provinces, enemy activity remained at a low level. In Tuyen Duc Province on 6 April, the Cam Ly Airfield near Dalat received 22 rounds of 82mm mortar fire. Also on 6 April, R'Lom Hamlet was attacked by an estimated two enemy companies. On 19 April, 8 kilometers west of Dalat, ARVN forces, while conducting a combat sweep operation, engaged an unknown size force and

killed 10 enemy. No significant contacts were made in the other six provinces; however, the enemy conducted acts of harassment, sabotage, and assassination throughout the southern provinces.

(C) Large-scale Significant Attacks. On 29 April in Kontum Province, an unidentified enemy battalion (possibly an element of the 66th NVA Regt) attacked Co B, 1st Bn, 14th Inf. Friendly losses were two KIA and 20 WIA. Enemy forces suffered 46 KIA and the loss of five individual and three crew-served weapons. [278]

May

(C) Enemy activity increased significantly throughout II CTZ during May. On the night of 4 May the enemy conducted 30 separate attacks, consisting generally of harrassments by fire which caused relatively few casualties. During this period, increased reconnaissance of friendly fire support bases and outposts in the Kontum City - Polei Kleng and Dak To - Ben Het area indicated that the enemy intended to follow up his standoff attacks with a major ground offensive in western Kontum Province. Deployed to the west of Kontum City were the 66th, 174th, and 320th Regts of the 1st NVA Div. To the north, the 325C NVA Div controlled at least the 101D and 95C NVA Regts which had moved from Laos into positions approximately 20 kilometers west of Dak To. On 9 and 10 May, elements of the 101D NVA Regt increased the offensive tempo with a successful assault on a CIDG outpost west of Ben Het and several small unit contacts with 4th Inf Div units. These small unit probing actions and intensified attacks by fire continued until 26 May, when an estimated two NVA battalions penetrated the perimeter of FSB 29, 4 kilometers southwest of Ben Het. Also on 26 May, FSB Brillo Pad, 31 kilometers west of Kontum City, received 234 rounds of mixed mortar and rocket fire resulting in 17 friendly WIA. Although Operation LUCAS GREEN, conducted by the 4th Inf Div west of Ben Het, and numerous B-52 strikes appeared to hamper the enemy's actions, he continued attacks by fire and indicated that he would attempt to maintain a viable offensive threat. At the end of the month, however, this objective appeared to be slipping from his grasp. Unconfirmed reports of tank sightings and employment of artillery suggested an all-out attempt to liberate the western highlands. Reports also indicated that the enemy planned to establish a powerful political base in the highlands. In Pleiku Province, the enemy conducted ambushes along Highway 14 and attacks by fire on Pleiku City and Plei Djereng Special Forces Camp. A 26 May ambush of a 4th Inf Div convoy north of Pleiku City was conducted by the 966th NVA Bn (formerly of the 32d NVA Regt), which was subordinated to the 95B NVA Regt. Interdiction of Highways 14 and 19 by this regiment continued with the enemy's hindering of friendly reinforcement of units in Kontum Province. A 6 May battalion-sized attack on hamlets near Duc Lap Special Forces Camp, attacks by fire on the camp itself, and a 25 May rocket attack on Ban Me Thuot highlighted enemy activity in Darlac Province. On 23 May, the E-301 LF Bn was identified in contact northwest of Ban Me Thuot. The anticipated threat to the city appeared to diminish when reliable intelligence noted the location of the 32d and 33d NVA Regts in a Cambodian base area. In the coastal provinces, enemy-initiated activity increased as the enemy continued to receive new personnel to replace his heavy losses. On 6 May in Binh Dinh Province, the 22d Regt of the 3d NVA Div sustained 119 KIA in a contact north of Phu My. Despite this heavy loss, the enemy indicated that he intended to conduct attacks and ambushes in the vicinity of Bong Son and Qui Nhon. Elements of the 5th NVA Div tried to avoid confrontation with friendly forces but with limited success. In Khanh Hoa Province, in the first phase of Operation DOK SU RI BACK MA o, ROK forces killed 123 enemy (Probably from 18B Regt, 5th NVA Div).

Enemy activity also increased in the southern provinces. The most notable contact occurred in Tuyen Duc Province on 28 May when two companies of the 186th MF Bn assaulted the National Military Academy in Dalat. In Binh Thuan Province, the 482d LF Bn increased its attacks by fire on Phan Thiet while local force companies and the 840th MF Bn were involved in attacks on hamlets in the Song Mao area.

(C) Large-scale Significant Attacks. In Kontum Province on 5 May, the 1st Bn, 174th NVA Regt ambushed and then assaulted a 4th Inf Div convoy northbound on Highway 14. Friendly losses included 15 US and one ARVN KIA, 28 US and eight ARVN WIA, and nine US MIA. Three trucks were destroyed, and six trucks, two tanks, and four UH-1H helicopters were damaged. The enemy lost 121 KIA and 26 individual and 17 crew-served weapons. Also on 9 May in Kontum Province, an unidentified enemy battalion (possibly an element of the 320th NVA Regt) attacked a Special Forces company on Hill 990. Friendly losses included nine CIDG and one US KIA, 28 CIDG and one US MIA. The enemy suffered eight KIA and the loss of three individual and one crew-served weapons. The 1st Bn, 95B NVA Regt attacked the 105th and 438th RF Companies on 15 May in Kontum Province. Friendly losses included three WIA. The enemy lost 147 KIA and 15 individual and three crew-served weapons. [279]

June

(C) In II CTZ enemy activity was highlighted by the failure of the B-3 Front's forces to initiate a coordinated offensive in the western highlands, the redeployment to I CTZ of major elements of the 3d NVA Div, and the relative increase in enemy activity in MR 6. The level of hostilities decreased substantially in the remainder of II CTZ. In Kontum Province the 66th, 174th, and 320th Regts of the 1st NVA Div were still deployed west of Polei Kleng SF Camp during the first week of June while the subordinate 95C and 101D Regts of the 325C NVA Div remained in positions northwest and southwest of Ben Het Fire Support Base. Enemy activity in both areas was characterized by numerous attacks by fire and small unit ground contacts with friendly elements. Two Hoi Chanhs from the 13th Heavy Weapons Bn, 1st NVA Div, who rallied on 2 June, identified their unit as being responsible for attacks by fire in the Polei Kleng area. In the Ben Het area, enemy employment of 105mm howitzers was confirmed by analysis of the rounds fired on FSB 29. On 4 June, a US convoy moving along Highway 14 toward Dak To was involved in two unsuccessful enemy ambushes, resulting in 12 enemy KIA, (probably from the 966th Bn, 24th NVA Regt). By 10 June noticeable decline in enemy activity was observed in both the Polei Kleng and Ben Het - Dak To areas as the enemy focused his attention on the Dak Pek SF Camp. On 10 June, a friendly night defensive position near Dak Pek withstood a mortar attack and a subsequent ground assault which succeeded in penetrating the camp perimeter before being repulsed. From 9 to 15 June, the Dak Pek area received 430 rounds of mixed rocket, mortar, recoilless rifle, and B-40 rocket fire. On 14 June, the 21st Regt of the 2nd NVA Div was identified by captured documents as the enemy unit operating in the vicinity of Dak Pek. During the third week of June, a marked decrease in activity was noted; concurrently, there were indications of an enemy withdrawal from prepared positions around Dak Pek, Ben Het, and Polei Kleng. Various intelligence sources suggested that elements of the 2d NVA Div were relocating in I CTZ and that the headquarters, 325C NVA Div and its subordinate regiments were establishing new positions in the tri-border area. Agent reports, Red Haze, visual reconnaissance, and the inability of friendly reconnaissance in force to contact the 1st NVA Div elements all indicated that the 1st Div was also withdrawing, possibly to Base Area 702 and northwestern Pleiku Province, where it operated during the rainy season of 1967. By early June, B-3 Front forces, weakened by friendly artillery and air power, had lost their ability to

launch large-scale attacks; however, despite friendly preemption, the enemy apparently maintained a presence with small forces and could be expected to continue harassing standoff attacks. In Pleiku Province, enemy activity remained at a low level. Two weapons caches were uncovered near Plei Me SF Camp and on 19 June, 8 kilometers southeast of the camp, CIDG engaged an estimated enemy platoon, resulting in nine enemy KIA. The area of contact was a known infiltration route for the 95B NVA Regt and the H-15 LF Bn. On 19 and 24 June friendly forces contacted suspected elements of the 95B NVA Regt in the Dak Payau River Valley southeast of Pleiku City and also discovered large rice and weapons caches. In Binh Dinh Province light enemy contact and PWs captured in Quang Ngai Province substantiated agent reports that major elements of the 3d NVA Div have relocated in southern Quang Ngai Province. A PW from the 22d Regt, captured on 15 June in southern Quang Ngai Province, stated that the entire 3d NVA Div was deployed north. The 2d VC and 22d NVA Regts probably moved north; however, the 18th NVA Regt remained in the Phu Cat Mountains where, on 23 June, a ROK cordon operation captured six NVA officers, including the regiment's Chief of Staff. In Phu Yen Province, a 16 June sapper attack on the naval installation at Vung Ro Bay and a 22 June mining of two civilian vehicles south of Song Cau indicated an increase in terrorist activity. The result of the attacks was 22 civilians KIA. The enemy apparently employed an economy of force role in the coastal provinces. In MR 6, a sizable increase in enemy activity was observed. Contacts and PW statements confirmed the existence of the 610th Local Force Bn operating in Ninh Thuan Province with the mission of disrupting the Revolutionary Development Program. In Binh Thuan Province, the 482d Local Force Bn was identified in contacts from 18 to 21 June near Phan Thiet, resulting in 62 enemy KIA. The sustained contact demonstrated the tenacity and fighting ability of the 482d LF Bn which, along with the 840th MF Bn, could be expected to maintain pressure in the Phan Thiet area. In Tuyen Duc Province enemy activity had subsided, probably a result of Operation BANJO ROYCE which attempted to destroy the 186 MF Bn. In Lam Dong Province, a regional force company suffered 50 KIA in a 3 June contact east of Bao Loc with an unknown size enemy force, possibly the 145th MF Bn which normally operated in the area. An estimated enemy battalion was contacted on 17 June southeast of Bao Loc. On 18 June a weapons cache belonging to the 145th MF Bn was discovered in the same area. Increased enemy activity in the southern five provinces could be expected to continue. [280]

July

(C) Activity remained light in II CTZ during July, as the enemy realigned his forces in the western highlands and prepared for future offensive operations. During the month, it became apparent that the B-3 Front had shifted its major emphasis from Kontum Province south to Darlac and a significant enemy threat began around Ban Me Thuot City. While the 325C NVA Div apparently remained in Cambodian sanctuaries, elements of the 1st NVA Div relocated to Darlac Province. A NVA rallier reported that his unit was preparing a forward command post for headquarters of the 1st NVA Div approximately 21 kilometers northwest of the Trang Phu SF Camp. According to the rallier, the 66 NVA Regt was to join the division headquarters but had not arrived at the time he rallied. An enemy agent, captured at the US 4th Inf Div base camp in Pleiku Province on 17 July, reported that Ban Me Thuot City was the objective of the enemy buildup in Darlac Province and claimed that an attack on the city was planned for 092100 August. The increased threat to the Darlac provincial capital was also indicated by a flurry of small contacts around the city beginning on 23 July. The concentration against Ban Me Thuot City followed the move of at least the 32d NVA Regt from the western highlands to III CTZ. This regiment was identified during a contact in III CTZ on 18 July. It is possible that other enemy units also deployed south to III CTZ. In Binh Dinh Province, friendly operations resulted in the

18th NVA Regt becoming combat ineffective. A ROK operation against the regiment began in June and ended on 19 July resulting in 355 enemy KIA. The other regiments of the 3d NVA Div, the 2d VC and the 22d NVA, moved north to I CTZ in late June and early July, and local force units apparently shifted to cover the gaps. Two contacts northeast of Bong Son, one on 9 July and the other on 22 July, indicated that the E-210 LF Bn had probably moved northward and assumed a new operational area. Further south in coastal II CTZ, a document captured in Khanh Hoa Province on 11 July indicated that the 5th NVA Div would withdraw major elements from their normal areas of operation for a three month period of refitting and training in Cambodian base areas. The 18B NVA Regt was to leave a reinforced battalion in position to threaten Nha Tra[illegible]rd was to depart on 20 June for a B-3 Front area, possibly Base Area 702. A ROK operati[illegible]inst the regiment may have forced a postponement of the move. The document also indicated t[illegible]t elements of the 95th NVA Regt were to make a similar relocation. Although no moves had been confirmed by the end of July, it appeared likely that major elements of both regiments were either enroute or preparing to move to Cambodian sanctuaries. The final destination of the units after refitting was not clearly stated by the document; however, a return to coastal II CTZ was implied. In Quang Duc Province two contacts near the Duc Lap Special Forces Camp, one on 2 July and the other 8 July, attested to the continued enemy use of Base Area 740 in Cambodia. The 2 July contact, 8 kilometers east of the camp, was with an estimated enemy battalion. Except in Binh Thuan Province, enemy activity in MR 6 consisted of scattered attacks by fire and interdiction of lines of communication. In Binh Thuan Province, there were two battalion-sized contacts northeast of Phan Thiet, one on 17 July and one on 21 July. The 482d VC LF Bn was probably involved in both actions.

(C) Large-scale Significant Attacks. On 21 July in Binh Thuan Province, an estimated two enemy battalions, possibly the 482d VC LF and the 840th VC MF Bns, attacked Phu Long Hamlet employing small arms. Friendly losses included 14 KIA, 47 WIA, one MIA, and one individual weapon. Enemy losses included 18 KIA and 16 detainees. [281]

August

(C) In the B-3 Front, activity was highlighted by the buildup of enemy forces in Darlac Province. A prisoner captured on 9 August, 23 kilometers southwest of Ban Me Thuot, identified his unit as the Reconnaissance Company of the 1st NVA Div and revealed that Ban Me Thuot was the primary target in the western highlands. The prisoner stated that three regiments of the 1st NVA Div, a local force regiment, and an artillery regiment would participate in the attack. Documents captured following a contact on 29 July southwest of Ban Me Thuot identified the K-39 Bn, suggesting that it remained in Darlac Province when its parent 33d NVA Regt deployed to III CTZ. On 23 August, an estimated enemy regiment attacked Duc Lap SF Camp and subsector headquarters in Quang Duc Province, possibly attempting to draw friendly forces away from Ban Me Thuot's defenses. Prisoners and documents captured at Duc Lap identified elements of the 66th, 320th, and 95C NVA Regts. Previous evidence had indicated that the 95C Regt was resubordinated to the 1st NVA Div when the division moved to Darlac Province in July. During the attack on Duc Lap and in subsequent engagements, the enemy sustained 646 KIA. The attack, along with at least 20 other attacks-by-fire and ground probes on 22 and 23 August, probably signaled the start of intensified activity in II CTZ. In Kontum Province the enemy harassed US positions around Dak To and Dak Seang. On 14 August the enemy attacked two US fire support bases near Ben Het SF Camp and a US company in the same area. On 18 August, Dak Seang SF Camp was attacked by a battalion-sized force identified by PWs as the 3d Bn of the 101D NVA Regt. The prisoners further revealed that the headquarters of the 325C NVA Div

returned north in June and that its regiments were subordinated to the B-3 Front. In Pleiku Province, the enemy substantially increased his interdiction of Routes 14 and 19. Prisoners and documents identified the 24th NVA Regt as the unit involved in a 4-day contact beginning on 18 August north of Pleiku City. The 24th Regt was probably responsible for the ambushes along Highway 14, and the 95B NVA Regt probably conducted the attacks along Highway 19. In Binh Dinh Province, the enemy conducted numerous harassing attacks in the Bong Son and Phu Cat areas. The D-21 LF Co and the XC-11 LF Bn were identified in contacts on 5 and 8 August north of Bong Son. A prisoner captured near Qui Nhon on 23 August identified his unit as the 7th Bn, 18th NVA Regt and stated that his regiment is located in the Nui Ba Mountains north of Qui Nhon. In Phu Yen Province a prisoner captured on 23 August near Tuy Hoa identified his unit as the 6th Bn, 95th NVA Regt and stated that the 4th and 5th Bns had moved to Pleiku to receive replacements. This confirmed previous evidence that the 18B and 95th NVA Regts had deployed to the B-3 Front since there were no indications that these units had returned to their normal operation areas in Khanh Hoa and Phu Yen Provinces. The most significant enemy activity in MR 6 occurred in Lam Dong Province where elements of the 145th and 186th MF Bns were identified in the 21 August attack on Di Linh. The 186th MF Bn had returned from Tuyen Duc Province to Lam Dong Province where it operated prior to Phase I of the General Offensive.

(C) Large-scale Significant Attacks. On 23 August in Quang Duc Province, elements of the 66th, 95C, and 320th NVA Regts attacked Duc Lap District Town and an adjacent CIDG camp. Friendly losses were 79 KIA and 196 WIA. Enemy losses consisted of 646 KIA, seven detainees, and 172 individual and 62 crew-served weapons. [282]

September

(C) Enemy activity in the B-3 Front was characterized by reorganization, extensive movement of major elements, and continued threats to Dak Seang and Duc Lap. In Kontum Province, rallier Hung from the 2d Bn, 101D NVA Regt reported that the headquarters of the 325C NVA Div was disbanded in June and its regiments, the 101D and 95C, were resubordinated to the B-3 Front. The 101D NVA Regt had been directed to continue its offensive action against Dak Seang. The 95C NVA Regt moved south and was resubordinated to the 1st NVA Div. The 101D NVA Regt, according to rallier Hung, was short of food and morale was low. Malaria had afflicted 25 percent of his battalion. Hung also revealed that the D-120 Sapper Bn was attached to the regiment to assist in breaching Dak Seang's defenses. In Pleiku Province, a PW captured on 28 August identified his unit as the 4th Bn, 24th NVA Regt and revealed that it was involved in a 24 August contact near the Plei Mrong CIDG Camp. The latter confirmed that the regiment's new area of operation was north of Pleiku City. In Darlac and Quang Duc Provinces, enemy activity centered around Base Area 740 and Duc Lap. PWs Hien and Tuong identified their unit as the 16th Sig Co, 320th NVA Regt and located the regiment 10 kilometers northwest of the Duc Lap CIDG Camp. They reported that the 95C NVA Regt, 1st NVA Div conducted the initial attack on the CIDG Camp and that one battalion of the 66th NVA Regt assisted in the attack. The PWs further revealed that the 320th NVA Regt, along with five other regiments, had planned to attack Ban Me Thuot after securing Duc Lap. PW Khang located the 95C NVA Regt in the Duc Lap area and he stated that it received 1,000 replacements in Kontum and would attack Duc Lap. In the coastal provinces, the 18th NVA Regt was engaged by ARVN and US forces on 22 September resulting in at least 120 enemy killed. Sporadic attacks-by-fire on Tuy Hoa, Nha Trang, Phan Rang, and Phan Thiet have been credited to local force units. An agent reported that residents of Nha Trang were storing food for a rumored attack on the city some-

time in September; however, the enemy was expected to direct his efforts to the rice harvest of Ninh Hoa and Dinh Khan Districts. Similar reports of rice collection had been reported by agents in southern Phu Yen Province. There was an increase in terrorist activity this month in the coastal and southern provinces, a pattern of activity which was expected to continue.

(C) Large-scale Significant Attacks. On 8 September in Quang Duc Province, an unidentified enemy battalion attacked the 1/45th ARVN Regt. Friendly losses were two KIA and 2 WIA. Enemy losses consisted of 47 KIA, two individual and four crew-served weapons. An unidentified enemy battalion attacked and overran Hoa Da District Town in Binh Thuan Province on 18 September. Friendly forces lost 37 KIA, 38 WIA, three MIA, and 23 individual weapons. The enemy lost 13 KIA and two individual weapons. [283]

October

(C) There were no major engagements during October in the B-3 Front as the enemy continued to avoid contact. Apparently he was using this period to rest and refit his forces which suffered heavy casualties in late August and early September. Visual reconnaissance and long-range patrols by friendly forces indicated that the 101D NVA Regt had withdrawn from western Kontum Province. Lack of significant contact around Duc Lap in Quang Duc Province indicated that the 1st NVA Div had also relocated out-of-country. Enemy activity in these areas consisted primarily of standoff attacks. The fire support bases in the vicinity of the Ben Het CIDG Camp and the Bon Sar Pa Outpost near Duc Lap were the primary targets. In Pleiku Province, the discovery on 17 October of a battalion-sized to regiment-sized bunker complex 11 kilometers northwest of the Duc Co CIDG Camp and significant Red Haze returns in this area on 15 October suggested an increased enemy interest in western Pleiku Province. Plans for the 1968 VC Gia Lai (Pleiku) Province Winter Campaign were disclosed in a document captured on 18 October. The document indicated that a three-stage offensive was to be conducted from 1 November to 31 December. The primary mission of the campaign was to attack cities and towns, Highways 14 and 19, and to urge 1,500 to 2,000 ARVN soldiers to initiate military rebellion. In Binh Dinh Province, Local Force units remained moderately active conducting small-scale ground probes, attacks-by-fire, and increased terrorist incidents. Interrogation of a PW captured on 7 October near Tam Quan revealed that the 406th Sapper Bn, 401st Sapper Regt may have been operating in southern Quang Ngai and northern Binh Dinh Provinces. PWs captured near Phu My identified their units as the 7th and 9th Bns of the 18th NVA Regt. The PWs indicated that the regiment, which suffered heavy losses in June, was close to full strength. In Khanh Hoa Province, a ROK sweep operation southwest of Nha Trang cost the enemy 352 killed. A PW captured during the operation identified his unit as the 7th Bn, 18B NVA Regt which probably was rendered ineffective. A PW from the 95th Arty Bn, 5th NVA Div indicated that elements of the battalion returned to their normal areas of operation in Phu Yen and Khanh Hoa Provinces following a three-month logistics mission in the B-3 Front. In MR 6, a Hoi Chanh revealed that the 810th LF Bn was formed in June 1968 by merging two LF companies with personnel from the 240th Infiltration Gp. The battalion was short of food and was operating in southern Tuyen Duc Province. In Binh Thuan Province, an agent indicated that LF companies were being upgraded to battalions and that a "491st Vietnamese Regiment" was organized northwest of Phan Thiet. [284]

November

(C) In the B-3 Front, enemy-initiated activity was light during the first part of the month. It consisted primarily of stand-off attacks directed against FSB 29 in the vicinity of Ben Het, Kontum Province. These attacks, which began with regularity in late October, ceased on 12 November with the evacuation of the base. Enemy-initiated activity was highest from 12 to 14 November, particularly in Pleiku Province where targets in the areas of Pleiku City, Plei Djereng, and Duc Co were hit with a series of stand-off attacks and ground probes. An Khe, in Binh Dinh Province, also received heavy attacks-by-fire during the period. A PW, captured on 3 November 17 kilometers southwest of the Duc Lap CIDG Camp, stated that his unit, the Trung Son Bn, was formed in August 1968. It moved in early September into the Duc Lap area to organize lines of communication. He stated that three unidentified battalions with a combined strength of from 1,200 to 1,500 men remained in the Duc Lap area, reportedly to renew the attack on the CIDG Camp. In coastal II CTZ the first half of the month was characterized by the familiar pattern of harassment, attacks-by-fire, and interdiction of lines of communication. Enemy-initiated activity, particularly in Binh Dinh Province, increased significantly during the last half of the month. The increased activity which began with a series of ground attacks directed against Popular Force and Regional Force outposts on 17 November appeared to relate to documents captured on 6 November, 7 kilometers northeast of Phu Cat. They discussed offensive operations and political activities following the bombing halt. The VC units were instructed to carry out plans prepared for the "climaxing" phase, with emphasis to be placed on attacking Highway 1 and Allied installations.

(C) A PW from the 7th Battalion, 18B NVA Regt captured on 22 October, 8 kilometers west of Nha Trang, stated that preparations were being made for the return of the regiment to Khanh Hoa Province. In Military Region 6, activity remained relatively light with VC units conducting attacks against villages and installations as well as interdicting lines of communication, primarily in an effort to disrupt the Accelerated Pacification Campaign. 285

December

(C) Enemy activity was generally light in the B-3 Front during the month. Although a PW captured on 2 December, 17 kilometers north of Kontum City, reported that the 304th LF Bn and the 406th Sapper Bn, possibly supported by elements of the 2d and 3d NVA Divs, would "liberate" Kontum Province during the month, no major actions took place. The enemy primarily maintained a presence in the Western Highlands by stand-off attacks which included the use of 122mm rockets against Kontum City on 22 December and against Pleiku City early on 23 December. Elements of the 40th Arty Regt were probably responsibile for both attacks. The 95B NVA Regt continued operations along Route 19. According to a PW captured on 21 December, his unit, the 4th Bn, 95B NVA Regt, had joined the regimental headquarters and the 5th Bn along the Pleiku/Binh Dinh Province border. Elements of the 95B NVA Regt probably were responsible for attacks-by-fire against Camp Radcliff on 18 and 23 December and against a US base camp 10 kilometers west of An Khe on 23 December. Activity in Darlac Province was highlighted by three attacks-by-fire against the Ban Me Thuot Airfield. Reports continued to reflect enemy plans to attack the Duc Lap CIDG Camp in Quang Duc province; however, the several small contacts in the area probably reflected continued enemy use of Cambodian Base Area 740 for infiltration and logistics activity. Documents captured in Binh Dinh Province revealed enemy plans for a large-scale attack against Qui Nhon as a part of the Winter/Spring Campaign.

However, Korean Army units inflicted heavy losses on enemy units in Binh Dinh Province during the month, significantly reducing the enemy's capability to conduct major offensive activity. On 1 December, 9 kilometers north of Phu Cat, ROK forces killed or captured the battalion commander and four company commanders of the 50th LF Bn, two company commanders of the 405th Sapper Bn (AKA 300th Sapper Bn), and two officers of the 36th Sapper Bn. These personnel were enroute to a province-level meeting to discuss offensive plans. On 2 December, Korean Army elements killed more than 90 members of the 50th LF Bn. A PW captured northeast of Qui Nhon on 7 December revealed that the 300th Sapper Bn had been resubordinated from the 3d NVA Div to the Binh Dinh Province Committee. In the southern subregion, captured documents, PW statements, and an agent report provided indications that the 95th NVA Regt had returned from a period of refitting in Cambodia. One PW from the 95th LF Bn reported that his unit would attack Tuy Hoa in coordination with the 95th NVA Regt when it returned from the B-3 Front. He also stated that a new, unidentified battalion would accompany the regiment to Phu Yen. Another PW, from an element of the Phu Yen Province Committee, claimed that the 95th NVA Regt was operating in Phu Yen with four battalions. Additionally, a diary captured on 19 December, 21 kilometers southwest of Song Cau, revealed that on 19 November the author, a cadre member of the southern subregion political staff, had joined the headquarters of the 95th NVA Regt. An agent reported that the 95th NVA Regt would attack Tuy Hoa during the period 20-23 December; however, no attack took place. In the remainder of II CTZ, enemy activity consisted of attacks against isolated outposts and interdiction of lines of communication, primarily to disrupt the Accelerated Pacification Campaign. 286

Operations in III Corps Tactical Zone

January

(C) Enemy activity increased sharply during the early Tet holiday period as attacks were conducted against friendly installations in the central III CTZ area. The enemy committed 23 major violations during the 31 December to 2 January New Year Truce. The most significant violation was the 2 January attack against positions of the 3d Bde, 25th Inf Div in northeast Tay Ninh Province. The attack was conducted by elements of the 9th VC Div and resulted in 401 enemy killed. The determination displayed by the enemy was probably indicative of the enemy's efforts to disrupt friendly forces on Operation YELLOWSTONE. Captured documents outlined a territorial reorganization of MR 4 and portions of TAORs and 2. These MRs were broken down into six subregions, including Saigon and a portion of central III CTZ. These subregions, together with the remainder of MRs 1 and 2, were directly subordinate to the COSVN Headquarters. This reorganization expanded former MR 4 and divided it into six subregions. The reorganization also divided MR 1 into two smaller subregions identified as VC Tay Ninh and VC Ba Bien Provinces. The reorganization was probably an attempt to increase control of enemy forces within these MRs. On 31 January, during the Tet holiday period, elements of the 5th VC Div attacked friendly installations in the Bien Hoa/Long Binh area. Elements of the 6th LF Bn, the D-16 LF Bn, and the 267th and 269th MF Bns conducted attacks in the Saigon/Tan Son Nhut area. The attacks in the Saigon area on 31 January resulted in approximately 700 enemy killed. The 7th NVA Div headquarters and its subordinate elements remained in northeast Tay Ninh Province and northwestern Binh Duong Province. Major elements of the 9th VC Div deployed to the Binh Duong/Gia Dinh Province border area to aid local forces in attacks in the Saigon area. The 5th VC Div elements relocated in northern Bien Hoa Province was expected to continue offensive action in the Bien Hoa City area.

(C) Large-scale Significant Attacks. On 1 January in Tay Ninh, the 1st, 2d, and 3d Bns, 271st VC Regt and the 3d Bn, 272d VC Regt placed an unknown number of unidentified mortar rounds on and then attacked the base camp of the 3d Bde, 25th Inf Div. Friendly losses were 23 KIA and 152 WIA. The enemy suffered 401 KIA, eight detainees, and the loss of 87 individual and 20 crew-served weapons.

(C) While in Hau Nghia Province on 8 January, the 269th and 506th VC Local Force Bns, the VC Duc Hoa Sapper Unit C-234, and the VC Duc Hoa Special Action Unit A-357, employing mortar, RPG rockets, small arms, and automatic weapons, attacked the headquarters of the 49th ARVN Regt and overran the Provincial Chieu Hoi Center. Friendly losses were 19 ARVN, six RF, seven National Police, and one CIDG KIA, three Hoi Chanh, and four civilians killed; five US, 36 ARVN, 14 RF, 12 National Police, and six CIDG WIA, 13 Hoi Chanh and 25 civilians wounded; and two ARVN and 12 RF MIA. Also, 34 individual weapons, one .30 caliber machinegun, one Thompson submachinegun, and two M79 grenade launchers were lost; seven vehicles, 20 individual weapons, 20 bags of rice, and one telephone were destroyed, and 14 fuel tanks and 15 houses were damaged. Enemy losses included 26 KIA, six detainees, one machinegun, one BAR, four B-40 rocket launchers, twelve individual weapons, and miscellaneous ammunition, mines and documents. In Hau Nghia Province, an estimated enemy battalion tentatively identified as the 7th VC Bn, MR 4, employing mortar, RPG rockets, small arms, and automatic weapons, attacked the base camp of the 1st Bn, 27th Inf on 10 January. Friendly losses were five KIA and 29 WIA. Enemy losses included 75 KIA and one detainee. Also, 10 individual and 11 crew-served weapons were seized and a quantity of ammunition was destroyed.

(C) In Gia Dinh Province on 31 January, the 2nd, 5th and 6th VC LF Bns, 267th, 269th and the 1st VC MF Bns, along with the C-10 VC Sapper Bn, attacked key US and GVN installations in Saigon, including the American Embassy, the Tan Son Nhut Air Base, the Independence Palace, the ARVN Joint General Staff Compound, the Vietnamese Naval Headquarters, US officer and enlisted billets, and the National Police Stations. Friendly losses were 71 KIA and 222 WIA. Enemy losses were 620 KIA and 51 detainees. [287]

February

(C) During the morning of 31 January 1968, elements of the 267th and 269th VC Bns, the 2nd and 6th VC LF Bns, and the C-10 Sapper Bn began a coordinated attack on Saigon and the Tan Son Nhut Complex. After infiltrating Saigon during the night, the C-10 Sapper Bn attacked the US Embassy and the GVN Presidential Palace. At the same time, the 267th VC MF Bn attacked Tan Son Nhut from the north and west while the 2d and 6th LF Bns entered Cholon from the west. Heavy fighting ensued in these areas as US and ARVN units organized reaction forces. At the same time, two Main Force units, the 274th and 275th Regts of the 5th VC Div, attacked the II FFV Headquarters at Long Binh and Bien Hoa Air Base. The attack commenced with rockets, mortars, and small-arms fire and was followed by a ground assault at the air base. Both regiments suffered heavy losses and withdrew to the east. After having taken heavy casualties in the cities, the enemy began a number of attacks by fire in other parts of III CTZ on 3 February. The US base camps at Lai Khe, Dau Tieng, Quan Loi, and Cu Chi were attacked with 122mm rockets and recoilless rifles. On 5 February, the VC tried to regain the initiative in Saigon. They attacked the southern section of Cholon, pushing to the northeast but were stopped by ARVN units. On the same day, FWMAF and ARVN units began Operation TRAN HUNG DAO. While units of the 1st, 9th, and 25th Divs surrounded Saigon, ARVN units continued to sweep the city. Some surviving VC began to exfiltrate the city. During the following

week, VC actions throughout III CTZ were reduced to attacks by fire and attempts to retain positions held after exfiltrating the city. A number of VC remained in the Phu Tho Race Track area in the western section of Cholon and continued to fight sporadically until 21 February. On 18 February, the VC attacked 21 targets by fire with mortars and 122mm rockets, including province capitals, major towns, US installations, and Tan Son Nhut and Bien Hoa Air Bases. Also on 18 February, the VC attacked Song Be by fire and ground assault, occupying the market place for 9 hours before being driven out by friendly forces. The 9th VC Div moved from its previous location in MR 10 to an area north of Saigon just before the offensive began. It was contacted by US elements during Operation TRAN HUNG DAO. There were indications that at least one regiment of the 7th NVA Div was deployed with the 9th VC Div but NVA units were not identified in the initial attacks. There had been intermittent VC harassments by mortar, recoilless rifle, and 122mm rocket fire since 18 February. Areas of VC concentration were continually swept by friendly units, and daily contacts were made during the last week of February.

(C) Large-scale Significant Attacks. An estimated two enemy battalions (identified one possibly as the 445th VC LF Bn) assaulted the province capital of Ba Ria on 1 February in Phuoc Tuy Province. Friendly losses included 21 KIA and 180 WIA, 16 civilians were killed and 34 were wounded. Enemy losses were 260 KIA, four detained, and 80 individual weapons.

(C) While on 2 February in Long Khanh Province, an estimated two enemy battalions attacked the province capital of Xuan Loc. Friendly losses consisted of 17 KIA and 26 WIA; two civilians were killed and 113 were wounded. Enemy forces suffered 66 KIA.

(C) In Gia Dinh Province, on 6 February, an estimated enemy battalion (possibly the 2nd VC Independent Bn) attacked A and B Compaines of the 2d Bn, 327th Abn Inf near Saigon. Friendly losses were 11 KIA and six WIA. Enemy losses included 20 KIA and four individual and two crew-served weapons.

(C) On 10 February in Long An Province, an estimated enemy battalion attacked the province capital of Tan An. On 18 February in Phuoc Long Province, an estimated enemy battalion (elements of the 211th and 212th NVA Bns) attacked Song Be District Town. Friendly losses were 24 KIA, and 53 WIA; 25 civilians were killed and 200 were wounded; and 150 homes burned. The enemy suffered 199 KIA, 13 detained, and the loss of 52 individual weapons. [288]

March

(C) In III CTZ, the enemy continued to launch attacks by fire against friendly installations and to interdict friendly lines of communications. Enemy initiated contacts were limited since main force units generally avoided large-scale ground engagements. An exception to this occurred on 24 March in Hau Nghia Province when friendly forces on Operation QUYET THANG (Resolved to Win) engaged battalion-sized units in the vicinity of Trang Bang District Town. This contact continued until 26 March, resulting in 471 enemy KIA and 71 weapons captured. Enemy forces identified in the contact included elements of the 271st and 272d VC MF Regts and the 7th VC LF Bn. Enemy resistance, which began when Communist forces attacked two popular forces outposts in the Trang Bang area, may have been an effort to protect resupply activities to the north and south of this location. In northern III CTZ there was a low level of activity consisting primarily of harassing actions against Special Forces camps. Reconnaissance conduc ed on and subsequent to 7 March revealed road construction in north-central Phuoc

Long Province which would probably extend into Cambodia and connect with Route 14. This road construction was further evidence of the enemy's effort to expedite movement of supplies and replacements into III CTZ. Attacks by fire continued throughout III CTZ but were generally light in terms of ammunition expended. Bien Hoa Air Base was attacked with 122mm rockets on 12 March and again on 22 March. Results of the first attack were one KIA and two WIA; the 22 March attack resulted in 12 WIA. These attacks were probably carried out by elements of the 5th VC Div. An unknown sized enemy force attacked the Tan Son Nhut Air Base with seven rounds of 75mm recoilless rifle fire on 21 March. Results were major damage to three C-130 aircraft, minor damage to two others, and minor damage to two H-34 helicopters. During March, friendly forces discovered a number of large munitions caches in western Hau Nghia, southern Binh Duong, and northern Gia Dinh Provinces. Two of the caches were discovered on 14 March north of Hoc Mon District Town and one on 19 March in Binh Duong Province. The cache north of Hoc Mon contained 27 122mm rocket warheads, 96 rounds of 90mm mortar, and 510 rounds of 82mm mortar, plus other munitions. The 19 March discovery included 31 122mm rockets, 1,200 rounds of 60mm, 82mm mortar, and other munitions. This cache had only been in place approximately two days, indicating continued enemy efforts to move large quantities of munitions toward the capital area. The 274th VC Regt probably continued to operate in the eastern Bien Hoa southwest Long Khanh area. The 275th VC Regt was unlocated but was probably in northern Bien Hoa Province. The 7th NVA Div had assumed part of the mission of the 9th VC Div, that of maintaining a main force present in or near northern Gia Dinh Province. A 21 March contact indicated that the 101st NVA Regt was located in southern Binh Duong Province. Based on an 11 March contact and a PW statement, the 165th NVA Regt was located in the vicinity of Bien Hoa. The 141st NVA Regt was located along the eastern Binh Duong/northern Bien Hoa border. Elements of the 9th VC Div moved from positions in northwest Gia Dinh and were dispersed in northern Hau Nghia and western Binh Duong Provinces, probably resupplying and refitting. However, Allied operations continued to maintain pressure on elements of this division. Withdrawal of main force units from Gia Dinh Province and subsequent pressure of Allied operations had reduced the threat of a major assault on Saigon. Attacks by fire on the Saigon/Bien Hoa areas and sapper activity was expected to continue. In outlying areas, interdiction of lines of communications and harassing attacks on installations would probably continue, particularly in central Hau Nghia, southern Binh Duong, Bien Hoa, and Long Khanh Provinces.

(C) Large-scale Significant Attacks. In Binh Duong Province on 5 March an estimated enemy battalion employing mortars, small arms, and automatic weapons attacked the 3/7th ARVN Regt. Friendly losses included nine KIA and 12 WIA. The enemy lost 42 KIA and 70 weapons.

(C) An estimated enemy battalion, identified as an element of the 272d VC Main Force Regiment, attacked Trang Bang District Town on 25 March in Hau Nghia Province. Friendly losses included 10 US, 14 ARVN and eight RF KIA; 71 US, 17 ARVN, 13 RF and two PF WIA; one PF and one National Police MIA; and three trucks destroyed. Enemy losses were 284 KIA, and 24 individual and 15 crew-served weapons.

(C) Also on 28 March in Hau Nghia Province, an estimated enemy battalion (probable element of the 271st or 272d VC MF Regts) attacked L and M Troops of the 2d Sqdn, 11th Armd Cav Regt and the 3/49th ARVN Regt. Friendly forces lost two US and 15 ARVN KIA, and five US and 21 ARVN WIA. Enemy losses included 57 KIA, four RPG-2 rocket launchers, and six AK-47 and two AK-50 rifles. [289]

April

(C) In III CTZ, enemy-initiated activity included attacks by fire and three battalion-sized ground assaults in the central corps area. On 1 and 5 April, enemy forces attacked the Bien Hoa Air Base with 122mm rockets. Friendly losses in these attacks included three KIA, 43 WIA, and light materiel damage. On 2 April, seven 122mm rockets were fired into the Tan Son Nhut area, causing minor damage. With the exception of three ground assaults, the enemy avoided major contact while attempting to refit and rebuild his units. On 12 April, elements of the 9th VC Div attacked elements of the 25th Inf Div in their night defensive positions. The 271st VC Regt was identified in this attack which resulted in 137 enemy KIA. On 15 April in northwest Bien Hoa Province, the K-2 Bn, Dong Nai Regt attacked an ARVN unit at Tan Uyen. On 23 April in Phuoc Tuy Province, possible elements of the K-34 Arty Bn fired twelve 122mm rocket rounds into the Vung Tau Air Base. An unknown number were also fired into the Military Sea Transportation Service area and harbor entrance. Friendly losses included one KIA, 24 WIA, one aircraft and one barracks destroyed, four aircraft received minor damage, and 63,000 gallons of diesel fuel were lost through a ruptured fuel line. On 30 April, a battalion-sized enemy force attacked ARVN positions in the Ben Cat area, Binh Duong Province. During the month, the 5th VC Div remained in the northeast Bien Hoa, Long Khanh Province border area. Elements of the 7th NVA Div remained deployed in northeast Binh Duong Province. Some elements of the 9th VC Div were deployed north of the Michelin Plantation in the northwest Binh Duong/Tay Ninh Province area while others possibly remained in Hau Nghia Province. There were no major changes in the deployment of local forces during the period. Indications were that the enemy planned to initiate offensive action in the Saigon area during late April or early May. These indications were supported by the statements of Colonel Dac, the political officer of Sub-Region 1, who rallied to the GVN on 19 April. However, it is probable that friendly sweep operations in the areas of enemy troop buildups and continued discovery of large weapons caches in central III CTZ had delayed his plans to some extent.

(C) Large-scale Significant Attacks. In Bien Hoa Province, on 15 April, an unidentified enemy battalion attacked the 2/43 ARVN Regt. Friendly losses were 10 KIA and 30 WIA. Enemy losses consisted of 19 KIA, one detained, two AK-47 rifles, one Soviet light machinegun, two B-41 rocket launchers, three Soviet carbines, 31 mixed rocket and mortar ammunition rounds, 20 grenades, 27 AK-47 magazines, one antitank mine, 2 B-40 rocket charges, five Bangalore Torpedoes, and two shovels. [200]

May

(C) The enemy maintained a high level of activity in III CTZ throughout the month. The activity was highlighted by the launching of Phase III of the General Offensive on 5 May. The offensive, directed primarily at Saigon, was presaged by a series of attacks by fire throughout southern Tay Ninh and northern and eastern Hau Nghia Provinces. These attacks on 1 to 3 May were conducted to screen the movement of major enemy forces into assembly areas west of Saigon. On 3 and 4 May, major engagements developed with elements of the 273d VC Regt in eastern Hau Nghia Province and with elements of the 7th NVA Div in western Bien Hoa and eastern Binh Duong Provinces, resulting in a cumulative total of 275 enemy KIA. These contacts and another on 4 to 5 May in southern Binh Duong Province, which resulted in 149 enemy killed, occurred when Allied forces intercepted enemy forces moving into their final assembly areas. Attacks by fire on Saigon and thirteen other locations in III CTZ during the early morning hours of 5 May signalled the beginning of the enemy offensive. Initial ground contact in the

Saigon area occurred early 5 May when the Dong Nai Regt and two Local Force battalions attempted to iz. the two major bridges east of the city. The enemy was repulsed after heavy fighting, and bridges remained under friendly control. On 6 May, the major action shifted to the west of aigon where elements of the 9th VC Div, the 88th NVA Regt, and three separate battalions were engaged in heavy to sporadic contact until 10 May. On 7 May, major action developed south of the city where two local force battalions remained until driven out on 12 May. After 12 May, contacts with enemy forces in Gia Dinh Province diminished in both frequency and intensity and occurred progressively further from Saigon. By 15 May, the major enemy forces had withdrawn to base areas on the periphery of Gia Dinh Province where they remained throughout the remainder of the month. Elements of the Dong Nai Regt continued attempts to penetrate the Gia Dinh City area in order to gain access to Saigon's First Precinct. Late in the month, the Dong Nai Regt was supplemented by the 2d LF Bn. At the same time, two local force battalions attacked the southwest edge of Saigon. Small elements managed to penetrate into the Fifth and Sixth Precincts where they were quickly isolated. By the end of the month, strong contacts had ceased and clearing operations had begun. PWs indicated that the current enemy tactic was to rotate battalions into the Saigon area in an effort to maintain constant pressure on the city in order to influence the Paris talks. After the 1st Australian Task Force (ATF) had established a base in War Zone D, the 7th NVA Div made several unsuccessful regimental-sized attacks in an attempt to eject the Australians from this traditional VC base area and consequently suffered heavy losses.

(C) Large-scale Significant Attacks. Two unidentified enemy battalions (possibly the 267th and 269th VC MF Bns) attacked the province capital on 5 May in Hau Nghia Province. Friendly losses included 17 ARVN KIA, three civilians killed, two US and 67 ARVN WIA, and nine civilians wounded. The enemy lost 36 KIA, 15 individual and 11 crew-served weapons, and one telephone.

(C) While in Phuoc Long Province on 5 May, an unidentified enemy battalion (possibly the 211th or 212th NVA Bn) attacked Bo Duc District Town. Friendly losses included five RF KIA and nine RF WIA. The enemy lost 66 KIA, one detainee, and 41 individual weapons.

(C) On 6 May in Long Khanh Province, two unidentified enemy battalions (possibly the 1st Bn, 274th VC MF Regt and the D440 NVA Bn) ambushed the 2/34th ARVN Inf Regt. Friendly losses included 40 KIA, 54 WIA, one crew-served weapon, three armored personnel carriers, and eight other vehicles destroyed. Enemy losses included 48 KIA and four crew-served and eight individual weapons.

(C) The 5th VC LF Bn attacked on 26 May in Gia Dinh Province the night defensive position of 4th Bn, 23rd Inf. Friendly losses included six KIA and 32 WIA. The enemy lost 218 KIA, three detainees, and 17 individual and four crew-served weapons. [291]

June

(C) Enemy activity diminished following the mid-June withdrawal of enemy forces from the Saigon area. The enemy subsequently avoided major confrontation while refitting and reorganizing his forces. In late May and continuing through early June, the enemy committed elements of the Dong Nai Regt in the Gia Dinh area northeast of Saigon. The attacks were supported by elements of the newly-formed Quyet Thang Regt which was believed to have been formed in April 1968 from the 1st Main Force, 2nd Local Force, and the Gia Dinh 4th Sapper Bns. During

the same period, both the 6th LF and 308th MF Bns conducted attacks in the Cholon section of southwestern Saigon. PWs captured in this action stated that the 308th Bn was formed from elements of the 306th Bn in IV CTZ and subsequently moved to the Saigon area. Activity in the Gia Dinh area diminished rapidly following a 9 June contact approximately 3 kilometers east of the Tan Son Nhut Air Base where friendly forces killed 72 enemy in a day-long battle. Elements of the Dong Nai Regt were identified in this action. In the southwestern section of the city, enemy resistance collapsed on 10 June with the surrender of 31 enemy, 30 of whom were from the 308th Bn. The remnants of both the 6th LF and 308th MF Bns subsequently withdrew to the southwest. In a similar mass surrender 141 VC/NVA soldiers, predominantly from the Quyet Thang Regt, returned to ARVN control on 19 June; subsequent interrogations revealed that the regiment had suffered heavy losses. On 22 June in central Long Khanh Province elements of the 274th VC Regt ambushed ARVN forces on Route 20 southwest of Dinh Quang Village. The regiment sustained 76 KIA. In other areas of III CTZ activity remained light as enemy elements avoided major contact. In central Long An Province friendly forces initiated contacts with the 294th Infiltration Bn and the 506th LF Bn on 23, 24, and 25 June. These engagements resulted in 129 enemy killed. During mid to late June enemy attention was directed at resupply, reorganization, and replacement. The intensification of the ARC LIGHT program during the month probably had an adverse effect upon these activities.

(C) Large-Scale Significant Attacks. On 4 June in Binh Duong Province, an estimated enemy battalion, possibly the K8 Bn of the 88th NVA Regt attacked Phu Hoa District Town and the 3/7 ARVN Inf Regt. Friendly losses were one KIA, eight WIA, and one civilian wounded. Enemy losses consisted of 45 KIA, eight detainees, and eight individual and four crew-served weapons.

(C) In Gia Dinh Province on 16 June an estimated enemy battalion, possibly the 267th VC LF Bn, shelled and then attacked the night defensive position of the 2d Bn, 27th Inf. Friendly losses were three KIA and 32 WIA. Enemy losses included 71 KIA, one detainee and 21 individual and four crew-served weapons.

(C) An estimated two enemy battalions, possibly the 1st and 2nd Bns, 274th VC Regt, ambushed the 3/43 ARVN Regt on 22 June in Long Khanh Province. Friendly losses included 48 KIA and 57 WIA. Enemy losses included 76 KIA, one detainee, and five individual and two crew-served weapons. [292]

July

(C) In III CTZ enemy-initiated activity during July was very light as large enemy units effected major relocations away from the Saigon area. It became clear that the Phase III of the Second General Offensive was cancelled and commanders were ordered to begin plans and preparations for the "Third Climaxing Phase" or the Third General Offensive. The headquarters of the 7th NVA Div, with the 141st and 165th NVA Regts, relocated northward to northern Binh Long Province where it assumed control of the 32d NVA Regt which recently moved to the Loc Ninh area from II CTZ. This force posed a threat to Loc Ninh in Binh Long Province. The 9th VC Div relocated from western Hau Nghia to western Tay Ninh Province where agents indicated that the division, along with local force units, would attack Tay Ninh City. The 275th VC Regt was to block reinforcements from the southeast during this attack. Captured documents, prisoners, and ralliers indicated that during the "Third Climaxing Phase" the Quyet Thang and Dong Nai Regts, reportedly back to full strength, would attack Saigon from

the north, the Thu Duc Regt from the east, six local force battalions from the South, and the Cuu Long Regt from the west. Reconnaissance and preparations were in the final stages, and captured documents stated that all preparations in Subregion 4 were to be completed before 5 August. Analysis of all available information indicated the probable date of initiation would be in mid-August. Simultaneous attacks on major provincial capitals could be expected. 293

August

(C) The enemy intensified his activities in III CTZ on 18 August with widespread attacks in the outer provinces. A task force with elements of both the 9th and 5th VC Divs attacked Tay Ninh City and elements of the 7th NVA Div attacked Loc Ninh in northern Binh Long Province. During contacts in Tay Ninh Province, both the 33rd and 175th NVA Regts were identified for the first time as subordinate to the 5th VC Div. Both regiments had previously operated in II CTZ. Sporadic contacts continued with enemy forces in Tay Ninh and Binh Long Provinces through the month. In late August other engagements occurred with elements of the 33d and 101st NVA Regts in vestern Binh Duong and northern Hau Nghia respectively. This enemy activity in the outer provinces had the objective of drawing Allied forces away from Saigon. Reliable agents had reported that the enemy would initiate activity against Saigon, beginning after 2 September. Two battalions of the Dong Nai Regt which reportedly had the mission of attacking Saigon from the north were detected moving into southern Binh Duong Province on 29 August. Captured documents indicated that the enemy considered the destruction of the 25th Div essential to the next attack on Saigon. The 5th VC Div had been assigned the mission of creating a situation in which the 25th Div could not react to attacks in the Saigon area. South of Saigon, friendly elements engaged Subregion 3 forces during the first half of the month, destroying the 520th Bn which had recently moved from IV to III CTZ. Unreplaced personnel losses in Subregion 3 since Phase I of the general offensive had forced the enemy to combine ineffective battalions to form fewer but stronger forces. Thus, the Phu Loi II and K3 (AKA Dong Nai) Bns had formed the Dong Phu Bn and the 5th Nha Be (AKA 306th and 6th) Bn had been incorporated into the 265th Bn. East of Saigon, the 440th LF Bn attacked an ARVN training base near Xuan Loc in mid-August. The 274th VC Regt moved south from the La Nga River area in northeast Long Khanh Province and had been ambushing and harassing ARVN and Allied forces in southern Long Khanh and central Bien Hoa Provinces. In Phuoc Tuy Province the D445 NVA LF Bn engaged in a two-week campaign of harassment southeast of Phuoc Le but it suffered so many casualties in the process that it was temporarily combat ineffective.

(C) Large-scale Significant Attacks. On 15 August in Long Khanh Province, an unidentified enemy battalion (possibly the D440th NVA Bn) attacked the Gia Ray Training Center defended by ARVN elements. Friendly losses were 29 KIA and 150 WIA. The enemy lost 28 KIA, one detainee, and three individual and two crew-served weapons.

(C) In Tay Ninh Province, on 18 August, an unidentified enemy battalion (possibly the 3d Bn of the 273d NVA Regt) shelled and attacked FSB "Buell" which was manned by unidentified US elements. Friendly losses were one KIA, 26 WIA, one tank destroyed, and one tank and 105mm howitzer damaged. The enemy lost 83 KIA and 12 detainees.

(C) Also on 18 August in Binh Long Province, an unidentified enemy battalion (possibly the 7th VC Main Force Bn) attacked the 269th and 969th RF Companies. Friendly losses were 26 KIA and five civilians wounded. The enemy suffered 40 KIA.

(C) On 25 August in Tay Ninh Province, an unidentified enemy battalion (possibly elements of the 273d VC MF Regt) attacked a convoy of the 25th Inf Div. Friendly losses were 12 KIA, 51 WIA, three MIA, and 25 vehicles damaged. The enemy suffered 103 KIA.

(C) Two unidentified enemy battalions (possibly elements of the 101st NVA Regt) attacked Trang Bang District Town on 29 August in Hau Nghia Province. Friendly losses were one KIA and 10 WIA. The enemy forces lost 30 KIA, two detainees, 13 individual and three crew-served weapons, 48 hand grenades, and 10 bangalore torpedoes.

(C) In Bien Hoa Province on 31 August, an unidentified enemy battalion (possibly the 2d Bn of the 274th VC MF Regt) attacked Long Thanh District Town. Friendly forces suffered four KIA, 24 WIA, and 16 civilians wounded. The enemy lost five KIA and two individual weapons.[294]

September

(C) The enemy continued widespread attacks in the outer provinces with emphasis in Binh Long and Tay Ninh Province areas. Enemy activity indicated continued efforts to cause the attrition of Allied forces, to draw Allied units from the Saigon area, and to reduce Allied interdiction of his infiltration routes toward the capital. Agents, prisoners, ralliers, and documents continued to indicate that attacks in the outer provinces were diversionary and that Saigon remained the enemy's primary objective. Indications were that the enemy planned to conduct attacks on Saigon sometime after 1 October. The 7th NVA Div remained in northern Binh Long Province while the 9th VC Div continued to operate in western Tay Ninh Province. Elements of the 5th VC Div moved slightly southwest, remaining deployed along the Tay Ninh/Saigon corridor. In south central Hau Nghia Province, four local force battalions reportedly were congregated in the vicinity of Tra Cu. The 265th, 506th and 508th LF Bns were located in the Long An/Gia Dinh Province border area. The D-1 Bn had been identified as a second battalion subordinate to the VC U-1 Province. In Subregion 5, the Dong Nai Regt, which continued to maintain an offensive posture, had experienced serious morale and food supply problems.

(C) Large-scale Significant Attacks. On 11 September in Tay Ninh Province, the 1st Bn of the 88th NVA Regt shelled and attacked the night defensive position of Co A, 1st Bn, 5th Inf. Friendly losses were six KIA and 20 WIA. The enemy lost 99 KIA, one detainee, and 25 individual weapons. In Tay Ninh Province, on 20 September, an unidentified enemy battalion (possibly the 1st Bn of the 275th NVA Regt) shelled and then attacked the night defensive position of Co A, 1st Bn, 5th Inf. Friendly losses were three KIA. Enemy losses consisted of 37 KIA, one detainee, and 14 individual and three crew-served weapons. The 1st Bn of the 271st VC MF Regt attacked the 1st ARVN Marines on 21 September in Tay Ninh Province. Friendly losses were five KIA and 60 WIA. The enemy lost 138 KIA, two detainees, and 22 individual and 10 crew-served weapons. On 25 September in Tay Ninh Province, an unidentified enemy battalion (possibly elements of the 88th NVA Regt) shelled and then attacked Katum SF Camp. Friendly losses were 12 KIA, 16 WIA, and one MIA. The enemy lost 135 KIA, 10 detainees, 39 individual and four crew-served weapons, 1,000 B-40 rocket rounds, and 1,000 pounds of TNT. In Tay Ninh Province on 27 September, two unidentified battalions (possibly elements of the 9th VC Div) shelled and then attacked Thien Ngon SF Camp. Friendly losses were four KIA and 13 WIA. The enemy forces lost 130 KIA, three detainees, and 50 individual and five crew-served weapons. Additionally, on 27 September in Tay Ninh Province, an unidentified enemy battalion (possibly elements of the 271st and 272d VC MF Regts) shelled and attacked an outpost defended by unidentified regional force soldiers. Friendly losses were 14 KIA and 96 WIA. The enemy suffered 146 KIA, and 48 individual and 14 crew-served weapons.[295]

October

(C) There was a general lull in tactical activity during October while the enemy's main force units appeared to be resting and resupplying in border santuaries and base areas. In the north, the 7th NVA Div remained positioned near the Binh Long Province/Cambodian border while the 9th VC Div remained along the western Tay Ninh Province/Cambodian border. The regiments of the 5th VC Div probably remained positioned along the Michelin Plantation - Fishhook (Cambodian) axis. Their ultimate objective appeared to be Saigon. In the VC subregions surrounding Saigon, there were reports of increased supplies being funneled into Subregion 2, but the subregion units remained in their normal areas of operation. Numerous captured documents disclosed that since shortly after the May phase of the general offensive, a new VC control authority, MR 7, was probably responsible for VC activity south of the Dong Nai River from the Saigon/Nha Be River line and east to the western MR 6 boundary. Varied sources indicated that the enemy had planned to conduct attacks prior to the US elections in November.[296]

November

(C) There was an increase in enemy activity during the month, primarily as a reaction to Allied operations in and near the base areas. The majority of these contacts took place in those portions of Binh Long and Tay Ninh Provinces which are contiguous to Cambodia. In Tay Ninh Province, on 14 November, the 95C Regt, 1st NVA Div attacked FSB Dot. There were 287 enemy killed. The 95C Regt had relocated from II CTZ and was probably accompanied by other elements of the 1st NVA Div. The 7th NVA Div and 9th VC Div were identified through contact in their normal areas of occupation. The 5th VC Div, not noted in contact, was believed to be deployed along the Michelin Plantation - Fishhook axis. In the remaining portion of the outer periphery of III CTZ, the enemy continued to avoid major engagements. There was an increase in logistical activity. There were no major relocations involving subregion forces. PWs indicated that the majority of Subregion 2 forces were located in the vicinity of Ba Thu, Cambodia, conducting supply activities and receiving replacements. PWs also indicated that additional infiltration groups were destined for Subregion 3 units. In southeastern III CTZ combined Allied operations were conducted against the 274th VC Regt which was located in the Phuoc Tuy - Long Khanh Province border area.[297]

December

(C) In December, the enemy began repositioning his divisional forces toward, and into, the subregions surrounding Saigon. Continued enemy infiltration of men and supplies through Phuoc Long Province and the Song Be River corridor was evidenced by contacts in these areas. To the west, in Binh Long and northeastern Tay Ninh Provinces, numerous attacks-by-fire on Allied fire support bases and landing zones were apparently conducted to screen the southward redeployment of enemy forces through the Saigon River corridor. The 95C NVA Regt, 1st NVA Div was identified in extreme northeast Binh Duong Province. The 320th NVA Regt, 1st NVA Div was engaged in the vicinity of the Cambodian Fishhook area in west-central Binh Long Province. The 275th VC Regt, 5th VC Div was identified in southwestern Phuoc Long Province. The 88th NVA Regt was located in Subregion 1. Captured documents suggested that the regiment might have been detached from the 5th VC Div. The 7th NVA Div probably remained in the Cambodian Fishhook area. During the month, the 9th VC Div moved regimental elements southward from Base Area 354 in western Tay Ninh Province. The 272d VC Regt, 9th VC Div lost

103 killed north of the Cambodian Angel's Wing area in southern Tay Ninh Province and an element of the 271st VC Regt, 9th VC Div was engaged in southwestern Tay Ninh Province. PWs revealed that the 6th LF and 308th Bns of Subregion 2 relocated from Ba Thu, Cambodia, to the Pineapple Plantation in Hau Nghia Province west of Saigon. There was a slight increase in activity within Subregion 3. Although there was no noted move toward Saigon, the five subregion battalions remained only a day's march from the capital. In southeastern III CTZ, both the 1st VC Regt of Subregion 4 and the 274th VC Regt were noted in contact in central and south-central Bien Hoa Province. These units posed a threat to both the Long Binh/Bien Hoa complex and Bear Cat Base Camp. In addition, they constituted a potential threat to Saigon from the east. With the exception of attacks by the 320th NVA Regt and the 272d VC Regt and an ambush conducted by elements of the 95C NVA Regt in which the enemy lost 59 killed, enemy forces in III CTZ attempted to avoid major engagements while repositioning their forces. However, enemy reconnaissance of Saigon and its western approaches continued through December which indicated that he had not abandoned plans to attack the Capital. [298]

Operations in IV Corps Tactical Zone

January

(C) In the early part of the month, the enemy violated the New Year's stand-down period by committing 14 major and 29 minor truce violations. Small-scale coordinated attacks occurred on 6, 8, and 20 January. On 4 January in Dinh Tuong Province, elements of the 7th ARVN Inf Div captured an enemy soldier who subsequently led friendly forces to 41 enemy weapons caches. Uncovered in one of the weapons caches were fifty-five 120mm mortar rounds, providing the first positive identification of 120mm mortar in IV Corps. On 6 January, the enemy conducted minor coordinated attacks in Vinh Binh Province. On 8 January, enemy coordinated activity was noted in five provinces throughout IV Corps. The capture of AK-47s in the third quarter of 1967 indicated the enemy was capable of moving and infiltrating newly manufactured equipment over a long distance in a short period of time. On 18 January, Operation CORONADO IX, which commenced on 2 November, terminated in Dinh Tuong Province. Cumulative results were 434 enemy killed and 611 detainees. Enemy activity from mid-January remained generally at a low level. On 29, 30, and 31 January, the enemy conducted widespread coordinated attacks against district towns, friendly night defensive positions, and airfields throughout the IV Corps area. Preliminary reports indicated 413 enemy soldiers were killed during the three-day period.

(C) Large-scale Significant Attacks. On 31 January in Dinh Tuong Province, the 514th VC LF Bn and 261st and 263d MF Bns attacked the province capital. Friendly losses were one US KIA, 64 civilians killed, five US WIA, 638 civilians wounded, and 4939 houses destroyed. Enemy losses were 434 KIA and 65 detainees.

(C) Also on 31 January in Kien Hoa Province the 516th VC LF Bn attacked the province capital. Friendly losses were 164 ARVN KIA, 23 ARVN WIA, and 150 civilians killed or wounded. Enemy losses were 150 KIA.

(C) While in Vinh Long Province on 31 January, the 857th VC LF Bn and the 306th VC MF Bn attacked the province capital and the adjacent airfield. Friendly losses were 10 US KIA, 23

US WIA, four UH-1D helicopters destroyed, and 20 UH-1D helicopters and four O1-E aircraft damaged. Enemy losses were 35 KIA, nine detainees, and 22 individual weapons.

(C) The 501st VC LF Bn attacked the province capital on 31 January in Vinh Binh Province. Friendly losses were one US and 14 ARVN KIA, and three US and 31 ARVN WIA. Also, four armored personnel carriers were destroyed and two individual weapons were lost. Enemy losses were 52 KIA and one detainee. Also, 23 individual weapons were seized.

(C) In Phong Dinh Province on 31 January, the VC Tay Do LF Bn and the 303d VC MF Bn attacked the province capital. Allied losses were six US and 20 ARVN KIA, and 14 US and 21 ARVN WIA. Enemy losses were 120 KIA and 55 detainees. Also, 85 individual weapons were seized.

(C) The VC U Minh 10 Bn attacked the province capital on 31 January in Kien Giang Province. Enemy losses were 70 KIA and eight detainees. Two 75mm recoilless rifles and numerous other weapons were seized.

(C) Also on 31 January in Chau Doc Province, the 512th VC LF Bn and the 802d and 804th VC LF Companies attacked and overran the province capital. Friendly losses were one US and 29 ARVN KIA, five US and 32 ARVN WIA, 50 civilians wounded, and two ARVN MIA. Enemy losses were 25 KIA and 14 detainees. Also, 41 individual weapons and one ton of miscellaneous equipment were seized.

(C) In Ba Xuyen Province on 31 January the D7164 VC LF Bn attacked the province capital. Friendly losses were six ARVN KIA and 22 WIA. Enemy losses were 50 KIA and three detainees. Also, 15 individual weapons were seized.

(C) During 31 January in An Xuyen Province, the VC U Minh LF Bn and two local force companies attacked the province capital. Friendly losses were 21 ARVN KIA and 45 WIA. Enemy losses were 234 KIA, 53 detainees, and 106 weapons seized. Enemy forces throughout the Delta launched a coordinated offensive that eventually resulted in over 4,500 ARVN and US casualties, over 4,000 civilian casualties, and the destruction of 18,000 homes. More than 6,000 enemy troops were killed. [299]

February

(C) During February, the enemy maintained pressure on urban centers and attempted to solidify his position in the countryside. Between 31 January and 2 February, the fighting in IV CTZ reached an unprecedented level of intensity. During the first three days of the Lunar New Year, 13 of the 16 province capitals were attacked and portions of the cities of Chau Doc, Vinh Long, My Tho, Ben Tre, and Can Tho were controlled by enemy forces. Despite the element of surprise gained by the enemy, ARVN and US forces methodically regained control over the disputed cities. In the aftermath of the heavy fighting, it became apparent that the enemy forces had been amply supplied with weapons and ammunition. There was widespread use of AK-47 automatic rifles and B-40 and B-41 rocket launchers. The size of the enemy units had been greatly augmented prior to the offensive. Many of the enemy dead were youths between 14 and 16 years of age. Prisoner interrogation revealed that many of them had been inducted only a few days prior to the battle. The enemy forces displayed a tenacity in contact which was uncharacteristic of prior engagements. After 4 February, the enemy's coordinated offensive activity

dropped sharply. Friendly sweep operations around the cities resulted in a large number of enemy casualties. These operations also revealed that the enemy intended to maintain his threatening posture around the urban areas. The largest concentration of enemy forces was in the vicinity of Can Tho where three battalions remained south and west of the city and along Highway 4 in Dinh Tuong Province between My Tho and Cai Lay. Enemy activity between 4 and 17 February was characterized by sporadic attacks by fire on towns and airfields throughout IV CTZ. With the exception of a 10 February ground attack on Bac Lieu City which eventually cost the enemy over 100 casualties, the enemy's ground activity was limited to harassment of outposts and watch towers in the rural areas. Binh Thuy and Can Tho airfields in Phong Dinh Province were prime targets for attacks by fire during this period. While keeping his main units poised around the cities, evidence indicated that the enemy continued an anti-GVN propaganda campaign coupled with a recruitment drive intended to replace his personnel losses. On the morning of 18 February, the enemy attacked eight province capitals, five major airfields, and the Dong Tam Naval Operations Base. These attacks were well coordinated and were characterized by a high volume of mortar and recoilless rifle fire; however, they did not approach the intensity of the 31 January attacks. Their significance lies in the fact that the enemy main units were still located within striking distance of the major population centers 20 days after the initial attacks. Obviously the enemy had not found it logistically necessary or tactically desirable to withdraw to his base areas. Enemy activity decreased after the 18 February attacks and remained at a relatively low level during the remainder of the month. Friendly operations continued to make light contact near Cai Lay in Dinh Tuong Province and south of Can Tho in Phong Dinh Province. By maintaining their presence around the cities, the enemy was able to keep the bulk of friendly forces in a defensive posture and out of the rural areas. This tactic, plus an intensive campaign to keep Highway 4 interdicted, gave the enemy forces a great deal of freedom of movement in the rural areas of IV CTZ.

(C) Large-scale Significant Attacks. On 25 February in Phong Dinh Province, an estimated enemy battalion (possibly elements of the 303d and 309th VC MF Bns) attacked the province capital of Can Tho. Friendly losses were 10 KIA, six civilians killed and 51 wounded, two ammo bunkers with 293,532 rounds of assorted ammo destroyed, and two aircraft damaged. The enemy lost 35 KIA, 13 individual and three crew-served weapons, 32 mines, 44 rounds of assorted ammo, and one telephone. In Dinh Tuong Province on 25 February, the 263d VC MF Bn attacked FSB Jaeger, which was manned by elements of the US 5/60th Infantry. Friendly losses included 20 KIA, 68 WIA, nine APCs destroyed, and two 155mm howitzers and two APCs damaged. The enemy lost 94 KIA, 28 individual and 15 crew-served weapons, one thermite mine, and two radios. [300]

March

(C) The location and combat effectiveness of enemy forces in IV CTZ remained relatively unchanged throughout the month. Enemy activity was light as he directed his principal offensive actions against outposts and lines of communications in an attempt to isolate urban areas. While the enemy continued his efforts to maintain psychological pressure on population centers, his reduced activities coupled with other indications suggest that the month was devoted to rebuilding, resupplying, and training his forces; however, elements of his main and local force battalions still lingered near urban areas. Extensive friendly sweep operations were conducted throughout the corps area, and it appeared that these operations had caused the enemy to divide his battalions into smaller units in order to avoid contact. In An Xuyen Province on 5 March, the VC U Minh 2d LF Bn and district forces attacked Ca Mau City. Friendly forces countered

the enemy's attack, killing over 280 enemy soldiers. This was the most aggressive activity demonstrated by the enemy during the month. The most significant contact during the month, as a result of friendly sweep operations, occurred approximately 20 kilometers west of Soc Trang City in Ba Xuyen Province where friendly forces contacted the D7164th VC LF Bn, killing over 120 enemy soldiers. Other sweep operations uncovered 11 significant enemy munitions and weapons caches, primarily along infiltration routes. The Delta Falcon Project, with the mission of interdicting Viet Cong lines of supply and communications in northern IV Corps, succeeded in destroying over 350 enemy sampans, thus further disrupting enemy logistics.

(C) Large-scale Significant Attacks. In An Xuyen Province on 5 March, the VC U Minh 2d LF Bn and district forces employing 82mm mortars, B-40 rockets, 57mm and 75mm recoilless rifles, small arms and automatic weapons attacked the province capital of Cau Mau City. Friendly losses were 10 ARVN KIA, 20 civilians killed, two US and 41 ARVN WIA, and 50 civilians wounded. In addition, over 1,000 civilian homes were burned; two helicopters and one radio were damaged, and one carbine was lost. Enemy losses included 257 KIA, five detained, two 60mm mortars, three 57mm recoilless rifles, one 75mm recoilless rifle, two machineguns, two unidentified rocket launchers, one B-40 rocket launcher, 43 individual weapons, two rounds of 60mm mortar, and one sampan loaded with plastic explosives. [301]

April

(C) Enemy activity during April was limited to intermittent harassing attacks and attacks by fire on friendly outposts, district towns, and LOCs. With the exception of a 22 April battle in Go Cong Province in which 122 members of the 514B LF Bn were killed, friendly operations made only scattered contact with enemy forces. However, the large number of Allied operations conducted during the month undoubtedly had a disruptive effect on enemy recruitment and resupply efforts. On 7 April in Kien Giang Province, an operational Delta Falcon team uncovered two large weapons caches along a known enemy infiltration route. The caches contained 386 individual weapons, 57 crew-served weapons, and 185,000 rounds of small arms ammunition as well as ammunition for B-41 rockets, 57mm recoilless rifles, and 60mm and 120mm mortars. Smaller weapons caches were also uncovered during April in Kien Giang, Dinh Tuong, and Vinh Long Provinces. A captured enemy document revealed a realignment of VC military regions along the Cambodian border. According to the document, Ha Tien District of Kien Giang Province had been shifted from the administrative control of MR 2 to that of MR 3. The change placed MR 3 in complete control of the infiltration routes in Kien Giang Province through which most of MR 3's supplies passed. Prisoner interrogations and documents captured in April point to the continued existence of a group of new enemy battalions which were not part of the enemy order of battle prior to late 1967. These units appeared to be composed of experienced cadre from other units who were placed in command of recruits and soldiers upgraded from guerrilla ranks. Although designated "battalions", all of these units appeared to be below the normal VC battalion strength and their presence did not represent a significant increase in total enemy strength in IV CTZ. However, the formation of these units improved the enemy's command and control over his subordinates and provided an increased tactical flexibility.

(C) Large-scale Significant Attacks. In Vinh Binh Province on 2 April, an unidentified enemy battalion attacked Cang Long District Town and adjacent outposts. Friendly casualties were three WIA; enemy forces lost 50 KIA, one B-40 rocket launcher, and three individual weapons. [302]

May

(C) Enemy activity during the month was characterized by an increased volume of incidents during the first half of the month, which gradually tapered off to sporadic harassing attacks. On 1 May, the enemy launched a series of attacks by fire and ground assaults on provincial and district cities and military posts. These attacks reached their greatest intensity during the period 5 to 11 May, apparently in keeping with the countrywide enemy offensive. The effort in the Delta, however, did not approach the scale of attacks reached during Phase I of the general offensive nor was it as intensive as the fighting in the other CTZs during the same period. Small-scale attacks by fire on towns, airfields, and Highway 4 bridges and outposts occurred in the latter half of May. In most cases these attacks consisted of only small numbers of rounds apparently fired more for psychological than military purposes. The city of My Tho and the airfield and Binh Thuy were targets for such attacks; the latter was shelled on three successive nights with 75mm rounds. Little damage and only light casualties were sustained. On 24 May in an attack 7 kilometers northeast of Phung Hiep District Town, an unknown sized enemy unit destroyed two bridges on Highway 4. The bridges were not repaired until 31 May. This was the most serious attack in the enemy's continuing campaign to close Highway 4. Friendly sweeps throughout IV CTZ resulted in several heavy contacts with main and local force battalions. Over 2,900 VC were killed in IV CTZ during May. The Tay Do LF Bn and the 263d MF Bn suffered over 300 killed as a result of aggressive ARVN offensive action. A number of enemy caches were uncovered during the offensive sweeps and as a result of the Delta Falcon operations, considerable quantities of arms and ammunition were captured. There was some evidence that the continued exploitation of enemy arms caches was having a disruptive effect on their supply posture throughout the Delta. There had also been indications that (VC) My Tho Province was being subdivided to provide better control. A new VC province approximately corresponding to the GVN Go Cong Province was expected to materialize.

(C) Large-scale Significant Attacks. On 7 May in Kien Hoa Province, the 516 VC LF Bn attacked the 1st and 3d/10th ARVN Inf Regt. Friendly losses included 41 KIA, 103 WIA, 55 MIA, 52 individual weapons, and one radio. 303

June

(C) In IV CTZ enemy initiated activity during the month was characterized by harassing attacks and attacks by fire, highlighted by a flurry of activity on 16 June. The bulk of the enemy activity was directed against urban areas, friendly lines of communications, and RVNAF installations and training centers. The early part of the month was marked by heavy contacts between elements of the 9th Div and the 514th and 261st VC MF Bns in Dinh Tuong Province. The enemy lost over 250 killed and a large quantity of weapons in these engagements. A personal letter, written by a company commander of the 261st MF Bn and captured in early June, complained of low morale, high desertion rates, and the difficulty of operating with 16-year-old soldiers. Enemy initiated activity increased sharply on 16 June as the VC shelled four province capitals, four district towns, the Dong Tam Base, and two ARVN training centers. The mortar attack on the Binh Duc Training Center was followed by a heavy ground assault. The attacking force was greatly aided by a small group of VC wearing ARVN uniforms who entered the post prior to the attack. This was the first confirmed incident in IV CTZ in which the enemy has made successful use of this strategem. An increase in the number of harassing attacks and attacks by fire in the Seven Mountains area of Chau Doc Province on 17, 18, and 19 June indicated a possible increase in enemy infiltration of supplies through this area. In another established

infiltration corridor to the east, a Delta Blackhawk (formerly Delta Falcon) operation uncovered one of the largest weapons caches ever found in the Delta. The cache, located in eastern Kien Tuong Province, contained over 270 weapons, nearly a half-million rounds of small arms ammunition, and several tons of explosives, mines, and grenades. Captured documents indicated that the headquarters of MR 3 had reorganized its subordinate main force battalions to form three new battle groups. The U Minh Battle Gp was composed of the 303d MF Bn and the 962d (possibly the former 3175th) MF Bn, the Phu Loi Battle Gp contained the 307th and 309th Bns and the Cuu Long Battle Gp was made up of the 306th and 312th (AKA 308th) Bns. This reorganization was an apparent attempt by the headquarters of MR 3 to tighten its command and control.

(C) Large-scale Significant Attacks. On 16 June in Dinh Tuong Province the 514th VC MF Bn attacked Binh Duc Training Center. Friendly losses were 48 KIA and 64 WIA. Enemy losses included 36 KIA, two detainees, and six individual and three crew-served weapons. An estimated enemy battalion, possibly the 512th VC Local Force Bn, attacked Ba Chu Hamlet on 19 June in Chau Doc Province. Friendly losses were 47 KIA, seven civilians killed, 20 WIA, seven MIA, and 10 civilians wounded. Also, two individual and eight crew-served weapons and nine radios were lost. Enemy losses included four detainees. [304]

July

(C) In IV CTZ enemy-initiated activity was very light during July, with the only significant contacts being the result of friendly actions. The B-52 attacks from 20 to 7 July in Dinh Tuong and Kien Phong Provinces struck elements of five VC battalions (261st, 263d, 265th, 514th, and 502d). Significant losses were reportedly suffered by these battalions. A very large cache consisting of approximately 27 tons of arms, ammunition, explosives, mines, and machinery was uncovered in Kien Tuong Province near the Cambodian border. This was one of the largest caches uncovered in South Vietnam. The enemy continued to have financial and recruiting problems in the Delta. A letter dated 2 May and captured in Dinh Tuong Province indicated that the VC were unable to find sufficient civilian laborers to accomplish their mission. In two cases, in Vinh Long and Kien Phong Provinces, civilians were kidnapped for failure to work for the VC or to intimidate others into supporting the VC cause. A document dated 3 May from the Current Affairs Committee of MR 3 initiated an austerity program because of a shortage of funds caused by the large expenses incurred during Phase I of the general offensive and the below average collections since then. In Sa Dec Province, two Hoi Chanhs indicated that a general mobilization program, put into effect on 26 June, was greeted with bitterness by the people in VC-controlled areas. Under this program, males from 14 to 40 years of age were to be used as soldiers and battlefield laborers while males between 40 and 50 were to serve in rear echelon support activities. On 13 July, a Hoi Chanh rallied in Phong Dinh Province wearing US jungle fatigues with a 9th Inf Div patch and armed with US weapons. He claimed to be from a special unit, the 101st Company, which was composed of similarly equipped North Vietnamese. The company was trained in small unit tactics, infiltration in small groups, and demolitions. Allegedly, the mission of the unit was to infiltrate Saigon but the Hoi Chanh claimed no knowledge of specific targets within Saigon. Another Hoi Chanh, the executive officer of the Tay Do 2 Bn, provided information on a conference held in Phong Dinh Province between 18 and 28 May. The results of the second phase of the VC Winter-Spring Offensive were reviewed and plans were made for future offensive actions in the province. Attacks throughout MR 3 were scheduled for 20 July but were to be postponed if better results could

be obtained later. The primary targets of the attacks were GVN provincial, administrative, and police offices, and airports, heliports, and US compounds. Captured areas were to be held as long as possible. [305]

August

(C) The period 4 to 20 August was characterized by limited enemy-initiated incidents; none resulting in major contact. There were widespread reports of preparations for an offensive throughout the IV CTZ area. On 13 August, a detailed plan of attack on Cai Lay in Dinh Tuong Province was captured as a result of an Allied sweep in Kien Phong Province. The plan revealed a major MR 2 effort involving at least five main force battalions reinforced by local force units. Reconnaissance of the target area was to be completed by 17 August. A prisoner captured on 20 August, the assistant chief of staff of the D-1 Regt (Nguyen Ba Thong, AKA Hoang Thien Hung), confirmed the attack plan contained in the captured documents. He felt that the attack had been delayed or cancelled because of the compromise of the plan. Enemy reconnaissance in the My Tho area indicated possible major enemy action against the city and a concentration of five VC battalions near Can Tho was noted. A prisoner, the company commander of the C-2 Co, 303d VC Bn (Luu Van Nu, AKA Ngan), stated that the VC planned to attack Can Tho City and the Binh Thuy Airfield with two reinforced regiments on an unknown date. An attack plan for the Can Tho City - Binh Thuy Airfield complex, captured 28 August in Phong Dinh Province, confirmed the prisoner's statement in almost every detail. On 21, 22, and 23 August, widespread attacks by fire and harassments of province capitals, district towns, airfields, and military posts occurred throughout IV CTZ. On 21 August, 74 enemy-initiated incidents occurred. Several ground assaults followed the attacks by fire but all were repulsed. Allied casualties were light and only moderate damage was done to installations and equipment; no major Allied position was seriously threatened. By 24 August, enemy efforts had tapered off. The enemy also directed a major effort toward the interdiction of main lines of communication, particularly Highway 4. In all but two incidents where bridges were destroyed, the damage was quickly repaired. A number of reports indicated that friendly sweeps caused substantial VC losses of men and supplies and they had reduced the enemy's ability to concentrate his forces and adequately prepare planned attacks. It was likely that the enemy effort in IV CTZ would continue to be generally limited to attacks by fire, harassments, and interdiction of lines of communications. Reports indicated that elements of at least three battalions were scheduled to move from IV CTZ to the Subregion 3 area of III CTZ. The 520th Bn from MR 2 was known to to have made such a move. [306]

September

(C) In IV CTZ enemy-initiated activity during September consisted primarily of attacks-by-fire, harassments, and acts of terrorism. Most of the enemy's effort was directed at government district towns, lines of communication, and Allied installations and airfields. Attacks-by-fire against airfields were particularly numerous, indicating the enemy's growing concern over the use of friendly airpower. Ground attacks during the period were at a minimum as the enemy continued to avoid large unit contacts. Subsequent to an ARVN sweep in Vinh Long Province on 1 September, a prisoner, the executive officer of the Recon Co, 312th VC Bn stated that the ARVN operation disrupted the battalion's plan to attack Vinh Long City on 1 September. He claimed the battalion still planned to attack Vinh Long on an unknown date.

Additionally, there were numerous reports of large-scale attacks to be conducted by the enemy before the end of September. The fact that these attacks did not materialize was probably due to the success of Allied intelligence in discovering enemy intentions as well as Allied operations mounted against his forces. An ARVN operation on 2 and 3 September in Kien Phong Province resulted in 143 VC killed. Prisoners taken during the operation were identified as members of the 261A VC Bn. The most significant enemy-initiated activity during the month occurred on the 15th of September when a number of attacks-by-fire and harassments were conducted throughout IV CTZ. Several of the attacks were followed by ground assaults, all of which were repulsed. The former ACofS, DT-1 Regt (Nguyen Ba Thong, AKA Hoang Thien Hung), captured in August, stated that as a result of Allied operations in July and August which inflicted heavy casualties on the VC, enemy forces had been pushed further and further away from the population centers. The enemy's extensive resupply efforts during this high water period in IV CTZ probably accounted in part, for his desire to avoid major contacts. In one two-week period, approximately 400 sampans were destroyed. During the period, a number of enemy caches were uncovered, resulting in the capture of considerable quantities of munitions and military equipment. [307]

October

(C) Enemy-initiated activity during October consisted mainly of attacks-by-fire, harassments, and acts of terrorism and sabotage. Most of the enemy's effort was directed at district towns, lines of communications, and Allied installations. Attacks-by-fire against airfields decreased significantly during the first three weeks of the month and increased, along with other enemy-initiated activity, during the last week. During this period the enemy continued to avoid large unit contacts. On 26 October, an attack-by-fire on the Ca Mau City airstrip destroyed over 112,000 gallons of POL. During the week of 6 October, ARVN and US elements exploited 10 ARC LIGHT strikes in eastern Dinh Tuong Province (Base Area 470) resulting in over 200 VC killed. The bodies of five senior staff officers of MR 2 and the DT-1 Regt (identified by documents) were discovered in the area. There were three violations of the Cambodian border by enemy forces. On 4 October a regional force company received automatic weapons fire from an unidentified force in Cambodia, resulting in one killed. On 1 October, and again on 16 and 17 October, the Cai Cai SF Camp received over 60 rounds of mixed mortar and artillery fire from positions within Cambodia. Reports on the reduction of VC/NVA combat capabilities and a drop in morale continued to increase during the month. The most significant of these unconfirmed reports were: the disbandment of the 261B Bn; the instructions from MR 3, which judged a mass surrender inevitable; and the VC Can Tho Provincial Commissioner's reported statment that the VC/NVA situation throughout the country was tragic. Additional evidence of the enemy's drop in morale was indicated by the high number of Hoi Chanhs. The total number of Hoi Chanhs for the month was 1,072 with an average of 34.6 per day. With the exception of March 1967, the daily average was at its highest level in two years. [308]

November

(C) In IV CTZ, enemy-initiated activity increased during November. It consisted mainly of attacks-by-fire, harassments, and acts of terrorism directed against district towns and Allied installations. Limited ground probes of isolated outposts also increased. However, the enemy again continued to avoid large unit contacts. On 1, 3, and 23 November, My Tho City received more than 85 rounds of mixed mortar fire. On 1 and 10 November, enemy water-mining incidents in Kien Giang, An Xuyen, and Dinh Tuong Provinces caused extensive damaged to 11

Allied vessels. The enemy persisted in utilizing Base Area 470 despite continuous Allied operations which killed over 200 enemy in or near this important training and resupply area. The VC intensified their extortion efforts throughout the Delta. A captured VC infrastructure member stated that the 1968 extortion rate was twice that of 1967. Other reports indicated that the VC had imprisoned some Vietnamese who failed to meet the demanded amounts. In November, 1,332 Hoi Chanhs rallied; this was the highest number since March 1967. [309]

December

(C) During the month, enemy-initiated activity decreased slightly from that of November. However, during the night of 5 December there were 44 enemy-initiated incidents, the highest total since 22 August. Attacks on hamlets and cadre groups involved in the GVN's Accelerated Pacification Campaign increased, indicating VC concern over their widening loss of popular support. Allied operations in and near the enemy's main staging areas may have preempted the major attacks predicted by agents, ralliers, and captured documents. Operations on 1 and 10 December near Cai Lay, Dinh Tuong Province, resulted in 129 enemy killed. In Kien Phong Province, 151 enemy were killed during two operations. In Base Area 487, Vinh Binh Province, a total of 197 enemy were killed in three operations. In the U Minh Forest (Base Area 483), ARVN elements conducted operations resulting in 183 enemy killed. Three caches, containing over 4 tons of munitions, 42 radios, a 10-ton printing press, and 2 tons of newsprint were discovered during these operations. Naval operations in Base Area 480, Chuong Thien Province, resulted in 55 enemy killed and a large amount of arms, ammunition, and other materiel and foodstuffs captured or destroyed, including over 26 tons of rice. Related to the serious losses suffered by the enemy in IV CTZ was the increasing number of VC rallying to the GVN. There were 1,991 Hoi Chanhs in December, the highest monthly total since March 1967. [310]

CONCLUSION

The Enemy Review of 1968

(U) With the dawn of 1969, the enemy immediately began to expound upon his "great victories of 1968." His presentation is worthy of note, for as Alfred Thayer Mahan said: "The wish of a possible enemy is the beacon which suggests the shoal." [311]

> (U) Vietnam is indivisible. The Vietnamese nation is indivisible. This truth can never be changed, although rivers may dry up and mountains may erode. No dark design, no reactionary force can abate the sacred good feelings between the blood-sealed North and South. The South calls up and the North answers. The North calls down and the South answers. In what capacity did they dare to attribute to themselves the right to kill our people, while arguing that our people have no right

to appropriately punish them for their crimes? Since the United States aggressors and their Lackeys have sown the wind, they must inevitably reap the whirlwind.[312]

(U) With the extremely vigorous impetus our Southern combatants and compatriots on 31 January 1968 created a new situation for the anti-U.S. national salvation, struggle of the Southern people, and of the Vietnamese people as a whole. It also marked the beginning of a new, earth-shaking period--the period of General Offensive and widespread uprisings conducive to complete victory. Following their early Spring attacks, our Southern combatants and compatriots again launched a series of repeated attacks on 17 and 18 February and early in March 1968, attacks which caught the U.S.-puppet clique off-guard. The resounding attacks and uprisings in May further deepened the serious wounds of the Americans and puppets. Despite their feverish precautionary measures, our combatants and compatriots directed staggering blows at them in Saigon, Cholon, and Gia Dinh. These blows proved that whatever measures the Americans and puppets might take and whatever they might be, they could by no means check the glorious, victorious-offensive thrust of the fourteen million heroic Southern people who are determined to regain their Independence and Freedom. The Khe Sanh victory which smashed to pieces the so-called manifestation of U.S. determination not to withdraw, further substantiated this truth. While the Americans and puppets had not yet revived their consciousness following the May, June, and July attacks, our frontline again launched a series of relentless, protracted attacks in August and September against enemy dens in thirty cities and more than two hundred district towns and military sub-regions and against about thirty airfields and hundreds of logistic installations.... the violent attacks of our combatants and compatriots.... have inflicted crushing defeats on U.S. puppet, and U.S. satellite troops . . . .[313]

(U) 1968 will go down into the glorious history of the Vietnamese people as a year of hardest fighting but also of biggest victories--a year that has brought about a new turning point. To the "enemy" 1968 was one of the gloomiest years in the history of aggression of U.S. imperialism, marked by three big strategic defeats: 1) the U.S. was forced to end without condition the bombardments on the whole territory of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, 2) the U.S. had to fall back to an all-round defensive strategy on the South Vietnam battlefield, and 3) the U.S. had to

accept talks with the South Vietnam National Liberation Front at the four-party conference in the French Capitol. Also....the U.S. President had to bow out of the Presidential race, the U.S. Secretary of Defense resigned and the Commander-in-Chief of the U.S. forces in South Vietnam was removed. [314]

(U) In 1968, our Southern Armed Forces and people scored great comprehensive achievements....we killed, wounded, or captured 630,000 enemy, including more than 230,000 U.S. aggressors and their satellites annihilating or seriously mauling 1 Brigade, 7 Regiments and Battle Groups, and 187 Battalions; annihilating 18 Armored Companies and more than 750 U.S., puppet, and satellite Companies; downing or damaging 6,000 aircraft of various types; destroying or damaging 13,500 military vehicles, including 7,000 tanks and armored cars; sinking or setting fire to 1,000 ships, combat boats, and cargo ships....In addition, hundreds of thousands of puppet troops deserted. These achievements far exceeded the total record of over-all achievements scored in 1966 and 1967. [315]

Actual VC/NVA Strategic Situation--December 1968

(S) As of 27 December, it was believed that the enemy did not have the capability to launch large-scale attacks, with III CTZ being the exception. He had lost 141,727 weapons during 1968 (see figure III-21); and he closed the year with 181,146 KIA (see figure III-22). He was faced with a decaying manpower situation for net losses had been doubling in each successive month of his operations but he continued to maintain his military posture in and north of the DMZ. South of the DMZ, he was expected to concentrate his efforts on the attainment of his political goals. At the same time, it was believed that he would attempt to increase his capabilities to renew major offensive operations at the time and place of his choosing, and a renewal of enemy offensive operations at a higher level of intensity, to include attacks against Saigon, remained as a possible psychological counter to prolonged peace talks and a relative lull in offensive activity of his forces. [316]

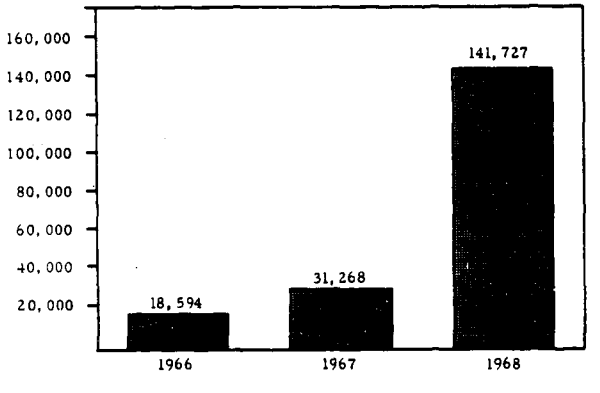
~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

ENEMY WEAPONS CAPTURED
DURING 1968

	I CTZ	II CTZ	III CTZ	IV CTZ	TOTAL
Small Arms	16,991	2,088	8,621	1,556	29,256
C/S Weapons	690	114	975	232	2,011
Grenades	52,092	2,537	31,969	18,011	104,609
Machine Guns	1,323	261	508	91	2,183
Launchers	1,814	411	738	169	3,132
Recoilless Rifles	0	0	0	0	0
Mortars	305	71	100	58	514
Artillery	31	1	0	0	32

GRAND TOTAL: 141,727

ENEMY WEAPONS CAPTURED
BY YEAR



~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

FIGURE III-21

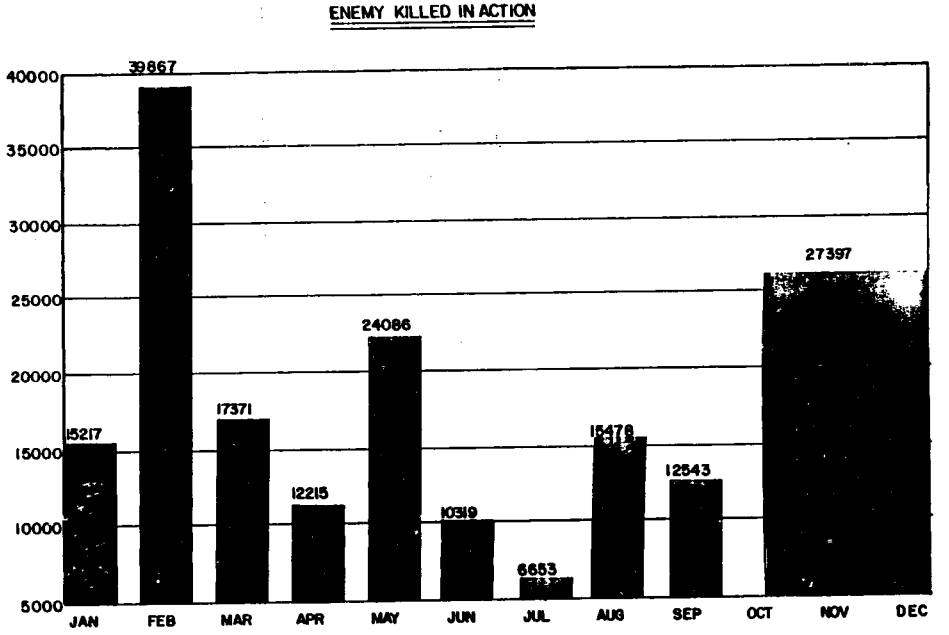


FIGURE III-22

1. Bk (U), Robert Debs Heinl, Jr., 1966: Dictionary of Military and Naval Quotations.

2. Rpt (S), MACV, 4 Dec 68, Subj: Year-End Review, Vietnam (U), Gp-4.

3. Op. cit. #1.

4. Msg (U), FBIS Saigon to KAOBLS/Chief JSPC, et al., 040935Z Feb 69, Subj: Nhan Dan Editorial.

5. Msg (U), FBIS Okinawa to RHMSVA/COMUSMACV, et al., 061739Z Mar 69, Subj: Liberation Press Agency (Clandestine).

6. Op. cit. #1.

7. Msg (C), SECSTATE to AMEMB PARIS, 232258Z Jul 68, Subj: Another Ho Chi Minh Appeal (U), Gp-3; Embtel (C), AMEMB SAIGON to SECSTATE, 11 Nov 68, Subj: Mission Weekly (U), Gp-None.

8. Msg (S), SECSTATE to AMEMB PARIS, 070006Z Sep 68, Subj: INTL Note: North Vietnam Premier Speaks on National Day (U), Gp-1.

9. Embtel (LOU), AMEMB SAIGON to SECSTATE, et al., 4 Nov 68, Subj: Ho Chi Minh's November 3 Appeal (U), Gp-None.

10. Msg (S), DIAAP-2 to Dist, 160324Z Nov 68, Subj: DIA INTBUL 320-68 Far East Summary (U), Gp-1.

11. Bklt (S), 7AF, 23 Nov 68, Subj: Weekly Air Intelligence Summary (U), Gp-1.

12. Msg (S), DIAAP to Dist, 220144Z Nov 68, Subj: DIA INTBUL 326-68 Far East Summary (U), Gp-1.

13. Bul (C), MACV, 2 Dec 68, Subj: Intelligence Bulletin Number 12-68 (December) (U), Gp-3.

14. Bklt (S), 7AF, 7 Dec 68, Subj: Weekly Air Intelligence Summary (U), Gp-1.

15. Ibid.

16. Rpt (S), MACJ2, Feb 68, Subj: PERINTREP No. 2-68 (U), Gp-3.

17. Msg (S), USADO/PARIS to DTA, 211700Z Aug 68, Subj: C-468-AR August 1968, SGD Walters (U), Gp-3.

18. Msg (S), USDAO/PARIS to RUEOJFA/DIA WASH DC, et al., 101750Z Dec 68, Subj: Classified, Gp-3; Msg (S), USDAO to REUOJFA/DIA WASH DC, et al., 121530Z Dec 68, Subj: Classified, Gp-3.

19. Embtel (C), AMEMB SAIGON to SECSTATE, 5 Feb 68, Subj: Classified, Gp-None.

20. Embtel (C), AMEMB SAIGON to SECSTATE, 10 Jul 68, Subj: Difficulties in North Vietnam (U), Gp-None; Msg (S), DIAAP SW to AIG 7010, 260133Z Mar 68, Subj: DIA INTBUL 85-68 (U), Gp-1.

21. Msg (S), DIA to AIG 7010, 171324Z Sep 68, Subj: DIA INTBUL 260-68 (U), Gp-1.

22. Msg (S), SECSTATE to AMEMB PARIS, 190034Z Sep 68, Subj: Conditions in North Vietnam (U), Gp-None.

23. Embtel (LOU), AMEMB MOSCOW to RUEHC/SECSTATE, 20 Nov 68, Subj: Pravda on DRV Priorities (U), Gp-None.

24. Msg (S), DIAAP-2 to AIG 7010, 120219Z Dec 68, Subj: DIA INTBUL 346-68 (U), Gp-1; Bklt (TS), 7AF, 18 Jan 69, Subj: Weekly Air Intelligence Summary (U), Gp-1.

25. Msg (S), DIAAP-2 to AIG 7010, 220144Z Nov 68, Subj: DIA INTBUL 326-68 (U), Gp-None.

26. Msg (S), DIAAP-2 to AIG 7010, 310026Z May 68, Subj: DIA INTBUL 151-68 (U), Gp-1.

27. New York Times, 25 Jun 68 (U).

28. Msg (S), DIAAP-2 to AIG 7010, 050118Z Jul 68, Subj: Classified, Gp-1.

29. Msg (S), 6499 SPACTYGP to CIA, 062345Z Jun 68, Subj: Classified, Gp-3.

30. Rpt (S), 7AF, 2 Nov 68, Subj: Weekly Intelligence Summary (U), Gp-1.

31. Rpt (S), 7AF, 14 Dec 68, Subj: Weekly Intelligence Summary (U), Gp-1; Msg (S), DIAAP-2 AIG 7010, 010315Z Jan 69, Subj: DIA INTBUL 366-68 (U), Gp-1.

32. Msg (S), DIAAP-2 to AIG 7010, 030208Z Jan 69, Subj: DIA INTBUL 2-69 (U), Gp-1.

33. Rpt (S), CICV, 14 Jan 68, Subj: Interrogation Report No. 105/68 (U), Gp-None.

34. Rpt (C), CICV, 16 Feb 68, Subj: Interrogation Report No. 203/68 (U), Gp-None.

35. Bk (U), Hong Kong, 1968, Subj: Far Eastern Economics Review, 1968 Yearbook.

36. Msg (S), DIAAP-2 to AIG 7010, 072343Z Apr 68, Subj: DIA INTBUL 98-68 (U), Gp-1.

37. Msg (S), DIAAP-2 to AIG 7010, 130439Z Apr 68, Subj: DIA INTBUL 103-68 (U), Gp-1.

38. Msg (C), AMEMB PARIS to SECSTATE, 021054Z Aug 68, Subj: CHICOMDRV Agreement (U), Gp-None.

39. Msg (TS), DIA to AIG 925, 040159Z Jul 68, Subj: Watch Report (U), Gp-1; Msg (TS), DIA to AIG 925, 182207Z Jul 68, Subj: Watch Report (U), Gp-1.

40. Msg (C), SECSTATE to AMEMB PARIS, 312247 Jul 68, Subj: Hanoi Publicly More Grateful for Chinese Aid than 1967 (U), Gp-3.

41. Embtel (C), AMCOUNSUL HONG KONG to SECSTATE, 9 Oct 68, Subj: French Reporter in Hanoi (U), Gp-3.

42. Rpt (S), 7AF, 26 Oct 68, Subj: Weekly Air Intelligence Summary (U), Gp-1.

43. Embtel (C), AMCONSUL HONG KONG to RUEHC/SECSTATE, et al., Subj: Peking's Attitude toward Paris Negotiations (U), Gp-3.

44. Embtel (LOU), AMCONSUL HONG KONG to SECSTATE, n.d., Subj: Mao, Lin, Chou NLF Anniversary (U), Gp-None.

45. Msg (S), DIAAP-2 to AIG 7010, 252326Z Dec 68, Subj: DIA INTBUL 360-68 (U), Gp-1.

46 Rpt (C), USARV, 23 Jul 68, Subj: Weekly Combat Intelligence and Security Review (U), Gp-1.

47. Bklt (S), CINCPAC, 30 Sep 68, Subj: Measurement of Progress in Southeast Asia (U), Gp-4.

48. Rpt (C), USARV, 23 Jul 68, Subj: Weekly Combat Intelligence and Security Review (U), Gp-1; Bklt (S), CINCPAC, 30 Sep 68, Subj: Measurement of Progress in Southeast Asia (U), Gp-4.

49. Msg (C), COMUSMACV to STATE DEPT, et al., 030040Z May 69, Subj: Monthly Report of NVN Infiltration into SVN (U), Gp-4.

50. Nltr (C), MACJ28, 17 Jan 68, Subj: CICV Newsletter, VC Political Infrastructure (U), Gp-4.

51. Ibid.

52. Nltr (C), MACJ28, 30 Mar 68, Subj: CICV Newsletter, VC Political Infrastructure (U), Gp-4.

53. Ibid.

54. Nltr (C), MACJ28, 29 Apr 68, Subj: CICV Newsletter, VC Political Infrastructure (U), Gp-4.

55. Msg (S), DIAAP-2 to AIG 7010, 270055Z Jul 68, Subj: DIA INTBUL 208-68 (U), Gp-1.

56. Embtel (S), AMEMB SAIGON to SECSTATE, 3 Jun 68, Subj: Communist Political Activity in I Corps During May (U), Gp-None.

57. Embtel (S), AMEMB SAIGON to STATE DEPT, et al., 23 May 68, Subj: Alliance of National, Democratic and Peace Forces (U), Gp-None.

58. Nltr (C), MACJ285, 27 Jul 68, Subj: CICV Newsletter, VC Political Infrastructure (U), Gp-4.

59. Ibid.

60. Briefing (C), MACV, 20 Sep 68, Subj: The Vietnamese Communist Political Offensive (U), Gp-4.

61. Msg (S), DIAAP-2 to AIG 7010, 160332Z Aug 68, Subj: DIA INTBUL 228-68 Far East Summary (U), Gp-1.

62. Op. cit. #11.

63. Embtel (C), AMEMB SAIGON to SECSTATE, 18 Nov 68, Subj: Embassy Saigon's Mission Weekly Nov 10-16 68 (U), Gp-None.

64. Op. cit. #60.

65. Nltr (C), MACJ231-5, 25 Nov 68, Subj: CICV Newsletter, VC Political Infrastruture (U), Gp-4.

66. Op. cit. #9.

67. Ibid.

68. Ibid.

69. Op. cit. #11.

70. Embtel (LOU), AMEMB SAIGON to SECSTATE, 30 Aug 68, Subj: Provincial People's Liberation Committee Established in Cau Mau (U), Gp-None.

71. Briefing (C), MACV, 20 Sep 68, Subj: The Vietnamese Communist Provincial People's Liberation Committee Established in Ca Mau (U), Gp-None.

72. Op. cit. #16.

73. Nltr (C), MACJ231-5, 7 Dec 68, Subj: CICV Newsletter, The Role of the Viet Cong Infrastructure in Enemy Offensive Preparations (U), Gp-4.

74. Embtel (S), SECSTATE to AMEMB SAIGON, 29 May 68, Subj: Saigon's 28474 (U), Gp-3.

75. Bklt (S), 7AF, 16 Nov 68, Subj: Weekly Air Intelligence Summary (U), Gp-1.

76. Op. cit. #18.

77. Msg (S), USDAO to RUEOJFA/DIA, et al., 271205Z Nov 68, Subj: Not Stated, Gp-3.

78. Embtel (S), SECSTATE to RUFNCR/AMEMB, et al., 17 Dec 68, Subj: Not Stated, Gp-3.

79. Embtel (LOU), AMEMB PARIS to AMEMB SAIGON, 3 Sep 68, Subj: Opening of NLF Information Office Paris in Near Future (U), Gp-None; Embtel (S), AMEMB PARIS to AMEMB SAIGON, 4 Sep 68, Subj: Manac'h on NLF Information Office Paris (U), Gp-3.

80. Embtel (U), SECSTATE to AMEMB SAIGON, 5 Dec 68, Subj: NLF Seen as Ghost Organization.

81. Msg (C), CORPS PHU BAI to AIG 3129, 071310Z Dec 68, Subj: Sphinx (U), Gp-4; Nltr (C), MACJ231-5, 25 Nov 68, Subj: CICV Newsletter, VC Political Infrastructure (U), Gp-4.

82. Bklt (S), 7AF, 28 Dec 68, Subj: Weekly Air Intelligence Summary (U), Gp-1.

83. Rpt (S), 7AF, 20 Jan 68, Subj: Weekly Air Intelligence Summary (U), Gp-1; Msg (C), CO 5th SFGA to ZEN/CG III MAF COC, 061245Z Dec 68, Subj: Confidential Sites (U), Gp-4; Msg (C), DIAAP-2 to AIG 7010, 150139Z Dec 68, Subj: DIA INTBUL 349-68 (U), Gp-1.

84. Op. cit. #77.

85. Op. cit. #83.

86. Op. cit. #14.

87. Msg (C), COMUSMACV to AIG 7054, 250580Z May 68, Subj: Captured Documents Screened at CDEC (U), Gp-4.

88. Embtel (C), AMEMB SAIGON to SECSTATE, 18 Jun 68, Subj: Mass Defections of VC/NVA Troops (U), Gp-4; Msg (C), COMUSMACV to AIG 7054, 190823Z Jun 68, Subj: Not Stated, Gp-3.

89. Msg (S), DIAAP-2 to AIG 7011, 080250Z Sep 68, Subj: DIA INTBUL 251-68 (U), Gp-1.

90. Rpt (S), MACJ2, Oct 68, Subj: PERINTREP No. 10-68 (U), Gp-3.

91. Msg (S), DIAAP-2 to AIG 7010, 240051Z Oct 68, Subj: DIA INTBUL 297-68 (U), Gp-1.

92. Msg (C), COMUSMACV to AIG 7054, et al., 251437Z Nov 68, Subj: Captured Documents Screened at CDEC (U), Gp-4.

93. Msg (C), COMUSMACV to AIG 7054, 300453Z Jun 68, Subj: Captured Documents Screened at CDEC (U), Gp-4.

94. Op. cit. #83.

95. Msg (S), DIAAP-4A to GPIN-15, 080416Z May 68, Subj: Classified, Gp-3.

96. Msg (S), DIAAP to AIG, 050800Z Apr 68, Subj: Far East Summary, DIA INTBUL 95-68 (U), Gp-1.

97. Msg (S), DIAAP-2 to AIG 7010, 230227Z May 68, Subj: DIA INTBUL 143-68 (U), Gp-1; Msg (S), DIAAP-2 to AIG 7010, 020252Z Jun 68, Subj: DIA INTBUL 183-68 (U), Gp-1.

98. Msg (S), DIAAP-2 to AIG 7010, 060259Z Aug 68, Subj: DIA INTBUL 218-68 (U), Gp-1.

99. Msg (S), DIAAP-2 to AIG 7010, 010134Z Sep 68, Subj: DIA INTBUL 274-68 (U), Gp-1.

100. Nltr (C), MACJ231, 7 Dec 68, Subj: CICV Newsletter: The Role of the Viet Cong in Enemy Offensive Preparations (U), Gp-4.

101. Memo (C), COMUSMACV to AMAMB BUNKER, 25 Jan 69, Subj: VC Recruitment Rate (U), Gp-3.

102. Rpt (S), MACJ251, 18 Mar 69, Subj: Monthly Historical Report (U), Gp-1.

103. Msg (S), CINCPAC to UREOJFA/DIA, et al., 112307Z Jan 69, Subj: CINCPAC Monthly Estimate of Enemy Strength in the SVN Area (U), Gp-3.

104. Briefing (C), CICV, 31 Dec 68, Subj: Order of Battle (U), Gp-4.

105. Rpt (C), MACJ231-8, 1 Jan 69, Subj: VC/NVA Base Area Study (U), Gp-3.

106. Fact Book (C), MACJ28, 14 Apr 68, Subj: Logistics Fact Book ST 68-09 (U), Gp-3.

107. Nltr (C), MACJ231-5, 12 Sep 68, Subj: CICV Newsletter, VC Political Infrastructure (U), Gp-4; Fact Book (C), MACJ28, 14 Apr 68, Subj: Logistics Fact Book ST 68-09 (U), Gp-3.

108. Op. cit. #106.

109. Bklt (C), USARV, 11 Jun 68, Subj: Weekly Combat Intelligence and Security Review (U), Gp-1.

110. Bklt (C), USARV, 20 Dec 68, Subj: Weekly Combat Intelligence and Security Review (U), Gp-1.

111. Op. cit. #106.

112. Msg (C), COMUSMACV to AIG 7051, 210233Z Jan 68, Subj: SPHINX (U), Gp-4.

113. Op. cit. #106.

114. Ibid.

115. Bklt (C), USARV, 16 Apr 68, Subj: Weekly Combat Intelligence and Security Review (U), Gp-1.

116. Msg (C), COMUSMACV to AIG 7051, 220239Z Jan 68, Subj: SPHINX (U), Gp-4; Msg (C), DASC to RUMSAR/TACC TSN, 22 Jan 68, Subj: DASC Daily Activity and Intel Sum for 22-6 (U), Gp-4.

117. Ltr (C), MACJ285 to G2 I FFORCEV, n.d., Subj: VC Tax Collecting (U), Gp-4.

118. Bklt (S), 7AF, 4 Jan 69, Subj: Weekly Air Intelligence Summary (U), Gp-1.

119. Op. cit. #73.

120. Bklt (S), 7AF, 23 Nov 68, Subj: Weekly Intelligence Summary (U), Gp-1.

121. Bklt (S), 7AF, 18 Jan 69, Subj: Weekly Intelligence Summary (U), Gp-1.

122. Rpt (S), MACJ2, Jan 68, Subj: PERINTREP No. 1-68 (U), Gp-3.

123. Msg (S), DIAAP-2 to AIG 7010, 230357Z Jan 68, Subj: DIA INTBUL 22-68 (U), Gp-1; Msg (C), Co B, 5th SFGA PKU to Dist, 171510Z Apr 68, Subj: Daily Intelligence Summary (U), Gp-4.

124. Msg (S), DIAAP-2 to Dist. 240410Z Feb 68, Subj: DIA INTBUL 54-68 (U), Gp-1.

125. Rpt (S), MACJ2, Mar 68, Subj: PERINTREP No. 3-68 (U), Gp-3.

126. Msg (C), COMUSMACV to DIA/RUEPJS, 230341Z Mar 68, Subj: CHICOM Fuze (U), Gp-4.

127. Rpt (S), MACJ2, Jun 68, Subj: PERINTREP No. 6-68 (U), Gp-3.

128. Intg Rpt (C), CMIC, 17 Feb 68, Subj: DKB Rockets in Cong Thanh District, Bien Hoa Prov (U), Gp-3.

129. Intg Rpt (C), CMIC, 20 Feb 68, Subj: The 140mm Rocket (U), Gp-3.

130. Msg (C), DIAAP-2 to Dist, 010234Z Aug 68, Subj: DIA INTBUL 244-68 Far East Summary (U), Gp-1.

131. Bul (C), MACV, 1 Oct 68, Subj: Intelligence Bul No. 10-68 (Oct)(U), Gp-3; Intg Rpt (C), CMIC, 2 Oct 68, Subj: 122mm, 132mm, 222mm Rockets (U), Gp-3; Msg (S), DIAAP-2 to Dist, 240107Z May 68, Subj: DIA INTBUL 144-68 (U), Gp-1.

132. Bul (C), MACV, 1 Oct 68, Subj: Intelligence Bul No. 10-68 (Oct) (U), Gp-3; Msg (S), DIAAP-2 to Dist, 230142Z Oct 68, Subj: DIA INTBUL 296-68 (U), Gp-1.

133. Msg (C), COMUSMACV to AIG 7054, 080100Z Apr 68, Subj: Captured Documents Screened at CDEC, Saigon (U), Gp-4.

134. Bul (C), MACV, 1 Oct 68, Subj: Intelligence Bul No. 10-68 (Oct) (U), Gp-3.

135. Msg (C), 23d ARTY GP PLO RVN to Dist, 271000Z Oct 68, Subj: Fragmentary INTSUM 301 (U), Gp-4.

136. Op. cit. #122.

137. Op. cit. #16.

138. Msg (S), CG III MAF to CG 3d MARDIV, 112350Z Feb 68, Subj: Antimechanized Plans (U), Gp-4.

139. Msg (C), COMUSMACV to II FFORCEV/RUMSFF, 181226Z Apr 68, Subj: VC/NVA Employment of 100mm and 76mm Ammunition (U), Gp-3.

140. Msg (C), CO 23d ARTY GP to Dist, 191900Z May 68, Subj: Fragmentary INTSUM No. 140 (U), Gp-4.

141. Msg (C), COMUSMACV to AIG 7051, 080618Z Nov 68, Subj: DIAUM SPHINX (U), Gp-1.

142. Msg (S), DIAAP-2 to AIG 7010, 150300Z Nov 68, Subj: DIA INTBUL 319-68, Far East Summary (U), Gp-1.

143. Msg (C), COMUSMACV to Dist, 130700Z Oct 68, Subj: J2 MACV DISUM 287-68 for Period 120001 to 122400 Oct 68 (U), Gp-4; Rpt (S), MACJ2, Oct 68, Subj: PERINTREP No. 10-68 (U), Gp-3.

144. Bul (C), MACV, 2 Dec 68, Subj: Intelligence Bul No. 12-68 (Dec) (U), Gp-3.

145. Msg (C), SA 5th Inf Div, 140900Z Dec 68, Subj: SPHINX Cite: 4794 (U), Gp-4.

146. Intl Rpt (C), CICV, 6 Mar 68, Subj: 12.7mm AA Weapons in Bien Hoa Prov (U), Gp-4.

147. Msg (C), COMUSMACV to Dist, 250418Z Mar 68, Subj: J2 MACV DISUM 85-68 for Period 240001 to 242400 Mar 68 (U), Gp-4.

148. Msg (S), 7AF to Dist, 060337Z Apr 68, Subj: Classified, Gp-1.

149. Rpt (S), MACJ2, Jun 68, Subj: PERINTREP No. 6-68 (U), Gp-3; Msg (S), DIAAP-2 to Dist 270101Z Jun 68, Subj: DIA INTBUL 178-68 Far East Summary (U), Gp-1.

150. Msg (C), 4th Riverine Area Intl Off to Dist, 211157Z Nov 68, Subj: PERINTREP No. 47-68, Gp-3.

151. Msg (S), DIAAP-2 to AIG 7010, 190213Z Jan 68, Subj: DIA INTBUL 18-68 Far East Summary (U), Gp-1.

152. Op. cit. #16.

153. Rpt (S), MACJ2, Apr 68, Subj: PERINTREP No. 4-68 (U), Gp-3.

154. Rpt (S), MACJ2, Jul 68, Subj: PERINTREP No. 7-68 (U), Gp-3.

155. Msg (C), COMUSMACV to NMCC, 020430Z Oct 68, Subj: Classified, Gp-4; Msg (S), DIAAP-2 to AIG 7010, 050302Z Oct 68, Subj: DIA INTBUL 278-68 Far East Summary (U), Gp-1.

156. Msg (C), COMNAVFORV to Dist, 040944Z Nov 68, Subj: Not Stated, Gp-4.

157. Bul (C), MACV, 2 Dec 68, Subj: Intelligence Bul No. 12-68 (U), Gp-3.

158. Msg (C), COMUSMACV to VMAC, 201230Z Jul 68, Subj: Incidents Caused by Mines and/or Booby Traps (U), Gp-4.

159. Msg (C), COMUSMACV to NMCC/CINCPAC, 241000Z Feb 68, Subj: Special Telecon (U), Gp-4.

160. Msg (S), DIAAP-2 to Dist, 060430Z Apr 68, Subj: DIA INTBUL 94-68 Far East Summary (U), Gp-1.

161. Msg (S), DIAAP-2 to Dist, 030124Z Jul 68, Subj: DIA INTBUL 184-68 Far East Summary (U), Gp-1; Bul (C), 2 Dec 68, Subj: Intelligence Bul No. 12-68 (Dec)(U), Gp-3.

162. Msg (C), CO 23d ARTY GP to Dist, 201050Z Jul 68, Subj: Fragmentary INTSUM No. 202 (U), Gp-4.

163. Msg (C), 4th Riverine Area Intl Off to RUMUGKO/COMNAVFORV, 171400Z Oct 68, Subj: Not Stated, Gp-3; Rpt (S), MACJ2, Oct 68, Subj: PERINTREP No. 10-68 (U), Gp-3.

164. Msg (C), CO Co B 5th SFGA to Dist, 271520Z Aug 68, Subj: Daily INTSUM No. 058-68 (U), Gp-4.

165. Msg (C), COMNAVFORV to AIG 216, 200944Z Nov 68, Subj: Confidential SPHINX (U), Gp-4.

166. Msg (S), DIAAP-2 to AIG 7010, 020052Z Oct 68, Subj: DIA INTBUL 275-68 Far East Summary (U), Gp-1.

167. Msg (C), 4th Riverine Area Intl Off to RUMUGKO/COMUSMACV, 171400Z Oct 68, Subj: Not Stated, Gp-3.

168. Msg (C), CO 23d ARTY GP to Dist, 151000Z Oct 68, Subj: Fragmentary INTSUM No. 289 (U), Gp-4; Rpt (S), MACJ2, Oct 68, Subj: PERINTREP No. 10-68 (U), Gp-3.

169. Rpt (S), MACJ2, Jan 68, Subj: PERINTREP No. 1-68 (U), Gp-3; Rpt (C), USARV, 19 Mar 68, Subj: Weekly Combat Intelligence and Secuity Review (U), Gp-1; Rpt (C), USARV, 23 Apr 68, Subj: Weekly Combat Intelligence and Security Review (U), Gp-1; Rpt (C), USARV, 6 Aug 68, Subj: Weekly Combat Intelligence and Security Review (U), Gp-1.

170. Rpt (S), USARV, 6 Aug 68, Subj: Weekly Combat Intelligence and Security Review (U), Gp-1; Msg (S), DIAAP-2 to AIG 7010, 170001Z Jul 68, Subj: DIA INTBUL No. 198-68 (U), Gp-1.

171. Rpt (C), USARV, 19 Mar 68, Subj: Weekly Combat Intelligence and Security Review (U), Gp-1; Rpt (S), MACJ2, Jan 68, Subj: PERINTREP No. 1-68 (U), Gp-3; Rpt (C), USARV, 23 Apr 68, Subj: Weekly Combat Intelligence and Security Review (U), Gp-1.

172. Rpt (S), 7AF, 31 Aug 68, Subj: Weekly Intelligence Summary (U), Gp-1; Rpt (S), MACJ2, Jan 68, Subj: PERINTREP No. 1-68 (U), Gp-3; Rpt (C), USARV, 10 Sep 68, Subj: Weekly Intelligence Summary (U), Gp-1.

173. Rpt (C), USARV, 19 Mar 68, Subj: Weekly Combat Intelligence and Security Review (U), Gp-1; Rpt (C), USARV, 10 Sep 68, Subj: Weekly Combat Intelligence and Security Review (U), Gp-1; Rpts (S), MACJ2, Jun & Sep 68, Subj: PERINTREP No. 6-68 & 9-68 (U), Gp-3; Msg (C), CO 23d ARTY GP to ZEN CO, et al., 221000Z Aug 68, Subj: Fragmentary INTSUM 235-68 (U), Gp-4.

174. Op. cit. #122.

175. Rpt (C), USARV, 23 Apr 68, Subj: Weekly Combat Intelligence and Security Review (U), Gp-1.

176. Rpt (S), MACJ2, May 68, Subj: PERINTREP No. 5-68 (U), Gp-3.

177. Rpt (S), 7AF, 8 Jun 68, Subj: Weekly Air Intelligence Summary (U), Gp-1.

178. Rpt (S), 7AF, 10 Aug 68, Subj: Weekly Air Intelligence Summary (U), Gp-1.

179. Rpt (C), USARV, 6 Aug 68, Subj: Weekly Combat Intelligence and Security Review (U), Gp-1; Rpt (S), MACJ2, Nov 68, Subj: PERINTREP No. 11-68 (U), Gp-3.

180. Rpt (C), USARV, 23 Apr 68, Subj: Weekly Combat Intelligence and Security Review (U), Gp-1; Rpt (S), 7AF, 20 Jul 68, Subj: Weekly Air Intelligence Summary (U), Gp-1.

181. Rpt (S), MACJ2, Apr 68, Subj: PERINTREP No. 4-68 (U), Gp-3; Rpt (C), USARV, 6 Aug 68, Subj: Weekly Combat Intelligence and Security Review (U), Gp-1.

182. Nltr (C), MACJ285, 5 Jun 68, Subj: CICV Newsletter, VC Political Infrastructure (U), Gp-4; Intl Bul (C), USMACV, 2 Dec 68, Subj: Intelligence Bulleting No. 12-68 (Dec), Gp-3.

183. Nltr (C), MACJ285, 5 Jun 68, Subj: CICV Newsletter, VC Political Infrastructure (U), Gp-4.

184. Op. cit. #154.

185. Op. cit. #90.

186. Rpt (S), MACJ2, Nov 68, Subj: PERINTREP No. 11-68 (U), Gp-3.

187. Op. cit. #122.

188. Op. cit. #16.

189. Op. cit. #90.

190. Op. cit. #125.

191. Op. cit. #153.

192. Op. cit. #176.

193. Rpt (S), MACJ2, Aug 68, Subj: PERINTREP No. 8-68 (U), Gp-3.

194. Rpt (S), MACJ2, Sep 68, Subj: PERINTREP No. 9-68 (U), Gp-3.

195. Op. cit. #186.

196. Rpt (S), MACJ2, Dec 68, Subj: PERINTREP No. 12-68 (U), Gp-3.

197. Unpublished Rpt (U), MACJ031, 30 Jun 68.

198. Msg (S), COMUSMACV to CJCS, 260930Z Aug 68, Subj: Weekly Assessment of Military Positions (U), Gp-3.

199. Msg (S), DIAAP-2 to AIG 7011, 070305Z Aug 68, Subj: DIA INTBUL 250-68 (U), Gp-1.

200. Msg (C), CO 23 ARTY GP to COMUSMACV, 281000Z Aug 68, Subj: Fragmentary INTSUM No. 41 (U), Gp-4.

201. Briefing (S), COMUSMACV, 7 Sep 68, Subj: Assessment of the Enemy's Third Offensive (U), Gp-None.

202. Msg (C), COMUSMACV to AIG 7054, 230918Z Aug 68, Subj: Captured Documents Screened at COCC Saigon (U), Gp-4.

203. Msg (S), COMUSMACV to AIG 7051, 020500Z Sep 68, Subj: Supplement to J2 MACV DISUM 246-68 (U), Gp-3.

204. Briefing (S), COMUSMACV, 5 Oct 68, Subj: Changes in Enemy Development (U), Gp-None.

205. Msg (C), CO 23d ARTY GP to COMUSMACV, 181000Z Sep 68, Subj: Fragmentary INTSUM 262 (U), Gp-4; Msg (C), CO 23d ARTY GP to COMUSMACV, 251000Z Sep 68, Subj: Fragmentary INTSUM 269-68 (U), Gp-4.

206. Briefing (S), COMUSMACV, 7 Sep 68, Subj: Assessment of the Enemy's Third Offensive (U), Gp-None; Briefing (S), COMUSMACV, 26 Oct 68, Subj: What Happened to the Enemy's Third Offensive (U), Gp-None.

207. Msg (C), G2 II FFORCEV to COMUSMACV, 131100Z Oct 68, Subj: Assessment of Current Enemy Threat (U), Gp-4.

208. Rpt (S), MACJ2, Nov 68, Subj: PERINTREP No. 11-68 (U), Gp-3; Msg (C), CO USAAG I CTZ to RHMSMVA/COMUSMACV, et al., 230625Z Nov 68, Subj: Not Stated, Gp-4, Msg (S), DIAAP-2 to AIG 7010, 260211Z Nov 68, Subj: DIA INTBUL 330-68 (U), Gp-1; Msg (C), SA 5th INF DIV to RUMUBHA/DSA, 170400Z Nov 68, Subj: Classified, Gp-4.

209. Msg (TS), DIAAP-2 to AIG 925, et al., 212349Z Nov 68, Subj: Watch Report (U), Gp-1.

210. Msg (S), SA IV CTZ to RUMUJLJ/SA, 122305Z Dec 68, Subj: VC Activity (U), Gp-4.

211. Msg (C), COMNAVFORV to AIG 216, 200944Z Nov 68, Subj: SPHINX (U), Gp-4.

212. Rpt (S), 7AF, 4 Jan 69, Subj: Weekly Intelligence Summary (U), Gp-1.

213. Msg (C), NILO TJ to TUMUGKD/COMNAVFORV, et al., 121350Z Dec 68, Subj: PERINTREP No. 50-68 (U), Gp-4; Msg (S), DIAAP-2 to AIG 7010, 130311Z Dec 68, Subj: DIA INTBUL 347-68 (U), Gp-1.

214. Msg (S), COMUSMACV to AIG 7051, et al., 150800Z Dec 68, Subj: J2 MACV DISUM 350-68, Subj: DIA INTBUL 350-68 (U), Gp-1.

215. Op. cit. #212.

216. Embtel (LOU), AMEMB SAIGON to SECSTATE, et al., 16 Sep 68, Subj: Terrorism Statistics (U), Gp-None.

217. Bklt (S), TAC, 14 Feb 68, Subj: Intelligence Digest (U), Gp-1; Rpt (S), MACJ2, Feb 68, Subj: PERINTREP 2-68 (U), Gp-3.

218. Rpt (C), AMEMB SAIGON to Dist, 10 Feb 68, Subj: VC Assassinations and Abductions of GVN Personnel and Civilians (U), Gp-4.

219. Op. cit. #216.

220. Msg (S), DIAAP-2 to AIG 7010, 250208Z Mar 68, Subj: DIA INTBUL 84-68 (U), Gp-1.

221. Interview (C), CORDS & MACJ031, 27 Jan 69, Subj: VC Terror Statistics (U), Gp-4.

222. Rpt (C), AMEMB SAIGON to Dist, 7 May 68, Subj: VC Assassinations and Abductions of GVN Personnel and Civilians (U), Gp-4.

223. Rpt (C), AMEMB SAIGON to Dist, 10 Jun 68, Subj: VC Assassinations and Abductions of GVN Personnel and Civilians (U), Gp-4.

224. Embtel (C), AMEMB SAIGON to SECSTATE, 17 Jun 68, Subj: Mission Weekly (U), Gp-4.

225. Op. cit. #127.

226. Rpt (C), AMEMB SAIGON to Dist, 12 Jul 68, Subj: VC Assassinations and Abductions of GVN Personnel and Civilians (U), Gp-4.

227. Msg (S), DIAAP-2 to AIG 7010, 290043Z Jun 68, Subj: Far East Summary (U), Gp-1; Msg (C), COMUSMACV to AIG 7051, Subj: SPHINX (U), Gp-4.

228. Msg (C), COMUSMACV to AIG 7051, 070940Z Aug 68, Subj: SPHINX (U), Gp-4.

229. Rpt (C), AMEMB SAIGON to Dist, 12 Aug 68, Subj: VC Assassinations and Abductions of GVN Personnel and Civilians (U), Gp-4.

230. Rpt (C), AMEMB SAIGON to Dist, 10 Sep 68, Subj: VC Assassinations and Abductions of GVN Personnel and Civilians (U), Gp-4.

231. Embtel (C), AMEMB SAIGON to SECSTATE, 22 Aug 68, Subj: Not Stated, Gp-4; Embtel (C), AMEMB SAIGON to SECSTATE, 24 Aug 68, Subj: 36250 (U), Gp-4.

232. Op. cit. #230.

233. Rpt (C), AMEMB SAIGON to Dist, 9 Oct 68, Subj: VC Assassinations and Abductions of GVN Personnel and Civilians (U), Gp-4.

234. Rpt (C), AMEMB SAIGON to Dist, 8 Nov 68, Subj: VC Assassinations and Abductions of GVN Personnel and Civilians (U), Gp-4.

235. Rpt (C), AMEMB SAIGON to Dist, 9 Dec 68, Subj: VC Assassinations and Abductions of GVN Personnel and Civilians (U), Gp-4.

236. Rpt (C), AMEMB SAIGON to Dist, 9 Jan 69, Subj: VC Assassinations and Abductions of GVN Personnel and Civilians (U), Gp-4.

237. Op. cit. #122.

238. Op. cit. #16.

239. Op. cit. #125.

240. Op. cit. #153.

241. Op. cit. #176.

242. Op. cit. #127.

243. Op. cit. #154.

244. Op. cit. #193.

245. Op. cit. #194.

246. Op. cit. #90.

247. Op. cit. #186.

248. Rpt (S), 7AF, 14 Dec 68, Subj: Weekly Air Intelligence Summary (U), Gp-1.

249. Op. cit. #122.

250. Op. cit. #16.

251. Op. cit. #125.

252. Op. cit. #153.

253. Op. cit. #176.

254. Op. cit. #127.

255. Op. cit. #154.

256. Op. cit. #193.

257. Op. cit. #194.

258. Op. cit. #90.

259. Ibid.

260. Rpt (S), MACJ2, Nov 68, Subj: PERINTREP No 11-68 (U), Gp-3; Msg (C), NILO SA DEC to RUMUGKD/COMNAVFORV, et al., 220940Z Nov 68, Subj: NILO SA DEC PERINTREP 47-68 (15 Nov - 22 Nov 68) (U), Gp-4.

261. Op. cit. #248.

262. Op. cit. #196.

263. Op. cit. #122.

264. Op. cit. #16.

265. Op. cit. #125.

266. Op. cit. #153.

267. Op. cit. #176.

268. Op. cit. #127.

269. Op. cit. #154.

270. Op. cit. #193.

271. Op. cit. #194.

272. Op. cit. #90.

273. Op. cit. #186.

274. Op. cit. #196.

275. Op. cit. #122.

276. Op. cit. #16.

277. Op. cit. #125.

278. Op. cit. #153.

279. Op. cit. #176.

280. Op. cit. #127.

281. Op. cit. #154.

282. Op. cit. #193.

283. Op. cit. #194.

284. Op. cit. #90.

285. Op. cit. #186.

286. Op. cit. #196.

287. Op. cit. #122.

288. Op. cit. #16.

289. Op. cit. #125.

290. Op. cit. #153.

291. Op. cit. #176.

292. Op. cit. #127.

293. Op. cit. #154.

294. Op. cit. #193.

295. Op. cit. #194.

296. Op. cit. #90.

297. Op. cit. #186.

298. Op. cit. #196.

299. Op. cit. #122.

300. Op. cit. #16.

301. Op. cit. #125.

302. Op. cit. #153.

303. Op. cit. #176.

304. Op. cit. #127.

305. Op. cit. #154.

306. Op. cit. #193.

307. Op. cit. #194.

308. Op. cit. #90.

309. Op. cit. #186.

310. Op. cit. #196.

311. Op. cit. #1.

312. Msg (U), FBIS SAIGON to RUAOBQA/7th PSYOPS, 0108002Z Mar 69, Subj: Lao Dong Editorial.

313. Msg (U), FBIS SAIGON to RUAOBLS/Chief JSPC, et al., 010845Z Feb 69, Subj: US - Pupper Clique.

314. Msg (U), FBIS OKINAWA to RUAOBLS/Chief JSPC, 161856Z Jan 69. Subj: Cuu Long.

315. Msg (U), FBIS SAIGON to RUAOBLS/7th PSYOPS, 020660Z Feb 69, Subj: Liberation Radio (Clandestine) in Vietnamese.

316. Rpt (S), USARV, 27 Dec 68, Subj: Weekly Intelligence Summary (U), Gp-1; Rpt (S), SECDEF, 14 Jan 69, Subj: Comparative Casualties--Southeast Asia (U), Gp-1; Memo (TS), MACJ3-06, 11 Jan 69, Subj: MACV Commanders Conference (U), Gp-1.

THIS PAGE NOT USED

CHAPTER IV

FRIENDLY FORCES

COMMAND AND CONTROL STRUCTURE

General

(S) Command and control of the war effort and US/FWMA forces in RVN during 1968 remained essentially the same as outlined in the 1967 MACV Command History. COMUSMACV, as the commander, was designated to exercise operational control of all assigned and attached forces in carrying out his responsibilities for the conduct of US military activities and operations in RVN and in such other areas as CINCPAC directed. He exercised control through his component commanders and commanders of subordinate commands. Two new subordinate commands were established during the year as a result of the increased enemy threat. They were XXIV Corps and the Capital Military Assistance Command (CMAC). (See MACV Command Relationship chart as of 11 December 1968, Figure IV-1). [1]

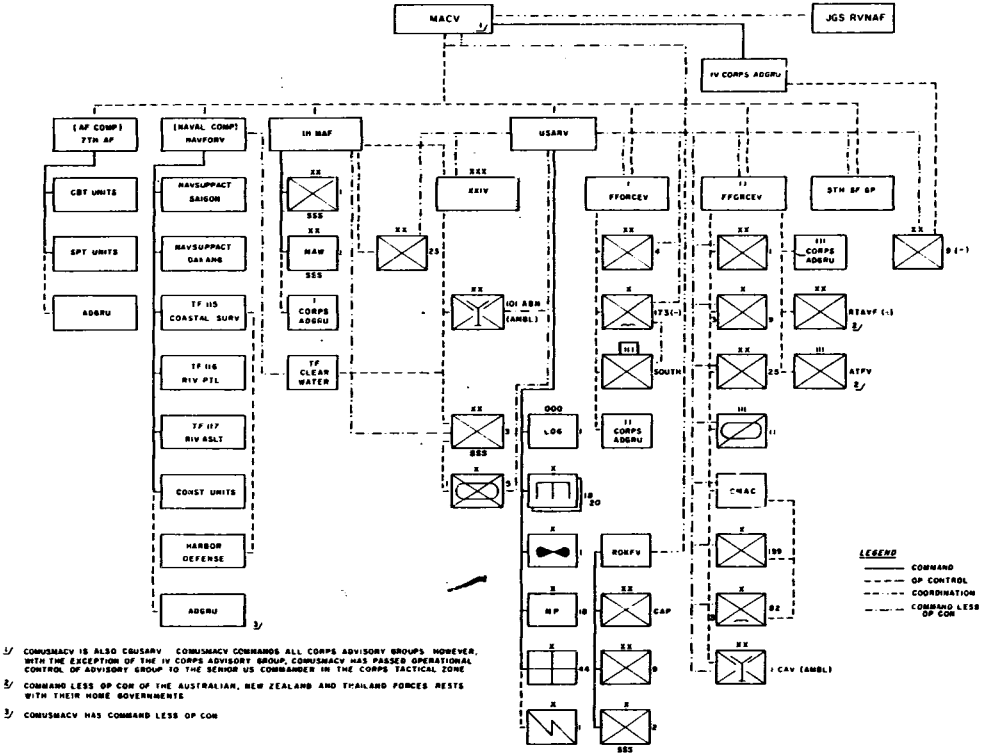
XXIV Corps

(U) Since the introduction of major US forces in Vietnam in March 1965, there had been a gradual but continual enemy build-up in northern I CTZ. To counter this enemy action, COMUSMACV, while conducting a general build-up of force throughout RVN, had continued to reinforce northern I CTZ. The ROK Marine Brigade was the first major in-country force to reinforce I CTZ. Initially located in II CTZ, the brigade had been transferred during August and September 1966 to Chu Lai. The arrival of the ROK Mar Bde had permitted a greater concentration of 1st Mar Div forces in central I CTZ which had, in turn, permitted a greater concentration of 3d Mar Div forces in the northern two provinces of the zone.

(U) During the early part of 1967, the build-up of northern I CTZ had continued by the simple expedient of shifting relatively lightly engaged units in central and southern I CTZ to the north. In April, TF OREGON later designated the Americal Div, had been deployed to southern I CTZ which had released additional Marine units for employment in the north. By late October, enemy plans for large-scale offensive operations in the DMZ had been disrupted by a combination of friendly actions, monsoon rains, and flooding. However, during December 1967 and January 1968, intelligence sources indentified a major enemy build-up in and around Quang Tri Province. To control and coordinate the major forces planned to counter this enemy threat, COMUSMACV directed the establishment of a forward headquarters.

(U) MACV Forward was established on 9 February 1968 at Hue/Phu Bai under the command of GEN Creighton W. Abrams, then DEPCOMUSMACV. Personnel to man the headquarters were assigned from MACV and USARV units in the Saigon/Bien Hoa area. The mission of the new headquarters was to coordinate and direct Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine, and ARVN

MACV COMMAND RELATIONSHIPS
(11 DEC 68)



1/ COMUSMACV IS ALSO CGUSARV. COMUSMACV COMMANDS ALL CORPS ADVISORY GROUPS. HOWEVER, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THE IV CORPS ADVISORY GROUP, COMUSMACV HAS PASSED OPERATIONAL CONTROL OF ADVISORY GROUP TO THE SENIOR US COMMANDER IN THE CORPS TACTICAL ZONE

2/ COMMAND LESS OP CON OF THE AUSTRALIAN, NEW ZEALAND AND THAILAND FORCES RESTS WITH THEIR HOME GOVERNMENTS

3/ COMUSMACV HAS COMMAND LESS OP CON

FIGURE IV-1

forces which were to be concentrated against what was expected to be a major enemy effort in northern I CTZ.

(S) A Provisional Corps, Vietnam (PROVCORPSV) was activated at Hue/Phu Bai replacing MACV (FWD), on 10 March 1968. LTG W. B. Rosson was designated Commanding General and exercised OPCON of assigned US ground forces. Initially these units were: 3d Mar Div (Reinf), 1st Cav Div (AM), and the 101st Abn Div (-) (Reinf). The purpose of establishing the PROVCORPSV was to provide operational direction of the expanded US ground force structure in northern I CTZ. The CG, PROVCORPSV was to conduct combat operations to destroy enemy forces in northern I CTZ and to exercise OPCON of ground tactical units operating in the Quang Tri and Thua Thien Provinces north of a boundary in Thua Thien Province. Designated nondivisional combat support and combat service support elements in this area supported PROVCORPSV.

(S) CG, III MAF continued his current missions in I CTZ and exercised OPCON of PROVCORPSV and all other tactical units in I CTZ south of the PROVCORPSV boundary. CG, III MAF retained responsibility for the CORDS functions throughout I CTZ.

(S) Combined and integrated operations were conducted through coordination and cooperation in planning and execution between CG, III MAF and CG, PROVCORPSV. The CG, PROVCORPSV was authorized direct coordination with ARVN forces in the zone. [2]

(U) PROVCORPSV was redesignated as XXIV Corps effective 15 August 1968 and remained under the OPCONof CG, III MAF. [3]

Capitol Military Assistance Command

(U) As part of the overall US reaction to the VC/NVA Tet Offensive, a command and control group, composed of key representatives of Headquarters, II Field Force Vietnam (IIFFORCEV) deployed to Saigon. This element, known as "Hurricane Forward", was commanded by MG Keith L. Ware, then Deputy CG, II FFORCEV. For the ensuing 15 days. "Hurricane Forward" controlled all US forces in the Saigon/Gia Dinh area and provided guidance to RVNAF elements in their successful efforts to eliminate the enemy penetration.

(U) Again, on 15 May, "Hurricane Forward" was formed and deployed to Saigon to supervise defensive efforts to halt and turn back the new enemy threat on the capital city. This command and control group was redesignated "Task Force Hay" under the command of MG John H. Hay, Deputy CG, II FFORCEV. On this occasion, US forces played a significant role in inflicting severe punishment on the diehard enemy units. Their effectiveness forced the enemy to withdraw as far north as War Zone C to lick their wounds. [4]

(S) On 3 June, President Thieu directed that, effective 4 June, MG Minh (CG, 21st ARVN Div) would be assigned as Military Governor of Saigon/Gia Dinh with the primary responsibility for the defense of the Saigon area. Operationally, he was under LTG Khang, CG, III CTZ.

(S) MG Minh had OPCONof all GVN forces involved in the security of Saigon/Gia Dinh. This control included ARVN, General Reserve, RF, PF, NP, and MP components. The ARVN CMD commander was his deputy.

(S) MG Minh had direct command of three ranger battalions, two service battalions (security), two RF battalions (mobile), two RF battalions (static), one RF recon company, 25 RF companies (separate), and 144 PF platoons. He also had OPCON of four Marine battalions, six airborne battalions, one ranger battalion, and the National Police in Saigon/Gia Dinh area. He established his headquarters at the CMD Headquarters in Saigon. While actively engaged in clearing the local area of the enemy, he was further refining his organizational structure, taking into consideration the artillery missions, civil defense, refugees, RD security, etc. Although his organizational structure was not firm in detail, there was no question of his command/OPCON of the above listed forces.

(S) To parallel this move, on 4 June 1968, MG Hay was reassigned as SA to the Military Governor and Commander of US forces assigned to the defense of Saigon/Gia Dinh. He was given OPCON of all US forces involved in the security of the area and, as SA, had OPCON of all US advisory elements. MG Hay was in turn under the OPCON of CG, II FFORCEV. The CG, USAHAC was his deputy.

(S) MG Hay's headquarters was designated as II FFORCEV (Forward) Command Post and was also established at the Capitol Military District (CMD) Headquarters. MG Hay's missions were:

1. Exercise OPCON of designated US units in defense of Saigon, key installations in the CMD, and approaches to the city.

2. Serve as SA to the Military Governor of Saigon/Gia Dinh. In this capacity he exercised OPCON over all ARVN, RF/PF, and NP advisors in the area.

3. Exercise OPCON of CG, USAHAC activities pertaining to the defense and security of US installations in Saigon and vicinity.

(S) MG Hay had under his OPCON one Mechanized battalion, one Infantry battalion, one Artillery battalion (105 How), one Armored Cavalry Troop, and one Air Cavalry Troop.

(S) All other US units in the CMD remained under CG, II FFORCEV with the proviso that such units coordinate combat operations as required with II FFORCEV (Forward).

(S) Additional measures which were initiated to enhance security were:

1. Collection of aerial photos of 23 sensitive areas in the Saigon area.

2. Collection of overlays of the Saigon sewer systems to determine their possible use by the enemy.

3. Continuous 24-hour aerial surveillance of the "rocket belt" around Saigon. During the critical hours for attack, 2300 - 0400, aircraft employed starlight scopes.

4. Construction of three flash ranging towers were constructed in Gia Dinh Province by the end of June to assist in locating enemy firing positions. These were to be eventually increased to a total of eight towers.

5. Assignment of ground surveillance of the "rocket belt" missions to the major tactical units operating in and around the CMD. These units were assigned sectors of responsibility

with the mission of interdicting the movement of ammunition; locating caches; and forcing the enemy, if he did fire, to use hasty emplacements. [5]

(S) MACV informed USARV that the new US CMD Headquarters had been established as an Army organization effective 14 June. USARV assistance was requested in getting the embryo organization started. On 20 June 1968, the II FFORCEV (Forward) element was redesignated the Capital Military Assistance Command (CMAC). On 22 August 1968, confirming COMUSMACV's verbal instructions, CG, II FFORCEV was assigned the responsibility for the planning, coordination, and execution of the defense of Saigon/Gia Dinh in coordination with CDR 7AF, COMNAVFORV, and CG, CMD/Military Governor of Saigon/Gia Dinh. [6]

Proposed Command Structure Change

(TS) In February 1968, SECDEF raised the issue of revising the existing command relationships in RVN as a method of increasing COMUSMACV's authority over RVNAF and FWMAF. It was suggested that command arrangements similar to SEATO Plans 5 and 8 might be a possible alternative. COMUSMACV felt that, although apparent advantages seemed to exist in such a scheme, there were numerous disadvantages inherent in them which weighed heavily against a change, particularly at that time. The relationships of COMUSMACV and DEPCOMUSMACV with the CJGS, both official and personal, had consistently been excellent. Joint planning and operational relationships between MACV and JGS were such that COMUSMACV did, for all practical purposes, exercise adequate OPCON of RVNAF. CJGS and JGS had been very receptive to the suggestions made by MACV and acted accordingly within the capabilities of RVNAF.

(TS) COMUSMACV exercised OPCON, less command, of the FWMAF of Thailand, Australia, and New Zealand. The relationship with CG, ROK forces was one of coordination, cooperation, and mutual support. Although the ROKs had been slow to respond in some instances, since Seoul kept a tight rein on them, these arrangements had been generally satisfactory.

(TS) The US dealt directly with COMUSMACV on questions of the prosecution of the war in SVN. This resulted in a degree of flexibility and responsiveness which could have been seriously diluted with the imposition of multi-national political and command machinery that would be formalized by the creation of a multi-nation organization.

(TS) As has been mentioned, a review of NATO, United Nations Command (Korea), and SEATO command relationships (i.e., SEATO Plans 5 and 8) led to the conclusion that the advantages of their command structures were more apparent than real. Specifically, COMUSMACV indicated the follwoing points as being disadvantages of the proposed change:

1. The designation of RVN as an appointed nation (similar to SEATO Plans) would require concurrence of the Free World nations and establishment of both a political superstructure and an integrated combined military staff. Experience thus far had indicated that difficulties would likely arise in arriving at agreed positions on strategy, tactics, weapons, force structure, and other issues. While the initial US approach would be one of simplicity in organization, it could be expected that Free World nations, particularly Korea and Thailand, would insist on various prestige command positions and exert the influences associated with an equal partnership.

2. A combined staff would be too cumbersome for active prosecution of the war as it was being accomplished. Language, as well as security (NOFORN aspects), could cause unacceptable delays. International politics would be a negative factor in staff relationships.

3. Such a combined staff would result in the creation of yet another large headquarters with attendant waste in personnel and assets, plus presenting an undesirable impact on the local economy.

4. There might well be demands by the various Free World nations for a voice in all echelons of command. This could create unmanageable problems. Further, it was doubtful if there was sufficient effective RVNAF professionalism to fill the additional positions of a combined staff.

5. The reluctance of ROK to place troops under US OPCON was indicative of the type of problems which could arise if the ROKG were to agree to a combined command for RVN; a quid pro quo basis would be established for similar arrangements in South Korea.

6. Additionally, the implementation of a combined command arrangement with a US officer in command could well result in increased Communist claims of US neo-colonialism. Parallels could be drawn with the immediate postwar relationship between the French and Bao Dai.

7. The creation of a combined staff would vastly complicate the GVN civil-military relationship in the four CTZs. Questions of control of the pacification campaign would, of necessity, be negotiable and the result could be to destroy the sense of SVN national purpose and pride.

8. Finally, the time would not be a propitious one to propose or develop new command relationships. Coming after the Communist Tet Offensive, any proposal could well be interpreted as indicative of a sense of panic within the USG and GVN.

(TS) In summary, COMUSMACV felt that the relationships existing between MACV, RVNAF, and FWMAF had provided an effective means of responsive coordination and cooperation among all force elements in supporting mutual objectives without incurring political disadvantages. A formal multi-national command organization would have given the appearance of unity of command and control over the military forces; however, the imposition of a political superstructure would, in his view, have the opposite effect. Therefore, he could see no advantage in disturbing the existing command relationships which had proven effective. In effect, he had the advantages of a unified command without the disadvantages.[7]

Relationship of COMUSMACV with the Mission Council

(U) To assist the AMAMB in the discharge of his responsibility for US operations in RVN, the senior officials of the civil and military elements of the US Mission sat as a formally established body known as the Mission Council. The Council was a policy-formulating institution and provided a mechanism for high-level coordination of multi-agency activities in support of US policy and strategy. Establishment of such an institution as the Council was felt to be necessary

in the light of the extraordinary extent and complexity of the US resource commitment in RVN and the attendant difficulty for any single Country Team member to identify all the policy implications for the total US effort of proposed programs and activities on his own agency. Through the regular weekly meeting of the Mission Council, the AMAMB and the Mission as a whole were provided with expert opinion across the entire range of functional activities. Consequently, when the AMAMB took action to initiate programs or propose new strategic approaches, he made his decision from broadly based recommendations arrived at after full and frank discussion among the chiefs of the Mission elements. True, the same result could have been obtained through circulation of a proposal for concurrence among the Mission a agencies prior to submission to the AMAMB. The mechanism of the Council meeting, however, offered the advantages of speed in the solution of policy issues and concurrent discussion of a proposal or problem by all the senior officials whose responsibilities and interests touched on the matter. This rapid identification of policy implications allowed for timely detailed guidance not only to the staff of the agency which had to develop the necessary documentation but also to the staffs of the agencies whose coordination was required in arriving at a finished product. Finally, the Mission Council institutionalized the regular exchange of information among the heads of the Mission elements and the discussion of emerging problems considered by each of these individuals to be of significant importance to the total Country Team effort.

(U) The permanent membership of the Council developed as a natural consequence of the intent that the Council be the Mission's policy formulating body. In addition to the AMAMB and the DEPAMAMB, the Council included the heads of the civil and military agencies, together with certain senior advisors from the AMAMB staff. COMUSMACV provided the Mission Council with the military advice essential to the development of Mission policies and strategy. In this, he was assisted by his Deputy for CORDS who was responsible to him for plans and operations in the field and was the principal advisor to the Mission Council on pacification. In this role, COMUSMACV's areas of responsibility had to be closely coordinated at the policy level with the directors of the other Mission civilian agencies, who also sat as Council members. These were the Director of the Joint US Public Affairs Office (JUSPAO), and the Director of the US Agency for International Development (USAID). The other Mission Council members were drawn from the Embassy staff. 8

UNITED STATES FORCES

General

(S) US military force strength during 1968 increased by 38,876 personnel over that of 1967 (See Figure IV-2). Strengths by Service at the beginning and end of the year were as follows:

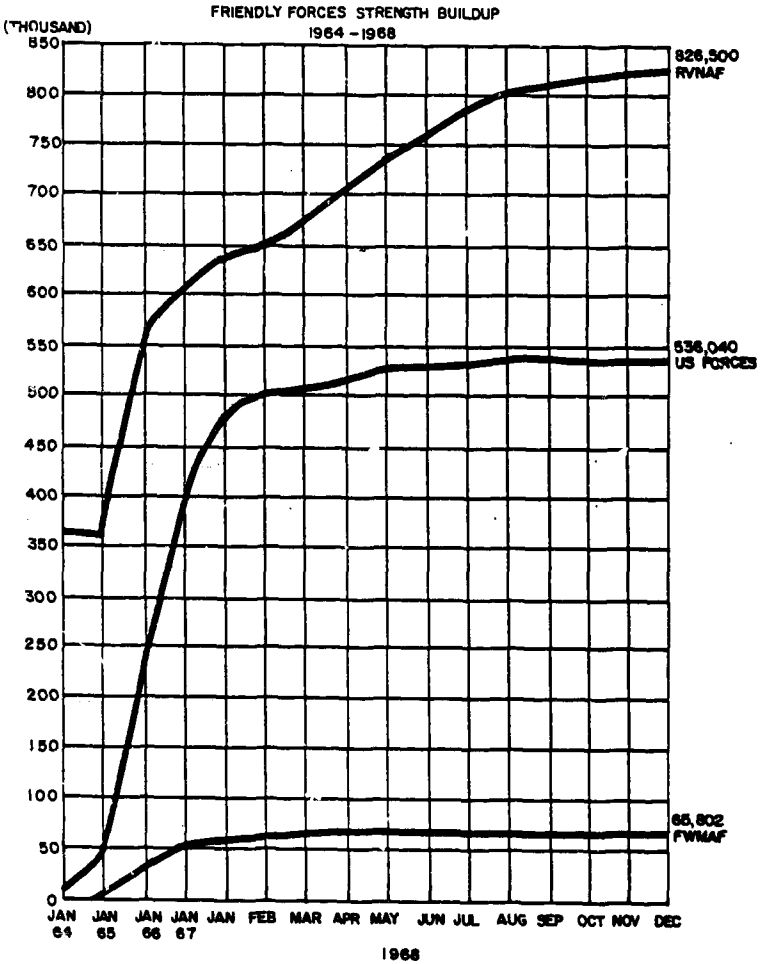

FRIENDLY FORCES STRENGTH BUILDUP
1964 - 1968
(THOUSAND)
850
800
750
700
650
600
550
500
450
400
350
300
250
200
150
100
50
0
826,500
RVNAF
536,040
US FORCES
65,802
FWMAF
JAN 64
JAN 65
JAN 66
JAN 67
JAN
FEB
MAR
APR
MAY
JUN
JUL
AUG
SEP
OCT
NOV
DEC
1968

FIGURE IV-2

	1 Jan 68	31 Dec 68
Army	331,098	359,313
Navy	31,669	37,541
Air Force	55,908	58,029
Marines	78,013	80,716
Coast Guard	476	441
TOTAL	497,164	536,040

(S) During the year, there was also a corresponding increase in military space authorization. This change, reflected in SEASIA Deployment Program 6, increased spaces by 24,500. This resulted in the following increases by Services: [9]

	Program 5	Program 6*	Increase of**
Army	348,880	368,307	19,427
Navy/CG	35,472	37,409	1,937
Air Force	58,709	61,541	2,832
Marines	81,939	82,243	304
TOTAL	525,000	549,500	24,500

*As of 3 January 1969.
**After minor adjustments.

(S) Also, the number of maneuver battalions in-country increased during the year. US maneuver battalions at the beginning of the year totalled 100; 79 Army and 21 Marine. As of 31 December, the total had increased to 110; 89 Army and 21 Marine. [10]

Deployment Program 6

(TS) In mid-February, MACV requested additional forces as a result of the enemy situation throughout RVN, particularly in I CTZ. The requirements were presented to the CJCS during his 22-25 February 1968 visit to MACV. The requirements were refined into a force package, and copies were presented to the Chairman and members of his party prior to their departure. A copy was carried, by courier, to CINCPAC on 25 February, in advance of the follow-on conference at CINCPAC with the Chairman and his party. The component commanders and CG, III MAF were requested to submit lists of the additional forces needed to increase the MACV force structure from Program 5 levels, which had been approved on 15 September 1967, to the force

structure level which had been briefed to CJCS. The revised force level presented was essentially:

1. Those forces required immediately; i.e., not later than 1 May 1968 (12 US maneuver battalions and eight tactical fighter squadrons).

2. Those forces required not later than 1 September 1968 (six US maneuver battalions, six ROK maneuver battalions, and four tactical fighter squadrons).

3. Those forces required prior to the end of 1968 (nine US maneuver battalions and three tactical fighter squadrons).

(TS) Of the eight tactical fighter squadrons requested immediately, MACV recommended that they include the three squadrons which were deferred in Program 5 and that the 27th Marine Regimental Landing Team (RLT) which had already been deployed, be included in the 12 US maneuver battalions requested.

(TS) JCS provided MACV with a shopping list of units available for deployment to SVN by 15 June 1968 and requested MACV to develop a balanced force package within 30,000 spaces from that list. Subsequently, a second list, indicating units available after 15 June 1968, was received from JCS with further guidance that MACV could develop an alternate 30,000-space package to include units available both before and after 15 June 1968. MACV was further advised that the alternate package would be useful to JCS in responding to MACV's requirements, but that MACV would be taking a chance on getting the units listed as available at a date late than 15 June 1968. Working within these parameters, the MACV staff, in conjunction with the component commands, developed several 30,000-space force packages which were presented to COMUSMACV on 11 March 1968. In order to adhere to the JCS guidance and obtain a reasonably well balanced force package, COMUSMACV approved two alternative 30,000-space force packages for presentation to JCS. He indicated a preference for the second alternative since it maximized combat power, yet afforded an acceptable balance of operating forces and service support elements. It provided for seven maneuver battalions and four attack/fighter squadrons, whereas alternative one provided only three maneuver battalions and three attack/fighter squadrons.

(TS) COMUSMACV also recognized that alternative two did not provide a Marine division headquarters as had been requested by the CG, III MAF nor did it consider the force level combat and combat service support requirements for more than one RLT additive to the currently approved Program 5 III MAF structure. The JCS had been specific in that the 3d Bde, 82d Abn Div and the 27th Mar RLT would not be considerd in development of the 30,000-space force package. Accordingly, the Marine division headquarters was deleted in favor of additional combat spaces elsewhere in the package and the force level combat and combat service support spaces were base on adequate support for only one additional RLT, presumably scheduled to replace the 27th Mar RLT. It was recognized that alternative two did not satisfy the stated needs of III MAF to correct all existing force structure imbalances. These imbalances, as well as those of the other components, were carefully considerd; however, it was decided to obtain the greatest practicable number of combat forces in this additive force package while maintaining the best possible balance within the package and correcting the most pressing overall force imbalances.

(TS) After conferring with CJCS at Clark AFB on 24 March, COMUSMACV informed JCS and CINCPAC on 31 March that he had reviewed his troop requirements in light of the current

and CINCPAC on 31 March that he had reviewed his troop requirements in light of the current situation. For USARV he requested a separate light infantry brigade, (3d Bde, 82d Abn Div (modified), 4,502 spaces), a mechanized brigade (4,769 spaces), and an armored cavalry squadron (1,030 spaces) for a total of 10,301 combat spaces equivalent to seven battalions. He also requested two F-100 tactical fighter squadrons (TFS) for 7AF for a total of 938 spaces.

(TS) For combat service and combat support, he requested 9,394 spaces for USARV, 1,775 spaces for NAVFORV, 1,602 spaces for 7AF, and 439 spaces for III MAF. The total package was a requested increase of 24,449 spaces over the structure ceiling of 525,000. [11]

(TS) A follow-on message from COMUSMACV informed JCS that the two AF F-100 tactical fighter squadrons indicated in the troop list were in addition to the three deferred tactical fighter squadrons already included in Program 5; these two deferred F-100 squadrons and the one deferred Marine A-4 squadron should be deployed in addition to the two AF tactical fighter squadrons referred to in the increase. [12]

(S) On 6 April 1968, JCS approved the 24,500 additional military personnel spaces, giving a new total military strength ceiling for RVN of 549,500. This new ceiling was promulgated by SECDEF as SEASIA Deployment Program 6. The additional force included the 3d Bde, 82d Abn Div, in-country on a temporary basis and scheduled to be converted to a separate light infantry brigade, one additional mechanized brigade (separate) to replace the 27th Mar RLT, one armored cavalry squadron, and two additional USAF tactical fighter squadrons.

(S) The 27th Mar RLT was to remain in-country on a temporary basis until the arrival of the replacement Army mechanized brigade, at which time the Marine regiment would be withdrawn and returned to its home base.

(S) JCS requested a refined troop list and authorized adjustments to be made to the troop list provided that the overall strength of those forces did not exceed the 24,500 limitation, and the basic combat units were not changed. However, total space limitations could be exceeded where compensating spaces were withdrawn from the available Program 5 credit account. After submitting the refined troop list, JCS further requested a review of the requirements for PACOM forces outside RVN to support the increased deployment to RVN. If additional forces were to be required in other PACOM areas specifically to support increased force levels in RVN, they were to be submitted at the earliest feasible date with full justification for the increase. [13]

(S) On 6 April JCS furnished a preliminary troop list upon which the 24,500 add-on package was predicated with the current Service estimates of dates available for deployment indicated. Service availability dates were based upon certain actions currently under consideration and were subject to major change in final review. The list consisted of the MACV basic recommendation as modified by the respective Service recommendations. COMUSMACV submitted a refined troop list to CINCPAC on 15 April 1968 which included the planned deployment areas and the recommended in-country close dates. In the final analysis, the list included a two brigade increment of 10,721 Army spaces and two AF tactical fighter squadrons for an AF total of 938 spaces. The USARV support increment consisted of 8,971 spaces, Naval support 1,775 spaces, AF support 1,602 spaces, and Marine support 493 spaces for a total support increment of 12,841 and a total MACV troop list of 24,500 personnel.

(S) The JCS directed the deployment of the Marine squadron and the two tactical fighter squadrons on 8 April 1968. These AF and USMC squadrons fulfilled the requirement for the three squadrons in Program 5 previously deferred from deployment. The planned deployment for the forces from Program 6 were as follows:

Unit	Planned Strength	Date to Close RVN	Deployment Area
Combat Forces, US Army			
3d Bde, 82d Abn Div	4,724	In-Country	I CTZ (N)
3d Bde, 5th Mech Div	4,967	Jul 68	I CTZ (N)
1/18 Arm Cav Sq (Res)*	1,030	Aug 68	I CTZ (N)
Total:	10,721		
Combat Forces, USAF			
174th Tac Ftr Sq (F100)	469	May 68	Phu Cat
120th Tac Ftr Sq (F100)	469	May 68	Phan Rang
Total:	938		
Combat Support Forces			
3/197 Field Arty Bn (155 Towed) (Reserve)	598	Sep 68	I CTZ (N)
2/138 Field Arty Bn (155 SP) (Reserve)	537	Oct 68	Bearcat
116 Combat Engr Bn (Reserve)	812	Sep 68	I CTZ (N)
Signal Company, Combat Area	712	Oct 68	I CTZ (N)
Total:	2,119		
Various Units Force	10,722	Various	Various

*The 1/18 Arm Cav Sq was deleted from deployment to RVN in mid-September and was reassigned to STRAF.

(C) In October, after a review of the requirement for the remaining units scheduled to deploy under Program 6, MACV recommended nondeployment of the 1st Sqdn, 18th Armd Cav Regt and the 94th Evac Hosp, thus accruing 1,474 unused spaces. These spaces were applied to urgent MACV and USARV requirements such as increased advisors, Navy Patrol (VP) squadron detachments, helicopter door gunners, and two additional artillery batteries. The equipment generated by the nondeployement of the 1st Sqdn, 18th Armd Cav Regt was used to modernize and expand RVNAF. All other units were deployed as scheduled. [15]

Civilianization Program

(C) The Civilianization Program was initiated pursuant to JCS Memorandum 505-67 dated 15 September 1967. The first quarterly report, submitted on 12 January 1968, covered actions

taken during the 4th Qtr/1967 accomplish the objectives of the program as outlined in Program 5. (See 1967 MACV Command History). The direct-hire portion of the program was progressing in consonance with the overall objectives, and DOD approved an increase in ceiling for civilian-hire for each military department for which O&M funds were made available. Contractor substitution was not possible due to the lack of Military Construction (MILCON) funds. JCS requested the military departments involved to deploy the additional construction units approved under Program 5 until such time as MILCON funds were made available to provide for contractor substitution, hopefully in early FY68. [16]

(S) Since the initiation of the Civilianization Program, USARV developed plans to provide for the phased introduction of Local National (LN) into units for the purpose of reducing military space requirements to specified ceilings. At the onset of planning for this program, USARV considered that the lack of mobility of many LNs could, under certain operational conditions, adversely affect the capability of units making use of these personnel. Likewise, limitations of security and personnel safety would, in times of intensified combat, preclude the availability of civilian substitutes. As a result of the Tet Offensive, the war had expanded in all dimensions. Air and ground action had increased in intensity and scope, and areas of operations had been significantly enlarged. Thus, in a short time, these operational factors had placed great demands on USARV's administrative and logistics system. The requirement of the moment had been met, but the attainment of approved civilianization goals, as envisioned, would jeopardize its capability to respond rapidly and efficiently in meeting future requirements, particularly in I CTZ.

(S) The civilianization concept was postured against a degree of stability which had not been realized, being based upon units and installations which were relatively fixed. Had USARV completed its final civilianization goal of 9,595 military positions prior to Tet, the strategic flexibility and ability of combat service support units to meet the demands of supported combat units would have been dangerously degraded.

(C) The Civilianization Program was initiated in January 1968 but had not yet gained momentum when the enemy intensified his operations during Tet. Meanwhile, the DA policy of deleting the requisition authority in the month in which civilianization was programmed served to seriously degrade USARV force levels. In view of the then current situation existing throughout RVN and the necessity to reappraise the impact of civilianization, USARV recommended that the Civilianization Program be deferred for a period of six months, during which all commands would be able to re-evaluate the impact of the Program and determine which military units, if any, could be prudently civilianized under foreseeable contingencies in the tactical and logistical situation. Likewise, tactical and logistical support requirements, particularly in I CTZ, could be more thoroughly evaluated. The DA policy, with respect to the automatic deletion of military spaces in accordance with the civilianization schedule, could be reviewed and programs for recruiting and training of LNs could be developed. However, such a deferral could cause USARV to exceed its force structure ceiling by July 1968, and this, accordingly, might then require a reappraisal of the overall force structure and the OSD ceiling constraints. [17]

(S) COMUSMACV concurred fully with USARV's comments and recommended to CINCPAC:

1. That there be a six months deferral of the Program 5 Civilianization Program and a re-evaluation of the Program.

2. That the Services continue to deploy individual replacements and units scheduled for civilianization, since reduction of personnel or deletion of units based on the Program 5 plan for civilianization was not realistic. Reductions should be based on actual attainment of civilianization.

3. That DOD be requested to authorize the 537,545 US military force structure established in Program 5, plus such additional forces as were being deployed to meet the current contingency requirements, pending recvaluation of civilianization plans and refinement of additional force requirements. [18]

(S) On 24 February 1968, CINCPAC concurred in COMUSMACV's proposal and cited a requirement for complete flexibility in the application of available units, manpower, and resources. CINCPAC supported the retention of authority to retain the military personnel requisitioning base. The utilization of LNs in supporting functions was recognized as economically and politically sound. However, as of 9 March, only 80 percent of the previous civilian employment strength of 33,800 had returned to work. At the end of the major Tet Offensive, less than 60 percent were available. This was at a time when maximum effort was required to support the fighting forces. On this basis alone, the current guidance for utilization of LNs was unrealistic i.e., processing of authorization documentation on a position for position basis and the phased withdrawal of the military requisition base regardless of whether or not the positions were filled by LNs.

(S) Other more important factors had an impact on the problem. There were clear indications of VC/NVA intent to terrorize the SVN civilian populace. Not only were the commanders unable to guarantee the safety of the employees or their families, but also the employers could not be assured of the reliability of the LN employee since possession of an ID Card and a long background of dependability could represent a cover for a VC who was dedicated to a single decisive blow against the GVN and the US.

(C) In view of all the factors bearing on the problem, it was considered advisable to eliminate the then current concept for civilianization. LNs could continue to be utilized to the maximum extent possible when such utilization would not present unusual danger to either US forces or employees and their families, and they could be utilized to supplement, rather than substitute for, military personnel. It was recommended to DA that: [19]

1. The current military authorization in combat service support units be maintained.

2. LN hire authorization be maintained at current and projected levels to permit maximum utilization as a supplementary work force.

3. The requirement for MTOE, TDA, and MTDA to reflect substitution of LNs for military be withdrawn.

(S) On 6 April 1968, JCS approved the deferral of the Program 5 civilianization schedule for a period of approximately six months, subject to the condition that the revised schedule of civilianization should provide for a build-up to the original Program 5 number of 12,545 at a rate that would preclude exceeding the new military space authorization of 549,500 as Program 6 (included the remaining Program 5) forces closed in-country. The quarterly report covering the third quarter of FY68 was to include the civilianization accomplished or scheduled to remain within the 549,500 space authorization. Also, required was a fu analysis of the problems encountered or expected in connection with the Program 6 civilianization. [20]

(S) The foregoing action by JCS would require MACV to eventually civilianize 12,545 spaces which would require approximately 19,000 trained LNs. This situation posed many problems, especially in the area of hiring personnel. The GVN had an established FY69 force goal of 801,215 spaces for RVNAF and planned to mobilize over 268,000 men during 1968. Estimates indicated that the total available manpower from 18 to 38 year olds (including almost all veterans in this age group) would be required to meet the goal. In fact, there was a possible necessity to draft men up to 45 years old as well as 17 year olds. The available manpower from the residue would be required to offset the LNs in US employ lost to the draft. This was expected to dry up much of the available manpower and would seriously erode the number of LNs in US employ (150,000).

(S) Some of the other factors militating against civilianization and presented by MACV to CINCPAC were:

1. The increased attacks on US i ations added security requirements. The increase in LNs in units with a concurrent de ase in soldiers was not desirable.

2. In Vietnam's agrarian economy, there was an acute shortage of personnel with mechanical ability. Although sufficiently intelligent to be trained, training would be expensive and time-consuming.

3. Since Tet, there was an increased reluctance among LNs to work in US employ. VC reprisals against employees of Americans were a genuine LN fear, and such reprisals had been carried out during Tet.

4. With the then current level of harassment and terrorism throughout RVN, the risk to the Civilianization Program was great. As an example: on 9 May, 90 percent of the 1,046 LNs working at the 506th Field Depot in Saigon left work in mid-afternoon without notice. This occurred just prior to the attack on the Newport Bridge. Similar situations had been experienced at the Saigon port. During the May offensives, work in many areas came almost to a standstill because of the LN failure to appear for work. Additionally, there were labor strikes to contend with. Further civilianization in critical activities, such as transportation, could create a situation where military capabilities would be too limited to respond to work stoppages caused by strikes.

5. During Tet, 65 combat service units of the 1st Log Cmd were deployed from II and III CTZ. Fifteen of these units were scheduled to civilianize 976 spaces.

6. Fifty percent of the LNs employed by USARV were females, many of whom were working with US soldiers; this practice had to be held to a minimum.

7. Sixty to sixty-five percent of the USARV port clearance capability was under civilian contract. The scheduled civilianization of one additional terminal service company would thereby further increase the percentage of civilian contractors. Continued reduction of military personnel affected the ratio of soldiers to civilians and would reduce to a dangerous level the capability to clear ports in emergencies.

8. There were four Army Forward Support Areas in I CTZ which were supporting 55,000 men in March and, as of June, were supporting 81,000. Twenty-eight percent of these supply and service companies were scheduled for civilianization.

9. One Army and two Navy construction battalions were scheduled for civilianization. To replace this troop effort with contractor effort would require a $19.8 million increase in MILCON funds annually. For the remaining troop units to assume this added MILCON work would degrade the effort being directed to operational support and LOCs. If no contractor substitution were made for the three battalions, the MILCON Program would be extended approximately five months. The MILCON Program was austere and base on requirements established by the tactical and logistical commanders.

(S) USARV had explored various methods of determine the best way to implement civilianization, including line-by-line substitution, conversion to reduced strength or Type B configuration, and inactivation of selected units. The line-by-line method was generally chosen, despite the inherent drawbacks, because it afforded the greatest operational flexibility. In an effort to explore every alternative, USARV considered a Korean Logistical Service Corps (KLSC), but this solution was considered infeasible at that time.

(C) III MAF had reported severe difficulties caused by the inability of LNs to deploy with units, the limited labor market, the effects of curfews, and the procurement of security clearances for refugees. III MAF also reported that only 195 of 300 planned spaces could be civilianized and suggested LN augmentation in lieu of substitution of civilians for military spaces.

(S) NAVFORV reported difficulty with the civilian labor. One civilian contractor estimated 50 percent absenteeism for a period after the 5 May offensive and those reporting to work were only available for five and one half to six hours per day. NAVFORV foresaw substantial difficulties in increaseing the number of LN employees in a rapidly decreasing labor market. In addition, the Navy Department had a civilian ceiling which ran counter to the JCS requirement for increased civilianization. NAVFORV was attempting to resolve this latter problem via Service channels.

(S) The AF was also feeling the impact of RVNAF mobilization. Since 31 January 1968, 829 LNs had been drafted and 2,523 were eligible throughout ten 7AF bases. Replacement of equipment operators/mechanics would become a major problem. 7AF found that the LN labor force could not be relied upon in a crisis when they were the most critically needed.

(S) COMUSMACV recognized that civilianization was a valid program when it was conceived, but conditions had changed so markedly that the program needed to be reconsidered. Also, no improvement in conditions was expected in the foreseeable future. In view of this situation COMUSMACV recommended that the Civilianization Program be reduced 50 percent (6,270 spaces) with the necessary military ceiling increase. The then-current total force structure ceiling of 562,045 would thus remain unchanged. However, in the meantime, or until a decision was made, MACV would continue to implement the Civilianization Program within its capability. [21]

(C) On 12 September, JCS recommended a one-time adjustment to the Program 6 troop list by reducing the appropriate military strengths in accordance with the then-current civilianization plan. CINCPAC concurred in the plan and recommended that it be accomplished, based on a special MACV report on Program 6 civilianization. He speculated that implementation of

the plan should result in a clearer depiction of the military space authorizations for RVN. However, assurance should be obtained that the overall LN direct hire/contract program would be adjusted to include the Program 6 civilianization requirements. [22]

(C) JCS made the one-time civilianization adjustment (12,545 spaces) in Program 6 on 10 December. This reduced the total force structure to the military space ceiling of 549,500. Individual Services continued to implement their programs as planned. By the end of the year all Services except the Army had completed their programs. The Army program was expected to be completed by May 1969. [23]

Advisors

(S) The MACV Advisory Team authorization increased from 10,422 personnel in January 1968 to 11,596 personnel in December. Yearend Advisor figures showed that there were 10,544 Army, 615 Navy and Marine Corps, and 437 Air Force. [24]

The RF/PF Advisor Build-up

(U) The first sustained large-scale US advisory involvement with the RF/PF was initiated by the 1964 program to activate 50 five-man teams. During 1965 and 1966, the rising numbers of US units in Vietnam, plus increases in the strength of district teams, had significantly extended opportunities and occasions for direct, sustained US assistance to RF/PF.

(U) By 1967, a variety of small US units had been created by commanders in the field to aid and train RF/PF elements. These units ranged in size from 3 to 10 men and their missions varied in nature, from carrying out one-day on-site instruction sessions for PF platoons to supervising 5-week refresher training programs for RF companies. The designations of these different teams included: Combined Mobile Training Teams (CMTT), Combined Mobile Improvement Teams (CMIT), "Red-catcher" and "Impact" Teams, Mobile Advisory Teams (MAT), and Regional Force Company Training Teams (RFCOTT). Prior to 1967, the Marine Combined Action Platoons (CAP) were engaged in somewhat similar efforts. Additionally, in late 1967 and early 1968, CG, II FFORCEV deployed 10 ten-man Logistics Advisory Assistance Teams (LAAT) to aid the RF/PF logistics system.

(U) The efforts of these teams had been highly successful, and, by mid-1967, a substantial increase in advisory assistance for RF/PF was planned. The personnel increases of Program 5 in mid-1967 incorporated spaces for 824 two-man RF Company Advisory Teams and 119 five-man RF Company Training Teams, plus personnel for 50 of the 239 District Advisory Teams. A total of some 2,600 personnel were assigned to duties associated with RF/PF or to other functions directly related to territorial security.

(U) A conference on RF/PF matters was held on 26 October 1967 and was attended by representatives of all elements of MACV and USARV with an interest in RF/PF. The conference recommended, among other things, that the RF Company Advisory and Training Teams of Program 5 be reoriented to produce a number of mobile advisory team, to be designated MATs. The conferees visualized 354 such teams and stated as a requirement that, initially, the personnel for MATS should be assigned from US combat units and should have approximately six

months' in-country experience prior to assignment to MATs. The MATs were to be organized as follows:

Position	Rank/Rate	Branch
Senior Advisor	03	Inf
Assistant Advisor	02	Inf
ARVN Officer	02	---
Lt Wpns Inf Adv	E-7	NCO
Hvy Wpns Inf Adv	E-7	NCO
Med Spec Adv	E-7	NCO
Interpreter	----	----

Regarding the ARVN officer and interpreter who were originally envisioned as being part of each MAT, it was determined that, due to other urgent requirements of RVNAF, Vietnamese officers could not be assigned to MATs on a full-time basis. ARVN officers were made available from among RF company commanders and officers assigned to sector headquarters for part-time assistance to the MATs. Interpreter allocations had been increased for the MATs build-up, and CTZs were at substantially 100 percent of their authorized interpreter strength. Allocations of interpreters were made by CTZ commanders to meet all requirements in the CTZ. Thus, interpreters were not deployed with the MATs but were assigned by the CTZ commanders. MACV requested that, when possible, appropriate priority be given to MATs for the assignment of interpreters.

(U) Some 51 other recommendations resulted from the October conference. These dealt with the RF/PF advisor build-up and called for:

1. Deploying 44 Engineer Advisors (one per province).

2. Deploying 44 S-1 Advisors (one to each province).

3. Reinforceing the advisory element assinged to Administrative and Direct Support Logistics (A&DSL) companies from a normal three-man staff to nine advisors.

4. Activating 7 seven-man Mobile Area Logistics Teams (MALTs) to give each ALC Senior Advisor at least one mobile field element capable of working with A&DSL companies or the supply/logistics elements of other "customers" of the ALC.

(U) The additional recommendations of the conference dealt with a wide variety of matters, including such matters as:

1. Initiation of combined MACV and JGS IG visits.

2. Provision of lensatic compasses for each PF platoon.

3. Preparation of a pay data card for each RF/PF soldier.

4. Activation of mobile RF/PF personnel management teams within each CTZ.

5. Development of a unit citation-type award for RF/PF.

(U) A review of the recommendations resulting from the conference indicated that, of those which were feasible and acceptable, 16 were within the purview of JGS, seven fell under the cognizance of MACV, and seven were of a combined nature.

(U) This 30-point package was reviewed and approved by COMUSMACV on 15 December 1967. By that time, planning for the necessary personnel build-up had indicated that it would be desirable to initiate a portion of the advisor program as rapidly as possible and to phase the remainder of the program over a period of several months. An "early impact" of "Phase I" to the program was planned to field about half of the RF/PF advisors by 31 March 1968, and an "Optimum Program" was planned to deploy the remainder by 31 December 1968.

(U) Early in the planning process it became clear that there would be two critical areas within the program: personnel and material. The MATs project were expensive in terms of requirements for experienced infantry officers and NCOs. The overall program called for an increase of about 30 percent in advisory vehicles as well as substantial increases in certain types of communications equipment and other items, some of which were in short supply. During this period, USARV developed a program of instruction for use in the three training centers envisioned at that time.

(U) The personnel reprogramming required to reshape Program 5 actions into the revised form triggered a response from DA that the first personnel to be provided would not be the requisite high skill-level officers, NCOs, and specialists, but would consist initially of 200 newly commissioned officers and 300 inexperienced NCOs. These would be provided in February and March 1968 and would not attend the preliminary training courses normally given to advisors in the US. By mid-January 1968, the plan called for MAT personnel:

1. To be drawn from USARV units.

2. To have four to six months experience in-country prior to assignment to a MAT.

3. To be trained at USARV-operated schools.

(U) Further study indicated that the training should be conducted at a single school at a location outside Saigon, and that it was not feasible, considering personnel availability and other factors, to complete Phase I by 31 March. Subsequently, it was decided that Phase I should begin toward the end of March and terminate about the end of May, representing a production slippage of about 42 MATs and a proportionate delay in deployment of other categories of advisors.

(U) One of the principal considerations in shaping these policies was the decision that MATs would not be elements of US units but would be full-fledged MACV Advisory Teams. Because the success of the earlier experimental RF/PF training teams had resulted, in part, from the close ties between the teams and their parent units (particularly the teams' access to the supply and transportation capabilities of their parent units), the decision to incorporate the

teams into the normal advisory system was arrived at only after careful examination of the alternatives. Provision was made in the policy directive for:

1. Major US units to continue to be identified with those MATs located a reasonable distance from the units. The personnel for MATs in a given area were drawn, insofar as feasible, from the major US unit operating in that area.

2. MATs could, under certain limited conditions, continue to turn for support to their associated US units.

(U) Phase I of the build-up was initiated on 17 March as the first class of 25 MATs began training in the USARV Advisor School at Di An. During Phase I (17 Mar-25 May), the following were scheduled for training at the Di An School:

100 MATs
7 MALTs
276 Individuals for assignment to A&DSL companies.
18 S-1 Advisors
23 Engineer Advisors

(U) Meanwhile, 70 MAT-like units, most of which had been deployed in 1967 at the initiative of field commanders, remained in service and continued their work with RF/PF. During Phase I, 12 of these units were upgraded by II FFORCEV and converted to MACV MATs. Thus by 25 May 1968, the following MATs or MAT-like units were deployed:

15 CMIT/CMTT in II CTZ.
24 Prototype (4-man) MATs in III CTZ.
19 Pre-Phase I MACV 5-man MATs in IV CTZ.
12 MATs in II CTZ converted from CMIT/CMTT.
100 Di An trained MATs.

Additionally, most of the personnel assigned to IIFFORCEV LAATs were transferred on-site to MACV as A&DSL company advisors.

(U) On 25 April 1968 the decision was made to schedule Phase II during the period 26 May through 30 September 1968. Eighty-six MATs were to be deployed during this period. In addition, 24 prototype MATs in II CTZ would be converted to MACV MATs, as would 12 CMIT/CMTT in II CTZ. On 3 August the decision was made to schedule Phase III during the period 1 October through 31 December 1968. Final distribution of these teams would be as follows:

CTZ	End Date	I	II	III	IV	Totals
Phase I	25 May 68	23	28	20	60	131
Phase II	30 Sep 68	6	30	52	34	122
Phase III	31 Dec 68	16	38	24	22	100
		45	96	96	116	353

(U) The goal of 353 MATs to be deployed by the end of the year was met and the program has proven to be highly successful. There were two significant changes that occurred since the inception of the program. The first major change concerned the source of personnel. Although team members were initially coming from USARV units with 1/3 to 1/2 of their tour completed before assignment to MATs, the personnel system starting February 1969 for enlisted personnel and April 1969 for officers will replace MATs members direct from the CONUS personnel stream. Replacements will include both first and second tour personnel. These personnel will be assigned by MACV to a specific MATs, will attend the USARV Advisor School, and will normally be assigned to MATs for a period of one year. The second significant change was that the MATs team leader and assistant will receive command credit.

Policies on Employment of MATs and MALTs

(U) The primary mission of the MATs was to advise and instruct RF companies and PF platoons and RF/PF group headquarters on field fortifications, barrier systems, request and adjustment of indirect fires, small unit operations with emphasis on night operations and ambushes, patrols, weapons employment, emergency medical care, and other topics related to RF and PF missions.

(U) The secondary mission was to advise and assist RF/PF group headquarters and RF/PF units in improving administrative and logistic support procedures including, for example, procedures concerned with personnel accounting and record keeping, awards, promotions, morale and welfare, supply support, maintenance, field sanitation, and hygiene. An additional mission was to provide a liaison capability with nearby US military forces.

(U) The missions of the MALTs were:

1. To provide on-the-spot administrative, supply, and logistics training and assistance to depots, administrative and direct support logistics companies, and RF/PF units.

2. To assist in locating and eliminating logistical problems.

(U) MALTs were under the command of the Senior Advisor of the Area Logistical Command (ALC) and were assigned to the Area Logistical Command Advisor Branch, MACV Field JTD. MALTs were assigned to ALCs as follows:

ALC	No of MALTs	ALC	No of MALTs
I	1	IV	2
II	1	V	1
III	2		

(U) All MALTs personnel were detailed from USARV resources and trained at the USARV Advisor School at Di An during Phase I. Replacements for these personnel will be detailed from the normal MACV replacement stream. [25]

US Army

(S) As the year began, the US Army had 331,098 personnel in-country. Major combat units and maneuver battalions were as follows:

Army Divisions		Bdes, Regts, Others	
1st Cav Div	9	11th Armd Cav Regt	3
1st Inf Div	9	173d Abn Bde	4
4th Inf Div	10	199th Lt Inf Bde	3
9th Inf Div	9	/50 Inf Bn (Mech)	1
23d Inf Div (Americal)	9	1/1 Cav Sqdn	1
25th Inf Div	10	2/1 Cav Sqdn	1
101st Abn Div	10	Sub TOTAL	13
Sub TOTAL	66		

TOTAL: 79

Supporting these units were thirty-one 105mm howitzer battalions, six battalions each of 155mm howitzers and 8-inch howitzers, and five battalions each of 155mm/8-inch howitzers and 175mm howitzers. There were 5 air defense artillery battalions, 18 combat engineer battalions, 15 construction engineer battalions, and 85 other type battalions in-country. Also included were 96 aviation companies.[26]

Infantry Battalion Packets

(S) In January 1968, COMUSMACV informed CINCPAC that I CTZ was in the process of being reinforced at the expense of II and III CTZs to meet the increased enemy offensive action in that area. Army units were under strength across the board with no immediate relief in sight through the replacement stream. To offset this unfavorable posture, COMUSMACV requested CINCPAC's assistance in the expeditious deployment of one infantry battalion and four infantry company packets each for the 196th, 198th and 199th Inf Bdes; one infantry battalion for the 11th Inf Bde; and four infantry company packets for the 1st Bde, 101st Abn Div. Approximately 5,500 personnel were involved in this request.[27]

(S) In making his request for the accelerated deployment of the four infantry battalions and 13 infantry company packets, COMUSMACV also indicated that, if the battalions deployment could be accelerated, a 30-day training program similar to that conducted by the 101st Abn Div and 11th Inf Bde could be provided on arrival in SVN. The infantry battalions deployed by air with the first unit arriving on 30 March 1968 and the last three units closing on 15 April 1968. Meeting this schedule required that the units' schedules be accelerated from two to four weeks. The company packets for the 196th, 198th, and 199th Inf Bdes deployed by air with a ready date

of 5 February 1968. The packets deployed at about 90 percent strength, with the remainder of the personnel being shipped as follow-on via replacement channels as rapidly as possible. With respect to the four infantry company packets for the 1st Bde, 101st Abn Div, the non-availability of personnel precluded assembling these packets for shipment prior to July/August 1968. The only way these packets could have been accelerated was to have used replacements scheduled for RVN. DA informed COMUSMACV that, unless employment was scheduled under emergency conditions, further acceleration beyond that indicated was not feasible. Deployment of the four battalions on schedule provided for completion of their normal training prior to shipment. Due to initial personnel and equipment shortfalls, it was essential that this training be completed before deployment, particularly for small unit leaders. [28]

(S) During a visit to the Americal Division on 3 April 1968, COMUSMACV said that the 6th Bn, 31st Inf had been scheduled for inclusion in the 196th Inf Bde to round it out to four battalions but was diverted to increase the strength of the 9th Inf Div and III CTZ which had lent troops to I CTZ. However, COMUSMACV said that the Americal Div would retain the 4th Bn, 46th Inf as the fourth battalion of the 198th Inf Bde and that it would deploy to Chu Lai as planned. The 4th Bn, 21st Inf would deploy to Duc Pho as planned as the fourth battalion of the 11th Lt Inf Bde. [29]

Formation of Artillery Units In-country

(S) Late in 1967, USARV had proposed to activate five additional 105mm howitzer batteries in-country for support of the fourth infantry battalion of the 173d Abn and the 11th, 196th, 198th, and 199th Inf Bdes provided the proposed plan was acceptable to DA. On 12 February 1968, COMUSMACV concurred in the proposal with the understanding that, if DA approval was obtained, the howitzers for these activations would be taken from M101A1 tubes (total 18) for the 11th, 196th, and 198th Inf Bdes and M102 tubes (total 12) for the 173d Abn Bde and the 199th Inf Bde programmed under closed loop during the 3d Qtr FY68 and that the closed loop program would be stopped, as required, for each type howitzer. Supplementary equipment and personnel requirements were to be satisfied through USARPAC and DA arrangement. Priority was given to activation of batteries for the 173d Abn Bde and the 199th Lt Inf Bde. However, COMUSMACV stated that the activation of these batteries was not to cause diversion of thirty-six 105mm howitzers allocated for activation of ARVN artillery units. It was further understood that the direct support artillery battery for the 199th Lt Inf Bde would be assigned initially to support of the 1st Bde, 101st Abn Div, and that this battery would be added to the structure of the 199th Lt Inf Bde when the 1st Bde, 101st Abn Div rejoined its parent unit. [30]

A Second Airmobile Division

(S) On 1 January 1968, COMUSMACV, at the request of USARV, approved the assignment of the 1st Bde, 101st Abn Div, which had been operating as a separate airborne brigade since its arrival in-country, to the 101st Abn Div and, further, authorized its retention in full airborne status pending the completion of a MACV study to determine US airborne status. This study resulted in a COMUSMACV decision to have two brigades, the 173d Abn Bde and the 1/101 Abn Bde, in an airborne status. Retention of the 1/101st Abn Bde in an airborne status was contingent upon the scheduled conversion of the 101st Abn Div to an airmobile configuration which was scheduled to begin in the summer of 1968. Airborne requirements were to be reassessed after the initial brigade conversion.

(S) USARV had completed a staff study on the subject of a second airmobile division and informed COMUSMACV on 10 January 1968 that the conclusions of the study were:

1. Contingency operations required the retention of a four-battalion airborne brigade in the USARV structure.

2. Airborne operations were an effective means to add mass, surprise, and shock action to preplanned airmobile assaults. An airborne force of four battalions was the desired size force for this role.

3. Ancillary capabilities within Vietnam were adequate to support a one brigade force. USARV further recommended that the 173d Abn Bde be maintained in the USARV force structure on full airborne status and that, upon conversion of the 101st Abn Div by 1969 to the airmobile configuration, this division be removed from an airborne status.

(S) On 12 January 1968 CINCPAC requested COMUSMACV's comments on what impact the proposed conversion of the 101st Abn Div to an airmobile configuration would have on aviation support for non-airmobile maneuver and fire support units. COMUSMACV informed CINCPAC that USARV planned the conversion of the 101st Abn Div in three phases: Phase I, 15 Jun - 15 Aug; Phase II, Dec 68 - Jan 69; and Phase III, mid to late 1969. Measured in terms of nondivisional aviation companies requirements vs assets during the separate phases of the proposed conversion, the impact of the conversion on non-airmobile maneuver and fire support units was planned to be as follows:

	Nondivisional ASLT HEL COs		Nondivisional ASLT SPT HEL COs	
PRE-PHASE I	CONV	NON-CONV	CONV	NON-CONV
Requirements	50	50	14	14
Assets	39	39	13	13
Shortfall	11	11	1	1
Percent requirement filled	78%	78%	92.8%	92.8%
PHASE I to PHASE II				
Requirements	49.5	51.5	14	15.5
Assets	38.0	40.0	12	14.0
Shortfall	11.5	11.5	2	1.5
Percent requirement filled	76.8%	77.6%	85.7%	90.3%

PHASE II to PHASE III	Nondivisional ASLT HEL COs CONV	NON-CONV	Nondivisional ASLT 3PT HEL COs CONV	NON-CONV
Requirements	50.0	53.0	14.5	16.0
Assest	40.0	45.0	11.0	14.0
Shortfall	10.0	8.0	3.5	2.0
Percent requirements filled	80.0%	85.0%	75.8%	87.5%

POST PHASE III - There was no change planned from Phase II.

(S) Shortfalls after the beginning of Phase I were attributable to:

1. Integration into the 101st of five assault helicopter companies and three assault support helicopter companies rather than the three assault helicopter companies and one and one-half assault helicopter support companies programmed to support the division before conversion.

2. An increase of three assault helicopter companies and two assault support helicopter companies required to support the following FWMAF units for which nondivisional aviation companies had not been programmed:

a. 3d Bn Royal Australian Regiment

b. Royal Thai Army Voluntary Division (Five additional battalions)

c. ROK Light Infantry Division

The transfer of one air cavalry squadron to the 101st would reduce air cavalry support to the remaining non-airmobile maneuver battalions by one-third. The air cavalry squadron would, however, be fully and effectively employed as an organic unit of the 101st and would be available to support other units on order.

(S) The conversion required a total of 434 aircraft. Two hundred and sixteen were to be provided from the 101st and 1st Avn Bde assets, 88 were to be provided from the transfer of an existing air cavalry squadron to the division, and 89 were to be provided from the 1st Avn Bde assets programmed for support of other US/FWMAF/ARVN units. Only the loss of these 89 aircraft would directly create an adverse impact on other units. However, the magnitude of the impact could not be accurately determined at that time since allocations were made on a daily mission basis depending on the tactical situation.

(C) As compared with the current capabilities, assault lift for non-airmobile maneuver battalions would be slightly increased. Resupply and artillery movement in support of non-airmobile units was normally accomplished by CH-47 aircraft and would be reduced 17 percent from the then current levels. Some portion of the resupply/artillery move shortfall could be absorbed by two additional CH-47 platoons scheduled to deploy in May/June 1968. MACV concurred with the conclusion of USARV that the shortfalls in aviation support for non-airmobile

maneuver units and fire support units was acceptable in order to obtain the additional tactical flexibility that a second airmobile division would provide.

(S) CINCPAC concurred in the proposed conversion of the 101st Abn Div and recommended that the helicopter production program be re-evaluated to ensure production would meet all PACOM requirements. On 5 March 1968, JCS approved the phased conversion of the 101st Abn Div to an airmobile division within existing assets. JCS had completed a re-evaluation of the helicopter production to meet worldwide requirements and had recommended to the SECDEF on 27 February 1968 that increased helicopter procurements be authorized and that the funds necessary to expand production capacity be provided. The evaluation was made without specific consideration being given to the conversion of the 101st Abn Div to an airmobile division. However, the program, when approved, would be reviewed continuously to verify compatibility with current worldwide military requirements, such as those to be generated by the conversion. [31]

Mobile Riverine Force

(S) The CORONADO series of operations had demonstrated the effectiveness of the Mobile Riverine Force (MRF) in the utilization of waterways to deny the enemy areas where he had previously operated with relative freedom of movement. (See 1967 MACV Command History). This success led to the exploration of means whereby the riverine effort could be expanded at a minimum of cost in order to step up the tempo of operations in the Delta. A study conducted by USARV and COMNAVFORV concluded that additional units of the 9th Inf Div could be accommodated in Dong Tam without dredging. Further, with a modest addition of Naval craft to the already programmed River Assault Squadrons (RIVASRONs), an expanded force could support two brigades afloat and one at Dong Tam. Through judicious use of Naval riverine craft and Army aviation assets, not only could the entire 9th Div be effectively employed in the Delta, but also the VNMC and eventually Vietnamese RAG units could be melded into the operation. The task organization of two MRF brigades, each with three infantry battalions plus supporting artillery, was considered the most desirable for mission accomplishment. The third brigade was to operate out of Dong Tam, either independently or in conjunction with the MRF. This arrangerangement provided flexibility, reduced reliance on and requirement for land bases, utilized less aircraft, and facilitated sustained pressure on the VC. It also eliminated the problem of regularized RIVASRON operations out of Dong Tam, which could tend to develop a pattern easily detected by the enemy. [32]

(S) At the Riverine Concept briefing on 5 January 1968, DEPCOMUSMACV tasked USARV with reexamining the organization for the riverine battalions and the battalion mix in the land based brigade. The 9th Inf Div, II FFORCEV, and USARV completed this reevaluation and reached the conclusion that the mission could best be accomplished by reorganization of the seven infantry battalions of the division to a mobile riverine configuration.

(S) USARV planned to configure all seven infantry battalions into a force specifically designed to operate in a riverine type role. The organization proposed also lent itself readily to other type operations, particularly airmobile, without the necessary investment in equipment and personnel not required on a continuing basis. In firepower, the riverine battalions, less four 81mm mortars, would be equivalent to the standard infantry battalion. By borrowing vehicles, the battalion would be capable of sustained dry-land operations. By organizing in the riverine configuration, some 600 critical spaces, which would be required by standardized battalions and their support elements, would be saved. The spaces would offset those required

for the additional Army tugs and LCM-8 craft. This course of action further eliminated problems in maintenance and shortage of the additional equipment since storage space was neither programmed for nor available in Dong Tam.

(C) With respect to the land based brigade, it was proposed that the mix of two mechanized battalions and one infantry battalion remain unchanged except for reorganization of the infantry battalion into the mobile riverine configuration. This brigade would possess exceptional flexibility and cross-country mobility throughout most of the Delta. It also provided another riverine-configured battalion suitable for rotation with the battalions afloat. The two mechanized battalions provided the 9th Inf Div with maneuver elements which could be readily employed in conjunction with MRF operations in varying combinations or in independent operations. The need for mechanized units in operations along the vital Delta LOCs was also visualized. Accordingly, the two-to-one mix of this brigade was deemed appropriate, and retention of the two mechanized battalions in the 9th Inf Div was desired.

(C) On 21 February 1968, COMUSMACV approved the reconfiguration of the seven infantry battalions as proposed and the proposed mix of the land-based brigade. 33

(S) On 15 April 1968, MACV tasked USARV with monitoring the movement of the 9th Inf Div rear elements out of Bear Cat. On 1 May, the 9th Inf Div had published a movement plan which provided for the phased movement of all division elements from Bear Cat to Dong Tam closing by 30 September 1968. Conferences were held between representatives of 9th Inf Div, II, FFORCEV, and USARV to coordinate and expedite the move, and the 9th Inf Div closed at Dong Tam by the end of July. 34

(C) The recommendation to assign one VNMC battalion to operate with the MRF was also carried out. However, this could not be considered to be a permanent assignment because VNMC units were part of the general reserve and therefore subject to recall at any time. When the 6th Bn, 31st Inf was assigned to the MRF, the riverine brigade had three US maneuver battalions on a regular basis.

(C) On 29 August 1968, MACV approved the exchange of a 9th Inf Div mechanized battalion for a standard infantry battalion from the 1st Inf Div. The units exchanged were the 1st Bn, 16th Inf, 1st Inf Div and the 5th Bn (mech), 60th Inf, 9th Inf Div. 35

Long-Range Patrol

(U) A conference was conducted on 28 March 1968 to discuss the concept and techniques of Long-Range Patrol (LRP) employment and lessons learned since their inception. Some of the more important points brought out in the conference were:

1. In many cases the OPCON of the LRP elements was assigned to brigades and even battalions. At these levels, there was a tendency to misuse LRP teams by assigning them to combat instead of reconnaissance missions. LRP unit commanders whose units were tasked by the division G2 felt that their units were being properly used. There was no indication of the number of LRP units falling into each of these two categories of control.

2. USARV figures for all LRP units showed that one-third of all patrols were less than 24 hours in length, one-third between 24 and 72 hours, and one-third 72 hours or longer. The

principal contributors to the large percentage of short patrols were division and separate brigade LRP units of II FFORCEV. The LRP companies and units from divisions/brigades in I FFORCEV and III MAF conducted between forty and sixty percent of their patrols for periods longer than 72 hours.

3. The 4th Inf Div LRP Company patrols were usually planned to last five days (three days during the rainy season). The 8,000 square mile 4th Inf Div AO necessitated patrols of this length with emphasis on the reconnaissance mission. Problems encountered in planning patrols of this length included: shortage of helicopters for immediate reaction/extraction in case of enemy contact; individual loads carried by patrol members (over 60 lbs); and the necessity for a stand-down of at least two days after an extended operation.

4. The 1st Cav Div (AM) with its large number of organic aircraft was usually able to provide ample helicopter support to its LRPs. This facilitated deception techniques for insertion, assured rapid reaction to enemy contact, and provided an immediate responsive extraction capability. The result was that the 1st Cav Div LRP Company had a higher percentage of patrols lasting over 72 hours than any other division/separate brigade unit except the 4th Inf Div unit.

5. In a discussion about the use of indigenous personnel, there was general agreement that adding one or two indigenous members to a US patrol provided a capability to detect enemy locations or movements that the most experienced American could not attain. One Kit Carson Scout was described as a "human geiger-counter." The major problem encountered was the language barrier, but long service with a US LRP unit or assignment to patrols in pairs effectively overcame this handicap. Units which had integrated ARVN personnel pointed out additional problems encountered such as occasional unwillingness to go with patrols into "hot" areas, a small percentage of malingerers, and frequent rotation back to parent ARVN units.

6. The CO, 9th Inf Div LRP Company pointed out that the physical and operational environment in the Delta had necessitated several departures from techniques used elsewhere in RVN. Patrol insertion by helicopter was the least desirable method because the patrol was invariably compromised, regard less of deception techniques. Covert daytime movement was not possible. Avoiding enemy contact for more than 24 hours was so difficult in AOs where patrols should operate that every patrol had to be organized as a combat patrol. As a result, the usual technique in the Delta was to organize large patrols, insert them by boat, and restrict missions to those that could be accomplished within 24 hours.

7. Only the I FFORCEV LRP unit had experimented with scout dogs on LRP operations. Results had been good, and the unit commander pointed out that scout dogs used by his unit had excellent alert capabilities, were no problem to carry on aircraft, and behaved well under fire. However, he emphasized that the dog/handler team had to habitually work with one LRP team and that rations and water for the dog represented a considerable extra load for the patrol. [36]

3d Brigade, 82d Airborne Division

(S) Immediately following the VC/NVA Tet Offensive, COMUSMACV requested additional forces to stem the threat. As a result, JCS directed the deployment of a Marine RLT and a

brigade task force of the 82d Abn Div from Fort Bragg, N. C. to close in-country no later than 26 February 1968. The 3d Bde, 82d Abn Div closed on schedule in I CTZ with CG, USARV exercising command and CG, 101st Abn Div exercising OPCON. After the threat had subsided, the 3d Bde was directed to reorganize to a light infantry structure while concurrently accomplishing assigned combat missions and maintaining a rigorous training program. The brigade was declared combat ready in their new configuration on 28 July 1968 by the CG, 101st Abn Bde and continued to operate in I CTZ until early October when it was deployed to the Saigon area and placed under the OPCON of CG, CMAC. [37]

Designation and Redesignation of the 101st Abn Div and 1st Cav Div

(U) On 27 June 1968, DA directed that the 101st Abn Div be redesignated the 101st Air Cav Div and that the 1st Cav Div be redesignated the 1st Air Cav Div. However, this terminology was revoked by DA on 26 August 1968 and the new designations established were the 101st Abn Div (AM) and the 1st Cav Div (AM). The Army CofS redesignated the units in order to preserve the heritage and traditions and to enhance further the long established esprit associated with these famous divisions. Because of their background, mobility, and flexibility, each division was particularly well-suited to undertake the airmobile role. [38]

Army Augmentation to III MAF Staff

(S) Because of the preliminaries incident to the establishment of PROVCORPSV, the increase of Army forces in I CTZ, and the mounting logistic challenges being faced, CG, III MAF was of the opinion that he needed additional Army personnel on his staff to cope with the current and immediate future situation. Accordingly, he requested that his staff be augmented by the assignment of 19 additional Army personnel in a temporary duty status. COMUSMACV approved this request on 12 March 1968 and requested that USARV provide the personnel from their assets as soon as possible. The losses to USARV because of the drawdown for the PROVCORPSV and recent operations were considered in making this decision. However, COMUSMACV considered the situation in the I CTZ and the task assigned the CG, III MAF of sufficient significance and magnitude as to warrant these additional personnel. These Army personnel augmenting the III MAF staff were not advisors but were integrated into the staff and provided the Army expertise necessary for proper control of Army tactical units under OPCON of III MAF. For the same purpose, III MAF provided Marine officers for the PROVCORPSV staff and it was further outlined that neither staff would be a joint staff. [39]

Redeployment of HAWK Units

(TS) As a result of the CINCPACAF study on air defense equipment for US installations in RVN, COMUSMACV recommended to CINCPAC that HAWK missile units in-country be deployed in I CTZ only, with two battalions redeployed elsewhere in PACOM. CINCPAC approved the recommendation and directed that one Army and one USMC HAWK battalion remain in RVN. JCS subsequently directed CINCPAC to reconsider the decision to redeploy two battalions from RVN in view of the expanded air threat. CINCPAC in turn requested MACV comments which were forwarded to CINCPAC on 8 April 1968 reaffirming the previous MACV/CINCPAC position. On 17 August 1968, CINCPAC directed the relocation of in-country HAWK missile units to facilitate the withdrawal of other HAWK missile units from RVN. In compliance COMUSMACV directed,

by message on 19 August 1968, the relocation of the 6th Bn, 56th Arty (less Btry C) from Saigon to Chu Lai. The message further directed that all movement/inactivation/redeployment be completed by 31 October 1968. Toward this end, the 6th Bn, 71st Arty was redeployed to CONUS in October. [40]

Year-End Strength Summary

(S) At year's end, the assigned strength of the US Army in Vietnam was 359,313. Major combat units and maneuver battalions were as follows:

Army Divisions		Bdes, Regts, Others	
1st Cav Div (AM)	9	1st Bde, 5th Inf Div (Mech)	3
101st Abn Div (AM)	10	11th Armd Cav Regt	3
1st Inf Div	9	3d Bde, 82d Abn Div	3
4th Inf Div	10	173d Abn Bde	4
9th Inf Div	10	199th Inf Bde	4
23d Inf Div	11	1/50 Inf Bn (Mech)	1
25th Inf Div	10	1/1 Cav Sqdn	1
Sub TOTAL	69	2/1 Cav Sqdn	1
		Sub TOTAL	20

GRAND TOTAL: 89

Supporting these units were thirty-four 105mm Howitzer battalions, eleven 155mm howitzer battalions, six 8-inch howitzer battalions and five battalions each of 155mm/8-inch howitzers and 175mm howitzers. There were also four air defense artillery battalions, 20 combat engineer and 15 construction engineer battalions, 89 other type battalions, and 132 aviation companies in-country. [41]

US Marine Corps

(S) At the beginning of 1968, III MAF consisted of the 1st and 3d Mar Divs, 1st Marine Airlift Wing and a Logistical Support Command, and it was deployed throughout northern I CTZ with 21 maneuver battalions. The 1st Mar Div was deployed in the Da Nang, Quang Tri, and Dong Ha areas while the 3d Mar Div was deployed in the Hue, Khe Sanh, and Phong Dien areas. The authorized strength was 81,939 while the assigned personnel strength was 78,013. [42]

(S) Immediately following the VC/NVA Tet Offensive, COMUSMACV requested additional forces to stem the tide. On 13 February, JCS directed the deployment by air of a Marine regimental landing team (27th Mar RLT) to RVN from California to arrive no later than 26 February. The point of debarkation for the 5,200-man force was designated as Da Nang. Destination of the RLT was northern I CTZ, and upon arrival they were deployed in the Da Nang TAOR.

(TS) In consonance with previous plans, CG, III MAF was queried as to when the 27th Mar RLT would be ready to deploy from RVN based on the 1st Bde, 5th Inf Div (Mech) closing on 31 July and the need for a 30-day in-country training period. The estimated time schedule required the month of August for the in-country training period of the 1st Bde, 5th Inf Div (Mech). During the period 21 August to 1 September, the brigade would relieve the 1st Mar Regt which would, in turn, relieve the 27th Mar RLT. This would permit the latter unit to be ready for redeployment by mid-September.

(S) On 22 July, JCS queried CINCPAC as to whether COMUSMACV could return the 27th Mar RLT to CONUS by 15 August 1968. COMUSMACV commented that the 27th Mar RLT was engaged in vital defense roles in the Da Nang TAOR and, based on the latest enemy intelligence, I CTZ, particularly the Da Nang TAOR, was expected to be a highly vulnerable area for the next 30-45 days. He felt that it was imperative that, in the present tactical situation, a full regiment relieve the 27th Mar RLT prior to embarkation. Plans were formulated to move the 1st Mar Regt, with three battalions, from the 3d Mar Div area to the Da Nang area for an in-place relief of the 27th Mar RLT early in September after the 30-day shakedown period of the 1st Bde, 5th Inf Div (Mech). Because this brigade was not fully combat ready until 1 September 1968 and because of the enemy threat, the moving of the 1st Mar Regt in early August would have created an undesirable gap in the forces in northern I CTZ. COMUSMACV strongly recommended that the originally scheduled time for departure of 10-15 September be adhered to. On 10 August, JCS approved the request. Elements of the 27th Mar RLT started departing RVN by air on 10 September 1968 and the redeployment was complete by the end of the month. [43]

(S) Prior to 1968, there were, in actuality, two managers for air operations, namely, the DEPCOMUSMACV for Air Operations/CDR 7AF and CG, III MAF who had the 1st Marine Airlift Wing (1st MAW) at his disposal. However, early in 1968, due to a critical requirement to apply maximum effective firepower on the enemy in support of both Army and Marine Corps units in I CTZ, COMUSMACV contemplated placing operational control of the 1st MAW under his Deputy Commander for Air Operations/CDR 7AF. On 18 January, the 7AF Commander, on instructions from COMUSMACV, met with the CG, III MAF to discuss the Single Management for Air concept which, in effect, called for integration of the 1st MAW fixed-wing resources into the overall tactical air picture. The CG, III MAF rebutted the concept on the grounds that it was not functionally or doctrinally suited to his requirements. CINCPAC also objected to the proposed concept, but COMUSMACV felt that it was essential that he look to one man to coordinate the air effort and bring its firepower to bear in the most effective way. Therefore, on 8 March 1968, he designated his Deputy Commander for Air Operations/CDR 7AF as the single manager for control of all tactical air resources in SVN. For a more detailed account and reasoning on this concept, refer to Air Operations in Chapter V.

(S) At the end of the year, the US Marine Corps had 21 maneuver battalions and a strength of 80,716. The authorized strength was 82,234. [44]

US Air Force

(S) At the start of 1968, 7AF controlled 11 airfields in RVN and six in Thailand and had a combined authorized personnel strength of 47,970 (46,515 in RVN and 1,455 in Thailand). Assigned personnel strength was 46,073 (44,812 in RVN and 1,261 in Thailand) and assigned aircraft strength stood at 1,572 (1,111 in RVN and 461 in Thailand). [45]

(S) As outlined previously, COMUSMACV had, early in 1968, requested an overall increase in authorization of personnel due to the increased enemy threat at that time. This increase, referred to as Program 6, provided the AF with a force structure increase of 2,540 personnel. This was divided into two areas--938 spaces for two tactical fighter squadrons and 1,602 spaces for ground support augmentation. For more specific coverage, see "Deployment Program 6" elsewhere in this chapter.

(S) During the year, there were four major AF units which closed in-country. Authorization for these spaces was provided by the Program 6 increase of two fighter squadrons and by deployment of two tactical fighter squadrons which were deferred from the Program 5 force structure. All four squadrons were activated National Guard units. Two squadrons, the 120th TFS from Buckley AFB, Colorado, and the 174th TFS from Sioux City, Iowa, closed in-country during May to Phan Rang and Phu Cat Air Bases, respectively. The 120th became part of the 35th TFW and the 174th became part of the 37th TFW. In June, the 136th TFS from Niagara Falls, New York, and the 188th TFS from Kirtland AFB, New Mexico, closed in-country to Tuy Hoa Air Base and became part of the 31st TFW. All four were F-100 Squadrons. [46]

(S) At year's end, the AF personnel authorization stood at 61,541 of which 50,977 belonged to 7AF (49,497 in RVN and 1,480 in Thailand). The balance of 9,564 spaces were allocated to other Major Air Commands in-country. Assigned strength of 7AF was 49,830 personnel broken down as follows: 46,842 in RVN, 1,448 in Thailand, and 1,540 TDY in-country. Aircraft status was 1,650 assigned (1,161 in RVN and 489 in Thailand). The balance of 8,199 AF personnel in-country were assigned to other Major Air Commands. [47]

US Navy

(S) COMNAVFORV, as Naval Component Commander for COMUSMACV and Chief of the Naval Advisory Group, Vietnam, was charged with executing US Navy responsibilities within and in the waters adjacent to RVN. Naval forces were organized to provide advisory, coastal surveillance, river patrol, river assault, logistic, and construction efforts in the prosecution of the war in coordination with the VNN.

(S) At the beginning of 1968, the Naval personnel authorization was 35,472 and their assigned strength stood at 31,669. When COMUSMACV requested an increase in troop strength in early 1968 as a result of increased enemy activity, the Navy received 1,775 additional spaces for support activities. The majority of these spaces went to NAVSUPPACT at Da Nang whose tempo of logistic operations had increased greatly due to the increased enemy threat in that area. As a result of further minor adjustments in service troop strengths, the Naval personnel authorization at the end of the year was 37,409, which included approximately 460 Coast Guard

spaces. Assigned personnel strength as of the end of the year was 37,541, an increase of 5,795.

(S) The increased strength of the Navy was spread throughout the country and served to expand overall operations (See Naval Operations, Chapter V). At the end of 1967, the River Patrol Force, TF 116, operated 147 PBRs, seven LHFTs, 12 MSBs, three LSTs, and various SEAL detachments and support craft. By the end of 1968 expansion was such that TF-116 operated almost 250 boats. TF 117, the River Assault Force, also increased from two river assault squadrons with 98 assault craft and support craft at the beginning of the year to the full planned strength of four river assault squadrons totalling 184 craft by October. [48]

REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM ARMED FORCES

Improvement and Modernization

(S) Throughout 1967, improvements designed to enhance the operational capability of Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces (RVNAF) were constantly being considered and implemented. These improvements included the areas of equipment, advisory effort, organization, leadership, training, morale, and management. The force structure aspects were designed with the long-range goal of a self-sustaining RVNAF while responding to the tactical situations in the short-range. Equipment to support these forces was addressed in many studies. Certain modern equipment was received, others were programmed, the requirement for additional items was recognized, and in several instances the necessary requests had been forwarded for approval. [49]

(S) On 11 January 1968, a force structure package consisting of a revised FY69 and a proposed FY70 force structure plan was presented to COMUSMACV. The force structure plan was not approved at that time. The Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support (CORDS) section of MACV HQ was directed to restudy the RF/PF requirements in the FY 69-70 time frame. COMUSMACV was briefed on the plans to expand the VNAF helicopter force on 21 January 1969. Approval of these plans had a further impact on the FY69-70 planned force structure. [50]

(S) MACV restudied the RVNAF force development program in the FY70 time frame. The objective was to further round out and balance the force structure and to make significant progress toward a self-sustaining RVNAF capable of expanding or contracting its main effort to conform to shifts in the direction of the war. Planning to achieve these objectives was done within the constraints of manpower availability, leadership potential, and inflationary pressures. The major limiting factor was manpower availability. The proposed modified FY69-70 force structure plans were briefed to CJGS on 24 February and to the US Mission Council on 4 March 1968. The proposed plan, approved by COMUSMACV on 28 February, was forwarded to CINCPAC for approval on 9 March 1968. CINCPAC indicated, on 16 March, that a recommendation for approval could be anticipated; however, this was contingent upon receipt of the estimated dollar costs and equipment requirements. The proposed modified FY69-70 force levels are shown below:

	FY68	FY69	FY70
ARVN	303,356	341,869	355,135
VNN	16,003	17,743	17,906
VNMC	7,321	8,900	8,900
VNAF	16,448	19,695	21,572
RF	182,971	211,932	218,687
PF	159,640	179,015	179,015
TOTAL	685,739	779,154	801,215

(S) The major force add-ons contained in the modified FY69 Plan, together with the supporting rationale, are shown below:

1. The 23d ARVN Div had only two assigned regiments. The addition of the third regiment (one battalion in FY68, two battalions in FY69, and 1 battalion in FY70) would provide a minimum force to permit the division to accomplish its assigned mission. A third artillery battalion for the 23d ARVN Div was required to provide the necessary fire support capability to the division while continuing to provide support to the separate 42d ARVN Regt.

2. The 18th ARVN Div was short two infantry battalions. However, six rifle companies to form these battalions were included in the FY68 force structure. The provision of the two battalion headquarters in FY69 would round out the 18th ARVN Div infantry battalion and enhance the division's capability to secure Highway 1.

3. To complete the program commenced in FY68 and to provide each regiment with a reconnaissance company, eleven companies were required in FY69.

4. Four 105mm howitzer battalions were provided on the basis of one per corps to provide an improved fire support capability for mobile operations. One additional 105mm howitzer battalion was provided to increase the fire support of the airborne division.

5. One armored cavalry squadron was provided to increase ARVN mobile forces and to improve the capability to open and secure highways.

6. A major objective of the FY69-70 plan was to build a self-sufficient RVNAF logistical base. Toward this goal, the FY69 plan provided two medium boat companies, four light truck companies, two engineer construction battalions, and significant increases in terminal service and medial units. In addition, two military police battalions and six military police PW camp companies were provided for internal security and adequate manning of enlarged prisoner compounds.

7. The pipeline authorization was insufficient to carry the total number of personnel who were in training, hospitals, and administrative categories. Failure to provide an adequate pipeline authorization adversely affected the maintenance of adequate operational strength in

combat units. Increases in pipeline authorizations proposed for FY69 included 17,700 ARVN, 1,175 VNN, 950 VNMC, 750 VNAF, and 2,900 RF spaces. An 8,000 space pipeline was proposed for the PF. This totaled 31,475 spaces.

8. Other regular force increases provided for a reorganization of the Marine Corps Brigade into a light division and the addition of one 105mm howitzer battery to the Marine Artillery Battalion. The Air Force was provided 1,752 spaces to support four new helicopter squadrons. Due to long training and equipment lead times, these squadrons would not be operational until 1970. The Navy would gain six LCMMs and would assume greater responsibility for mine counter-measures on the Long Tau and Dong Nai Rivers.

9. Increases of 28,961 in the RF and 19,375 in the PF were proposed for FY69 in order to provide security to the villages undergoing Revolutionary Development (RD), prevent regression in those areas where RD had been previously implemented, continue the conversion of CIDG to RF, provide railroad security, and provide logistical and administrative support.

(S) The proposed add-ons for FY70 completed the round out of a full ten-division ARVN force backed up by a highly mobile airborne division. The major add-ons contained in the FY70 plan are shown below:

1. One infantry battalion was provided to the 23d ARVN Div and one to the 9th ARVN Div, completing the round out of infantry divisions.

2. In order to provide one 105mm howitzer battalion in support of each ARVN regiment, eight additional battalions were required. Also another battalion was provided to round out the airborne division artillery.

3. Continuation of the improvement in the logistical system and the balancing of the force structure required the addition of two medium and one heavy boat companies, three light and one medium truck companies, two engineer construction battalions, one dredge company, one engineer dump truck company, and significant increases in medical and other service units. With the addition of these forces, the ARVN was expected to have a self-sufficient logistics base.

4. An armored cavalry squadron was included to increase available rapid reaction forces capable of maintaining security over large areas.

5. Other regular force increases included one LST for the Navy and spaces for four additional helicopter squadrons for VNAF.

6. The FY70 RF projection to support CIDG conversions, railroad security, and river patrol companies totaled 6,755 spaces.

(S) These force increases would cost approximately seven hundred million piasters more than was budgeted for 1968. The 1969 cost was estimated at 5.4 billion piasters above that budgeted in 1968 and the 1970 cost was expected to be approximately 8.5 billion piasters above the 1968 budget. [51]

(S) JCS recommended to SECDEF that action be taken to provide a blanket authorization for an RVNAF force increase up to 801,000 with recruitment and induction to take place as rapidly

as possible. This proposal was motivated by the desire to remove any inhibitions on the Vietnamese for rapid mobilization. It also incorporated the idea that rapid strength increases could be assigned as overstrength to existing units with the personnel equipped as light infantry. As a temporary expedient additional M-2 carbines could be made available. As additional equipment became available for artillery, engineer, signal, mor, and logistics units, some of the personnel could be diverted for the activation of the new units in the force structure. [52]

(S) On 15 March 1968, COMUSMACV informed CINCPAC that President Thieu had ordered that 100,000-125,000 men be made available to RVNAF during the next six months. This would provide a net increase of approximately 60,000 to the strength of RVNAF and would require an accelerated build-up of forces over that initially planned. MACV had proposed that this net increase be utilized to fill existing shortages in units and to organize more RF/PF units.

(S) Because of the number of ineffectives and the extensive training pipeline which was necessary for this accelerated build-up, there was an urgent need for the early release of the pipeline spaces requested on 9 March 1968. As mentioned previously, the pipeline authorization was insufficient to carry the total number of personnel who were in training, hospitals, and administrative categories. Failure to provide an adequate pipeline authorization impacted adversely on the maintenance of adequate operational strengths.

(S) RVNAF was developing considerable momentum in its recruiting and training program in expediting its recovery from the VC/NVA Tet Offensive. To maintain the impetus of this buildup and to carry it through into FY69, the early release of the indicated pipeline spaces was required. Such space authorization would permit RVNAF to begin planning early for the big buildup requested for FY69 and concomitantly would ensure authority for the rapid buildup of forces ordered by President Thieu. Prompt action in this matter would assure the GVN that the US was firmly behind their proposed buildup. Since the majority of this increase was to be in basic soldiers, this proposed action would serve to alleviate partially the need for additional officers and NCOs. Further, the associated equipment requirement would be minimal because replacements were involved as opposed to new units. [53]

(S) On 6 April, JCS concurred in the early release of the 31,475 FY69 pipeline spaces and continued COMUSMACV's authority to adjust forces within the authorized levels. JCS further stated that the proposed add-on for FY69 would be reduced by these 31,475 pipeline spaces and that the overall FY69-70 RVNAF force level increases would be adjusted upon receipt of equipment requirements and dollar costs. These spaces were released on JCS on 9 April 1968. [54]

(S) A directive, dated 16 April 1968, had been received by JCS from DEPSECDEF on the subject of RVNAF improvement and modernization. In the directive, he stated:

> We have embarked on a course of gradually shifting the burden of the war to GVN forces. We now must support as quickly as possible and to the maximum extent feasible, efforts of the GVN to enlarge, improve, and modernize their armed forces. There is an urgency to accomplishing these objectives. In the course of negotiations, we may find it desirable to agree to mutual restriction on the military efforts of North Vietnam and the US, accordingly, the structure of GVN

forces must be reoriented to provide as soon as possible for self-sufficiency in logistic, air, and artillery support categories. I recognize that this policy will require extraordinary actions from all of us and that we may have to alter past and present priorities for equipment deliveries and allocation of available logistic, transport, and firepower support for forces in Vietnam.

I desire that the Joint Chiefs of Staff develop a comprehensive, feasible action plan to achieve the above objectives. The plan should identify (and provide a regular reporting system on) the deficiencies of the RVNAF, specify corrective actions and resources required, and establish time-phased goals. It could concentrate on those actions most likely to provide immediate substantial improvements. While equipment modernization (particularly mobility and firepower) is needed, we all recognize we must also concentrate on such areas as leadership, personnel management, higher pay and allowances (including fringe benefits) and a promotion system based on merit. The plan should of course be selective, so that we do not dilute our efforts and our leverage on the GVN, by attempting to do everything at once. I recognize that we can re-equip the ARVN much faster if we give this requirement priority over our non-SEA active and reserve forces. This will require some hard alternative choices. Consequently, your plans should identify those equipment items which are competitive with our non-SEA requirements, and your recommendations for allocating the equipment between the competing forces. I have asked the ASD(SA) to coordinate the actions of OSD offices and agencies in support of your study. Please provide me with your plan by 15 May 1968. [55]

(S) It was essential that planning be started immediately along the lines set forth by DEPSECDEF. The problem was addressed in three increments:

1. Emergency actions such as those recommended to SECDEF by JCS, plus any possible acceleration in providing modern arms and equipment for the existing structure.

2. Review of the optimum RVNAF force structure within the 801,000 manpower estimate together with a review of equipment availability, recruiting, and induction schedules. An optimum force structure was considered to be one that could successfully cope with any continued subversive internal aggression subsequent to a mutual withdrawal of US, other FWMA and NVA forces.

3. Consideration of expedients which would enable the RVNAF to take over the equipment of selected US units which might be included in a schedule of mutual withdrawal.

(S) In view of the urgency of the requirement to expand, augment, and modernize the RVNAF and in order to insure rapid concurrent planning, JCS requested that planning proceed according to the follwing guidelines:

1. Modernization of the existing force structure--CINCPAC would submit a report identifying critical mission-essential modernization equipment over and above the currently approved programs by nomenclature, quantity, and required delivery dates (RDD). Additionally, he commented on the timeliness of currently approved RDDs. JCS would provide CINCPAC with estimates of Service capabilities to meet the requested RDDs. Within these capabilities CINCPAC would develop and submit a proposed schedule for modernization of the existing RVNAF force structure, which would be incorporated in the overall JCS reply to SECDEF.

2. Optimum force structure--CINCPAC would submit a completed optimum force structure plan identifying add-on units, equipment lists, supporting, training, unit activations, and cost estimates. Questions with regard to the equipment for the optimum force structure plans would be submitted incrementally and as soon as identified for Joint Staff review, determination of feasibility, and alternatives. The Joint Staff would provide CINCPAC, as rapidly as possible, with the results of such review and determinations so as to permit CINCPAC modification of the plan during development. The optimum force structure as finalized through this procedure would be incorporated into the JCS report to SECDEF.

3. Contingency plan for the turnover of US equipment--CINCPAC would submit a proposed plan to turn over the mission-essential equipment required by the RVNAF to complete the formation of a balanced, self-sufficient force structure in the event of an agreement for an early mutual withdrawal of US/FWMA and NVA forces.

(S) In connection with the optimum RVNAF structure, the JCS required a time-phased plan for the provision of adequate naval, air, artillery, helicopter, airlift, and logistic support for, or within, the RVNAF. Deficiencies in those areas of combat and logistic support which must be met by US forces during a transition period would affect directly and importantly the agreements on the timing and composition of US forces withdrawals. For this purpose, a table setting forth continuing (but diminishing) US combat and logistic support requirements in terms of types and numbers of units and strengths by quarter starting 1 July would be required.

(C) Owing to political and psychological sensitivities, coordination with GVN/JGS could be, at the discretion of CINCPAC and in coordination with the US AMB, on the basis of strengthening RVNAF rather than self-sufficiency. In reference to the DEPSECDEF directive, JCS assumed that the System for Evaluating the Effectiveness of RVNAF (SEER) report was, or could be, adjusted to provide the required regular reports. They further assumed that these reports would be provided monthly. [56]

(S) CINCPAC tasked MACV to provide input for the first increment, identifying critical mission-essential modernization equipment over and above the currently approved programs. The requirement coincided with MACV studies of GVN plans for an accelerated mobilization. JGS was planning to complete the FY68 force structure by 30 June 1968, the FY69 plan by 31 December 1968, and the FY70 plan by 31 March 19[illegible]. Coordination with RVNAF/JGS required for the development of valid force structure [illegible]ans was to proceed on the basis of

assisting in GVN mobilization efforts and continuing programs designed to strengthen and modernize RVNAF. [57]

(S) On 24 April 1968, a report identifying critical essential modernization equipment and comments on approved RDDs for the FY68 structure was submitted to CINCPAC. On 26 April, CINCPAC concurred in the proposed equipment lists, rationale, and RDD. Because VNN and VNAF could not reach the optimum expansion point until after 1973, the force structure plan was projected over the FY69-73 time frame. A long lead time was required to train pilots and certain Navy personnel; therefore it would take a longer time for VNN and VNAF to reach their ultimate strengths. ARVN, RF, and PF were to reach a peak strength early in the program and then be phased down to allow for VNN and VNAF expansion. [58]

(S) The plans for Increments Two and Three were submitted to CINCAPC on 3 May. On 8 May, CINCPAC recommended approval of the FY69 portion of the optimum force structure plan. Several areas of the FY70-74 portion were pointed out as requiring further examination and resolution. On 28 May, OSD approved the force ceiling of 801,215 but had not acted on the funding.

(S) On 8 June 1968, JCS requested a complete recomputation of total equipment requirements for the RVNAF force structure for FY69-70. MACV's reply on 13 June recognized the requirement for definitive supporting data but recommended early approval of the force structure in order to avoid delay in initiating supply action. On 22 June a JCS liaison team arrived to aid MACV in the development of the inforamtion required by JCS. On 24 June, MACV requested that OSD be informed of the necessity of early approval of FY69 RVNAF unit activation and the release of supporting funds. A SECDEF Memo of 25 June approved the FY68 RVNAF equipment modernization program with the exception of the VNN portion. It also approved the FY69 force structure for ARVN combat units, ARVN and VNMC 105mm and 155mm artillery, RF/PF, and two VNAF UH-1 helicopter squadrons. SECDEF did not approve FY69 funding. He requested that the RVNAF expansion and modernization program be reviewed in two phases. The force structure for the indefinite future, Phase I, should provide maximum GVN ground combat capability, assuming continued US participation in the war at the then currently approved levels. The Phase II structure should be self-sufficient and capable of meeting insurgency requirements that could remain if NVA and US forces withdrew but not renewed large-scale aggression from NVN. [59]

(S) On 27 August, COMUSMACV forwarded the final unit authorization list and activation schedule for Phase I, which provided for a force of 801,215, distributed as follows:

	FY68 Plan	FY69 Plan (Phase I)
ARVN	321,056	359,897
VNN	17,178	19,344
VNMC	8,271	8,920
VNAF	17,198	20,987
RF	185,871	213,927
PF	167,640	178,140
TOTAL	717,214	801,215

(S) Phase I was based on the assumption that, barring a negotiated termination of hostilities, the enemy threat to RVN could be expected to continue at the current level for the indefinite future. Further assuming continued US participation in the war at currently approved levels, the RVNAF did not need to be balanced by service at that time, as their lack of an adequate naval and air capability could be offset by US naval and air support. This restriction on expansion of the RVN naval and air elements, coupled with allocating to ARVN logistical elements the minimum spaces required for effective support of combat units, would permit correction of the following ground forces problems:

1. Deficiencies in artillery and armor.

2. Division structures not completely filled out.

3. Direct support logistics units not capable of supporting the scale of operations required.

4. Lack of helicopter lift.

(S) Two potential problem areas in the proposed Phase I development plan were pointed out: the JCS had already begun execution of reductions, activation, and training plans based on the May submission structure, and the Phase I plan continued to emphasize ARVN combat and combat support elements at the expense of ARVN logistical, VNN, and VNAF elements which would require long lead time training. The complementary concept to these problems was that US support would be essentially the same as that provided in the past, to include port terminal service, airlift, engineer construction, property disposal, and out-of-country maintenance. [60]

(S) On 23 October, JCS approved the Phase I Improvement and Modernization Plan. [61]

(S) In September, the strength of RVNAF stood at 811,519, or some 10,000 above the SECDEF approved ceiling. It appeared that the momentum of the mobilization would carry the total RVNAF strength over 850,000. To preclude the absorption of the overstrength in existing units, additional units were recommended for activation as soon as possible. Also, an increase in the authorized ceiling would permit maximum impact from the mobilization, possible deny manpower to VC recruiters, and permit initiation of long lead time training required to expedite the transition from Phase I to Phase II force structures. MACV, therefore, requested, on 4 October, that the overall RVNAF ceiling be raised to 850,000. The 48,785 space increase would be apportioned between the RF (39,000) and the pipeline (9,785). The latter would be used to support long lead time training and OJT with US units. The breakout of pipeline spaces by Service was: ARVN, 6,585; VNAF, 1,500; and VNN, 1,700. [62]

(S) On 5 November, DEPSECDEF approved the increase in the RVNAF force structure to 850,000 men as a modification of the JCS Phase I Plan for RVNAF expansion and modernization. In so doing, he judged as sound the MACV plan to accomplish long lead time training of Vietnamese needed to speed transition to Phase II, thus leading to an improved force which could be sustained. He further directed that the Secretaries of the Military Departments review the JCS study of skills, training times, and costs when submitted; request the funds required for such training; and include in the Service budget submissions for Phase I the FY69 and FY70 equipment and funding requirements for this 49,000 add-on. New authorizations for RVNAF as a result of the approved Phase I modified force levels were: [63]

ARVN:	366,482
VNN:	21,044
VNMC:	8,920
VNAF:	22,487
RF:	252,927
PF:	178,140
TOTAL:	850,000

(S) On 8 October, COMUSMACV submitted his plan for Phase II of the RVNAF Improvement and Modernization Program, which called for a force structure of 855,594. On 9 November, he requested authority to go beyond Phase I and move rapidly toward a Phase II posture. At the same time, he stated that with the current situation being what it was--i.e., the discontinuance of all offensive actions in NVN and the increased expectations for progress in the peace talks--it appeared prudent to go beyond Phase I and move rapidly toward a Phase II posture. The Phase I plan was no longer consistent with the situation in RVN and the political considerations associated with the negotiations in Paris, and therefore, the Phase II structure was better suited to the present and anticipated conditions in RVN. What was needed was authority for the Services and MACV to proceed with the necessary programming, budgeting, and other actions that were required to provide the equipment for the Phase II structure. Also needed was authority for RVNAF to recruit in FY69 the strengths for an accelerated Phase II force structure. Proposed Phase II and Phase II accelerated force structures are listed below:

Service	Phase II	Phase II (Accelerated)
ARVN	363,831	374,132*
VNN	26,100	30,000
VNMC	9,304	9,304
VNAF	32,587	32,587
RF	245,632	252,927**
FF	178,140	178,140
TOTAL	855,594	877,090

*Designed to permit retention of selected Phase I units during the transition to Phase II. In order to have a more balanced force as soon as possible, consideration was given to expanding the austere logistic structure of ARVN, in which case some units scheduled for deletion in the original Phase II plan would be phased out in FY70 and 71.

**Includes addition of Phase I modified strength of 39,000.

(S) The increased authorized strengths were necessary to enable initiation of training and other long lead time requirements incident to Phase II without further delay. No consideration could be given to reducing ARVN and RF to Phase II levels at this time. The strength of these two components could be adjusted at a later date depending on security conditions existing in RVN.[64]

(S) It was estimated that the RVN manpower base could sustain the 877,090 RVNAF level through FY71 if GVN could be successful in accomplishing a 50 percent reduction in current RVNAF desertion rates. The estimated manpower pool each year would be as follows: 1969, 324,000; 1970, 244,200; and 1971, 234,800. In FY72 and 73, the projected total military and paramilitary force level would be over 1.1 million; manpower estimates for those years reflect inadequate manpower resources for that level.

(S) In the proposed force structure, no new units were added to the Phase II ARVN force structure. Ways to accelerate Phase II VNAF activations were being investigated in the interim. However, strength increases for VNAF were needed to support recruiting and initiation of long lead time training requirements.

(S) The original Phase II plan reflected major budget considerations, except for the personnel increase needed to support the transition from a Phase I to a Phase II posture. Equipment requirements which were submitted were based on units being added in Phase II; reduction in material requirements was not made for scheduled deactivations in Phase II. The basis of the proposed 27,090 increase was the requirement to continue to maximize ground capability while moving toward self-sufficiency for RVNAF.

1. The recommended ceiling of 877,090 consisted of the following:

Phase II Plan	- 855,594
Phase I ARVN units retained in force structure	- 10,301
Phase I RF elements retained in structure	- 7,295
VNN augmentation (pipeline)	- 3,900
TOTAL	877,090

2. Equipment requirements, other materiel, ammunition and operating costs, both one-time and recurring, had been furnished for forces as follows:[65]

Phase I - 801,215 RVNAF

Phase I Increase - 48,785 (39,000 for RF and 9,785 for pipeline)

Phase II - 54,379 RVNAF (Phase I Increase Included)

(S) Supporting his recommendation for immediate implementation on an accelerated schedule of the plans for Phase II RVNAF Improvement and Modernization, COMUSMACV forwarded a proposal to CINCPAC on 25 November for completing Phase II unit activations in the second quarter of FY70 on the following schedule:

By End	Units to be Activated
3d Qtr FY69	1 Signal Battalion (Long Lines)
4th Qtr FY69	2 Engineer Battalions (Construction) 1 Engineer Company (Dump Truck) 1 Engineer Company (Heavy Equipment) 4 Transportation Companies (Medium Boat) 1 Transportation Company (Heavy Boat) 4 Transportation Terminal Service Battalion Headquarters
1st Qtr FY70	6 Armored Cavalry Squadrons 10 Transportaion Companies (Light Truck)
2d Qtr FY70	23 Artillery Battalions

(S) The proposed schedule was based on US estimates of the maximum rate at which JGS and affected ARVN agencies could recruit and train the required personnel. It was recognized that current forecasts for delivery of equipment would not support the accelerated schedule and that, even if deliveries were accelerated, there were likely to be shortfalls in some types of equipment. The MACV plan contemplated turnover of selected US units equipment in-country to cover these shortfalls and considered this procedure advantageous in that it avoided problems of procurement, production, and shipping lead time and reduced the amount of equipment to be retrograded upon US withdrawal.

(S) COMUSMACV recommended approval of the accelerated schedule; continuation; insofar as possible, of action to accelerate equipment deliveries for original FY71 units accelerated into FY69 and early FY70; and approval for turnover of US unit equipment, tactical situation permitting, to Phase II RVNAF units not included in the Phase I plan. [66]

(S) On 18 December, SECDEF approved the Accelerated Phase II plan except for the VNN portion and included in the approval authority for COMUSMACV to accelerate the activation of certain RVNAF units from FY70-71 to FY69. The authorized strength of RVNAF at that time was 866,434. In his approval, SECDEF also requested an accelerated Phase II activation schedule and accompanying equipment list, a plan for transfer of necessary equipment from identified US units, and a plan to withdraw US units from SVN which would no longer be required or effective after the transfer of equipment. [67]

(S) COMUSMACV provided CINCPAC with the new activation schedule, the plan for transfer of equipment, and the plan to withdraw selected units from SVN on 26 December. Detailed information on these items may be found under the respective Services elsewhere in this chapter.

(S) With regard to the withdrawal of selected US units from SVN, it was suggested that Reserve and NG units selected to transfer equipment to RVNAF be redeployed from RVN to CONUS via air as individual units. The period of stand-down would be determined by the Service component commander but would not exceed 30 days after transfer of equipment was completed.

(S) Regular units could be redeployed as individual units via air or inactivated in RVN as determined by the Service component commander. Regular unit personnel could accompany their unit to CONUS, if appropriate, or be retained in RVN a few days depending on individual DEROS, RVNAF advisory needs, or other component requirements. The period of stand-down would be the same as for Reserve and NG units.

(S) To news media, it could be explained that the units redeploying had completed their mission and their presence was no longer required in RVN. Information on units that were designated for redeployment would be forwarded on a case-by-case basis.

(S) In conjuction with the approval of an accelerated Phase II program, SECDEF also requested a review of the logistical forces in both Phase I and Phase II plans. As a result of the review, COMUSMACV decided that an overall strength increase of 9,427 would be required. To obtain adequate transportation, quartermaster, engineer, ordnance, and signal support in ARVN for FY69, a minor increase would be needed as follows:

Ordnance DS units, repair teams, and ammo depots	544
Transportation units and staging areas	164
Inf and abn div log spt	893
JGS/CLC elements	197
TOTAL	1,798

But an additonal strength increase of 5,808 in FY70 would be required to provide improvements in the follwoing areas, mainly inexpansion of engineer capability:

Quartermaster depots and exchange/commissary	783
Ordnance DS units and RPR teams	1,404
Signal support elements	450
Engineer construction units and topographical companies	3,107
Transportation floating crane det	14
Inventory control center	50
TOTAL	5,808

Also, the increase in FY71 would be for three additional engineer construction battalions (1,821 spaces).

(S) The relatively large engineer addition in FY70-71 was to be in recognition of the LOC and nation building role that would probably fall to the ARVN engineers. This increase would also provide a better balance in the overall force structure with respect to engineer support.

(S) The small logistics increase in FY69 could be accommodated within the ARVN strength of 374,132 without major impact. It was envisioned that in FY70-71 security conditions should continue to improve, assuming negotiations in Paris progress satisfactorily during 1969. Therefore, trade-off in combat elements that were not possible in FY69 could be planned for FY70-71. Although the then current unit authorization list (UAL) to support this plan showed Ranger battalions being reduced, MACV could designate other type combat elements for trade-off after further coordination with RVNAF JGS.[68]

Weaponry

(S) The slowness with which RVNAF was receving modern weapons from out-of-country sources was a matter of vital concern to COMUSMACV. He expressed his feelings on the subject to CINCPAC on 28 February 1968. He stated that since 7 February 1968 the responae that he had received in reference to weaponry requirements needed to meet the current and projected operational losses had been gratifying. His purpose in sending the message was to place the emphasis on those weapons included in the current modernization plans that merited special consideration for accelerated delivery. He desired that there be a complete understanding regarding the importance attached to promptly equipping RVNAF with modern weaponry. In this regard, the M-16 rifle, M60 machine gun, M79 grenade launcher, the M72 light anti-tank weapon, and the M29 81mm mortar were considered particularly important.

> When the enemy decided to wage his so-called wars of national liberation, he designed and produced a formidable arsenal of weapons. He now has them in quantity in South Vietnam. We must face this hard cold fact of life and do something about it. Because of this, the aggressiveness normally associated with confidence in their equipment is lost. It is essential that this problem be resolved at the earliest possible date. It is my belief that the world priorities should be reviewed with the view towards raising the priority of the RVNAF.
>
> Production schedules on some items have been inadequate to meet requirements. The issue of M16 rifles to RVNAF is an excellent example of the delays that have occurred. M16 rifles were requested urgently in December 1965 and we are just beginning to receive them in quantity for RVNAF.
>
> Our goal is achievement of a self-sustaining RVNAF capable of being responsive to any contingency. This program of modernization includes the Regional and Popular forces as a major element. While M16A1 rifles have been programmed for receipt for the ARVN combat

elements, the RF companies and PF platoons also must be so equipped. At the present time these units compare unfavorably in firepower with enemy main force and NVA units. Issue of M16 rifles and M79 grenade launchers would make these forces superior to comparable enemy units. RF/PF forces would require 267,970 M16 rifles. [69]

(S) As of 15 Janaury 1968, 21,802 M16 rifles had been issued to combat maneuver elements of RVNAF. An additional 11,600 rifles had been released for issue as of the end of January 1968. M16 rifles were received in-country as expected, and 15,000 more were issued during the period January-February 1968. Units armed, or being armed, in January included the battalions of the VNMC, ARVN Abn Div, 5th ARVN Rgr Gp, and designated elements of I CTZ to include the 51st Inf Regt and the three ranger battalions. The requirements to equip the RF with the new rifles was being considered along with the remainder of ARVN. [70]

(C) These weapons were to replace the M1 rifle, both types of carbine, the BAR, and the submachine gun. Weapons replaced by the M16 were to be returned to supply in order to meet other RVNAF requirements. The actual issue of the new rifles was to be on the basis of assigned strength rather than authorized strength. In January 1968, issues were being made to complete the units in I CTZ which were scheduled to receive the weapons. Seven hundred and fifty of the weapons were issued to the training base. Instructions were given to issue 8,789 M16 rifles to the 20th ARVN Ordnance Base Depot, Saigon, for further issue to the 7th ARVN Div and the 32d and 41st ARVN Rgr Bns, IV CTZ. An additional 6,343 rifles were to be issued to IV Area Logistical Command (ALC), Can Tho. Priorities for issue were to be to the remaining combat maneuver elements of ARVN in IV CTZ with the units in II and III CTZs sharing equally in the next priority. Priorities within these CTZs were determined by the Corps commander, with the advice and assistance of the Corps SA. [71]

(C) On 21 February 1968, due to the changing tactical situation, COMUSMACV superseded his previous instructions for the issue of M16 rifles to the IV CTZ. They were to be issued in the following priority as the weapons were received:

IV Corps (complete)

7,060 to the 9th ARVN Div at Sa Dec

7,625 to the 21st ARVN Div at Vinh Loi.

1,567 to ARVN Ranger Bns at My Tho, Vinh Loi, and Sa Dec

JGS was requested to insure that the actual issues be made to the using units on the basis of authorized or assigned strength, whichever was lower. The SAs were informed that it was important that the rifles, with ammunition, be placed in the hands of troops as soon as possible and that they be provided assistance as needed. [72]

(S) On 14 March 1968, JCS informed COMUSMACV that the concern expressed by him regarding the priority requirement of equipping RVNAF was well understood and second only to

US forces in combat. Increased production of M16 rifles had been approved and Colt would be producing 50,000 per month by June 1969. A second source (unnamed) would begin production in August 1969 and reach a monthly production of 25,000 by June 1970. A third source (unnamed) was to begin production in January 1969 and was expected to reach a monthly production of 25,000 by October of the same year. The production of all sources was at maximum, based on three shifts per day and operating seven days per week. [73]

(S) In response to a SECDEF query pertaining to the modernization of the existing RVNAF force structure, MACV replied that 586,716 M16 rifles were required for the FY68 force structure. Of these, 86,174 were on hand, but the balance had not yet been delivered on the currently approved MASF program for FY68. There was also an unprogrammed requirement for 468,275 rifles for RF/PF. The supply of M16 rifles to RVNAF was considered to be a high priority requirement. A proposal had been forwarded to DA recommending a 25 percent US and a 75 percent RVNAF split of deliveries in RVN. If the proposal was to be approved and current delivery rates continued, ARVN combat elements would be equipped with the M16 by June 1968. As a follow-on program, an initial spread issue of a limited number of M16 rifles was to be made to each RF company and PF platoon to provide additional firepower. Following this, M16 rifles had to be made available to the RVNAF training base. The receipt of additional M2 carbines would aid in this upgrading of these important units; however, as the M16 rifle was superior to other available individual weapons and its psychological impact was so great, M16 rifles would be made available for RVNAF as rapidly as possible. [74]

(C) In May 1968, MACV contemplated that the FY68 M16 issue programs for the ARVN maneuver elements could be completed by the end of June and that rifles would begin to become available in July for issue to RF/PF at an approximate rate of 20,000 per month. MACV proposed an initial issue of 60,000 weapons to be used to upgrade RF/PF by a spread-issue of 18 rifles to each RF company and nine rifles to each PF platoon. The proposed priority of issue was IV, III, II, and I CTZ. In order to reduce handling of the weapons and speed their delivery to the RF/PF units, MACV proposed shipping the rifles directly from CONUS to the respective ALCs for further distribution to the A&DSL companies.

(C) JGS concurred in the proposed priority of the M16 rifles to RF/PF and recommended an additional issue of M16s for a 2 percent maintenance float. On 7 June, MACV provided for the issue of 4,964 weapons for use as a combat consumption/maintenance float allowance. This number amounted to 4.6 percent of the FY68 program. [75]

(S) COMUSMACV informed DA in early July that priorities of issue had been established for the FY69 allocations of 115,000 and 172,345 M16 rifles and for the 246,828 expected to be received during FY70. Based upon these priorities, M16 rifles would be issued during FY69 and FY70 as follows:

USARV combat losses, Aug 68-Mar 69 (to be issued on a loan basis and restored to RVNAF during FY70)	(4,000)
RF/PF, Combat, and Combat Support Units	299,294
Other RVNAF Combat and Combat Support Units	85,899
CIDG	40,962

MACV Studies and Observation Group	2,000
Provincial Reconnaissance Units	4,000
National Police Field Forces	15,756
RD Cadre Division	1,600
US Advisors	6,695
RVNAF Training Base	44,553
Maintenance Float/Attrition	33,414
Total	534,173

COMUSMACV informed DA that receipt of FY70 allocations would satisfy all FY68-69 requirements for combat and combat support units as well as for the training base. Plans included continued use of M2 carbines and BARs in higher command elements and within the service support structure during this period. [76]

(S) SECDEF approved the first portion of the Phase I Improvement and Modernization Plan on 16 July and this, coupled with an earlier approval of FY68 plans, brought the OSD approved allocation for M16s to 711,190. On 27 August SECDEF approved the balance of the Phase I plan which brought the approved allocation up to 742,338. When COMUSMACV requested implementation of Phase II Improvement and Modernization in early November, the cumulative requirement for M16s rose to 780,487 for FY69. This figure included 142,626 M16s for logistical support units. On 18 December, SECDEF approved the 780,487 weapons level for the M16. [77]

(S) Shipment of the M16 rifles progressed well during 1968. At the end of the year, a total of 315,253 had been shipped, 209,040 of them since 1 July, and the balance was programmed for shipment by December 1969. [78]

(S) In addition to the M16 rifle, COMUSMACV planned to provide an initial issue of one M79 40mm grenade launcher to each PF platoon and an increase of from three to nine in each of the RF rifle companies. This involved an additional requirement of 11,156 M79s above what had already been requested. [79]

(S) On 14 March 1968, JCS informed COMUSMACV that 2,268 M79 grenade launchers had been supplied to ARVN and 1,915 would be shipped from the March 1968 production to complete the requirement. The requirement for 11,156 M79 grenade launchers for RF/PF would be fulfilled as production permitted. [80]

(S) The requirement for M79 grenade launchers increased to 25,708 to complete the FY68 structure. Of these, 13,465 were on hand by the end of April and the balance was undelivered on the currently approved MASF programs for FY68. The delivery schedule would complete equipping the FY68 structure with M79s by 30 November 1968. As there was no similar weapon in-country to substitute for the M79, delivery schedules were requested to be continued at the then current rate. [81]

(S) After minor alterations and adjustments, the FY69 quota called for 35,166 M79 grenade launchers. As of the end of the year, 24,788 M79s had been shipped with the balance due by the end of FY69. [82]

(S) In a briefing on 20 October 1967, COMUSMACV approved a recommendation to equip selected units of the RVNAF with 2,489 M60 machine guns. On 21 October 1967, a message was dispatched to CINCPAC requesting approval of the program. A message from JCS dated 8 December 1967 stated agreement in principle. In early March 1968, no reply stating formal approval had been received although 1,000 designated as partial fill for the program had been received and indications were that the remaining 1,489 machine guns would be provided from production by 31 December 1968. Immediately upon arrival, 100 of the 1,000 M60 machine guns were shipped to I CTZ to satisfy requirements for the Strong Point Obstacle System (SPOS) along with fifteen 106mm RR w/M79 mounts, and eighteen .50 cal MG (M2HB) with M3 mounts. These weapons were not to be issued for any other purpose. Another 100 were transferred to USARV to replenish depleted stocks and were considered as part of the 321 guns authorized for US advisor compound defense requirements. The remaining 800 M60 machine guns were distributed in accordance with a plan approved by JCS. [83]

(C) The M60 machine guns arrived in-country with no advance knowledge on the part of MACV. The delivery occurred in the midst of the Tet Offensive and, because of the situation, were immediately issued by the Vietnamese to priority units according to a plan which they had developed. Since that time, a combined MACV/JGS meeting was held and a plan was developed whereby M60 machine guns already in the hands of certain RVNAF units, as well as those scheduled for delivery per the COMUSMACV decision on 20 October 1967, were to be incorporated into a single plan in order to achieve maximum utilization of assets. This plan recognized that several RVNAF units had M60 machine guns in their possession which were acquired from various other sources. As a result, enough additional M60 machine guns were available to equip all of the units armed with .30 caliber machine guns in the ARVN Abn Div, 5th ARVN Rgr Gp, and the VNMC Bde, in addition to the units originally planned. This was desirable in order to eliminate one type of ammunition from those units. MACV proposed the following general priority plan to JGS for the issue of M60 machine guns:

1. General Reserve Units
2. 5th ARVN Ranger Group
3. Selected Units in I CTZ
4. Selected Units in IV CTZ
5. Selected Units in II and III CTZ.

Within these general priorities, JGS was authorized to establish further priority as it desired. [84]

(S) On 14 March 1968, COMUSMACV was informed that the remaining 1,489 M60 machine guns would receive priority action and be shipped to reach ARVN by the end of March 1968. [85]

(S) In response to a SECDEF query pertaining to the modernization of the existing RVNAF force structure, MACV replied that 12,306 M60s were required for the FY68 force structure.

Of these, 1,123 were on hand and 1,539 were undelivered on the then currently approved MASF programs (FY68 plus minor changes). There were 9,624 remaining which were unprogrammed. The undelivered FY68 balance was delivered by 30 June 1968. There were sufficient quantities of .30 caliber machine guns in-country to equip the FY68 structure; however, the M60 would be provided in lieu of the .30 cal machine gun as rapidly as possible. Important advantages of the M60 machine gun in relation to the .30 caliber were the lesser weight of both the gun and ammunition, reduced maintenance at all echelons, and mechanical advantages such as pre-set headspace. The first priority of these unprogrammed M60 machine guns was for 2,106 to equip the RF companies in the FY68 force. [86]

(S) On 25 June, SECDEF approved a requirement of 10,663 M60 machine guns in concert with the RVNAF Improvement and Modernization Program. On 16 July he approved another 1,215 as part of the FY69 Phase I program. When SECDEF approved the balance of Phase I on 27 August, a total of 14,447 M60s was authorized. On 28 November, MACV submitted a revised equipment list and the cumulative FY69 requirement for M60s was reduced to 14,028. Shipments of the M60s commenced in August and continued steadily through the end of the year. At the year end, there were 9,270 M60 machine guns in-country or on their way, and the balance of the requirements were programmed for completion by the end of FY69. [87]

(C) On 29 February 1968, eight 105mm howitzers (M101A1), programmed from CONUS for issue to ARVN, arrived at Tan Son Nhut AB. On 4 March another four howitzers arrived. These howitzers were 12 of the 36 guns provided from the December 1967 and January 1968 overhaul production program. Six additional guns arrived in March and 18 in May. In considering the utilization of the weapons, six of them were provided to the newly formed 62d ARVN Arty Bn in I CTZ. This enabled each battery to train on actual equipment. The remaining howitzers were retained in the maintenance float to provide additional weapons to the 62d ARVN Arty Bn in the event the training situation later warranted it. JGS considered issuing six more howitzers in April and making one battery operational. The other six would still be in the maintenance float. The remaining 18 howitzers scheduled to arrive in May had been shipped from the arsenal in late March to the port of debarkation and arrived on schedule. [88]

(S) For the 105mm towed howitzer (M101A1), 501 were needed for the FY68 force structure. Of these, 474 were on hand and 47 were waiting delivery on the currently approved MASF programs for FY68. The FY68 force structure was deficient in artillery; however, this deficiency was planned to be corrected in FY69-70. The 18 howitzers that arrived in May 1968 completed the activation of the remaining artillery battalion in the FY68 plan. The 105mm howitzers were requested to be programmed and delivered on an accelerated schedule to permit early activation of vital FY69 artillery units. [89]

(S) For the FY69 requirements, COMUSMACV initially required a total of 592 105mm howitzers (M101A1) which was approved by SECDEF on 16 July. In his final Phase I plan, COMUSMACV's requirements rose to 728. This requirement was for TOE/TA and maintenance float for RVNAF. However, on 28 November, MACV changed the requirement for FY69 to 602 howitzers vice 728. As of the end of the year, 560 105mm howitzers (M101A1) had been shipped to SEASIA with the balance projected to be shipped by the 4th quarter of FY69. [90]

(S) In response to a SECDEF query pertaining to the modernization of the existing RVNAF force structure, MACV replied that 72 of the light towed 105mm howitzers (M102) were required for the FY68 force structure; however, none were programmed. The 105mm howitzer

(M102) with firing platform had proved to be highly effective in providing firing positions in swampy inundated terrain. The aluminum firing platforms, which were expected shortly, would further enchance the flexibility of employing and displacing that weapon under conditions such as existed in much of RVN, particularly in IV CTZ. A study of the employment of the M102 howitzer concluded that this weapon and the aluminum firing platform should be provided to ARVN artillery battalions in IV CTZ on the basis of one battery per battalion. In addition, all artillery batteries in the ARVN Abn Div and the VNMC Bde (General Reserve units) should be so equipped. The major advantages that would accrue from such an action were increased mobility and tactical flexibility, less time required to engage targets (decreased by virtue of the 360 degree traverse capability), improved characteristics of air transportability and aerial delivery and capability of moving by a smaller prime mover (3/4 ton vs 2 1/2 ton truck). MACV recommended that these weapons be provided at the earliest possible date since the receipt of these weapons would enable the release of M101A1 howitzers to form battalions in other areas. [91]

(S) The FY69 requirements for seventy-seven 105mm howitzers (M102) was approved by SECDEF on 26 July. However, on 28 November, MACV realigned its requirements and only 60 were required. As of the end of the year, no deliveries had been made and there were none scheduled for delivery. The final RDD for the FY69 requirements was 4th quarter FY69. [92]

(S) In a briefing on 20 October 1967, COMUSMACV approved a recommendation to equip selected units of the RVNAF with 769 M29 81mm mortars, and a message was dispatched to CINCPAC requesting approval of the program. A message from JCS, dated 8 December 1967, stated agreement in principle. As of early March 1968, no reply stating formal approval had been received although 25 M29 mortars, designated as partial fill for the program, had been received. Information revealed that another 250 M29 mortars were being withdrawn from CONUS reserve units to partially satisfy the requirement. The 25 M29 mortars that arrived in-country in February received expedited shipment specifically for use on the DMZ. On arrival, eight of the 25 weapons were transferred to USARV for use by US advisors, without the knowledge of MACV. USARV stated that the next M29 mortars arriving in-country would be transferred back to ARVN to complete the DMZ requirement. The remaining 17 weapons were sent to the 2d ARVN Regt for use on the DMZ. SECDEF deferred action on the withdrawal of the remaining weapons pending a decision on the call-up of additional reserve forces.

(S) A meeting was held between MACV and JGS to prepare a proposed distribution and priority of issue plan for the new mortars. Mortars provided to the VNMC Bde were on loan from ARVN. When the Marine Brigade received M29 mortars through the MASF Plan from USN assets, the new weapons were to be turned over to ARVN. The general pattern of distribution as approved was as follows, subject to establishment of further priorities by JGS as desired:

1. General Reserve Units
2. 5th ARVN Ranger Group
3. Selected Units in I CTZ
4. Selected Units in IV CTZ
5. Selected Units in II and III CTZ

It was anticipated that another 258 mortars would become available for issue to RVNAF by 30 June 1968.[93]

(S) As of April 1968, 1,236 M29s were needed for the FY68 force structure. Of these, 265 were on hand and 10 remained undelivered on the then currently approved FY68 schedule. An unprogrammed requirement for 1,023 remained. The M1 mortar currently in-country could not be shifted through 360 degrees without repositioning the base plate and it was considerably heavier than the M29 mortar. Therefore, the lighter weight of the M29 coupled with the capability of engaging targets quickly in widely varying directions made the M29 mortar a necessary modernization weapon.[94]

(S) The FY69 requirement for the M29 was 1,463 as approved by SECDEF on 16 July and 27 August. The requirement as of the end of the year, due to approval of Phase II and a MACV adjustment, was 1,633. However, only 692 had been shipped/received by 31 December. The remaining 977 were expected to be received by the end of FY69.[95]

(C) DEPCOMUSMACV approved an ARVN armor reorganization plan on 13 September 1967. This plan provided for an increase of 234 M113 type vehicles. A breakout of these vehicles was 122 M113 Armored Personnel Carriers (APC), 84 M125A1 81mm mortar carriers and 28 Armored Vehicle Launched Bridges (AVLB). Although all of these were M113 type vehicles, they were separate items. Before the reorganization of ARVN armor was approved, there were 25 assault bridges on order. This requirement was validated with the provision that the bridges would be mounted on M113s contained in the authorization as no additional vehicles were to be made available. Since the assault bridges were to arrive in-country already mounted on an M113, trade off vehicles were required. The trade off vehicles agreed upon by the Chief of the ARVN Armor Command and the SA, Armor Command were a RR carrier in each M113 troop, one carrier from each tank troop section, and one carrier from the ARVN Armor School.[96]

(S) A total of 723 APCs (M113) were required for the FY68 force structure. Of these, 665 were on hand and 58 remained undelivered on the then currently approved FY68 MASF programs. The on-hand figure included 29 carriers transferred from [redacted] to RVNAF. Additionally, two more armored cavalry squadrons, with an authorization of 62 each, were planned in FY69 and 70. It was requested that deliveries against the then current program be continued to enable the reorganization to be completed and the new squadrons to be activated on an accelerated schedule.

(S) When the first portion of Phase I was approved by SECDEF on 16 July, the APC authorization rose to 754. SECDEF authorized an additional 216 APCs on 27 August to complete the Phase I authorization in this area. Another increase to 1,180 was needed for the Phase II FY69 program. This was later revised to 1,100 by MACV and SECDEF approved this level on 18 December 1968. As of the end of the year, there were 1,016 either on-hand or in the pipeline, with the balance expected by the end of FY69.[97]

(S) In addition, 107 SP Mortar Carriers (M125A1) were required for the FY68 structure. None of these were on hand and 107 remained undelivered on the then currently approved MASF programs. These vehicles were required to provide mortar fire support to the armor units and were part of the 1968 armor reorganization. Also, these vehicles were required as rapidly as they could be provided.[98]

(S) The FY69 requirement for the M125A1 81mm mortar carriers was 116. As of 4 January 1969, all carriers had either been received in-country or had been shipped.[99]

(C) On 7 February 1968, enemy PT76 tanks were observed and identified in the vicinity of Khe Sanh in Quang Tri Province. These tanks were part of the attack force used against the Lang Vei Special Forces Camp. Based on the introduction of armor by the enemy forces, the MACJ3 requested information be provided as to the antitank capability of ARVN units deployed in I CTZ, particularly those units located north of the Hai Van Pass. The purpose of this query was to insure an adequate antitank capability existed and that actions were being taken to improve the antitank capability of ARVN units in I CTZ as the requirements arose.

(C) The primary antitank weapons authorized by TOE to ARVN maneuver battalions were the 3.5 inch rocket launcher and the 57mm recoilless rifle. Each rifle company was authorized two 3.5 inch rocket launchers. The battalion headquarters company was authorized four 57mm recoilless rifles. In addition to organic antitank capabilities, all units had available artillery, air support, antitank mines, and field expedients. As of February 1968, the total requirements for 106mm recoilless rifles was 70 in I CTZ; 15 of these were for the DYE MARKER Project; 16 for the 1st Regt, 1st ARVN Div; 12 each for the 3d Regt and 51st Regt of the 1st ARVN Div; 12 for the ARVN Rgr Regt; and 3 for maintenance floats. Of the 70 recoilless rifles on demand, 8 had been airlifted to I CTZ.

(C) As of February 1968, JGS plans to improve the antitank defense included:

1. Formation and dissemination of antitank doctrine to all units.

2. Distribution of immediate information on the formation of Tank Killer Teams.

3. Requesting I FFORCEV, II FFORCEV, and II MAF to provide one mobile training team per ARVN division to assist in antitank training.

4. Issuance of instructions to all RVNAF elements on antitank defense to include tank traps and barriers.

5. Development of VNAF plans for engaging tanks with aircraft.

6. Immediate issue according to TOE of 3.5 inch rocket launchers and ammunition with priority to I CTZ.

(C) To assist in improving the antitank capability of ARVN, the MACJ3:

1. Transferred 2,500 light antitank weapons to I CTZ.

2. Airlifted to III MAF, 188 rounds of 2.75 inch HEAT rocket ammunition.

3. Made arrangements for the transfer of 76mm ammunition to ARVN from USARV assets.

4. Requested shipment from CONUS of gasoline-powered M48 tanks.[100]

(C) A study was made of ARVN antitank weapons as of 11 February 1968. The study showed the following:

	Authorized	O/H*
Howitzer, Pack, 75mm	3	165
Howitzer, Towed, 105mm	489	444
Howitzer, Towed, 155mm	126	130
Launcher, Grenade M7A3	32,742	36,909
Launcher, Rocket 3.5 inch	1,091	1,983
Rifle, Recoilless 57mm	1,015	964
Tank, Light M41A3	125	128
Rifle, Recoilless 106mm	0	8
Gun, 76mm M6	0	101

*O/H data does not include battle losses from the enemy Tet Offensive.

(S) On 14 March 1968, JCS informed COMUSMACV that the computed light antitank weapon ammunition requirement for ARVN was 17,850 rounds per month. The RVN requests would be met by deferring issues from other priority customers until December 1968 when production wuld reach 100,000 rounds per month to satisfy the total requirements.[101]

Mobilization

(S) In order to provide an enlarged military manpower base, the GVN published a Decree Law (#043/67) on 24 October 1967 announcing a partial mobilization and a national resource requisition. A subsequent Decree (#152/SL/QP) issued on 25 October 1967 amplified the provisions of the basic order and provided that, effective 1 January 1968, all personnel 18 through 33 were eligible to be drafted, Home Reservists in the same age group could be recalled, and specialists and technicians in the 34 to 45 age group could be requisitioned (involuntarily recalled). The 25 October Decreee also cancelled business and professional draft deferments and reduced deferments for educational and religious reasons.[102]

(U) In view of the differences concerning partial mobilization that lay unresolved between the legislature and administration, there was cause for concern as 1967 came to a close. Fortunately, none of the controversial portions of the new Decrees had to be implemented immediately so the disagreement did not interfere with the orderly procurement of manpower in January 1968, and RVNAF manpower needs were being met satisfactorily.[103]

(C) On 16 January 1968, COMUSMACV sent a memorandum to AMB Bunker stating that efforts must be made to have the Mobilization Directorate placed at a level in the GVN hierarachy from which it could view and respond to the overall manpower picture. This elevation of the mobilization effort would emphasize the fact that the leadership and administrative effort required for successful population control, of which mobilization was part, must come from all

elements of the public administration, not just the Ministry of Defense. Concurrently, it would become more evident that the mobilization advisory effort involved several US Mission agencies, not just MACV. This repositioning would relieve the US Mission of the organizational anomaly in which several Mission agencies were interested in doing business with one subordinate a agency of the Ministry of Defense, the Mobilization Directorate. [104]

(C) As a result of the enemy's Tet Offensive launched in late January 1968, the GVN, on 10 February, recalled reservists with less than five years service and in the 18-33 age group. The Mobilization Directorate estimated that 15,000 or more reservists would be brought back into military service by this action. By 28 February, a total of 3,239 former servicemen had reported, of whom 291 were officers, 368 were NCOs, and 2,580 were enlisted men. Reservists were to report between the dates 15 February-15 March with choice of unit and location being given, where possible, to those reporting before 29 February. Some of the provisions of the Recall Decree provided for time in service, and pay and allowance for recalled personnel would be counted effective from the date that the individual reported for reenlistment. However, pending the completion of reenlistment procedures, the respective unit was required to provide a pay advance to recalled personnel in the first month of reenlistment with the purpose of helping them support their families. In addition, recalled personnel, including assimilated prior-servicemen, were entitled to the rank they had held prior to their discharge (only permanent, temporary, and brevet ranks were considered). Prior servicemen who volunteered for the Recall Program were considered as reserve personnel and were not entitled to the reenlistment bonus as NCOs and EM. Prior servicemen who did not report for reenlistment during the prescribed time or who were apprehended after 15 March 1968 were to be considered as draft dodgers. [105]

(C) By 15 March the number who had reported was approximately 11,000, some 4,000 lower than the earlier estimate. GVN announced a one month extension of the period, and, by the end of March, the total rose to approximately 15,000. [106]

(C) MACV, in cooperation with other US Mission agencies, continued to advise its counterparts on all matters pertaining to the implementation of partial mobilization by GVN. However, it had come to the attention of MACV that one aspect of the planning for partial mobilization might be moving to the point of decision: a GVN interministrial committee was to convene shortly to decide whether or not to exempt from the draft the members of certain organizations which played key roles in the paramilitary and pacification effort. Thus far, MACV had been successful in convincing their counterparts, one by one, of the need for deferment of these groups. However, once matters moved to the committee, MACV's influence was expected to diminish. Consequently, COMUSMACV called upon AMB Bunker to present the US views on the matter to the Prime Minister. MACV's position was basically one of retaining, in their important work, the employees of the following paramilitary and pacification groups:

ORGANIZATION	STRENGTH (Feb 68)	END 1968 PROGRAMMED STRENGTH
*Kit Carson Scouts	247	1,800
*Armed Progpganda Teams	2,636	5,500
Mobile Refugee Teams	344	1,000

ORGANIZATION	STRENGTH (Feb 68)	END CY68 PROGRAMMED STRENGTH
Instructors, RD School Vung Tau	578	585
Van Tac Vu Cadre	80	150
TOTAL	3,885	9,035

*Exempted in March 1968.

There was little doubt that the NP and the RD Cadre would be exempted, since these two groups were specifically named for exemption in Decree 152, dated 25 October 1967, but it was recommended that they be mentioned as well.

(U) Paralleling the need for exemption of the cited groups was the need to retain key individuals in certain essential civilian positions. The GVN planned to meet this need by use of "mobilization in place". Under this vaguely conceived plan, GVN intended to induct these individuals, give them military training, and then reassign them to their essential jobs. In the abstract, this idealistic attempt to bring everyone into service had several favorable aspects, but, unfortunately, GVN had not developed the organization and administrative procedures for this plan, nor did it have the physical plant required to accept the military training burden. With time, these prerequisites could be developed into a workable plan, but hasty, ill-planned, albeit well-intentioned implementation at that time might well have resulted in chaos. In conveying views on these individuals who should not be drafted, it was recommended that a positive statement be made of the need to retain these individuals in their jobs; GVN would be required to develop a system to accomplish this within the constraints of their announced partial mobilization plan. This would take time and considerable planning. MACV continued its efforts to influence its counterparts in these matters. The Ambassador's help was requested to insure that there was no debilitating attempt to "rob Peter to pay Paul".[107]

(U) GVN was also thinking of postponing any 18 and 19 year old call-up until all older eligibles were used; presumably this was because of political opposition within the National Assembly. From a practical viewpoint, unless the GVN started drafting the younger age group, MACV would be wholly unable to achieve the new goals for the RVNAF build-up approved by the Mission. In turn, this would engender further adverse US criticism that the Vietnamese were not carrying their proper share of the burden. Moreover, any delay in drafting younger age groups would necessarily put greater pressure on drafting older people who were already in key civil service or other jobs. Under these circumstances, COMUSMACV recommended that AMB Bunker present his views in proposing immediate drafting of 19 year olds and drafting of 18 year olds no later than 30 June 1968.[108]

(C) The drafting of 19 year olds started on 1 March and was scheduled to continue through April. Incomplete reports indicated that more than 3,000 had reported by 20 March. Announcement was made in March that 18-year-olds were to begin reporting on 1 May 1968.

(U) On 28 February 1968, GVN announced a program for the return of essential reservists, in a detached service status, to their civilian employment. GVN ministers were given until 15 March to prepare lists of these personnel for their own ministries and related non-govenment business firms. Similarly, the US Mission was asked to prepare lists for US employees.

(C) The GVN Interministerial Committee commenced its hearing on 21 March 1968. US-originated requests totalled 161 at the end of March with late requests still arriving. The committee took a hard line on applications, approving about half of the total, but varying considerably from ministry to ministry.

(U) By the end of February other manpower producing steps had been taken by GVN. These included:

1. Extension of the previously announced amnesty program for deserters and draft dodgers.

2. Re-examinations for men previously rejected for physical disability.

3. Suspensions of sentences of deserter laborers and their return to duty status.

4. Restoration of military criminal prisoners to duty status on a selective basis.

5. Suspension of discharges except for physical disability. This applied only to a small number since, for most servicemen, discharges had been suspended on 1 January 1968.

(C) As of the end of February, it appeared from preliminary estimates that the FY68 manpower requirements of RVNAF, both for force add-ons and to replace losses, could be met. The heavy losses during the Tet Offensive, coupled with an increasing scarcity of manpower, increased the importance of efficient utilization of all available manpower and of reducing and draft evasion.[109]

(U) With a view to meeting the strength requirement for the RF, JGS planned to allocate a quota of conscriptees to the RF in 1968. Based upon the total of quotas for calling up conscriptees in the first six months of 1968, JGS allocated 56 percent of the prescribed quotas for Regular Forces and 44 percent of the prescribed quotas for the RF. Priority was to be given to the Regular Forces in the matter pertaining to the provision of an adequate quota of conscriptees. Conscriptees called up for the RF were allocated to, and appropriately utilized by, Sectors within the DTA's scope, based upon RF strength requirements and the able manpower resources in each Sector. CTZ headquarters were responsible for providing guidance and supervision to DTA's, Special Zones, Sectors, or Special Sectors in pushing up their activities for encouraging male citizens of draft age to report for military service. In addition, police roundup operations were to be conducted by them, on a permanent basis, in local areas so as to be able to procure adequate conscriptees prescribed by the JGS for each month. The quota of conscriptees prescribed for the first six months of 1968 was 25,303 for the Regular Force and 20,045 for the RF. These figures were only an estimate because, after processing, there would be about 40 percent of them physically unfit or not eligible for the draft. In the CMD, after obtaining 100 percent RF assigned strength, the excess would be transferred to the Regular Force. JGS reminded the responsible authorities that the quota of conscriptees was the minimum number. Therefore, DTA's or Special Zones could not give an approximate 10 percent of conscriptees to each Sector so as to insure the adequacy of the number of conscriptees assigned to them by JGS directives.[110]

(U) On 18 February 1968, GVN published Decree Law #90 which established the Central Interministerial Committee which was responsible for formulating plans (short- and long-period

time frames) to guide, supervise, and inspect the activities of the Joint Committees. Committees, which were designed to coordinate and improve efforts to encourage enlistments and to prevent desertion and draft evasion, were established at national, provincial, city, and village levels. The timing of this Decree was a reflection of the strain being placed on Vietnamese manpower resources. It was also recognition that any solutions to be the problems of recruiting, desertion, and draft evasion would require cooperative effort by all arms of the government in the community. [111]

(C) The National Committee held two meetings in March 1968. The first meeting was concerned with short-term goals. The second meeting discussed the need for encouraging young men to report when ordered for military service. In Vietnamese practice, non-reporting did not lead to criminal prosecution as it did in the US; rather, the individual, when he was finally captured or when he turned himself in, was put in the military forces. In former days, this individual was penalized by being forced to serve for a longer period, a meaningless penalty because a situation of indeterminate service existed for all men.

(U) On 30 April 1968, COMUSMACV recommended that the GVN be urged to include the various paramilitary forces, such as RD cadre, NP, CIDG, PRU, APTSM, and CG cadre, in the national mobilization program. These forces shared a common characteristic of being armed, thus deserving the term "paramilitary". They also made a direct contribution to winning the war through their role in military operations or pacification. Blanketing them in under the general mobilization plan would greatly ease the problem of getting deferments for such personnel by permitting blanket deferment. COMUSMACV felt that another advantage of this procedure would be to permit the GVN to claim that it was putting about a million men under arms rather than the 800,000 now planned for RVNAF. Such a total would be quite impressive in showing how the GVN was increasing its share of the burden of the Vietnam War. [112]

(S) Under the mobilization criteria established by the GVN which had established a force goal of 779,154, the goal would fall approximately 59,000 short of the input necessary to meet this end of 1968 force goal. After a study of the problem by the MACV staff, COMUSMACV recommended that certain measures be presented to the GVN by AMB Bunker. The GVN could meet this manpower shortage by several steps, used singly or in combination, which included the recall of older reservists or those with more than five years prior service and a widening of the draft age brackers. [113]

(S) On 19 June 1968, a General Mobilization Law (#003.68) was promulgated. Succinct portions of the law are as follows: [114]

1. Personnel in the military service would serve for an indefinite period as long as a state of war in RVN existed.

2. All males between the ages of 16-50 were mobilized with those between 18-38 to serve in RVNAF and other age groups to serve in "The Peoples Self Defense Forces".

3. Provisions were provided for various categories of draft deferments.

(U) On 21 August 1968, the Ministry of Defense and War Veterans (MOD&WV) published a communique concerning the drafting of high school students, 18-21 years old, who failed to

pass the Baccalaureate Part I examination, who were not issued high school graduation certificates, or who did not meet the requirements for draft deferments in school year 1968-69. The call-up schedule for the above categories was as follows:

1. 1-30 Sep 68 - students born in 1947 and 1948.
2. 1-31 Oct 68 - students born between Jan and Jun 49.
3. 1-30 Nov 68 - students born between Jul and Dec 49.
4. 1-31 Dec 68 - students born between Jan and Jun 50.
5. 1-31 Jan 69 - students born between Jul and Dec 50.

(U) On 2 September 1968, the MOD&WV published a communique concerning induction of men born in 1930 and 1931. All male personnel born during that time, except for those permanently exempted for physical reasons and those deferred, were required to report for induction during the period 1-31 October 1968. Individuals failing to report were to be classified as "draft dodgers" and punished accordingly. On 30 October the Minister of Veterans Affairs issued a communique that the period to report was extended to 30 November. [115]

(U) On 5 November the MOD&WV puslished a letter which extended the previous deferments of youths 33 years of age and below, scheduled for call-up in November and December 1968, until January 1969 (50%) and March 1969 (50%). These new call-up dates applied to both government and non-government employees. Each ministry was responsible for preparing the lists of employees to be called-up in either January or March and forwarding each list of the Mobilization Directorate by 25 November 1968. [116]

(S) In late October, MACV learned that JGS was planning to halt general recruiting of Regular and RF forces because it appeared that the momentum of the current mobilization would permit RVNAF to achieve a total strength in excess of the 801,215 ceiling. In view of this, MACV recommended that the authorized strength be increased to 850,000 and requested JGS to defer any action on plans to suspend general recruiting until a decision had been reached regarding the increase. The new ceiling was approved on 5 November and MACV recommended that JGS authorize its respective commands to begin recruiting and training personnel to meet the increased ceiling. [117]

Desertion Control

(S) There was a 32 percent reduction in RVNAF desertions during 1967 as compared to 1966, and the rate of dersertions was 10.5 per thousand during 1967, as opposed to the 1966 rate of 16.2 per thousand. However, desertions continued to constitute one of the most critical problems facing RVNAF. To reduce the number of deserters during 1968, JGS took measures emphasizing the need for improvement of leadership, the day-to-day living environment of the RVNAF servicemen and their dependents, and the motivation and indoctrination of the citizen. [118]

(U) Base on past experience AWOL and desertion rates increased during the Tet season. In order to minimize the problem during Tet in 1968, JGS enjoined the cooperation of commanders

at all levels. The Central POLWAR Agency was tasked to publicize news reports on trials of deserters conducted by Military Field Courts by radio, TV, newspapers, and magazines. Particula attention was given to exemplary cases, severe sentences, and mobile court sessions. In addition, the Agency prepared special radio broadcasting and TV programs for servicemen on New Year's Day. The Agency also reminded the servicemen of organized meetings to inform them about preventive measures against AWOL and desertion. Annual leaves were to be granted on the occasion of New Year's Day to outstanding personnel who had a number of children, within the established five percent leave system.

(C) At the start of the Tet Offensive, a considerable number of soldiers were absent from their units. Although many personnel returned to their units as soon as practicable, desertions in February were much higher than normal. During March, GVN established a series of governmental committees at national and regional levels to study means to encourage enlistments and to discourage desertions. It was decided to establish only interim goals and to seek suggestions from the field prior to the initiation of a long-range program. [119]

(C) As a result of these studies, the following measures were taken in an effort to curb the growing desertion rate:

1. JGS/RVNAF again enforced Decree Law 15/66 which authorized the trial and punishment of deserters following the amnesty period which ended 15 March 1968.

2. The Director General for Finance and Audit authorized JGS $VN 200,000 per quarter during 1968 for a deserter apprehension program. This compared favorably with the $VN 80,000 received for the last quarters of 1967.

3. JGS/RVNAF published a memorandum to commanders comparing desertion data among units and directed that measures be taken to reduce desertions.

4. JGS/RVNAF established two teams headed by ACofS for Personnel and Chief, J5/JGS to conduct field trips to major units to determine what was causing the high rate of desertions. [120]

(S) Despite GVN and JGS efforts to curb desertions, the monthly counts continued to rise to a peak in July of 13,056 (a rate of 16.5 per thousand) which was the highest of any month since mid-1966.

(C) The data below, extracted from official records for 1968, represents actual reported desertions and deserters returned: [121]

MO.	REGULAR	REGIONAL	POPULAR	TOTAL
Jan	2,786	925	1,156	4,867
Feb	6,764	1,430	1,827	10,021
Mar	7,264	2,401	3,050	12,715
Apr	5,532	2,125	3,293	10,950
May	6,331	2,146	2,658	11,135

MO.	REGULAR	REGIONAL	POPULAR	TOTAL
Jun	6,631	2,832	1,937	11,400
Jul	7,100	3,347	2,609	13,056
Aug	7,567	3,536	1,778	12,881
Sep	7,750	3,916	1,672	13,338
Oct	8,935	4,354	1,771	15,060
Nov	7,474	4,031	1,439	12,944
Dec	7,090	2,937	1,278	11,303
TOTAL	81,224	33,978	24,468	139,670

MO.	DESERTERS RETURNED	NET DESERTION LOSS	RATE/1000
Jan	544	4,323	6.7
Feb	4,599	5,422	8.4
Mar	7,484	5,231	7.7
Apr	2,719	8,231	11.5
May	1,538	9,597	12.9
Jun	1,231	10,169	13.3
Jul	964	12,092	15.3
Aug	1,215	11,666	14.4
Sep	573	12,765	15.7
Oct	886	14,174	17.2
Nov	928	12,016	14.6
Dec	952	10,351	12.6
TOATL	23,633	116,037	12.8 Av

(S) On 29 August 1968, SECDEF also expressed his concern at the high RVNAF desertion rates. He felt that these high desertion rates seriously eroded the relatively good impression GVN was giving regarding the determination of the government and its citizens and could erode the ability of the GVN to assume a broader role in the war and improve the capabilities and performance of their own forces. A public disclosure of desertion figures would have had an important impact on the US public's belief in the will of GVN citizens to support their government.

(S) SECDEF recognized that the mobilization, amnesty, and resulting return to service of numerous desertion-prone individuals presented a severe challenge to GVN reduction of desertion rates. This prospect reinforced his view that extraordinary actions regarding desertions must be taken by the GVN if rates were to be reduced to a level which would not undermine GVN efforts to convince others of the dedication of its people to the cause of independence. SECDEF said that he had only a limited understanding of the problems involved in enforcing the Decree regarding desertion. From what he understood, it appeared that the problem cut across various GVN ministries, none of whom seemed to know how to handle the situation. He understood that the nature of the Decree resulted in desertions being a crime against the state with trial in other than the military system of justice, and that, partially as a result of this, penalties being levied had been less than the five-year maximum stipulated in the Decree. Moreover, he felt that the penalty stipulated was assignment to a labor gang attached to an ARVN combat unit, but that ARVN officers were reluctant to accept prisoners for these duties because of the burden of

supporting and guarding these men and perhaps because of the effect of their presence upon the morale of other soldiers. He further felt that the entire problem required attention at the highest levels of GVN if interdepartmental aspects were to be resolved. [122]

(U) Although RVNAF personnel strength goals were being attained readily through the mobilization efforts, it was doubtful that this level could be maintained indefinitely without a drastic reduction in desertions. This was a complex problem and the rapid expansion of the RVNAF forces during 1968 had offset some of the successes achieved in the past. However, with the need to maintain higher force levels and to reduce operating costs it was most urgent to face the problem headon. A high rate of desertions in any military unit is a prime indicator of serious basic problems relating to discipline, morale, and training. These same problems can undermine aggressiveness and combat effectiveness. These realizations prompted COMUSMACV to write to GEN Vien, CJGS, saying:

> This problem must be placed where it rightfully belongs, squarely on the shoulders of the commander. Commanders at all levels must be held responsible and given the authority to take the necessary steps to reduce desertions in their units. Commanders who cannot accomplish this goal, regardless of their other apparent capabilities, must be replaced. Equally, commanders who can maintain low rates of desertion and perform successfully in battle must be recognized appropriately by means of awards and promotions. [123]

(C) In addition, COMUSMACV brought the desertion problem to the attention of all US SAs in the field, directing that they make this a matter of utmost concern. For guidance, the following programs were to be stressed:

1. Increased efforts to educate the population to the need for service and the liabilities related to desertion.

2. Expansion of detection and apprehension activities.

3. Improvement in the timeliness of deserter trials and enforcement of appropriate punishments.

4. Continuation of efforts to improve the morale and welfare of the Servicemen and their dependents.

5. Emphasis on the role of the commander and the need for positive leadership.

(U) Deserter and Draft Dodger Apprehension Sections were enjoined to make a greater effort to increase joint patrols, check axes of communications, bus stations, sea ports, and airports so as to apprehend those who could not show legal identification papers. They were to notify parent units of the apprehension of individuals for pickup and application of disciplinary measures. NP Agencies, in cooperation with the Armed Forces, were to organize continuous police roundup operations to apprehend deserters and AWOL personnel. District, village, and Hamlet Administrative Agencies of Sectors or Subsectors were required to refuse servicemen who came to live in the areas and did not have leave, TDY, or on-economy living certificates. [124]

(C) On 27 September, JGS dispatched a directive establishing "quotas" or acceptable maximum rates of desertion for all commands. The directive stated that failure to meet these standards would result in punishment/relief of commanders. On 4 October, JGS and RVNAF directed an increase in the award of the Gallantry Cross, primarily for lower ranks in combat units to include RF and PF. On 5 October JGS and RVNAF issued a directive which increased the number of personnel authorized to be on leave from five percent to ten percent and granted graduation leave of ten days to those completing basic training. This graduation leave was over and above the 15 days leave authorized annually. Additionally, all Sectors, Special Sectors and Special Zones were directed to organize Guidance Sections to provide assistance to personnel on leave to include transient billets, messing, and transportation arrangements. On 8 October JGS and RVNAF directed commanders to place greater emphasis on indoctrination and motivation of Servicemen in training centers and at all levels of command down to the squad level.

(C) The RVNAF was also participating in the implemented NP records system. This system provided for the establishment of a central fingerprint file with a related system for providing information on all "wanted" personnel. The target date for completion of the fingerprinting of all RVNAF personnel was 31 January 1969. This program would assist in the identification and apprehension of deserters, especially those who desert to enlist in other units.

(C) At the JGS "Progress of the Anti-desertion Campaign" meeting on 3 December 1968, the subject of lack of sufficient transportation was discussed as a major factor related to the Regular Forces desertion problem. At that time, the ARVN soldier in isolated areas lost much of his leave time waiting for transportation, and commercial air transportation was costly for the average soldier. A special MACV committee met on 4 December to conduct preliminary planning to determine the feasibility of providing additional air transportation for ARVN personnel on leave. Status of this effort as of the end of the year was the researching of requirements in order to establish a test model in I CTZ. Additionally, effects on commercial carriers would be determined prior to any decision. The plan envisioned a 30-60 day testing period.

(C) The following two actions were considered to be of significance in the overall effort to gain full support of GVN in controlling desertions.

1. AMB Bunker discussed desertions with President Thieu in early December.

2. COMUSMACV and President Thieu met on 7 December and the urgency of the desertion problem was again discussed.

(C) A recommendation from CJGS and RVNAF to the Minister of National Defense highlighted the seven following areas in which they solicited the support of the civilian agencies to the government. These areas are summarized as follows:

1. Improve the administrative organizations at villages and hamlets and outline the responsibilities of officials at villages and hamlets and chief of the People's Self-Defense groups in checking the civilian population and in the apprehension of deserters.

2. Direct, as an additional responsibility for members of the People's Self-Defense Force, the responsibility to denounce deserters and draft dodgers living in their areas.

3. Direct government agencies and civilian authorities to be selective and restrictive in the issuance of civil status certificates and ID cards. Holders of falsified paper and the responsible issuing authorities would be prosecuted and severely punished.

4. Direct NP to give top priority to the issuance of new ID cards to all male employees of both government and civilian agencies (including NP) with the view to identifying and apprehending deserters and draft dodgers now working for these agencies.

5. Direct the NP to conduct continuous roundup operations in populated areas.

6. Approve request for the military forces to have full authority to check civilians and apprehend deserters and draft dodgers without the necessity of having NP present.

7. Authorize the use of all resources/agencies available to local authorities, both military and civilian, in screening and checking the civilian population during police operations.

(C) In a message to SECSTATE, COMUSMACV stated that the directives and measures in-being and proposed were adequate, but, to be effective, they had to be publicized and enforced at all levels. This had been a major problem in the past, but strong emphasis and renewed attention were being devoted to desertion control by MACV and JGS. COMUSMACV felt that the effects of all these measures in lowering desertion rates should begin to be apparent by the end of 1st quarter of 1969.[125]

Reorganization

(S) A combined study conducted during the fall of 1967 resulted in several significant organizational changes in RVNAF designed to achieve greater thrust in the pacification effort and improvement in the RF/PF. These changes, to be implemented progressively, were expected to have an impact to varying degrees on all levels of RVNAF. Significant changes at each level were as follows:

1. At JGS level - The establishment of the position of Vice Chief of JGS for RF/PF commander. The Vice Chief was specifically charged with the supervision of all matters pertaining to territorial security, with particular attention to the RF/PF.

2. At CTZ level - The establishment of the position of deputy commander for territory/RF/PF commander. These positions were to closely parallel that of the Vice Chief of JGS.

3. At DTA level - Retention of the DTA with a clarification of pacification responsibilities at DTA and province level once certain specified criteria were achieved. Most significantly, the province chief was directly responsible for RD campaigns and reported directly to the CTZ commander in RD matters, effective 1 January 1968.

4. At province/district level- The establishment of a combined position of province chief/sector commander with a military deputy to command the RF/PF. In a related study, a significant upgrade in command, control, and support for the RF/PF was initiated with the adoption of new TOEs for Sector/Subsector Headquarters and A&DSL companies. Additionally, a new organization, the RF/PF Group Headquarters, was developed as a span of control

headquarters between Sector/Subsector commanders and RF companies and PF platoons. With a strength of 19 personnel, this headquarters had the capability of controlling three to five RF companies a[illegible]cent PF platoons. Because of limited resources, implementation of these new TOEs wa[illegible]ed. The new TOEs were authorized in 22 priority provinces by the end of 1968 and the p[illegible]m was expected to completed during 1969. [126]

(C) During the months of January, the JGS published implementation instructions for the reorganization measures developed jointly by MACV and JGS. Included in the implementation plan were conditions required to be achieved prior to territorial security responsibilities being removed from the DTA. Those conditions, to which MACV agreed informally, were as follows:

1. Deputy Commanders for operations and territorial security must be assigned at the corps headquarters and their offices organized.

2. New RF TOEs must be implemented in priority provinces.

3. Regular units supporting RD must be under the OPCON of the sectors.

4. Sectors must have sufficient manpower to operate effectively under the direction of the corps headquarters.

5. The security situation must be such as to permit the removal of territorial responsibilities from the DTA. [127]

Post-Tet Status

(S) Much of the information received after the Tet Offensive regarding the actual status and combat capability of RVNAF was conflicting and confusing. Consequently, MACV requested a one-time report as of 29 February 1968 in order to accurately assess the status of RVNAF. From all reports the Tet Offensive had less serious effect on the RVNAF personnel situation than was initially anticipated. Most units reported that personnel actions as a result of the Tet Offensive had not seriously degraded their operational capability. There were some exceptions that are noted below. There were shortages of officers, NCOs, and specialists, but this condition existed prior to the Tet attacks. Some personnel remained absent from their units; however, a significant number of these were reporting back. Morale and esprit of the regular soldiers, sailors, and airmen was good and, in fact, seemed to be higher than before the Tet Offensive began.

(S) Mobilization measures established by the GVN to compensate for losses and to increas the force level showed promising results. For example, ARVN combat units reported a total of 8,421 casualties suffered during the period 31 January to 29 February 1968. During the same period, 14,021 replacements were provided. By 16 March, this figure had risen to over 19,000. This brought about problems in moving troops from the recruiting and induction centers to training centers and from there to their units. On occasion it was necessary to declare such movements as combat essential. The RVNAF personnel reporting system was not responsive enough to provide critical personnel data on a timely basis. JGS was encouraged to adopt daily personnel status reports similar to the one used by US forces. Due to incomplete reports, it was not possible to make a complete assessment of the impact of the Tet attacks on

the personnel situation in RF and PF units. Reports indicated that RF and PF units in the IV CTZ sustained heavy losses. Five provinces in the IV CTZ reported a severe degradation of capability. (For further discussion of post-Tet RF/PF status, see Chapter VI.)

(S) The overall performance of ARVN forces during the VC/NVA Tet Offensive was very good. Of the 149 ARVN maneuver battalions, advisors cited units representing 42 battalions as having performed exceptionally well while only eight battalions were listed as having performed poorly. The status of ARVN, highlighting the problem areas, was as follows:

1. Since blunting the enemy Tet Offensive, I Corps worked toward restoring the combat effectiveness of all units by effecting replacements and refitting those units which sustained losses, with the priority of effort going to the 1st ARVN Div and the 1st ARVN Rgr Gp. The training of replacement personnel was expedited. Replacing company grade officers and key NCOs required some time. The shortage of vehicular transport, barrier materials, and some items of ammunition continued to have an effect on the overall program. If replacements and equipment materialized as programmed, it was estimated that I Corps would regain their pre-Tet operational status by 1 April 1968, with the possible exception of the 1st ARVN Div.

2. Within II Corps, only the 11th and 23d ARVN Rgr Bns suffered losses during the reporting period which significantly reduced their combat capabilities.

3. In III Corps, two divisions and the CMD had battalions that were rated less than satisfactory in operational capability. Steps were taken to elevate their combat effectiveness. In the main, the factor most degrading unit combat effectiveness was present-for-operations strength. However, adequate replacements were programmed and many absentees who were on Tet leave returned to their units. There were some equipment shortages that affected their capabilities, especially in the 61st ARVN Arty Bn, CMD.

4. Within IV Corps, the corps troop units and the 7th ARVN Inf Div were rated combat effective. Though the 9th and 21st Inf Divs were also considered satisfactory in the overall assessment, there were some significant weaknesses. Ninth Division units were generally understrength, and two of its regiments were considered marginally effective for combat. The 21st ARVN Div remained capable of conducting combat operations, though not at the strength or level of effectiveness that existed prior to Tet. A period of four to six weeks was estimated to be required before the former strength levels could be achieved.

(S) Though still a potent strike force, the airborne division combat effectiveness was degraded significantly as a result of the loss of key officers and NCOs and general combat attrition. The overall present-for-operations strength of the division was inadequate (63.8% of the authorized strength). Approximately 35 percent of the enlisted men in the airborne battalions were replacements that were assigned during the VC/NVA Tet Offensive without unit training. JGS assigned the highest priority to rehabilitating the ARVN Abn Div.

(S) The overall Navy combat effectiveness was considered excellent. The enemy's attacks stimulated Naval units to assume a high degree of readiness. In the face of increased operational commitments, no deleterious effects on fleet readiness were noted. The Navy met and exceeded operational commitments placed on it.

(S) The VNMC Bde combat capability was considered highly effective. Though significant numbers of casualties were suffered, the personnel pipeline proved adequate to maintain combat capability.

(S) The overall effectiveness of VNAF was highly satisfactory. Personnel losses were minimal. Personnel present-for-duty at the onset of the Tet Offensive was low due to the liberal leave policy. However, the recovery rate of personnel was high, reaching the normal level within 72 hours of recall. Those available acted promptly and effectively to hinder the effect of the enemy attacks. The numbers of aircraft lost were: five A-1, four H-34, one C-47, four O-1, two U-17, and one C-119.

(S) Losses during the period 29 January-29 February 1968 had no significant effect on the mission performance of the Vietnamese Special Forces and the 91st ARVN Abn Rgr Bn. The primary impact of the Tet Offensive on the RVNAF training base was the temporary cessation of training for varying periods of time. On 11 February, the Central Training Command/Joint General Staff (CTC/JGS) directed that all training activities resume immediately unless prevented by tactical considerations. Of the 24 schools controlled or monitored by CTC, 17 had resumed training as of 29 February. This included the AFLS which was 75 percent destroyed. Four more schools resumed training after 29 February. The remaining three schools resumed training as soon as they received student input. Three of the ten division training centers (DTC) were training as of 29 February 1968. The remaining seven DTCs had resumed training by 18 March 1968. The remaining seven DTCs had resumed training by 18 March. ARVN/RF recruit training, formerly conducted only in CTC controlled training centers, was conducted in all DTCs as well. This change in mission was brought about by an increased demand for recruits in ARVN/RF. The training cycle was reduced from twelve to nine weeks. Eight of the 37 PF training centers were conducting training as of 29 February. Shortly thereafter, nine additional PFTCs resumed training for a total of 17. One TC (Long Dau) in I CTZ received severe damage and was abandoned.

(S) Airborne training was conducted in the airborne division Jump School. Recruit and airborne training had returned to normal as of 29 February. VNAF training was conducted in the Air Training Center, and normal training had resumed as of 29 February. VNMC training was conducted in the Marine Training Center and had resumed as of 29 February at approximately 50 percent effectiveness. The reduced effectiveness was the result of continuing security requirements. Shortly thereafter, training had returned to normal. CIDG training was conducted in five CIDG TCs, and training had resumed at all five training centers by 29 February. Modification to programs of instruction were made, and reprogramming was accomplished to insure a continuous flow of trained personnel. [128]

Morale Services

(U) An overall review to identify additional steps that might be taken to improve the morale of the RVNAF was conducted by the MACV staff in early 1968. This review concluded that the full impact of many measures taken during 1967 had not been realized. Such measures as the pay raise for the Regular Forces and RF and the impending PF pay raise, the rice allowance for PF dependents, development and expansion of the RVNAF Commissary System, and increased emphasis on an across-the-board improvement of RF/PF would have a great impact on RVNAF servicemen after effective implementation.

(U) It was considered premature to develop additional measures without assessing fully the effects of actions taken during 1967. There were already many on-going programs of which the commanders did not seem to be making maximum use. The addition of other programs would not solve the basic problem of getting the commanders to utilize effectively the resources available to them. It appeared that the greatest benefit could be realized from the proper implementation of measures already approved or proposed. Each leader in the RVNAF chain of command had to be made to recognize his responsibility to insure that his men received benefits due them, such as those cited above. Nothing raised the morale of a serviceman more dramatically than clear evidence that his commander was concerned about the welfare of his men and their dependents. It was recommended that the major program during 1968 be toward this end. Although RVNAF had many brave and dedicated leaders, there was always room for improvement, as was true in all armed forces. The beginning of 1968 was a propitious time for US and RVNAF officers and NCOs to resolve to improve themselves as leaders, with consideration for their men being foremost in their minds. The much sought after improvement in morale would follow. [129]

Promotions

(U) In order to increase the esprit of combat servicemen and give consolation and help to the families of war dead, JGS issued a memorandum of 5 February 1968 which prescribed the prerequisite, authority, and procedures for promotion in rank for Regular forces and RF/PF servicemen who had sacrificed their lives for their country. The military personnel to be promoted must have met one of the following conditions:

1. Bravely sacrificed their lives on the battlefield;

2. Died due to wounds received in action;

3. Been shelled, ambushed, assassinated, or killed by the enemy while performing duty in an enemy or friendly zone;

4. Killed themselves in order not to surrender to the enemy; or

5. Been killed while engaged in operations, except in cases where death was by mistake or carelessness of individuals.

(U) There was no limitation to the promotion quotas. The promoted servicemen were exempted from seniority in rank and age limitations. War dead servicemen meeting the required conditions were only promoted one rank except that RF and Regular force privates could be promoted to corporal and PF could be promoted from Assistant Squad Leader to Squad Leader and Squad Leaders and Assistant Platoon Leaders could be promoted to Platoon Leaders. Officers having functional rank after death in action automatically had their rank adjusted to permanent rank, and in the case of valorous deeds, the individual having functional rank would be adjusted to permanent rank and at the same time be promoted to a higher rank or awarded an appropriate medal. The promotion and award had to be proposed by the unit concerned so that the authorized officials could consider which one would be consistent with their achievements. The promotion date was figured from the date of death. The recommending officials were cautioned to be careful in the establishment of recommendations. The recommendations had to correspond with their achievements (avoiding prejudice and sentiment) and would be forwarded as expeditiously as possible so as to prevent loss of prestige to them and their family. The officials

who were given the authority to promote were required to consider carefully before issuing a promotion decision so as to maintain the value of the promoted rank. [130]

(U) On 17 February 1968, COMUSMACV sent a letter to CJGS commending him on the degree of selectivity exercised by RVNAF in selecting officers for annual promotions. He was in complete agreement with the policy of promoting an officer only when he had demonstrated the ability to serve in the higher grade. However, in the special promotion area there were two matters that appeared to merit further attention:

1. During 1967, there were only 146 Regular Forces and 11 RF officers promoted under the Special Battlefield Promotion criteria. However, COMUSMACV had in his travels encountered many officers occupying positions which called for a higher rank than they held and who appeared to be doing an outstanding job. Additionally, there was a serious shortage of officers in the grades above 1st Lieutenant. These facts led COMUSMACV to believe that possibly RVNAF was being too conservative or demanding in its Special Battlefield Promotion criteria. The recognition and promotion of these outstanding officers who had proven themselves on the field of battle would not only enhance their morale, prestige, and dedication to duty, but at the same time would serve as an incentive to other officers. When officers realized that excellence was being rewarded, there would be a marked improvement in their performance of duty.

2. Conversely, in 1967 there were 1,467 Regular Force and 56 RF officer promotions under the Special Non-Battlefield Promotions criteria. In comparing the results of Special Battlefield and Special Non-Battlefield Promotions during 1967, it was noted that the latter outnumbered the former 10 to 1. This indicated that possibly RVNAF might have been too lenient with these promotions. In view of the above, it was recommended that the criteria for Special Battlefield Promotions be reviewed to determine whether or not they were too demanding. Also, it appeared that the criteria for Speical Non-Battlefield Promotions should be reviewed to determine if they were too lenient. JGS was urged to recognize the outstanding performance of duty of many officers, NCOs, and EM during the Tet attacks by promoting to the next higher grade those whose exceptional contributions merited promotion. [131]

(U) On 19 February, JGS dispatched a message urging CTZ commanders to recognize Regular and Regional Forces servicemen who distinguished themselves by brave actions in the Tet counter-offensive against the VC and provided for the use of special battlefield promotion quotas for the second and third quarters of 1968, should the first quarter allocations not be sufficient. [132]

(U) On 19 August 1968, a formal briefing was presented by MACAG to the CofS, JGS and other selected JGS officers on the subject of the US Army Officer and NCO promotion system. At that briefing and in subsequent information provided to the DCSPER and J1/JGS, the following points were made concerning promotion policy changes required during periods of rapid expansion:

1. Promotion from 2LT to CPT in 2 years with promotion authority delegated to field unit/installation level.

2. Field grade promotions retained at DA level, but time-in-grade requirements reduced for temporary promotions.

3. Requirements for NCO time-in-grade for promotion reduced, and field boards were given authority to select for all but the top two grades.

4. Provision for filling corporal requirements by selection of outstanding basic trainees and sending them to special NCO training courses of 20-24 weeks duration.

GEN Phong was also briefed on US WWII promotion systems and the attendant problems of grade reduction and RIF programs which followed force reduction.

(U) As an apparent result of this briefing, JGS, in preparation for National Day (annual) promotions, issued a Memorandum (#12853) on August 1968 which prescribed:

1. Lowering time-in-grade requirement for promotion from 2LT to CPT.

2. Procedures for field promotion boards to consider and recommend officers to be promoted.

3. Provisions for promotion of officers who are over age limits but in good health.

4. Waiver of time-in-position requirement of six months when transfer to a new position was made because of service requirements. [133]

(U) On 19 October 1968, JGS issued a directive setting forth the procedures for the promotion of RVNAF personnel. The directive was a revised, consolidated RVNAF promotion policy which superceded all other conflicting policies. It applied equally to regular and reserve officers, except general officers, and to noncommissioned officers and enlisted men on active duty in both the Regular and Regional Forces. In accordance with this new directive, there were two types of grade and two types of promotion. [134]

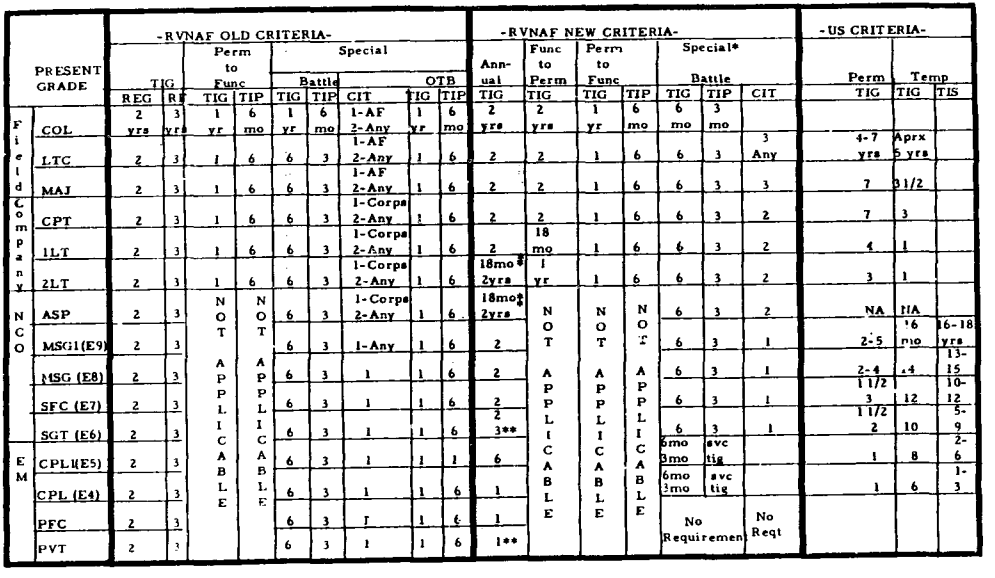
(U) The two types of grade were:

1. Permanent. This grade was official for pay, allowance, retirement, and for seniority. It could be granted either by annual or special promotions and could be compared to US permanent grade.

2. Functional. It could be granted on an unscheduled basis to officers who were serving in duty positions which were authorized higher grades by TO&E. Additionally, it could be granted as a special promotion to officers who had distinguished themselves through combat achievement or exceptional service. An officer serving in a functional grade was entitled to pay, allowances, and retirement in that grade, but his promotion list seniority was based on his permanent grade. An RVNAF officer who held a functional grade could not be promoted directly to the next higher permanent or functional grade without first being promoted (converted) to the permanent grade equivalent to the functional grade he held at that time.

(U) The two types of promotions prescribed were:

1. Annual. This promotion was granted on the basis of a selection list similar to the US system. Promotion boards for officers and NCOs met annually in the fall at JGS Headquarters to consider personnel who met time-in-grade criteria and had been recommended for



	PRESENT GRADE	-RVNAF OLD CRITERIA-									-RVNAF NEW CRITERIA-							-US CRITERIA-		
		TIG		Perm to Func		Special					Annual	Func to Perm	Perm to Func		Special*			Perm	Temp	
						Battle			OTB						Battle					
		REG	RF	TIG	TIP	TIG	TIP	CIT	TIG	TIP	TIG	TIG	TIG	TIP	TIG	TIP	CIT	TIG	TIG	TIS
Field	COL	2 yrs	3 yrs	1 yr	6 mo	1 yr	6 mo	1-AF 2-Any	1 yr	6 mo	2 yrs	2 yrs	1 yr	6 mo	6 mo	3 mo				
	LTC	2	3	1	6	6	3	1-AF 2-Any	1	6	2	2	1	6	6	3	3 Any	4-7 yrs	Aprx 6 yrs	
	MAJ	2	3	1	6	6	3	1-AF 2-Any	1	6	2	2	1	6	6	3	3	7	31/2	
Company	CPT	2	3	1	6	6	3	1-Corps 2-Any	1	6	2	2	1	6	6	3	2	7	3	
	1LT	2	3	1	6	6	3	1-Corps 2-Any	1	6	2	18 mo	1	6	6	3	2	4	1	
	2LT	2	3	1	6	6	3	1-Corps 2-Any	1	6	18mo* 2yrs	1 yr	1	6	6	3	2	3	1	
NCO	ASP	2	3	NOT APPLICABLE	NOT APPLICABLE	6	3	1-Corps 2-Any	1	6	18mo* 2yrs	NOT APPLICABLE	NOT APPLICABLE	NOT APPLICABLE	6	3	2	NA	NA	
	MSG1(E9)	2	3			6	3	1-Any	1	6	2				6	3	1	2-5	6 mo	16-18 yrs
	MSG (E8)	2	3			6	3	1	1	6	2				6	3	1	2-4	4	13-15
	SFC (E7)	2	3			6	3	1	1	6	2				6	3	1	1 1/2 3	12	10-12
	SGT (E6)	2	3			6	3	1	1	6	2 3**				6	3	1	1 1/2 2	10	5-9
EM	CPL(E5)	2	3			6	3	1	1	1	6				6mo 3mo	svc tig		1	8	2-6
	CPL (E4)	2	3			6	3	1	1	6	1				6mo 3mo	svc tig		1	6	1-3
	PFC	2	3			6	3	1	1	6	1				No Requirement		No Reqt			
	PVT	2	3			6	3	1	1	6	1**									

COMPARISON OF RVN/US PROMOTION CRITERIA

LEGEND:
REG - Regular Force
RF - Regional Force
TIG - Time in Grade
TIP - Time in Position
TIG - Time in Service
CIT - Citations
AF - Armed Forces Level
*SPECIAL OTB is considered under same criteria as FUNC
**Automatic Promotion

FIGURE IV-3

promotion. The boards published a promotion list indicating a priority of promotion for those selected, and they also published an elimination list indicating those personnel not selected (passed over). Promotion of those personnel selected to permanent grade were on the first day of each quarter according to the annual force level requirements.

2. Special. This promotion was granted on an unscheduled basis to those personnel who had consistently distinguished themselves on the battlefield or served meritoriously in non-combat positions. The promotion could be to a permanent or functional grade according to the services performed and the grade of the individual concerned at that time. (See Figure IV-3 which compares promotion criteria under the old and new RVNAF systems with the present US promotion criteria.)

(U) The following aspects of the JGS directive indicated acceleration and improvement in the RVNAF promotion system:[135]

1. Regular and RF personnel were considered under equal criteria for promotion.

2. Special battlefield promotion criteria had been modified to require citations from any command rather than from specified high levels prescribed in the old system and the citation requirement for EM had been eliminated.

3. Automatic promotion for Regular Force 2d Lieutenants to 1st Lieutenant could be made at 18 months rather than at two years depending on educational background. Functional promotion criteria also enabled a 2d Lieutenant to become a temporary captain in two years rather than the 3 1/2 years required previously.

4. Automatic promotions had been instituted for certain NCO and EM grades.

(C) The main improvements achieved in officer and NCO grade distributions came as a result of implementation in September 1968 of the RVNAF Three Year Plan for Officer and NCO Realization. This plan provided for a progressive system of officer and NCO promotions designed to realize 90 percent strength in all grades by the end of 1970. In order to insure that the goals for 1968 would be met, quotas were established for November and December special promotions, but RVNAF did not achieve their end of 1968 promotion goals. There was a shortfall in the planned National Day special promotions and a cancellation of all December special promotions. These were due mainly to administrative delays in field commanders submitting recommendations to JGS. (The commander's recommendation is a prerequisite for special promotion). However, JGS directed that the 1968 promotion shortfall of approximately 8,700 officers to be added to the annual promotion quotas for 1969.[136]

(C) At the end of the year, JGS was developing authorized officer and NCO strength requirements by grade, based upon the Phase II accelerated force level, and was revising, accordingly its 1969 annual and special promotion quotas. It anticipated completing these projects by 10 February 1969. JGS stated that it anticipated achieving fully its end of 1969 three-year realization plan goals.[137]

Awards and Decorations

(U) On 22 February 1968 JGS published a memorandum setting forth the procedures for awarding commendations to personnel who distinguished themselves by outstanding achievement

during the Tet Offensive. RVNAF and Allied military personnel of all grades, including Women of the Armed Forces Corps (WAFC), social workers, and civilian personnel were eligible for the awards if they rendered special service during the Tet Offensive period in fighting the enemy and participating in operations to wipe out and exterminate VC forces; providing combat support; assisting in logistical, staff, technical, civil actions, social welfare, and political warfare activities; maintaining of security in the respective agency or service; or giving blood. Also included were civil servants or civilian personnel who distinguished themselves by outstanding performance or effective cooperation with the armed forces, which brought about "brillant success while accomplishing the mission".

(U) Based upon the area of service and performance, individuals who distinguished themselves by outstanding achievement were to be awarded appropriately one of the following media:

1. Certificate of commendation.

2. Certificate of outstanding achievement.

3. A medal.

Persons within the qualified zone who were excluded from receiving further recognition were those who had been awarded a special promotion for their special service rendered during the Tet Offensive. They were not authorized to receive an award for the same service.

(U) The following represents the number of awards presented to ARVN and RF/PF personnel for 1968 by CTZs:

CTZ	ARVN	RF/PF
I	20,460	6,206
II	6,080	2,067
III	10,751	9,171
IV	17,408	7,747
TOTAL	54,699	25,191

(U) An analysis of this data was made by the Advisory Division, MACJ1, using such considerations as troop strength and number of combat operations with contacts for each CTZ. The basic conclusions drawn from the analysis were:

1. A disproportionate share of the awards were being granted to Regular Force units in comparison to the number awarded to Regional and Popular Force units. This situation existed to all CTZs except III CTZ where essentially an equality of awards existed.

2. There appeared to be a disparity among the four CTZs in award policies.

(U) Field advisors were instructed to continue to monitor unit award policies and encourage counterparts to grant awards on a timely basis to deserving individuals and units. It was pointed out that the judicious use of awards and decorations could be a significant morale factor and an effective deterrent to desertions. [138]

Pay and Allowances

(U) There were three categories of pay and allowances for the RVNAF: Regular, Regional, and Popular Forces. Within these forces, there were certain entitlement variations.

(U) Regular Forces and Regional Forces entitlements were basically the same. A typical example of monthly pay and allowances authorized for a MSGT and Major were as follows:

	MSGT (Echelon 6)	% of Total Pay	Major (Echelon 4)	% of Total Pay
Basic Pay	3,620$VN	47	9,884$VN	66
Allowances (Wife only)				
Family	350		350	
High Cost of Living (Zone II)	1,820		1,820	
Rice	400		400	
Total Allowances	2,570	33	2,570	17
Provisional Pay Increase	1,548	20	2,491	17
Total Pay and Allowance	7,738	100	14,945	100

NOTES:

1. Rates were as of 30 June 1968.

2. In this example, only one dependent is used. Additional dependents would increase the allowance entitlements.

3. The provisional pay increase of 1 June 1966 is shown separately because it was based upon gross entitlements which included basic pay, family allowances, and high cost of living allowances.

(U) Popular Forces received a flat rate of pay based upon their position. Nonrated soldiers received $VN 2,400 or $VN 2,500 monthly dependent upon the cost of living and where they resided. Rated personnel received from $VN 2,700 to $VN 3,500 based upon their rating. These forces also received a rice allowance of $VN 200 per member and each dependent.

(U) Regular and Regional Forces were given a basic pay raise on 1 January 1968. The average increase was $VN 380 per month. The objective of this raise was to place these personnel on par with other governmental agencies. This pay raise, when considering allowances authorized, placed them above their civil servant counterparts.

(U) Popular Forces were granted an increase in pay in June 1968 which was retroactive to 1 January 1968. Their pay was not on a par with other forces because their primary mission was to guard the hamlet in which they lived. Their service was voluntary, they were permitted to live at home, and normally they were not militarily deployed in defense of other geographical areas. [139]

Veterans Affairs

(S) It was a long standing RVNAF policy to carry physically impaired (PI) servicemen on the active rolls because of inadequate facilities for their physical and vocational rehabilitation; this caused a drawdown on unit present-for-operations (PFO) strength. The Cat Lai Project, established in May 1967, under the joint sponsorship of the Ministry of Defense (MOD) and the Ministry for Veterans Affairs (MVA) conducted vocational school training for physically impaired personnel prior to discharge from the service, thus preparing them more adequately for civilian life. This project had as its goal the yearly training of some 1,200 soldiers who, upon successful completion of their course, would be eligible to obtain gainful employment. In July 1967 the school officially opened with 138 students enrolled in eight courses (tailoring, supply, mechanical, carpentry, plumbing, masonry, typing, and electrical). In December 1967 the school graduated 95 of the original students. Placement of these graduates by the Veterans Affairs Placement Office proved to be unsatisfactory; however, through the efforts of Education Consultants, Ltd., many of the students were placed in civilian jobs. [140]

(U) In a letter to the Minister of National Defense (MND) on 4 January 1968, COMUSMACV reaffirmed his interest in the placement of physically impaired RVNAF soldiers upon discharge from the service. As was well realized by all concerned, a viable Veterans Program was an essential element of an effective RVNAF. In addition, a strong program was essential to the proper care and placement of physically impaired soldiers. To this end, MACV and MOD had been supporting the vocational training center at Cat Lai; however, this was only an initial step toward the solution of a very important and complex problem. MACV took under study the placement of the handicapped soldier by examining the overall labor market, the job placement system, the classification of personnel, and the job training for the unskilled. The results of the study were completed in mid-January, 1968. However, prior to the completion of the study, COMUSMACV requested that action be taken to simplify and shorten the security clearance procedures to which prospective veterans were subjected. This was a serious hindrance to employees and employers; shortening and simplifying this processing would help materially in expediting the job placement of certain veterans. In addition to the immediate problem of job placement, the long-range matter of industrial development was being taken under advisement. Solutions to this problem were contingent upon many factors, not the least of which was the development of a strong economy which in turn was dependent on peace being restored to the nation. Ultimate industrial development would depend on the maturing of private enterprise. Regardless of what the outcome of the study might have been, the major effort in making any recommendations workable would rest with the GVN. Only through strong governmental support to include financial assistance, material support, and aggressive management, could the Veterans and other related programs be expected to succeed. [141]

(U) On 16 Janaury 1968 at a conference held to discuss the revitalization of the GVN Veterans Program, COMUSMACV announced that MACV would assume the responsibility for advising and assisting the MVA in its Veterans Program. He further outlined four areas on

which the effort should be placed: hospitalization, classification, training, and job placement. He assigned the mission of implementing MACV's advisory effort to MACJ1, who formed a separate division, MACJ16, whose mission would be to advise the MVA in the carrying out of the objectives as outlined by COMUSMACV. [142]

(U) This special J1 division was established on 17 January 1968. It was deactivated on 31 July 1968 due to the assumption of its operational functions by the newly established Mobilization and War Veterans Advisory Branch (MADV) of the Advisory Division. [143]

(U) The MVA accepted the MACV offer to advise and assist in the revitalization of the Veterans Program. MACV undertook the advisorship with emphasis in the four areas previously established.

(U) Because of the importance of the undertaking and the limited resources available to the MVA, the assistance of the MND was solicited. In the area of hospitalization, aid was expected to be required in terms of providing additional hospital beds. Tied closely with hospitalization was a re-emphasis on the methods and execution of medical classification to insure precise and prompt catagorizing of the individual. When vocational training was prescribed, the accurate and rapid filing of occupational questionnaires and the issuance of a security clearance were imperative. In the cases of those personnel who desired to accept civil employment, assurance of an early release became essential. It was felt that by joining MND, MVA, and MACV cooperation in these areas, a program beneficial to the individual, the armed forces, and the nation would be assured.

(U) The matter of the development of private enterprises was discussed with personnel of the Industrial Developments Branch of USAID who were especially knowledgeable in this area. It was their opinion that industrial development planning should remain within the sphere of the Ministry of Economy, since its mission was to explore ventures of this nature. COMUSMACV agreed with this position. [144]

(C) During the first quarter of 1968, emphasis was centered on the identification of resources, determination of requirements, and unifications of effort on the part of all agencies affiliated with RVN Veterans Affairs. Plans and material for the conduct of a command survey of physically impaired soldiers were prepared and made available to the MOD and MVA. A combined committee comprised of representatives from the MOD, MVA, and MACV was organized to formulate plans and administer the overall program for RVNAF physically impaired soldiers.

(C) Approaching midyear, excellent progress was achieved in the RVN Veterans Affairs Program. The highlight of the period was a GVN reorganization which resulted in the merger of the MOD and MVA. MVA, losing its ministerial status, became an integral part of the MOD which was redesignated Ministry of Defense and War Veterans (MOD&WV). No changes in the administration and operation of the defunct ministry were anticipated. A command survey of the RVNAF PI soldiers was conducted by AG/JGS to determine the number of personnel involved and to establish a basis on which to organize the program. Results indicated a working figure of 8,000 including 700 who had completed medical classification and were awaiting instructions on vocational training and/or direct civil employment at AFVN Regional Administrative Units.

(C) The Cat Lai Vocational Training Center (CLVTC) started its second class of 191 students (186 PI soldiers and five veterans) on 1o May. The acquisition of new tools, added

equipment, and assignment of a full-time commandant contributed to the improved standards of the center.

(C) In the area of job placement, the establishment of working relationships and close liaison between the job placement section, MOD&WV, and US/RVN civilian and governmental enterprises opened the way for the employement of PI soldiers and veterans. During the second quarter of 1968, approximately 1,100 job referrals and placements were effect. The MOD&WV, in an effort to create added employment, studied the feasibility of establishing factories to produce operational rations, ammunition, and items of organizational equipment. Additionally, MOD&WV, working in conjunction with the MOE, planned to utilize approximately 1,000 PI soldiers as security guards to relieve RF/PF forces securing industrial complexes. PI soldiers involved would ultimately be discharged from the service and hired immediately by the industries concerned.

(C) In cooperation with the RVNAF Surgeon General a plan had been prepared to eliminate the shortcomings in the system for classification of PI soldiers. Provisions for 1,250 hospital beds had been incorporated in a joint construction plan which was being studied by representatives of the GVN and US. In addition, preliminary investigation was underway with a view toward establishing nursing homes for unemployed disabled veterans. [145]

(U) Approximately mid-1968 the MOD&WV placed in effect a four year program of action for RVN Veterans Affairs which outlined specifically the short-and-long range objectives for the years 1968 through 1971. The current veterans benefits provided were as follows:

1. Retirement pensions.
2. Preference in job placement and vocational training.
3. Bonus points (10 percent) in civil service examinations.
4. Free education for orphans at academic and technical schools of the National Wards Institute.
5. Scholarship program for wards of the nation (USAID sponsored).
6. Free hospitalization and medical care at GVN facilities.
7. Admission to Invalid Homes for severely disabled veterans.
8. Commissary privileges for disabled veterans, widows, and orphans.
9. Physical and vocational rehabilitation for disabled veterans.
10. Separate allowances for dependent children.
11. Death gratuity equal to 12 months pay.

(U) The MOD&WV made a concerted effort to improve and expand veterans programs, particularly in the area of disabled veterans. These actions, coupled with plans to systematize

and unify the various veterans laws into a "Veterans Code", could be considered the GVN's version of a "G. I. Bill". [146]

Rations

(S) The basic problem faced by the RVNAF serviceman in the garrison ration program was the increasing price of food items on the Vietnamese economy without compensating pay increases. Actions taken to partially alleviate the problem were:

1. On 1 June 1967 the GVN had granted a monthly supplemental ration allowance of 200 piasters to all military personnel and their dependents.

2. A US support program aimed at improving the diet of the RVNAF serviceman in units that were directly engaged in RD activities had been initiated in 1967. This program was designed to provide 50 percent of the soldier's daily protein requirements and involved the free issue of $3.56 million worth of canned meat and fish items in 1967. Approximately one-third of the ration supplement commodities had been received in-country and were being distributed to field depots at the end of 1967.

(S) During 1967, the GVN had established a requirement to provide free operational rations. With US support of up to $1.8 million in Military Assistance Service Funds (MASF) and a GVN dehydrated rice contract for 48 million piasters, operational rations were being issued to RVNAF units engaged in combat operations. The operational rations were issued to the CTZs by the DCSLOG/JGS and were stocked within each division with levels as determined by the CTZ commander. Normally, combat units had to engage in operations of over 48 hours to be eligible for the ration, but it could also be issued when food was not available on the open market.

(U) On 9 May 1968, the CofS, JGS, signed a memorandum simplifying the issue of the operational rations of RVNAF. Effective 1 May operational rations were stocked at Regiment and Sector levels to insure that rations would be readily available to support combat operations. In addition to the stocking of rations at a lower level of command, the requirement that rations be issued only for combat operations in excess of two successive days was changed so that operational rations could be issued when combat operations covered a period in excess of one day (24 hours) and were conducted in a remote area. [147]

(U) In order to improve further the diet of the serviceman, JGS and RVNAF in early 1967 had directed that units with 30 or more bachelors assigned would establish unit messes. On 5 July 1968, the first Mess Directive for the operation of RVNAF Unit Messes was signed by the CJGS. The directive promulgated mess staffing procedures, equipment allowances, sanitation standards, and other operating procedures. This directive provided the RVNAF with a realistic long-range program which prescribed operating principles and assigned command responsibility. [148]

Commissary

(S) Action had been taken by RVNAF and MACV during 1967 to develop a commissary system that would improve the diet of the RVNAF serviceman and his dependents. The US portion of the support to the commissary system was expected to be generated by funds from the sale of US contributed food items. This support program had been initiated with the requisitioning of

$16.4 million in US food items that began arriving in-country during September 1967. A secondary action in the support program included the requisitioning of approximately $25.6 million of US food items for receipt in-country during the period April through September 1968. US food items of a value of $5.7 million were received throughout the RVNAF commissary depot system for delivery to the retail outlets. Sales of US food items had begun in the retail stores on 20 September 1967 and exceeded the $1 million mark by the end of the year. At year's end, there were 134 outlets in operation serving troop and dependent concentrations throughout RVN and at the end of 1968, there were 190 outlets. The US food items were selling very well and the revenue generated was sufficient to cover the cost of overhead, construction of facilities, and the acquisition of labor saving devices. [149]

(U) Reports from advisors indicated that the US products introduced into the RVNAF Commissary System were reaching the soldier and his family and were providing the desired stimulus for further development and expansion of the commissary program, as well as having a favorable impact on troop morale. Of the $42 million program, a total of $41.5 million had been obligated by the end of January 1968 and the balance was expended by 30 June 1968. At that time, the USG financial commitment to the RVNAF Commissary system terminated. Food supplies totaling $25 million were requisitioned in December 1967 and were scheduled to begin arriving at Vietnamese ports in May 1968, with receipts completed by 31 December 1968. In this connection, COMUSMACV suggested to CJGS in January 1968 that planning for the acquisition of food items for commissary sale subsequent to the final receipt of US items be initiated immediately. Toward this end, the GVN provided the RVNAF Commissary with $43 million of foreign exchange credits to transact purchases of necessary food items from sources outside RVN for 1969. [150]

(U) Analysis of expected revenues and proposed expenditures furnished by the RVNAF Commissary Department in January 1968 indicated that proceeds accruing from the sale of US donated food items should be sufficient to perpetuate the commissary system and afford progressively increased quantities of foods being made available to the serviceman and his family. Anticipated total revenues amounted to approximately $25 million. Costs for establishing a modern warehouse and distribution complex and for defraying all other overhead expenses for one year would not exceed $12 million. The remaining balance of $13 million could be used as working capital for replenishing basic food inventories. Through the application of inventory turn-over principles, an initial monthly investment of $6 million would afford an annual $72 million inventory, a 70 percent increase over that furnished under the US support program. This increase in quantities of basic foods was expected to accommodate the increased number of personnel entering the military service.

(U) Of great concern to COMUSMACV was the possibility that taxation and duties would be levied on food items and equipment that the Commissary Department planned to procure. It had come to his attention that govenment charges had been assessed against warehouse kits which had been delivered from the US for construction of the commissary depot system. The imposition of such charges was in direct conflict with the US Support Program Agreement. If the GVN were to persist in its taxation policies, the inventories expected would be greatly attenuated. The Chief, RVNAF Commissary Department sent a letter to the Ministry of Finance requesting a refund of the taxes and charges imposed on the warehouse kits and requested exemption from any further taxation. The Chief, POLWAR Dept had also solicited the support of the CJGS to obtain tax exemption for the RVNAF Commissary. It was imperative that the Ministry of Finance respond favorably to these requests if the commissary system was to continue to provide benefits to the serviceman and his family. COMUSMACV strongly urged the

MOD to give his support for tax relief and to encourage the GVN to comply with the provisions of the US Support Program Agreement. COMUSMACV said that, should the Ministry of Finance not respond favorably to the requests, he would recommend to the USG that shipments of US donated food items be suspended until such time as there was resolution of the taxation problem and the inherent conflict with the tenents of the basic US/GVN agreement. On 19 August, the MOD decided that food items imported by the RVNAF Commissary would be free of taxes and charges except for the equilibration charge, i.e., payment of the official rate of $VN 118 per US dollar for payment of imported items. [151]

(C) The first shipment of non-US support items arrived in Saigon on 26 December 1968. This shipment marked the beginning of a new phase of RVNAF commissary development in that these items were purchased offshore utilizing funds obtained from RVNAF Commissary sale of US furnished goods. This was in keeping with the original plan for self-perpetuation and expansion of the RVNAF Commissary system utilizing proceeds from commissary sales. Procurement had been made for additional items from Singapore, Taiwan, and Australia and deliveries were scheduled for February through June 1969. [152]

Schools

(U) The RVNAF service schools were subject to a rapid expansion during 1968. The post-Tet expansion of RVNAF and the program for modernization and improvement of RVNAF impacted on the school system. The input increased to approximately 70,000 students, compared with a 1967 input of 53,000. [153]

Vietnamese Military Academy

(C) The Tet Offensive interrupted normal operations of the Vietnamese Miliatry Academy (VNMA). During the period 28 Janaury to 26 February 1968, the staff, faculty, and cadets were committed to security and tactical operations in the Dalat area. No damage was sustained by VNMA facilities or equipment, but the 1968 academic year was delayed one week and started on 4 May 1968. The Academy reorganized under a new expansion program TOE, completed modernization of one academic building, and received the necessary faculty increase for the 1968 academic year. The program of expansion to a four year degree-gaining curriculum continued on a schedule except for new construction which was two months behind schedule as of the end of the first quarter. JGS requested postponement of the 1968 800,000,000$VN construction program. A MACV position paper was forwarded to JGS recommending that the 1968 construction continue as programmed. [154]

(C) As of 30 June, the RVN Prime Minister had taken no action to release the funds (800,000,000$VN) to the Chief of Engineers, ARVN. Consequently, the 1968 construction was behind schedule by 46 days, though progress was made in expansion to the four year program. Progress was also achieved in converting VNMA's planning cycle from one to five years. The structure of the five-year plan was based on five programs: [155]

1. Cadets.
2. Curriculum.

3. Staff and faculty.

4. Equipment.

5. Physical plant.

(C) Other problem areas which received emphasis were:

1. Candidate recruiting.

2. Curriculum balance.

3. Physical training.

4. Faculty education.

5. VNMA organization.

6. Faculty pay scales.

7. Classroom and lab equipment.

8. Routine maintenance system.

(C) On 31 August, the Prime Minister released 300,000,000$VN to initiate construction of the academic building, Cadet Headquarters, and 50 sets of faculty quarters. Construction of the heavy laboratory, auditorium, gymnasium, BOQ, BEQ, and an additional 50 sets of quarters had to be delayed pending the release of the remaining funds (500,000,000$VN).[156]

(C) On 16 September the CofS, MACV, informed the CofS, JGS that the remaining 500,000,000$VN programmed for VNMA construction would be withdrawn by the US if it were not released in 1968. As of the end of the year, the National Assembly was still considering the 1969 budget which included the unexpended portion of the 1968 funds. The new freshman class of approximately 260 cadets reported for classes on 19 December. This marked the first time that all four classes were in session under the four-year curriculum.[157]

National Defense College

(U) The Chief, JGS approved the concept of the National Defense College (NDC) in April 1967. A "campus" was selected in Saigon and the College was formally established by National Decree on 22 August 1967. The Decree charged the College with studying, planning, and developing national defense policy and educating top officers and government civilians for functions of national security.

(U) The missions prescribed by the National Decree pointed to one clear objective: establish an operational college. At the same time, there were stimulating challenges related to that objective. Somehow, the College had to be created without undue impact on day-to-day tactical operations. Ironically, the fundamental needs of Vietnam for broadly educated officers of considerable potential also presented understandable tempatations to give the project less than top priority. The faculty and advisors--many of whom were busily engaged with the "shooting" war

or, in the case of American advisors, were not even in Vietnam in April 1967--were directed to open the academic building doors to the first class by February 1968.

(U) The College was under the direct command of the CJGS. The CTC of JGS was responsible for coordinating support and supervising instruction. The commandant was advised by a board of consultants composed of representatives of all Ministries in the governmental cabinet.[158]

(C) The college opened on 6 May 1968 after a two month delay caused by the February Tet Offensive. Almost all the building rehabilitation and construction of College facilities were completed prior to the opening. The only exception was the auditorium's simultaneous translation sound system which was not completed and operational until the third quarter of 1968. The staff and faculty of the school numbered 109 out of an authorized 111 at the end of the year. The first NDC class consisted of 21 carefully selected members: 15 military officers (O-5 and O-6) and six civilians who were career government employees. The mission of the NDC was to study, plan, and develop national defense policy. The first class was scheduled to graduate in April 1969.[159]

Command and Staff College

(C) Preparation and organization for the five programmed 1968 classes for the Command and Staff College (CSC) was interrupted by the Tet Offensive, but no damage was sustained to either the facilities or the equipment. By the end of June, the operation of the college and the student input was back to normal. The guest lecture program, which was a 1968 improvement goal, was extremely successful, and the library was expanded by the acquisition of 1,300 books and 57 periodical subscriptions. Graduates of the five programmed classes numbered 208 for the year. In late August, C&SC was directed to prepare for a doubling of class input in 1969. The end result was a programmed 1969 input of 850.[160]

RVNAF Language School

(U) The RVNAF Language School (RVNAFLS) suffered over 70 percent destruction during the 1968 Tet Offensive. Due to the extensive damage it was planned to relocate the school. However, in March, the mission of conducting the English language training required to support the VNAF expansion program was assigned to the RVNAFLS. Ten prefabricated metal buildings were erected at the JGS location to serve as classrooms, and action was initiated to obtain additional facilities for the School. In August a government owned building in Cholon was allocated as an annex for the RVNAFLS. Necessary rehabilitation of this building began in September and 52 classrooms were made available by 4 November when classes for VNAF students began. In December MACT obtained Koelper Compound in Saigon for use by the RVNAFLS. This facility provided the additional space required to increase the School's one time capacity to 5,000 students. The increase from its original capacity of 1,000 students was necessitated by the English language training requirements of the RVNAF Improvement and Modernization Program.

Infantry School

(U) The Infantry School began the year with a capacity of 3,800 students. Its training program included the Officer Candidate, Special Officer Candidate, Company Commander, Regional Force Officer Refresher, and Methods of Instruction courses. Following the enemy offensive in January and February, all courses other than the two for officer candidates were cancelled.

In June, a radical change occurred in the school's training program. To meet increased officer requirements, the capacity was increased to approximately 6,000 students. The officer candidate program of instruction was decreased from 37 weeks to 24 weeks. The first phase of the new program consisted of 9 weeks of officer preparatory basic and advanced individual training at Quang Trung Training Center. The remaining 15 weeks of officer candidate training were conducted at the Infantry School. During the year more than 11,200 students began officer candidate training. Additionally, more than 1,100 personnel selected from the ranks attended the Special Officer Candidate Course.

National NCO Academy

(U) The NCO Academy began the year with a capacity of 2,750 students. Its training program included the Reserve NCO and B1 Infantryman courses. Both courses were 16 weeks in duration. The initial programmed input for the school was 7,100 students. Following the enemy offensive in early 1968, the B1 Infantryman Course for senior NCOs was cancelled and special Reserve NCO Course for personnel from the ranks was added. To meet the increased NCO requirements, input to the Reserve NCO Course was increased, and the training period was reduced to 9 weeks, and the capacity of the school was increased to more than 5,000. The school was also tasked to conduct the 15 week Reserve Officer Candidate program of instruction to help meet officer requirements. During the year the actual input to the NCO Academy was more than 14,800 including 1,700 officer candidates. [161]

Training Centers

Expansion to Meet 1968 Training Requirements

(C) Enactment of the GVN Mobilization Decree and the acceleration of force structure increases during 1968 placed extraordinary demands on the ARVN training base. Early in February, it became necessary to reduce the length of recruit training from 12 to 9 weeks to permit the training of increased numbers of volunteers following the Tet Offensive. Division Training Centers and the Hoa Cam Popular Force Training Center (PFTC) were required to augment the CTC-controlled training centers in handling the increased training load. On 1 April, the capacity of the CTC controlled training centers was raised from 40,140 to 48,700. Additionally, the 10 Division Training Centers and Hoa Cam PFTC were expanded from a total capacity of 8,500 to an emergency capacity level of 19,000. This expansion was found to be adequate to fulfill RVNAF's 1968 training requirements. The more significant requirements that were met included the training of 168,335 ARVN and RF recruits, 19,174 OCS preparatory course students, 22,483 PF recruits, 13 new infantry battalions, 13 old infantry battalions, 176 new RF companies, 89 old RF companies, 44 new RF heavy weapons platoons, 588 new PF platoons and 656 old PF platoons.

Consolidation of Popular Force Training Centers

(U) To develop better training facilities for the Popular Forces and to achieve standardization and improvement in their training, the decision was made to reduce the number of Popular Force Training Centers from 37 to 19, 12 of these to be developed as Inter-provincial Popular Force Training Centers under the control of the CTC. II Corps retained control of seven

Highland Popular Force Training Centers, each having a capacity of 300 men. The CTC assumed control over the Inter-provincial Popular Force Training Centers in August and implementation of plans to improve the training capabilities of these centers continued throughout 1968. By year's end, standardized training had been achieved and much of the planned construction had been completed.

Combat in Cities Training

(U) The extensive fighting that took place in urban areas during the Communist Tet Offensive revealed a need to provide the ARVN with additional training for this type of combat. Such training was not included in any program then being conducted. In April, the CTC published a training directive entitled Technique of Combat in Cities. This subject was added to the tactical training portion of all individual and unit training programs.

Australian Army Training Assistance

(U) During June the Australian Army Training Team, Vietnam (AATTV) began sponsoring a long Range Patrol Reconnaissance Course at Van Kiep NTC for ARVN infantry division personnel from III and IV CTZs. Initially programmed to receive 40 students for each class, the program was expanded in December to receive 80 students for each class. Having planned originally to conduct this course only through June 1969, AATTV consented to an ARVN request to continue the program indefinitely. In addition, AATTV agreed to assist ARVN in establishing a five week LRRP course at Van Kiep NTC for regimental LRRP platoons.

Weapons Training

(C) Preparation for new weapons training began early in 1968. In anticipation of the issue of M16 rifles, M72 Light Antitank Weapons (LAW), M60 machineguns, and 106mm recoilless rifles, the CTC prepared the necessary training literature for these weapons. Plans were made to implement the new programs of instruction at training centers as new weapons were made available. Significant were the preparations made for training ARVN forces with the M16 rifles. Early in the year, a token issue of weapons was made for the purpose of cadre training. Of 16,909 M16 rifles authorized for issue to the CTC-controlled training centers, 7,150 had been issued by the end of September. M16 training began at the training centers as sufficient weapons became available.

(U) Added to the ARVN marksmanship program early in 1968 was "Quick Kill", a training technique designed to improve the soldiers' skill in combat marksmanship. Quick Kill was introduced as part of the program of instruction for the M16 rifle. A program for preparing instructors to apply these training techniques was accomplished, and training literature and Quick Kill equipment were made available to the Training Center. [162]

Army of the Republic of Vietnam

(S) The Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) had an assigned strength as of 1 January 1968 of 324,637 consisting of 10 infantry divisions, two separate regiments, an airborne division, an armor command, a Ranger command, a special forces group, and supporting elements.

(C) The ARVN force structure was built around the 10 infantry divisions, each one having three organic regiments. The regiments had four infantry battalions of three rifle companies

each, but this structure was incomplete at the beginning of the year. FY68 plans included an effort to develop the necessary combat and service support elements, but the operational situation initially required that the maximum number of personnel available be assigned to ground combat forces. The other services and the supporting elements of ARVN were developed at a slower rate. There were 154 maneuver battalions in January. [163]

(C) On 28 January 1968, COMUSMACV authorized the activation of a new armored cavalry regiment and five rifle companies. These units were to replace those which were diverted to reinforce the 2d Regt, 1st ARVN Div on the DMZ. Reprogramming within the FY68 RVNAF force ceiling was necessary to provide the spaces for these new units. A recommendation was made that 575 unallocated RF spaces and the spaces from 26 unallocated PF platoons be used to meet this requirement. After minor modifications, this action was forwarded to MACJ3 for approval and transmittal to COMUSMACV on 1 March 1968. The Mission Council approval of the reprogramming action was obtained on 4 March and COMUSMACV released the spaces to JGS by letter on 9 March. [164]

(S) On 27 October 1967, COMUSMACV approved a concept to expand the ARVN Airborne to create an elite division. The expansion concept included the addition of a ninth battalion and the round-out of combat and combat service support units to the extent that the division would have an organic capability to support the airborne combat units in sustained operations. The concept of employment of the division envisioned unilateral or combined operations of division or task force sized units. For sustained operations, the concept envisioned employment of the division with two task force elements. Units not on operational missions were to be assigned security missions at their home base as an RVNAF general reserve. The authorized size of the division after expansion was 9,785 personnel. To support the expansion, 26 additional US Advisors were required, with the majority intended for the combat battalions. [165]

(C) On 1 March JCS approved the equipment and dollar costs necessary for the expansion and DA established 30 June as the RDD for the equipment. On 5 March 1968, COMUSMACV suggested to JGS that the Task Force Headquarters be institutionalized as a Brigade Headquarters. Since it was virtually impossible for a division commander to exercise the proper control over all maneuver and support elements of a division, it became necessary to have a brigade echelon with adequate authority to supervise the battalions in their routine day-to-day activities, as well as during combat operations. To assure the development of optimum combat efficiency, specific battalions should be assigned to each brigade and the brigade commander given command responsibility for all phases of their activities. COMUSMACV recommended that the provision of logistical and administrative support direct from division to battalion be continued as this procedure facilitated the temporary attachment of battalions to other brigades when necessary. Plans were developed in coordination with the JGS to insure accomplishment. [166]

(S) The 11th ARVN Abn Bn completed training at Van Kiep NTC on 30 March 1968 and returned to Saigon as an operational battalion. This completed the FY68 expansion of the Airborne Division. [167]

(C) The 62d ARVN Arty Bn was activated on 1 January 1968 and began its training on 15 March, concluding with a battalion test on 18 May 1968. The training was supervised by I Corps Arty, and the battalion became operational on 4 June. Battalion Headquarters of the 62d ARVN Arty Bn was located at Phu Bai and the firing batteries were deployed near the DMZ where they had the mission of supporting the 1st ARVN Div units. The addition of the 62d Arty Bn brought to 28 the number of ARVN artillery battalions excluding the Marine and Airborne artillery.

(C) Although specific units included in the FY69 force structure increase had not been approved, the ARVN Artillery Command requested and received permission from JGS to assemble personnel and minimum equipment to form the three artillery battalions planned for the 1st quarter FY69. These battalions were given the following designations:

1. 30th Arty (ARVN), a 155mm towed Howitzer Bn, to be assigned to I Corps Artillery and trained in Da Nang.

2. 31st Arty (ARVN), a 155mm towed Howitzer Bn to be assigned to IV CTZ and trained at My Tho.

3. 63d Arty (ARVN), a 105mm towed Howitzer Bn, to be trained in Qui Nhon in II CTZ.

On 30 May, the ARVN Artillery Command requested that these new units be issued howitzers from the maintenance float for the purpose of training. This request was approved by JGS and two 155mm howitzers were given to the 31st Bn. Two 155mm howitzers and four 105mm howitzers were set aside for the other two battalions. [168]

(C) In late January 1968, COMUSMACV queried all the CTZ SAs as to the ARVN units that might be improperly employed. Responses identified 21 battalions not properly employed, of which 17 were under province OPCON and 15 of the 17 were assigned RD support missions. The principal reasons for improper employment of battalions under province OPCON were: position defense of installations, restrictive TAORs, and assignment to low priority or minimum threat areas. By 15 March, it was realized that changes in the tactical situation might have eliminated some problems in ARVN force employment. Also, advisor influence at various ARVN command levels might likewise have succeeded in effecting desired changes. However, on that date, COMUSMACV informed all SAs that it was mandatory, in view of the recent increases in enemy activity and the threat of a renewal of widespread offensive action, that all ARVN battalions be employed to the maximum extent of their tactical capabilities. Continued advisory effort to identify improperly employed units and to influence counterpart commanders to take prompt corrective action was essential. In cases where commanders were reluctant or unwilling to remedy a bad situation, the SAs were told to notify MACV. Based on the information submitted, MACV planned to take appropriate action at higher command or staff level. In regards to the malutilization of the units discussed previously, CJGS had been informed of the units and the reasons therefore. [169]

(C) On 11 February 1968, COMUSMACV requested an analysis of the impact on ARVN forces as a result of the M-16 issue. In 1965, based on available information and field tests, COMUSMACV had requested that all US, RVNAF, and other FWMAF involved in operations in RVN be armed with the M-16 rifle. By May 1967, all US combat maneuver forces, the ROK divisions, the ROK Marines, the PHILCAGV, the RTAVR, the VNMC, and the Vietnamese Airborne units were equipped with the M-16. There was an outstanding requirement to replace the M-1s, the carbines, the BARs, and the submachine guns with the M-16 in the ARVN combat maneuver units. Early in FY68, M-16 rifles were made available to the ARVN as a result of a worldwide reallocation of these weapons by SECDEF. The primary objective, therefore, was to receive, collate, and analyze the responses of a sample of ARVN airborne, ranger, and infantry soldiers. The criteria were that they had used the M-16 in combat and had a basis of comparison between the M-16 and a previous weapon (M-1, M-2 carbine, BAR, caliber .45 submachine gun).

(C) Previous US studies relating to the M-16 weapon employment by ARVN forces predicted favorable results. The resultant advantages to be gained were size and weight, rate of fire, ballistic characteristics, unit firepower index, sustainability, logistical considerations, and morale and psychological effects. The intent of the evaluation was to see if there had been an impact and to determine, through simple analytical means, the degree of the impact.

(C) It was concluded from the report, as supported by the logic of previous studies, that the impact of arming the ARVN combat maneuver battalions with the M-16 had resulted in a significant improvement in operational capability, a significant boost in morale and esprit de corps, and had increased the reliability while improving the maintainability of the soldier's individual weapon. Within the limitations of the scope of this study tne statistical results showed:

1. The operational capability had increased approximately 69 percent.

2. Morale and esprit had increased by approximately 61 percent.

3. Overall maintenance and reliability of the M-16 showed a 51 percent improvement over the previous mix of weapons. 170

(C) In August, COMUSMACV asked that a study be conducted to compare the performance of ARVN between the Tet Offensive and the later two series of attacks, May and August. CG, III MAF, indicated that both effectiveness and leadership rose from Tet through May. A regression was indicated during August and this warranted explanation. Intensified combat during the last part of the second quarter may have resulted in a slight "halo effect" in the assessments of the advisors. The SA, I CTZ was aware of this. Also, the 1st ARVN Div advisors had changed since May, as had over half the current battalion advisors reporting on the 18-31 August period. Of the August period, the SA, I CTZ noted the increased concentration of enemy forces in the 12th DTA, resulting in larger and more numerous contacts for the 2d ARVN Div. Also, the 51st ARVN Regt faced a greater threat in the Da Nang area. In general, the SA reported that ARVN forces in the I CTZ area improved their performance over that realized in the Tet and May Offensives. The CG, I CTZ was making preparation for the anticipated third offensive and his forces were at a higher state of readiness than they were for the two previous offensives. ARVN forces had gained self-confidence through their victories in previous months, and showed encouraging signs of aggressiveness in the conduct of their operations. Coordination and liaison with US units had improved and the ability of ARVN to supplement their own fire support with US fire support added to their confidence. ARVN was still limited in attaining uniformly high standards of performance by an insufficient number of good junior leaders. There remained a rigidity in the chain of command which prevented flexibility in organization and the delegation of authority. ARVN had not overcome its reluctance to exploit contacts by rapid reinforcement of its units in contact. Operational and logistical palnning also showed little improvement.

(C) In II CTZ, the advisors indicated continued improvement in effectiveness and leadership. CG, I FFORCEV commented on the marked improvement in ARVN unit effectiveness in August. He highlighted battalion accomplishments in increased aggressiveness and in attacks on well entrenched enemy nortn of Pleiku City. At the same time, he pointed to some failures to aggressively pursue the enemy with fire and maneuver, the adverse effect on the 41st ARVN Regt of employment in the "support for RD" role, and the continuing leadership problems in the

44th ARVN Inf Regt, particularly at the battalion commander level. The improvements noted were attributed to:

1. Issue of M-16 rifles and M-60 machine guns.

2. Increasing ARVN confidence in their ability to defeat the enemy forces.

3. Improvement in the employment of artillery, gunships, and tactical air strikes and in more aggressive employment of troops in contact.

(C) Comments on III CTZ can best be discussed by commenting on each of the three divisions separately. The SA of the 5th ARVN Inf Div reported that this division began to mature with the beginning of the Tet Offensive and had continued to improve through August. He commented on the increasingly aggressive offensive operations to seek out and destroy the enemy. While still not as effective as desirable, the division was improving in maintaining contact and exploiting fire.

(C) With respect to the 18th ARVN Div, the Vietnamese III CTZ Commander had directed a study by his staff to improve the division's effectiveness and asked the assistance of the Corps Deputy SA. The Division SA cited some deficiencies which continued to exist through August; security, weak junior leadership, inadequate intelligence collection, poor use of Vietnamese artillery support, and needed improvement in fire and maneuver.

(C) The SA of the 25th ARVN Div considered that his division's overall effectiveness in August, as compared to the two previous periods, was much improved in terms of planning, execution, and support of operations. He attributed much of this increased effectiveness to the division commander, through good leadership, hard work, and the application of excellent overall military knowledge. Of particular interest was the mention by battalion advisors of increased aggressiveness attributed to the receipt of the M-16 rifle and the M-60 machine gun. Overall, the increased effectiveness of the 5th and 25th ARVN Divs did not compensate for the relatively ineffective 18th ARVN Div.

(C) In the IV CTZ, the SA reported that, in comparison to Tet and the May Offensive, ARVN performance in August was considered superior. A key reason was intelligence, which predicted a period of increased enemy activity, thus allowing maneuver and support forces to make necessary preparations. In this connection, ground follow-up of ARC LIGHT strikes by IV CTZ units showed that the selected targets were valid. Also, unit leadership had improved, particularly in the utilization of combat support. New leaders were reported to have taken command after Tet, displaying a new aggressiveness. The Advisor/Commander relationships were smooth, with ARVN commanders making more timely decisions.

(C) In conclusion, one could deduce logically from the data available that ARVN performance had improved from Tet, despite the temporary decline in May, through August. Attrition of the enemy improved, as did the rate of captured to lost weapons. There were continuing problem areas in junior leaders and inflexibility in logistic and operational planning. Notwithstanding, improvements were apparent in senior leaders, employment of combat support, and aggressiveness. Advisors confirmed this improved performance. With much of this data derived from advisors' comments, it should be borne in mind that comparisions of performance between periods of time, in this case, Tet, May, and August, were based on different advisors' assessments of the same units. However, one can conclude logically that ARVN performed better during the period 18-31 August then during the periods of Tet and May. [171]

(C) On 20 November, in response to a CofS, JGS requirement, an analysis of the effectiveness of ARVN armored cavalry units by CTZ was conducted. The analysis found that large unit-long duration operations were most effective in inflicting casualties on the enemy, armored units were well suited for offensive operations because of their mobility and firepower, and III CTZ units were assessed lowest in combat effectiveness and leadership during the third Quarter of 1968 and were below ARVN averages in results achieved. The study was forwarded to the CofS, JGS in accordance with his request. [172]

(S) In the MACV Phase I plan of the revised May submission to JCS, ARVN retained its current 10 division structure. ARVN forces were allocated to provide additional combat support units in the divisions, armored cavalry squadrons, and separate infantry and artillery units. The additions to combat and combat support elements in the plan completed the 10 infantry division structure, with each division consisting of three regiments of four battalions each and division artillery of three 105mm howitzer battalions. In FY69, a direct support logistical battalion will unite the current technical service logistical units within each division. Corps artillery consisted of one 155mm howitzer battalion for each division in the corps and a 105mm howitzer battalion to support each separate regiment. In addition, a 105mm howitzer battalion was provided for the CMD and another for the 44th STZ. Ten armored cavalry squadrons were planned for operations under OPCON of infantry divisions when required, and seven others were provided at corps level. Major FY69 unit activations were generally on schedule. A shortage in certain items of critical equipment continued until the end of 1968, but did not impede scheduled activations. [173]

(S) During the year, the ARVN personnel authorization increased from 359,897 to 374,132 as a result of approval of the Phase II accelerated Improvement and Modernization Plan on 20 December 1968. (For a more complete discussion, refer to "Improvement and Modernization" section of this chapter.) In accordance with this plan, the following units were scheduled to be activated in the quarter shown:

ARVN Units	Activation Qtr/FY
1 Abn Arty Bn, 105 How:	3/69
3 Arty Bn, 105 How:	(3) 3/69
4 Arty Bn, 155 How:	(2) 3/69 & (2) 1/70
2 Armd Cav Sqdn:	(2) 4/69
2 Engr Bn, Const:	(2) 3/69
1 Engr Co, Dump Trk:	3/69
1 Engr Co, Hvy Equip:	3/69
1 Engr Gp HQ, Const:	3/69
3 Trans Co, Lt Trk:	3/69, 4/69 & 1/70

ARVN Units	Activation Qtr/FY
1 Trans Co, Med Boat:	4/69
1 Trans Co, Hvy Boat:	4/69
1 Flt Craft Maint Depot Co:	4/69
4 Term Svc Bn, HQ:	(2) 3/69 & (2) 4/69
1 Long Lines Sig Bn:	3/69
5 Tugboat Teams:	(5) 1/70

(S) RVNAF schools, training facilities, and existing units were to be utilized to the maximum to train accelerated units in the employment, operation, and maintenance of equipment which would be transferred to ARVN units by the USG. Training by US personnel was to be made available when the RVNAF skill base was insufficient to provide requisite training. This was particularly important when there was a shortfall of programmed advisors for newly activiated units. Generally, unit training and associated transfer of equipment was conducted in three phases: activation and organization (ARVN personnel were to collocate with the US units, when necessary, and minimum equipment necessary to start training was transferred); individual and section training (depending on type unit, this could be separate ARVN unit training or OJT with US unit; equipment was transferred as required for expansion of training); unit training and testing (remainder of equipment transferred). Duration of each phase was contingent upon type of unit and length of training cycle. In the case of hard skill technical training (i.e., ICS repairman), long-term and concentrated training would be necessary. The training of boat crews for the boat companies and tugboat teams would be accomplished by OJT with US crews. The equipment was not to be turned over until ARVN crews were fully capable of operating and maintaining it. While a concept had been developed for equipment transfer procedures, details would have to be coordinated with JGS and USARV prior to proposed transfers of equipment. [174]

(C) On 31 December, the strength of ARVN was 387,250, an increase of 62,613 during the year. There were also 164 maneuver battalions as of 31 October, an increase of 10 over the beginning of the year. [175]

ARVN Interpreter Program

(U) On 30 September 1967, MACV had published a directive establishing the Foreign Nationals ARVN Interpreter Program. This directive was highly complimented on its completeness and detailed coverage of the program. Highlights of the directive are as follows:

1. Recruiting: Names of civilians and in-service applicants would be forwarded to the Corps G1 Advisor in order that testing and processing could be effected at the Corps Recruitment and Induction Center.

2. Assignments: An assignment priority list submitted by major user units specifies the relative priority of subordinate elements for assignment of interpreters. Assignment of interpreters would be made according to priorities reflected in this list.

3. Processing: Newly assigned interpreters would be processed through the appropriate Corps headquarters (AG and HQ Co) prior to movement to user units. Processing would include necessary administration, issuance of field equipment and weapon, plus security processing.

4. Reassignment: All interpreter requests for transfer would be processed through ARVN AG channels. Each request would be indorsed by the SA or US/FWMA element recommending approval or disapproval. Normally, ARVN interpreters were required to remain assigned to a unit for one year before requesting reassignment.

5. Security Clearances: Action to obtain a complete background investigation was initiated for all interpreters upon enlistment in the program. Upon receipt of newly assigned interpreters, user units would confirm through ARVN channels that the interpreter had a favorably completed background investigation and a security clearance was granted before permitting access to classified information.

6. Awards and Decorations: US/FWMAF unit commanders and MACV advisors insured that valorous or meritorious acts of interpreters were recognized. Recommendations for US/FWMAF medals for valor were submitted through appropriate US channels. Recommendations for RVNAF awards for valor or meritorious service were submitted through the RVNAF unit commander or liaison team chief. US/FWMAF or RVNAF awards could be awarded posthumously.

7. Leaves and Passes: Advisors and US/FWMAF units made only recommendations concerning interpreters' leaves and passes. The RVNAF unit commanders or liaison team chiefs provided the necessary leave or pass documentation. US/FWMAF documents were not recognized by RVNAF authorities and could result in the apprehension of an interpreter as a deserter.

8. Casualty Reporting: US/FWMAF units and advisors would report interpreter casualties promptly through RVNAF and US channels. [176]

(U) Periodically, requests were received from advisors requesting the assignment of an interpreter from the Armed Forces Language School (AFLS). In June, assignment policy guidance was provided to rectify the situation. Requests for assignments of interpreters by name from the AFLS would not be approved. An assignment board, composed of ARVN officers, considered qualifications, class standing, and individual desires. These considerations were matched against a priroity list furnished the AG/JGS by the J1/JGS. This list was based on information compiled by the MACJ1 Advisory Branch from reports submitted by the Corps SAs and commanders of major units. There were two ways that an interpreter could get an assignment he desired upon graduation from the school. These were:

1. If he completed the course at the head of the class, he would normally be given his choice of an assignment being offered to that class.

2. If the particular assignment that he desired was not available, he could select another assignment and at a later date request a transfer. [177]

(U) As of 30 June there were 5,227 ARVN interpreters in the program strength. Thirty-five hundred were in the field, 1,648 were in training, and 79 were awaiting training. The

overall authorized spaces for interpreters was only 4,000. Due to this overstrength, J1/JGS, on 15 June, discontinued inputs to the program for an indefinite period of time. [178]

Vietnamese Navy

Buildup

(U) The Vietnamese Navy (VNN) was organized in 1954 when the French relinquished control of Vietnam as a result of the Geneva Accords. The French, upon their departure, left the VNN with 14 ships, 6 Dinassauts (River Assault Group boats akin to the present day USN ASPB, but smaller and less well armed), and a small cadre of well-trained Vietnamese officers and petty officers. The Navy elements of the French forces in former French Indo-China had seen a good deal of fighting in the struggle against the Vietminh, from the swampy, inundated lowlands of the Mekong Delta north along the coast to the Red River Delta in and about the Haiphong/Hanoi area.

(U) As part of the mission of the USMAAGV in 1955, US Naval Advisors were assigned to assist in the developemnt of the VNN. This effort expanded as the VNN and the VC insurgency expanded. Although never as well publicized as the US Army Special Forces and (later) helicopter contributions to the American ssistance effort, Naval Advisors have been in RVN since the first days of the RVN independence.

(U) In 1956, the VC embarked on an increasing scale of insurgency. To counter sea infiltration of arms and men from NVN and Communist China, the VNN reestablished the sea anti-infiltration force concept used by the French during the post-World War II years. A fleet of 10 sail-only junks was formed and assigned to operate in the area of the 17th parallel. It was manned by paramilitary personnel who wore an assortment of uniforms and carried a mixed bag of weapons. This was the genesis of the Junk Force (the "Junkies") and today's US/RVN MARKET TIME Coastal Surveillance Force.

(U) By 1961, the VNN had a force consisting of 23 ships, the largest of which was the Landing Ship Medium (LSM), 197 boats and a personnel strength of 5,000 men. At the time, morale in the VNN was judged to be high but the VNN's forces were not sufficient to counter the growing enemy infiltration. Additional assets were necessary and were requested from the USG. The years 1962 to 1964 were marked by a rapid expansion of the VNN. Training facilities, repair bases and logistics support facilities were established; communications equipment and networks were improved; and organizational and administrative procedures were strengthened. The number of ships was increased to 44 and the personnel strength was increased to 8,100 men.

(U) By the end of 1965, the VNN had almost doubled its 1964 personnel strength. This was in part the result of integrating the paramilitary Junk Force into the regular Navy. This force, an off-shoot of the small anti-infiltration patrol established in 1956, as mentioned above, had been taken over by the Ministry of Defense in 1960. By 1965, it had grown to over 100 junks and the GVN ordered it reincorporated into the VNN.

(U) After the addition of the Junk Force, the VNN was reorganized into three operational commands: the Sea Force (now known as the Fleet Command), the Riverine Force, and the Coastal Force. The chain of command was clarified and operational control of the various forces was delegated to Force Commanders. The country was divided into four coastal zones

and two riverine areas, each zone under a Zone or Area Commander, roughly approximating the ARVN division of the RVN into four CTZs (See Figure IV-4.)

(C) When the Junk Force was absorbed into the VNN in July 1965, the authorized personnel strength increased to 14,344. The assigned strength of the VNN continued to raise until December 1967 when it reached 15,963. The authorized strength for that year was 16,076.

(C) At the end of 1967, the number of ships had increased to 41 patrol ships, 18 logistics ships 232 River Assault Group (RAG) craft, 290 junks, and 52 miscellaneous craft. The Fleet Command was divided into three elements: coastal patrol, logistic support, and minesweeping. Its composition was:

Coastal Patrol:	
PC (Patrol Craft)	1
PCE (Patrol Craft, Escort)	6
PGM (Patrol Motor Gunboat)	20
MSC (Minesweeper, Coastal)	3
LSIL (Landing Ship, Infantry, Large)	5
LSSL (Landing Ship, Support, Large)	6
	41
Logistic Support:	
LST (Landing Ship, Tank)	3
YOG (Gasoline Barge, Self-propelled)	3
AKL (Light Cargo Ship)	1
LSM (Landing Ship, Medium)	5
LCU (Landing Craft, Utility)	6
	18
Minesweeping:	
MLMS (Motorlaunch Minesweeper)	10

(C) The Riverine Force operated 228 boats, 305 were attached to the Coastal Force, and miscellaneous and yard craft were operated at various installations. The commissioning of four RAGs in FY67 greatly increased the VNN's amphibious assault and river patrol capability in the RSSZ. The modern Yabuta junk construction program, although continually hampered by the loss of skilled shipyard workers, was scheduled to be completed by late FY70. This program, begun in 1965, involved the construction of 180 junks.

(C) In addition, the VNN had a UDT capability in the form of the VNN LDNN (the abbreviation for "soldiers who fight under the sea" in Vietnamese).[179]

Detailed Organization of the VNN

(U) CNO, VNN, exercised administrative control over the ships and craft of the VNN. Operational control was vested in the Fleet, Coastal Zone, and Riverine Area Commanders. They were responsible to the Corps Tactical Zone Commanders of the areas in which their commands were located for operational matter.

(U) The Fleet Command, the "blue water" Navy, was organized into two flotillas: a Patrol Flotilla and a Logistics Flotilla. The Fleet Commander was directly responsible to the CNO for

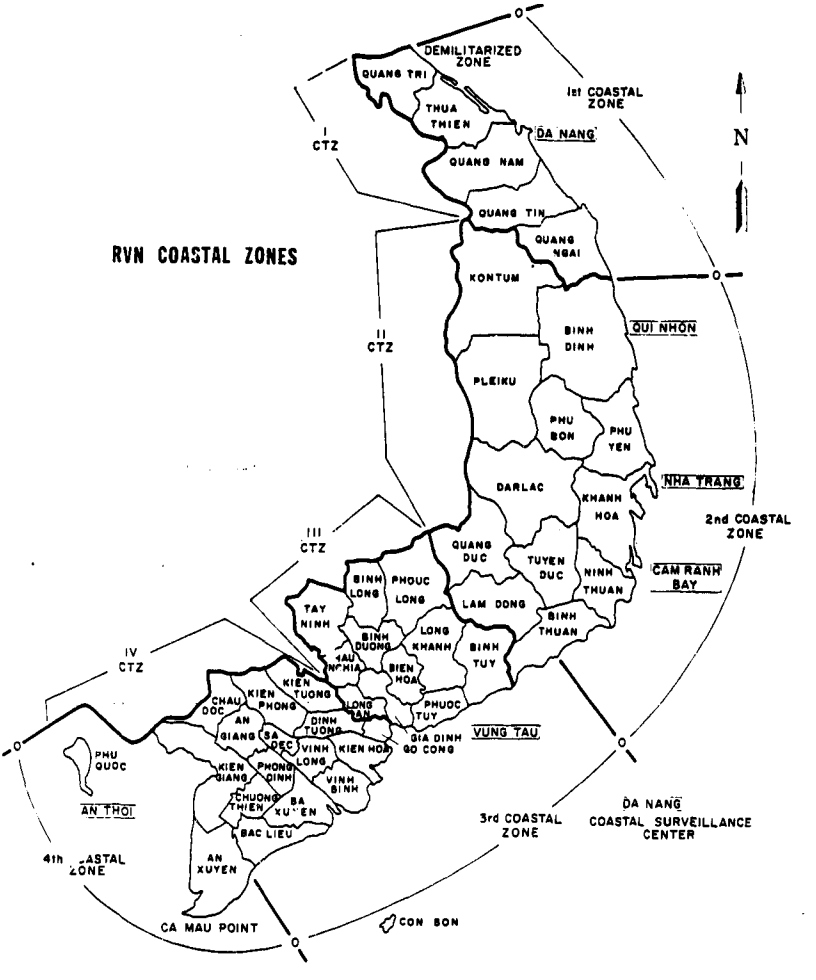

RVN COASTAL ZONES
DEMILITARIZED ZONE
QUANG TRI
THUA THIEN
DA NANG
QUANG NAM
QUANG TIN
QUANG NGAI
KONTUM
BINH DINH
QUI NHON
PLEIKU
PHU BON
PHU YEN
DARLAC
KHANH HOA
NHA TRANG
QUANG DUC
TUYEN DUC
NINH THUAN
CAM RANH BAY
LAM DONG
BINH THUAN
BINH LONG
PHUOC LONG
TAY NINH
BINH DUONG
LONG KHANH
BINH TUY
AU NGHIA
BIEN HOA
PHUOC TUY
VUNG TAU
LONG AN
KIEN TUONG
KIEN PHONG
CHAU DOC
AN GIANG
SA DEC
DINH TUONG
GIA DINH
GO CONG
VINH LONG
KIEN HOA
KIEN GIANG
PHONG DINH
VINH BINH
CHUONG THIEN
BA XUYEN
BAC LIEU
AN XUYEN
PHU QUOC
AN THOI
CA MAU POINT
CON SON
I CTZ
II CTZ
III CTZ
IV CTZ
1st COASTAL ZONE
2nd COASTAL ZONE
3rd COASTAL ZONE
4th COASTAL ZONE
DA NANG COASTAL SURVEILLANCE CENTER
N

FIGURE IV-4

the readiness of these ships. (See figure IV-5). The Fleet Commander assigned and scheduled ships to operate in the Coastal Zones, Riverine Areas, and the RSSZ. While employed, the ships ships operated from the following ports:

I Coastal Zone - Da Nang
II Coastal Zone - Nha Trang and Qui Nhon
III Coastal Zone - Vung Tau
IV Coastal Zone - An Thoi (Phu Quoc Island)
III Riverine Area - Saigon and Cat Lai
IV Riverine Area - Can Tho and Vinh Long
RSSZ - Can Tho, Vinh Long and Nah Be

(U) Overhaul and major repairs and maintenance of Fleet Command ships were accomplished at the Naval Shipyard and the floating workshop (YR-24) in Saigon. The shipyard was capable of performing major overhauls on any ship in the VNN.

(C) Flotilla ONE - Patrol Ships: Flotilla ONE was composed of 41 patrol ships and 10 MLMSs. They were organized into four squadrons. The LSSLs and LSILs normally operated in the Riverine Areas of the RSSZ, although on occasion they were assigned to Coastal Zones. The duties of the patrol ships included gunfire support for the Coastal Groups or other units requiring such assistance, PSYOPS, light logistics/personnel lift missions, and patrol of MARKET TIME stations. These operational requirements called for 50 percent of the Flotilla's units to be deployed from their homeport of Saigon at all times. To meet this requirements, normal patrol routine was 30 days at sea for PGMs, 35 days for LSILs, and 40 days for other ships. Fleet Command patrol ships assigned to the Riverine Areas provided NGFS as well as patrols on the main waterways in the Riverine Areas. They also enforced curfews and conducted light logistics/personnel lifts. One river patrol unit was assigned to escort convoys on the Mekong River to and from the Cambodian border. The minesweeping squadron conducted daily minesweeping operations on the Long Tau and Dong Nai Rivers. At the beginning of 1968 this was done in coordination with USN mine-countermeasures forces. The Vietnamese were, at that time, being groomed to take over this responsibility and some USN mine-countermeasures assets at about midyear.

(U) Flotilla TWO - Logistics Ships: Flotilla TWO was comprised of 18 logistics ships which were organized into two squadrons. The primary employment of these ships was to support naval units and bases throughout Vietnam. Logistics ships were under the administrative control of the Fleet Commander and the operational control of the VNN DCofS for Logistics, acting on orders from the Central Logistics Command of the JGS.

(C) Riverine Forces: The Riverine Forces included the RAGs and the River Transport Escort Group (RTEG). The primary mission of the RAGs was amphibious assault, and their secondary mission was riverine security. The mission of the RTEG was to escort shipping on the rivers and canals of the Delta. There was no Vietnamese Riverine Force commander. The force was composed of 232 craft including commandements, MONs, LCVPs, STCANs, and RPCs (for a full discussion of characteristics of each craft, refer to the 1967 MACV Command History). This force was divided into 13 RAGs, one RTEG, and one special detachment, and was based at the following locations:

UNCLASSIFIED

VIETNAMESE NAVY COMMAND STRUCTURE

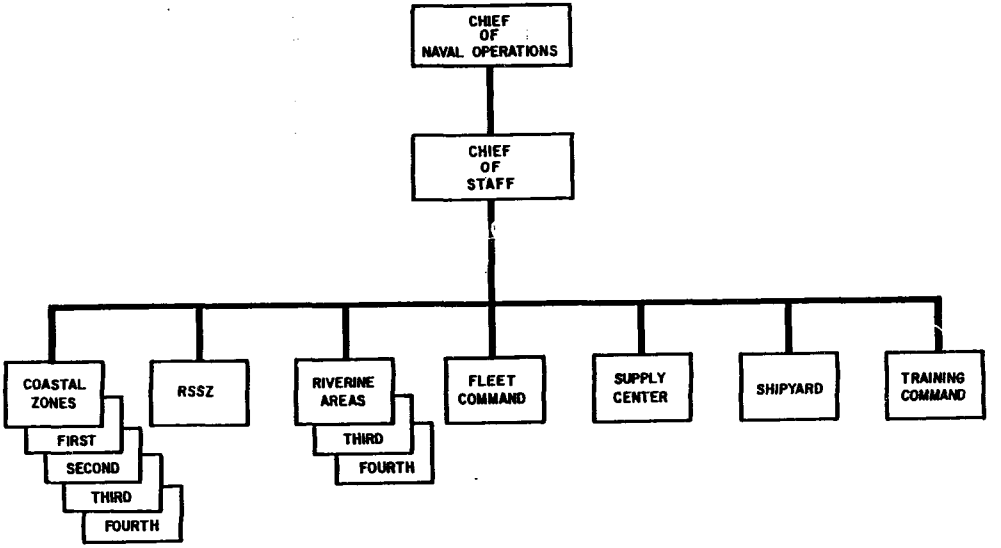


FIGURE IV-5

UNCLASSIFIED

CONFIDENTIAL

PATROL SHIP ORGANIZATION CHART

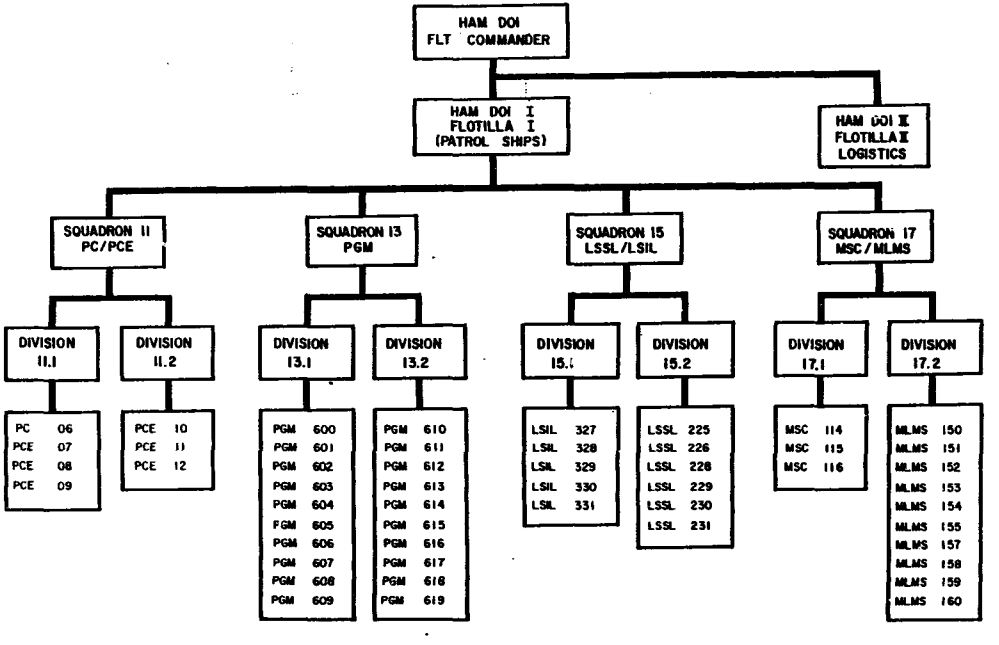


FIGURE IV-6

CONFIDENTIAL

LOGISTIC SHIPS ORGANIZATION CHART

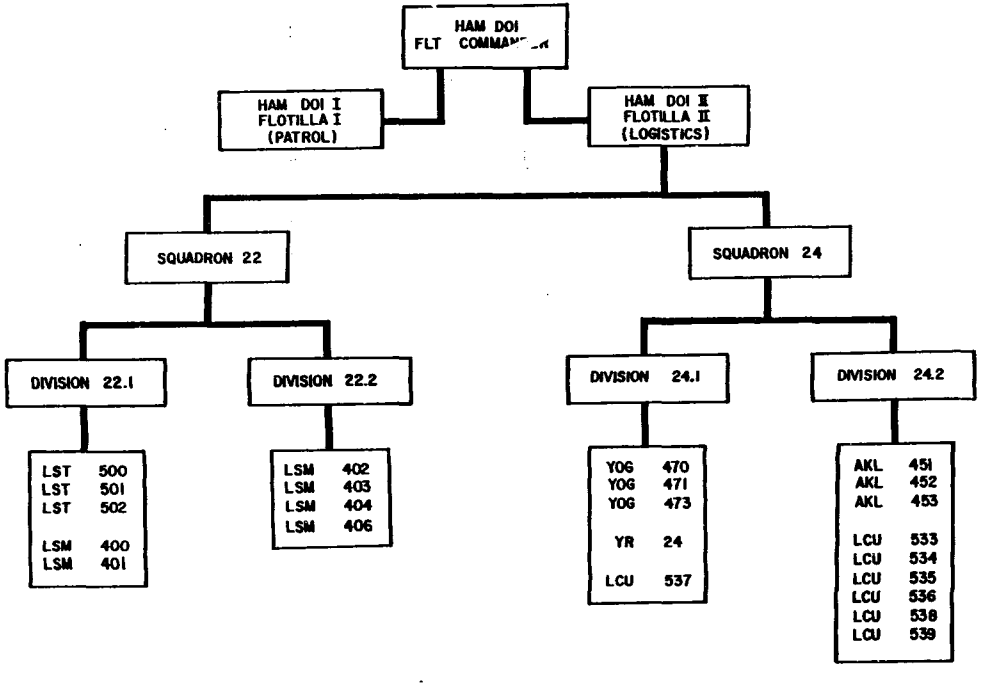


FIGURE IV-7

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

FIGURE IV-8

3d Riverine Area	Standard	Reduced	Special*
Cat Lai			RAG 27
Saigon		RAG 30	
Nha Be	RAG 22		
Tan An	RAG 24		
Phu Cuong		RAG 28	
Saigon			RTEG
4th Riverine Area			
My Tho	RAG 21	RAG 33	
Vinh Long	RAG 23	RAG 31	
Can Tho	RAG 25	RAG 29	
Long Xuyen	RAG 26	RAG 32	
1st Coastal Zone			
Thuan An			CG12**

*RAGS were designated either standard, reduced, or special according to the number and type of craft assigned. A standard RAG had one commandement, one MON, five LCM-6s, six LCVPs, and six STCANs. A reduced RAG was composed of one commandement, one MON, five LCM-6s, and four RPCs. A special RAG was composed of one commandement, one MON, six LCM-8s, and fourteen RPCs. The RTEG had four MONs, fourteen LCVPs and ten STCANs.

**A special detachment which consisted of six RAG craft (two LCM-6s and four LCVPs) was assigned to Coastal Group 12 and was under the operational control of the 1 Coastal Zone Commander. This special detachment joined and became an integral part of RAG 32 when that unit was transferred from Long Xuyen to Hue on 1 July 1968.

(U) Coastal Forces: Twenty-seven Coastal Groups comprised the Coastal Forces of the VNN. The primary mission of these groups was to conduct coastal surveillance in order to prevent infiltration from the sea and to prevent illegal coastal transshipment of military contraband. Their secondary mission included the support of small unit amphibious operations, resources control, intelligence, and PSYOPS.

(C) In the execution of these missions the Coastal Forces performed the following tasks:

1. Defended the territorial waters of the Republic.

2. Maintained a seaborne anti-infiltration/coastal transshipment screen in the coastal waters of the Republic, including designated river mouths and lagoons.

3. Maintained close liaison with ARVN CTZ Commanders for the purpose of coordinating seaborne anti-infiltration operations with ground operations.

4. Conducted and supported amphibious operations within respective areas as directed.

5. Provided naval support for ground actions, with forces available which included point-to-point sealift and NGFS.

6. Secured the seaward approaches to coastal logistic and operational bases, with particular emphasis on designated areas which required special security.

7. Established an active program, with available units, to assist the National Police Resources Control effort.

8. Within capability, assisted forces engaged in operations to eliminate the VC infrastructure.

9. Conducted PSYOPS in coastal areas.

10. Supported the pacification in coastal areas where naval force could be brought to bear.

(C) The then 27 Coastal Groups would be reduced to 20 by 1969 as groups were co-located and consolidated. Although a total of 380 junks were authorized, only 291 were on hand at the beginning of 1968. Shortfall was primarily due to labor troubles at the Saigon Naval Shipyard where the Yabuta junk was built. Of the 291 junks, I Coastal Zone had 50, II and III Coastal Zones had 55 each, and IV Coastal Zone had 131.

Vietnamese Naval Shipyard in Saigon

(U) The Vietnamese Naval Shipyard in Saigon was the largest indigenous industrial facility in Vietnam. It was an outgrowth and follow-on to a similar French facility on the same site in the days of French colonial rule. The shipyard encompassed 54 acres of land and contained 87 permanent buildings. Dry docking facilities consisted of a 520-foot graving dock, a 199-foot graving dock, a 1,000-ton floating dry dock, and four marine railways. The yard had a foundry; a sail loft; and machine, electronics, carpenter, electrical, boat, ordnance, engine, copper, hull, reefer, and public works shops.

(C) A yard repair craft (YR) had been provided to the VNN through the MASF Program. The craft was assigned to act as a tender to the VNN PGMs and as a training installation for VNN technicians. The facilities of the shipyard were adequate to handle the needs of the VNN and some specialized requirements of other military and civilian organizations. 180

(U) As in past years, the viability of the VNN Shipyard continued to be weakened by a skilled labor shortage. The root of the problem was the low wage scale at the shipyard, which had not been able to compete with the inflationary civilian economy for some time. Consequently, in quantity and quality, job positions were not being filled. The result was a slowdown in the junk building program and a slippage in the VNN's ship overall cycle.

(U) In a letter to the Chief of the JGS on 20 February, COMUSMACV pointed out the problem:

> The lack of progress in making the long delayed but vitally needed revision in the compensation structure at the Saigon Naval Shipyard has (remained) . . . .(a) chronic problem, which is continuing to have a debilitating effect on the readiness of Vietnamese

Naval Forces..... I recommended to you in a letter of 28 August that the compensation system be revised as a matter of high priority. I consider it essential that this revision be made if the Vietnamese Navy is to reach the goal of maintenance self-sufficiency.

To date this revision has not been effected although. . . the Minister of Defense has decided to establish the Shipyard as an autonomous activity of the Government, a status which, I am informed, will permit it to develop reasonably competitive wage scales. The decree announcing this decision was reportedly to have been issued on 1 January 1968. It has not been issued although a new date of 1 March has been mentioned.

Because there is a great urgency in rectifying this serious and chronically debilitating situation, I recommend that you seek the support of the Minister of Defense in expediting necessary action in this regard. [181]

(U) A similar letter of the same date, was sent to LTG Nguyen Van Vy, the Minister of National Defense. On 4 April, COMUSMACV again brought this matter to the attention of LTG Vy:

As you will recall I solicited your assistance on 20 February 1968 in bringing about needed revisions in pay scales at the Saigon Naval Shipyard. It has come to my attention that necessary improvement has not been effected. Understandably the recent Tet Offensive required maximum attention and effort and and delayed resolution of this problem. The situation has grown increasingly severe, however, and it is time for immediate action to bring the Shipyard to a state of health.

Current analysis of the personnel management problem reveals that loss of valuable skilled and supervisory personnel has accelerated during the past three months. Inability of the Shipyard to attract and retain these types of employees has resulted in further reduction in the assigned strength. Operational effectiveness has suffered and combat readiness of the Vietnamese Naval Forces is endangered. Updating of Shipyard pay scales is essential to insure maintenance and repair support if the goal of self-sufficiency of the Vietnamese Navy is to be attained.

I understand that a draft decree, which would establish the Shipyard as an autonomous industrial activity, has recently reached your desk. This decree would permit development

ORGANIZATION CHART OF THE SAIGON NAVAL SHIPYARD

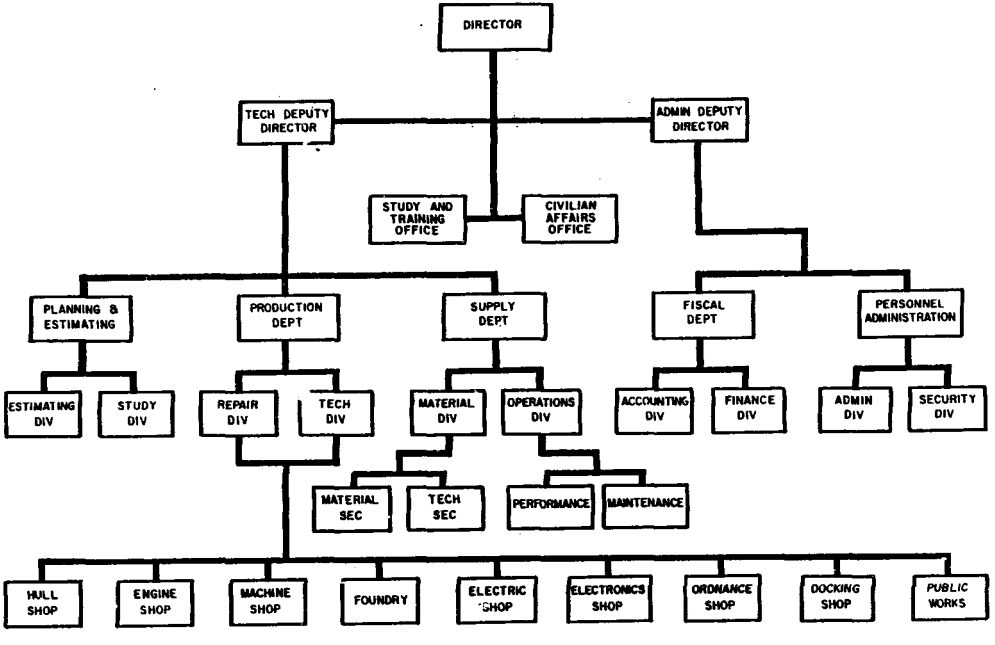


FIGURE IV-9

> of a reasonably competitive wage and incentive pay program to recruit and keep highly needed skilled and supervisory employees. Announcement of the decree would bring about an immediate improvement in the Shipyard operation and would be an important step in maintaining an exceptional logistical support program.
>
> I cannot overemphasize the urgency of the situation; further delay could cause setbacks difficult to overcome. I again urge you to press for immediate issuance of the decree to establish the Shipyard as an autonomous activity.[182]

(C) Despite continuing US efforts and pressures, no corrective action had been taken by the end of the year, and there continued to be a paucity of skilled labor and a concomitant inability to accomplish all required work and construction. A MACV Evaluation Report said:

> The civilian personnel strength of the Vietnamese Naval Shipyard and Repair Facilities is considered unsatisfactory. The Navy Shipyard normally operates with less than 60 percent of authorized personnel. This civilian personnel problem is primarily attributed to low wages, and no significant gain has been made in the recent past.[183]

Vietnamese Navy Training

(U) The VNN training establishment consisted of a Training Bureau located at VNN Hq in Saigon, with training centers located at Saigon, Nha Trang, and Cam Ranh Bay, and Mobile Training Teams located in each Coastal Zone.

(U) The Naval Advanced Training Center was located at Fleet Command Headquarters in Saigon and conducted classes in basic and advanced skills, some shortcourse specialized training, and English language and warrant officer training. The Advanced Training Center also conducted refresher training for units of the Fleet Command.

(U) The Naval Training Center, Nha Trang, included the Vietnamese Naval Academy and the Enlisted Training Center. The Naval Academy had two classes of 130 students each in residence, undergoing a 24-month curriculum. Students specialized in either line (deck) or engineering.

(U) The Recruit Training Center, Cam Ranh Bay, conducted a 12-week recruit training course and a 16-week school for boatswain's mates and gunner's mates.[184]

(U) The most significant event in 1968 with respect to training of the VNN occurred on 14 June when 100 VNN recruits left Saigon for eight weeks of basic training at the US Naval Recruit Training Center, San Diego, California. Two VNN officers and three Chief Petty Officers accompanied this hand-picked, highly-motivated volunteer group. These recruits were all high school graduates, spoke some English, and at least half of them held a two-year

college degree. Prior to their going offshore for training in the US, the group received preliminary training in Saigon which included drills, seamanship and swimming, and a familiarization course in English. At San Diego, the recruits received the same training as did American sailors. [185]

Civic Action

(U) The VNN had two hospital ships (converted LSMs designated as LSM(H)), which conducted medical civic action programs and psychological warfare programs in remote areas of the Republic which were accessible by water. The operating schedule of these two ships was the responsibility of the Political Warfare Section, VNN Hq. A typical deployment for these ships was 14 days, during which the ships visited several communities, normally spending two days at each one. Upwards of 7,000 patients were treated in one deployment. [186]

Operational Summary

(C) Fleet Command. Fleet Command units met all commitments during the first quarter of 1968 and, in addition, assumed permanent responsiblity for two additional MARKET TIME stations, one in II CTZ and one in III CTZ. This brought the total of MARKET TIME stations under VNN control to six. Fleet Command ships in the Second Naval Zone demonstrated increased professionalism and fighting spirit as they participated in the capture of the NVN trawler at Hon Heo Peninsula on 1 March.

(C) MLMSs continued daily sweep operations in the Saigon, Long Tau, Nha Be, and Dong Nai Rivers--the approaches to the Saigon port complex. On 17 March, a joint US/VN plan for introducting LCMMs into the VNN was promulgated. This plan provided the basis for the eventual assumption of responsibility by the VNN for command detonated mine countermeasures on the Long Tau and Dong Nai Rivers. The increased responsibility was indicative of the growth of the VNN and the sophistication of the personnel training and continued maintenance of its assets.

(C) As in 1967 the VNN LDNN detachment at Saigon continued to conduct nightly hull inspections of the ships berthed at the port of Saigon. The two other detachments, at Binh Thuy and Nha Be, continued operations with SEALs in search and ambush missions in the 4th Riverine Area and the RSSZ. [187]

(C) Of particular significance during the second quarter was the increased employment of VNN craft (both Fleet Command and RAG) and ARVN forces in offensive operations. Operations of the TRUONG CONG DINH series, conducted during April, in particular combined the infantry power of ARVN/US troops with the mobility of RAGs and Fleet Command units with outstanding success. During each operation, RAG craft and Fleet Command units carried the troops to the area of operations, inserted them, then conducted blocking and patrolling operations, providing gunfire and MEDEVAC support. Each operation resulted in favorable kill ratios and vast amounts of enemy war material captured or destroyed. Daily operations were also carried out to flush the enemy from their positions on the rivers, streams, and canals of the Delta.

(C) On 10 June, the Fleet Command received six USN LCMMs--landing craft specifically configured for chain-drag minesweeping. Commanded, operated, and supported by officers and men of the VNN, they subsequently performed the vital job of clearing command detonated mines on the Long Tau and Dong Nai Rivers. This was a significant move, despite its small size, with respect to overall US resources in RVN, in that it was a positive achievement in the

long-range US effort to build a viable VNN and allow an orderly US phase-out from Vietnam. The LCMMs augmented the ten operating VNN MLMSs which had already been conducting mine countermeasure operations on the Long Tau and Dong Nai Rivers.

(C) In July, the VNN took possession of four PCFs and assumed sole responsibility for two more MARKET TIME stations.[188] In October, responsibility for two additional MARKET TIME stations was assumed by the VNN. The scope of responsibility assumed by the VNN expanded at a greater rate than was initially anticipated, and revised plans for an accelerated transfer of responsibility were in process. It was planned that, eventually, all 47 inner patrol barriers of Operation MARKET TIME would be patrolled solely by the VNN

(C) In October, the VNN took another step toward enhancing its efficiency and self-sufficiency with the transfer of the first repair ship from the US to the VNN. The YR-24, manned by two officers and 135 men, would serve as a floating shipyard capable of keeping the VNN gunboats in good repair.

(C) Four additional PCFs were transferred to the VNN in December to bring the total of VNN PCFs to 12. On 27 December, two PCFs conducted the first VNN river patrol, in conjunction with Operation SEA LORDS, when the Cai Lon River was penetrated. This first mission was conducted for familiarization with SEA LORDS operations; there was no enemy contact made during the 25-mile trip. Derivative benefits came from a VNN craft flying the Vietnamese flag throughout the passage and in the small Delta village of Ken Hung.[189]

(C) Coastal Force. The Coastal Force, in 1968, was involved primarily in maintaining a seaborne anti-infiltration/coastal transshipment screen in the coastal waters of RVN. In the accomplishment of this mission the Coastal Force checked a total of 653,081 craft and 2,093,785 personnel.

(C) Coastal Force units demonstrated a great deal of versatility by assisting in troop lifts and in providing blocking and naval gunfire support for ground actions. The operations, however, were mainly small-scale in nature.

(C) In March, Coastal Group 25 units also displayed their capability during recovery operations. Junks and landing parties engaged in securing the area and extracting valuable documents, equipment, and ammunition which a trawler had attempted to infiltrate.

(C) Also in March, Coastal Group 12 units conducted two separate operations in the Phu Vang subsector, the land mass across the Thanh Lam Bay east of Hue. In one operation, Coastal Group junks provided troop lift and blocking support to two PF platoons and subsector police units as a sweep of the area yielded four VC killed, seven captured, 18 VC suspects detained, and numerous weapons seized. Meanwhile, six Coastal Group 12 units, one Coastal Group 12 ambush team, TF 116 PBRs, and approximately 170 RF/PF troops operating just to the north, evacuated over 400 Catholic civilians from the Phu Vang subsector across the bay to the mainland.[190]

(C) In September, units of Coastal Group 12 and 13 were employed in the massive LAM SON 260 operation which scourged the Vinh Loc Peninsula, east of Hue. In this operation, Coastal Force units joined USN PCFs and PBRs in supporting land sweeps. The operation accounted for 72 VC KIA and 21 of these were credited to the VNN sailors.[191]

(C) Riverine Force. Primary combat operations continued to be small-scale in nature and involved support of ARVN, RF/PF, and VNMC units, as well as paramilitary units. Many joint US/ VNN Riverine Force operations were also conducted (complete details of these operations are contained in the referenced documents).

(C) The major riverine action of the first quarter was fought by RAGs 23 and 31 at Vinh Long during the Tet Offensive. There, the VC infiltrated the city and attacked all government installations. By dawn, the city, except for the areas immediately surrounding the RAG base and the airfield, was under enemy control. Leaving 40 men to defend their base, RAGs 23 and 31 got their craft underway and were then joined by LSSLs 226 and 229, forming one task force to support the base and friendly ground units in the city and along the nearby major canals. During the following week, this task force evacuated over 2,500 refugees to a mid-river island, resupplied the island and troop units in and near the city, and provided almost continuous gunfire support in the battle for the city.[192] For this action, RAGs 23 and 31 were recommended for the Navy Unit Commendation by COMNAVFORV. On 20 September, COMUSMACV favorably endorsed this recommendation.

(C) During the second quarter, the RAGs continued to support ARVN and US operations in the III and IV CTZs and the RSSZ, providing transport, blocking and patrolling, gunfire, and MEDEVAC support.

(C) On 10 June, in a move coincident with the Fleet Command's receipt of the USN LCMMs, the Riverine Force assumed control of eight PBRs, identical to those utilized by USN Operation GAME WARDEN forces. The newly-formed VNN River Patrol Group (RPG) 51 established patrols on the Long Tau River along with TF 116 units. The VNN PBRs of this increment would eventually be joined by others to expand into the Delta to deny the enemy the use of other strategic waterways and to ensure the safe use of these waterways by the citizens of the Republic. [193]

(S) In subsequent months, the PBRs of RPG 51 proved their worth many times. They provided mobility for the RSSZ commandos and gunfire support to land troops during opeations to halt the enemy's flow of men and materials into the CMD. RPG 51 redeployed on 1 August and established regular patrols on the Dong Nai River. Their assumption of one day and two night patrols along this critical river east of Saigon relieved the USN PBRs of two-thirds of the patrol area. [194]

(C) In October, the VNN suffered the most destructive mining incident of the war in terms of numbers of craft sunk or damaged in a single attack. On the 20th, the RAG 25/29 detachment nest located in downtown Cau Mau was mined by enemy sappers, destroying 2 FOMs and one MON, damaging one LCM, killing 2 VNN sailors (one was the RAG unit CO), and wounding three other VNN personnel. There was negligible damage to the remainder of the nest despite the explosive force that lifted debris and estimated 100 feet into the air. The RAG craft were obviously targeted to slow down the tempo of VNN operations which had served as a major obstacle to VC movement in the rain-swollen canals and waterways of An Xuyen Province.

(C) On 4 November, RPG 51 assumed total responsibility for patrolling the Dong Nai River This relieved US PBRs of TF 116 of waterway denial operations in the CMD and released them for redeployment to the RSSZ and the Delta. The 12 PBRs of RPG 51 now provided two day and three night patrols on this waterway. Additionally, the PBRs commenced amphibious operations with SEAL, LDNN, and ARVN troops embarked. Night raids and ambushes were conducted as the PBRs supported the landed troops in gunfire support and river blocking operations. PSYOPs

VNN Statistical Summary - 1968

Craft and People Searched

	Fleet Command		Coastal Forces		Riverine Forces	
	Craft	People	Craft	People	Craft	People
January	1,003	4,152	32,555	97,426	4,927	15,581
February	405	2,056	21,423	70,151	2,396	7,090
March	1,089	5,156	31,406	102,854	3,258	8,944
April	2,368	9,355	43,105	141,883	3,962	15,202
May	1,864	8,655	69,030	216,180	604	28,353
June	2,217	10,381	70,579	233,709	9,435	32,264
July	1,995	9,375	67,932	227,420	7,302	27,903
August	788	2,955	73,303	216,791	9,910	36,105
September	2,790	11,642	64,790	206,755	14,805	41,467
October	2,611	11,261	59,190	193,254	16,449	46,276
November	2,833	13,000	56,857	183,149	8,559	28,745
December	2,335	10,265	62,911	204,213	9,945	30,143
TOTALS	22,298	98,253	653,081	2,093,785	91,552	318,073

FIGURE IV-10

were also conducted during the normal patrols in addition to routine search and inspection activities. [195]

Amphibious Task Force

(S) In late March, COMUSMACV, in the interest of improving Allied operational capabilities in IV CTZ through greater utilization of available resources, presented a staff study to CJGS which developed a concept for a Vietnamese Riverine Warfare Group. This group would be comprised of one VNMC battalion, two RAGs, and a gunfire support ship (LSSL/LSIL), all under the control of the CG, IV ARVN Corps.

(S) This was not a new idea, but the need for the timely establishment of such a group was becoming more apparent. The Riverine Warfare Group would provide an independent, mobile force capable of immediate employment in response to requirements of the Corps Commander. The concept had the additional desirable feature of combining the VNMC and VNN RAGs into a single task organization which could more fully exploit the amphibious capabilities of both. Initially, it appeared desirable to employ the proposed Riverine Warfare Group in combined operations with the US MRF for the purpose of developing VNN/VNMC coordination and riverine warfare doctrine. A proposed formal arrangement for combined operations was drawn up by MACV (COC 12) and given to CJGS for his consideration. [196]

(S) It was not until late November that the JGS issued a directive organizing the VNN/VNMC Amphibious Task Force (ATF). The ATF would be composed of RAGs 21 and 33 and one VNMC battalion. The plan to equip these RAGs could be carried out while they operated as part of the ATF, and USN riverine forces would provide the necessary support. The ATF would be based at My Tho initially, and its capabilities would be exploited to the fullest extent by assigning missions where required throughout IV CTZ. It was envisioned that by mid-1969 the ATF would be equipped with modern river assault craft and have six months operating experience as a combined force. [197]

(C) The newly instituted ATF, composed of the 3d VNMC Bn, VNN RAG 21/33 and the 7th and 9th ARVN Inf Divs, began conducting operations in the My Tho/Ben Tre areas in early December and participated in Operations SONG THAN and KIDNEY FLUSH. The fledging ATF recorded little enemy contact during its first month of operations. [198]

(U) COMUSMACV's views on this first month's operations are contained in the following letter to General Vien:

> The Amphibious Task Force commenced an operation in coordination with units of the U. S. Mobile Riverine Force on 24 December 1968 in the U Minh Forest Area of IV Corps Tactical Zone. The operation provides an excellent example of the type of operation that the Amphibious Task Force is capable of conducting.
>
> Advisors on the scene have reported that the operation was conducted within the letter and spirit of the Joint General Staff directives and that the command structure has worked smoothly with no conflicting demands placed upon the boats of the River Assault Groups.

It is encouraging to learn that the difficulties that were encountered on earlier operations have been overcome and that the Amphibious Task Force concept is proving itself.

I believe you can look forward to the continued employment of the Amphibious Task Force in future, well-organized and conducted amphibious and interdiction operations. [199]

Structure Changes and Background

(C) The authorized and planned force strengths of the VNN were 16,003 for FY68, 17,743 for FY69, and 17,906 for FY70.

(S) Below is listed the programmed significant changes scheduled for FYs 68, 69, 70 and 71:

1. Two LCVPs were scheduled for tentative delivery in FY69 and 70.

2. Twenty PCFs were programmed; 12 were delivered in FY68.

3. Two PCEs were included in the program for delivery from US reserve assets in FY70.

4. One PGM was programmed for tentative delivery in FY71.

5. Forty PBRs were in the FY67 program; eight were delivered in FY68, 16 were scheduled for delivery in FY69, and 16 in FY70.

6. Two MLMSs were scheduled for delivery in FY70.

7. Six LCMMs were delivered in FY68, four were scheduled for delivery in FY70.

8. One LST was included in each of the FY70 and FY71 programs for delivery in those years from US assets.

9. To modernize the 13 RAGs to a point that they were comparable with US River Assult Divisions (RIVASDIVs), a program change had been submitted for the following additional boats:

	FY68	FY69	FY70	FY71	FY72
CCB					
Program	2	2	5	5	
Delivery		2	2	5	5

	FY68	FY69	FY70	FY71	FY72
Improved Monitor					
Program	4	4	10	10	
Delivery		4	4	10	10
ATC					
Program	28	20	32	32	
Delivery		28	20	32	32
ASPB					
Program	2	2	5	5	
Delivery		2	2	5	

10. A program was pending delivery of a destroyer escort in FY72 and another in FY-73.[200] In November, CINCPAC stated that a forthcoming recommendation for forces in RVNAF Phase II Modernization and Improvement Plan would also contain one DE for FY71 and recommended that ship loan legislation be initiated.[201]

Transfer of USN Assets to VNN

(S) On 16 April 1968, in a memorandum to the CJCS, the DEPSECDEF stated:

> We have embarked on a course of gradually shifting the burden of the war to GVN forces. We now must support as quickly as possible and to the maximum extent feasible efforts of the GVN to enlarge, improve, and modernize their armed forces.
>
> There is urgency to accomplishing these objectives. In the course of negotiations, we may find it desirable to agree to mutual restriction on the military efforts of North Vietnam and the US. Accordingly, the structure of GVN forces must be reoriented to provide as soon as possible for self sufficiency in logistic, airlift, and air and artillery support categories.
>
> I desire that the Joint Chiefs of Staff develop a comprehensive, feasible action plan to achieve the above objectives.[202]

(S) In response to the above, and because of FY69 DOD budget cuts, COMNAVFORV proposed the turnover of river assault craft of two RIVASRONs to the VNN by June 1969. The turnover would include approximately 52 ATCs, 24 ASPBs, 10 MONs, 5 CCBs, and 2 refuelers. Turnover of support ships or craft was not envisioned at that time. The turnover would release two APLs, one or two ARLs and two LSTs from RVN support missions. The total of 1,500-1,700

USN personnel and spaces would be available for other purposes, and it was estimated that the savings in MASF funds would be approximately $32 million. One USN/USA MRF composed of two RIVASRONs, four APBs, two LSTs and one ARL with one brigade afloat was envisioned. This force would operate against large enemy units in III/IV CTZ for the duration of the major US commitment and then form the nucleus of a post-hostilities MRF, if such was desired.

(S) The turnover craft would apply toward programmed or planned MASF level of 104 ATCs, 104 ASPBs, 26 MONs, 13 CCBs, and 13 refuelers for modernization of 13 RAGs. Spaces for six improved RAGs had been previously approved for Phase I planning by COMUSMACV, and two RIVASRONs, plus 20 approved MASF ASPBs to be delivered in FY69, closely approximated six modernized VNN RAGs. It was expected that the current VNN concept of operations of shore based RAGs lifting VNMC/ARVN would continue.

(S) The turnover craft would replace existing RAG craft which were mostly old LCM 6As, MONs, commandements, RPCs, and French developed FOMs. The VNN craft were functionally similar to USN craft but were too lightly armored to withstand current enemy weapons and were becoming increasingly uneconomical to maintain. A result of the turnover was expected to be much improved confidence in VNN RAG operations by VNMC/ARVN and a concomitant increase in RAG utilization. Due to the basic similarities of the craft, it was considered that the VNN would be capable of receiving, operating, and maintaining USN turnovers by June 1969 with no serious problems.[203]

(S) Subsequent message traffic pertained to the plan for the operation, maintenance, logistic, and material support of RIVASRON craft should the proposal be approved. Pertinent portions of the general plan were:

1. Commence boat crew training in December by on-the-job training in USN boats for first VNN crews. At the same time, maintenance training of groups at Dong Tam and in the USN ARL would begin.

2. Program AMMI drydock for eastern (Saigon) and western (Can Tho) repair facilities and program upgrading marine railway at the western repair facility.

3. Utilization of existing in-country repair parts stocks to satisfy initial VNN requirements.

4. Program YRBM and obtain "A" frame and pontoons.

5. Use ARL and YRBM with US crews for repair and training.

6. Use Dong Tam for overhauls and training of VNN.

Long-term planning called for the VNN to conduct depot level maintenance and overhaul at the eastern and western repair facilities, assuming responsibility for YRBM and the overhaul facilities at Dong Tam and Cat Lo, and eventually replacing VNN personnel with civilians at the repair facilities.[204]

(S) By November, the plan had been approved by CINCPACFLT, COMUSMACV, and CINCPAC. At year's end, however, the plan was still awaiting JCS approval.

Accelerated Plan for Improvement and Modernization

(S) In November, COMUSMACV forwarded to CINCPAC recommendations for an accelerated VNN force development toward the Phase II structure. Phase II plans scheduled VNN activations principally by assumption of US assets over a four-year period. The accelerated plan would turn over to the VNN a high percentage of the US boats and craft engaged in coastal and riverine warfare within 18 months. The structure in the Phase II plan was designed to deal with a threat which had been attenuated over the activation period. The acceleration of the activations and consequent earlier phase out of USN elements would require that the VNN assume responsibility for operations at a higher level of threat. The principal area of VNN operations in Phase II would be in IV CTZ where withdrawal of US and NVA forces would have little impact on the type and intensity of operations.

(S) The accelerated plan increased VNN force levels as shown below:

	FY69	FY70	FY71	FY72	FY73
Accel Plan	23,931	28,417	30,221	30,805	30,805
Phase II	19,344	21,900	23,689	25,363	26,100

(S) The increases in major units over the former Phase II final structure would be:

Unit	Number	Unit	Number
PCF	20	ARL	1
WPB	16	LSM-8	14
PBR	150	YRBM	2
LST	2	YR	1

(S) On the job training with US units was the primary method of training envisioned. VNN personnel would be assigned to US crews and their number sequentially increased until the boat or facility could be completely operated by the VNN. Approximately 4,300 VNN personnel would require technical English training and several hundred per year would require technical training in US schools. [205]

(S) COMUSMACV directed that training of available VNN personnel should commence in anticipation of approval to accelerate Phase II activation. Personnel for units in excess of the Phase II structure could be included for on the job training on US craft if spaces were available within the currently approved VNN ceiling. [206]

(S) On 18 December, SECDEF approved the Accelerated Phase II Plan for VNAF and ARVN, but not for VNN. At this same time he requested that he be provided with a list of proposed unit activations, a listing of equipment turnover to include losing and gaining unit, and a withdrawal plan for US units no longer required or effective after the turnover. The proposed accelerated activation schedule for VNN was as follows:

VNN Unit	Qtr/FY Activation
2 DE	(1) 1/71, (1) 4/71
2 PCE	(1) 4/69, (1) 4/70
2 PGM	4/69
16 WPB	4/70
88 PCF	(4) 3/69, (4) 4/69, (80) *4/70
5 LST	(1) 1/70, (2) 1/71, (2) 1/72
1 YFR	4/71
6 LCR/YFU	(1) 1/70, (1) 3/70, (1) 1/71, (1) 3/71, (1) 1/72, (1) 3/72
2 YOG	(1) 1/70, (1) 1/71
6 YTM	8/71
4 100' Util Boats	3/69
1 LSSL	1/72
9 Riv Aslt/Interdiction Div**	(6) 4/69, (3) 4/70
1 YR	1/72
2 YRBM	(1) 2/70, (1) 2/72
1 ARL	2/72
10 PBR Group	4/70
1 RAG Support Base, Dong Tam	1/70
4 PCF Support Base	(1) 1/72, (1) 2/72, (1) 3/72, (1) 4/72
12 PBR Support Base	4/72

*Dependent on number of craft available.
**Formerly Modernized RAG.

Proposed transfer of equipment from US units to VNN units was as follows:

Equipment	US Unit	Qtr/FY Transfer
16 PCF	COSDIV 11	4/70
16 PCF	COSDIV 12	4/70
16 PCF	COSDIV 13	4/70
1 PCF	COSDIV 14	4/70
1 CSC	An Thoi	2/70
1 CSC	Vung Tau	2/70
1 CSC	Nha Trang	2/70
1 CSC	Qui Nhon	2/70
1 CSC	Da Nang	2/70
1 RSI	Cu Lao Re Island	3/70
1 RSI	Con Son	2/70
8 WPB	CGARD Div 12	4/70
8 WPB	CGARD Div 13	4/70
1 HDU	IUWU 3 Qui Nhon	1/71
1 HDU	IUWU 4 Nha Trang	1/71
50 PBR	RIVPATRON 51	4/70
40 PBR	RIVPATRON 55	4/70
40 PBR	RIVPATRON 57	4/70

Equipment	US Unit	Qtr/FY Transfer
30 PBR	RIVPATRON 59	4/70
1 RAS	RIVASRON 9	4/69
1 RAS	RIVASRON 11	1/70
1 HCU	HCU 1 Det RVN	4/72
1 YRBM	YRBM-16	2/72
1 YRBN	YRBN-17	1/70
1 YR	YR-71	1/72
1 ARL	SAYTR ARL-23	2/72
1 YTM	YTM-762	2/71
91 Riv Aslt Craft	RAS 13, RAS 15	4/70
1 YTM	YTM-769	2/71
1 YTM	YTM-771	2/71
6 LCM8	LCM	2/70
6 LCM8	LCM	1/71
6 LCM8	LCM	1/72
1 YFR	YFR-889	4/71
1 YOG	YOG-56	1/70
1 YOG	YOG-76	1/71
1 LCU	LCU-1475	1/70
1 LCU	LCU-1477	3/70
1 LCU	LCU-1482	1/71
1 LCU	LCU-1484	3/71
1 LCU	LCU-1493	1/72
1 LCU	LCU-1494	3/72
5 LST	Unidentified	---
6 LCMM	Unidentified	---

All of US units affected were planned for withdrawal in the fiscal quarter indicated except COSDIV 14 and RIVASRON 15. The flexibility of this plan allowed for the leveling off of expansion at any time. Fractional crews could be pooled to constitute a lesser number of crews/units should a change in US requirements intervene. In any event, turnover would not be accomplished until US requirements had been met. [207]

(S) At year's end, the Accelerated Phase II Plan for VNN force development was still awaiting SECDEF approval.

Evaluation of the Vietnamese Navy

(S) At the commencement of 1968 the VNN was considered to be combat effective. It had an excellent capability to conduct riverine warfare operations in the Mekong Delta. There was a limited but expanding mine countermeasures capability. The Coastal Forces had a limited counterinfiltration capability. The Fleet patrol ships had an excellent shore gunfire support capability with weapons up to 3"/50 caliber. The VNN operated 20 logistic support ships and was capable of supplying all the logistic lift needs of the VNN, but because these were not controlled by the Navy and were employed in logistics lifts for all of RVNAF, there was a logistic lift deficiency between the CTZ HQ and the coastal bases. The VNN's LDNN had developed a SEAL capability and was actively participating in operations with their US counterparts. The VNN had a significant capability to participate in civic action and PSYOPs.

(S) During periods of limited or general war, the VNN had force deficiencies in antisubmarine warfare, anti-air warfare, mine laying/minesweeping, and major amphibious assault capabilities; however, within the context of the assigned VNN mission, US/FWMA forces were required to augment VNN forces to overcome the above deficiencies.[208]

Periodic Evaluation of the Vietnamese Navy

(C) MACJ341 (MACEVAL) provided the Commander with quarterly evaluations of the regular Vietnamese forces, based on advisors' reports. The below evaluations of VNN for 1968 are excerpted from these reports:

> The overall combat effectiveness of the VNN was considered satisfactory during the 1st Qtr of CY68. The employment of the naval forces during the reporting period was considered satisfactory. Base defense has improved from marginal to satisfactory since the last reporting period. The shortage and lack of retention of skilled civilian personnel continue to plague the VNN shipyard and repair facilities. This situation is attributed primarily to low wages. The civilian personnel shortage at the shipyard has grown from 478 below allowance (Dec 67) to 677 below allowance (end of Mar 68). This condition is unsatisfactory. Training, leadership, and PSYWAR were considered overall satisfactory. . . .[209]

> The combat effectiveness of the VNN was considered satisfactory during the 2d Qtr CY68. The trend compared to the 1st Qtr is upward. . . . The employment of Vietnamese Naval forces during the reporting period was considered satisfactory. . . . At the end of June the personnel strength of the VNN was 17,611 an increase of 692 during the reporting period. . . . The personnel strength of the VNN is considerd satisfactory. . . . The shortage and lack of retention of skilled civilian personnel (at the VNN shipyard) continues to hinder VNN efficiency and operations. The deteriorating personnel situation at the Shipyard is primarily attributed to low wages. The civilian personnel strength of the VNN Shipyard and repair facilities is considered unsatisfactory. . . . Base defense has continued to improve and is considered satisfactory, however, base defense materials remain in short supply. . . . The Chief of Naval Operations, VNN, continues his policy of direct and forceful interest in VNN activities. . . . In general, commanding officer

and Petty officer (NCO) leadership is continuing to improve. Leadership training is receiving continued attention and is expanding and improving. . . . Fleet Command routine maintenance remains marginal in many cases. Coastal Forces routine maintenance varies throughout the Coastal Force from satisfactory to unsatisfactory, while river craft routine maintenance is considered satisfactory.[210]

The combat effectiveness of the VNN was considered satisfactory during the 3d Qtr, CY68. The trend as compared to the 2d Qtr is upward. . . . The employment of the Vietnamese Naval forces. . . . was considered satisfactory. . . . The personnel strength of the VNN is considered satisfactory. At the end of the reporting period, the personnel strength of the VNN was 17,543, a decrease of 68. . . . The civilian personnel strength of the Naval Shipyard is considered unsatisfactory. This problem is primarily attributed to low wages, and no significant gain has been made in the recent past. . . . Leadership continues to improve at all levels. The CNO, VNN continues his direct and forceful interest in VNN activities. Commanding officer and junior officer leadership varies from outstanding to unsatisfactory. Officer leadership is improving steadily. Petty officer leadership remains the greatest problem. . . . Civilian relations and PSYWAR are considered satisfactory. . . .[211]

The effectiveness of the VNN was considered excellent during the 4th Qtr, CY68. The trend is upward from the 3d Qtr. . . . The employment of the VNN forces was considered excellent. . . . The present personnel strength of the VNN is 19,661 an increase of 2,116 during the reporting period. . . . The civilian repair personnel strength of the VNN remains unsatisfactory. . . . Leadership has received continued attention and has improved at all levels. Commanding officer and junior officer leadership is regarded as good. The measures devoted to improving petty officer leadership have resulted in substantial improvement in this area. . . . Vietnamese Naval Intelligence collection assets made marked improvements during the last quarter CY68. . . .[212]

Special Post-Tet Evaluations of the Vietnamese Navy

(S) In recognition of the unforeseen and great severity of the enemy's Tet Offensive, MACJ3 completed a special study of the results of the period. COMUSMACV's overall assessment of the VNN in the Tet period was contained in a message to CINCPAC:

> . . . . The overall navy combat effectiveness is considered excellent. The enemy's Tet attacks stimulated naval units to assume a high degree of readiness. In the face of increased operational commitments no deletorious effects on Fleet readiness were noted. The Navy met and exceeded operational commitments placed on it. [213]

(C) The special study concluded:

> The overall combat effectiveness of the Vietnamese Navy has been excellent. In each encounter with the enemy the Vietnamese Navy fought well. Not a single installation was overrun or even severely damaged. The enemy's attack stimulated naval units to assume a high degree of readiness. Generally there was a marked improvement in leadership as the tempo of military action increased. Even with increased operational commitments no deleterious effects on Fleet readiness were noted. The Vietnamese Navy has met and exceeded all operational commitments placed on it. Morale of all units remained high, with the morale of units involved in heavy actions showing the most significant increase. . . .
>
> The Tet Offensive produced no adverse impact on the communications-electronics capability of the Vietnamese Navy. . . . Within the Vietnamese Navy minor disruption of logistics support was experienced during the Tet Offensive. Scheduled maintenance and up-keep schedules were seriously disrupted, however, emergency repairs were sufficient to meet this deficit. The absenteeism of civilian personnel, particularly at the VNN Shipyard, Saigon, has caused a serious disruption of approximately six weeks in the overhaul and repair schedules for the Vietnamese Navy. However, this situation has not materially affected the overall combat effectiveness of the Vietnamese Navy. [214]

Vietnamese Air Force

(S) At the beginning of 1968, the VNAF had 20 squadrons and 14,161 personnel. Plans for the year included updating one of the five A-1 fighter squadrons to the A-37 and one of the five helicopter squadrons from the H-34 to the UH-1. One C-47 transport squadron was to convert to the heavier C-119, and another squadron was to have its aircraft modified into AC-47 gunships.

(S) At longer range, plans called for 12 new squadrons to be activated between FY70 and 72 with primary emphasis on mobility and attack capability. Eleven of these squadrons were programmed for UH-1 helicopters with the remaining squadron to be a transport type with C-47 aircraft. Concurrent with all expansion plans, however, were parallel programs for modernizing the VNAF force structure, including the provision for adequate numbers of qualified aircrews, mechanics, etc. There was also a plan to add six RF-5s to VNAF's reconnaissance capability. This planning was subsequently modified by the Phase I and Phase II programs which reduced the planning figures.[215]

(S) As indicated, the C-47 squadron converted to C-119s in March and modifications of the other squadron of C-47s into gunships began about the same time. Only three of the latter were completed, however, before higher priorities for mini-gun armament temporarily postponed the program. The UH-1s began arriving in June, but, like the mini-guns, there were not enough to go around, and combat requirements enjoyed a higher priority. The A-37 program also slipped. The fault here lay with the manufacturer; however, VNAF's relatively low priority was also a factor.

(S) This overall slippage left VNAF statistically not much better off at the end of the year than it had been at the beginning. Moreover, preparations for "modernization" automatically interfered with the combat readiness capability of the squadrons involved. At the end of September, for example, US advisors rated three of the six fighter squadrons as "fully operationally ready" (C-1), one as "operationally ready" (-2), and the remaining two as "non-operationally ready" (-4). The two C-4s, of course, went to the 520th and 524th Fighter Squadrons, which were in a stand-down status awaiting A-37s.

(S) Of the five helicopter squadrons, only one was listed as C-1. One was designated C-2, and three as C-3 ("marginally operationally ready"). This lack of operational capability was attributable to the generally poor condition of the outdated H-34s, a shortage arising from operational losses, and maintenance problems. At the same time, shortages of both aircrews and aircraft--particularly the O-1--hindered the effectiveness of the liaison squadrons. Only one of the four was rated as C-2. The remainder received a C-3 rating.

(S) The one reconnaissance and three transport squadrons making up the 33d Wing at Tan Son Nhut fared best in the ratings. All were rated as C-1, with the exception of the 413th Transportation Squadron. Since some aircrews were not yet qualified in the C-119, it was given a C-2 rating.[216]

(S) Despite the low ratings, the overall outlook for VNAF at the end of the year was reasonably optimistic. The conversion of the 413th Squadron to C-119s was complete and, as soon as the A-37s and UH-1s become available in force, the combat capability of the fighter and helicopter squadrons would significantly increase. Relief for the liaison squadrons was

programmed for the second quarter of 1969, although O-1s were also in great demand and slippage was likely. One project, titled "PEACE COLT", was underway. This project called for 44 H-34s to be added to the inventory as an interim measure and to act as an eventual backup to the single squadron scheduled to remain in H-34s. Finally, VNAF could look to significant advances in training, refinements in organization, etc. For example, an intensive program for increasing English language fluency was underway, a class of fifty students entered a flight mechanic course in mid-October, and 30 freshly trained pilots were due in from CONUS in January, with another 20 in July. [217]

(S) Meanwhile, some of the more significant advances of the year in regard to VNAF concerned plans for updating the entire VNAF structure. In April, SECDEF directed that a plan be developed to provide for self-sufficiency in VNAF as soon as possible. As interpreted by JCS, this meant an "optimum force structure" which "could successfully cope with any continued subversive internal aggression subsequent to mutual withdrawal of US/FW and NVA forces." While this had been a long-range objective for some time, the OSD/JCS decision required planning that would integrate the current programs into larger overall concept. The planners had to consider approved equipment allocations, replacement of older equipment, attritional losses, sources of increased manpower, additional training, etc. At the same time, pressing combat requirements had to be kept constantly in mind. [218]

(S) By May, MACV was ready with a preliminary program. Based heavily on programming already accomplished, it recommended increases in personnel strength according to the following schedule: FY68 - 17,198; FY69 - 21,705; FY70 - 27,705; FY71 - 33,305; and FY72 - 36,855. As part of this package, MACV called for a VNAF increase of up to 44 squadrons. [219]

(S) On 25 June, Deputy SECDEF directed a two-phase review of the MACV May program. As far as the VNAF was concerned, Phase I was to emphasize increased ground support capability and Phase II the self-sufficiency stressed in the April JCS decision. [220]

(S) Meeting DOD's request for "review and recommendations" of the proposed two-phased program was a much more difficult assignment than satisfying the JCS requirement. All the old limitations and considerations still applied. Also, since the phases were basically set to comply with two different sets of conditions rather than two consecutive periods of time, the two programs would have to be complementary and parallel rather than a simple follow-on of Phase II to Phase I.

(S) By the end of the summer, MACV had what appeared to be a workable Phase I program. Its schedule was as follows:

FY69

Units to be Modified	Change
415th Transport Sq (Tan Son Nhut)	C-47 to AC-47
516th Fighter Sq (Da Nang)	A-1 to A-37
524th Fighter Sq (Nha Trang)	A-1 to A-37

Units to be Modified	Change
520th Fighter Sq (Binh Thuy)	A-1 to A-37
211th Helo Sq (Binh Thuy)	H-34 to UH-1
217th Helo Sq (Binh Thuy)	H-34 to UH-1
FY70	
213th Helo Sq (Da Nang)	H-34 to UH-1
215th Helo Sq (Nha Trang)	H-34 to UH-1

Units to be Activated	Qtr of Activation	Aircraft
FY70		
221st Helo Sq (Tan Son Nhut)	4	UH-1
FY71		
223d Helo Sq (Binh Thuy)	1	UH-1
225th Helo Sq (My Tho)	2	UH-1
227th Helo Sq (My Tho)	2	UH-1

(S) Basically, this MACV schedule for Phase I continued previously approved fighter and helicopter conversion programs. It provided for only limited expansion, however, calling for only four additional helicopter squadrons, primarily to increase airmobile operations in the IV CTZ.

(S) Since the May plan and MACV's Phase II proposal both looked towards VNAF self-sufficiency, the latter closely paralleled the former. MACV's Phase II included Phase I force increases. However, it differed from the May plan in that it contained 40 squadrons instead of 44. It recognized that there would be shortfalls to "preclude the attainment of complete self-sufficiency" but felt that matching limitations with opportunity and objectives with circumstances, a 40 squadron force would be more realistic. The Phase II schedule for modifying and enlarging the existing force, therefore, included, in addition to the Phase I approved activations, the following:

Unit to be Activated	Location	Qtr of Activation	Aircraft
FY70			
427th SAM Sq	Tan Son Nhut	3	VC-47, UH-1 U-17

Units to be Activated	Location	Qtr of Activation	Aircraft
	FY71		
122d Liaison Sq	Binh Thuy	1	O-1
229th Helo Sq	Pleiku	3	UH-1
231st Helo Sq	Bien Hoa	3	UH-1
233d Helo Sq	Da Nang	4	UH-1
	FY72		
235th Helo Sq	Pleiku	1	UH-1
237th Helo Sq	Nha Trang/Bien Hoa	1	CH-47
120th Liaison Sq	Da Nang	1	O-1
	FY73		
530th Fighter Sq	Binh Thuy	1	A-[illegible]
526th Fighter Sq	Pleiku	1	A-37
118th Liaison Sq	Pleiku	1	O-1
419th Trans Sq	Da Nang	4	AC-47
421st Trans Sq	Bien Hoa	4	C-123
	FY74		
423d Trans Sq	Bien Hoa	4	C-123
425th Trans Sq	Bien Hoa	4	C-123
528th Fighter Sq	Da Nang	1	A-1

(S) In early November, only days after DOD approved Phase I, COMUSMACV informed CINCPAC that, "discounting all offensive actions in NVN and increased expectation for progress in the peace talks" made it "prudent to go beyond Phase I and move rapidly into Phase II posture. The Phase I plan is no longer consistent with the situation in Vietnam and the political considerations associated with the negotiations in Paris. The Phase II structure is better suited to the present and anticipated conditions in RVN."[222]

(S) One month later, with approval of Phase II still pending, COMUSMACV expressed his concern to CINCPAC. "The accelerated schedule cannot be met unless action is to begin immediately," he wrote, "Delays in approval of the acceleration, in approval of the equipment

required, or in initiation of JGS recruiting and training will force a revision of schedule."[223] This potential difficulty, however, was obviated when, on 18 December, JCS approved an accelerated Phase II program.

(S) As regards the VNAF, this acceleration meant an earlier activation of some units than was originally planned. On 26 December, COMUSMACV submitted this revised list of activations to CINCPAC, which changed the listing as follows:

VNAF Sqdn	Change to Phase II (Qtr/FY)
211th Helo*	2/69 to 4/69 (Slippage)
217th Helo*	No Change
215th Helo*	4/70 to 4/69
213th Helo*	4/70 to 4/69
223d Helo	No Change
225th Helo	No Change
227th Helo	No Change
229th Helo	3/71 to 2/71
233d Helo	4/71 to 3/71
221st Helo	4/70 to 3/71 (Sequence Change)
235th Helo	1/72 to 3/71
231st Helo	No Change
237th Helo	1/72 to 3/71
118th Ln	1/73 to 4/71
120th Ln	1/72 to 4/71
122d Ln	1/71 to 4/71 (Sequence Change)
526th Ftr	1/73 to 1/72
530th Ftr	1/73 to 1/72
528th Ftr	1/74 to 1/72
419th Trans	4/73 to 1/72

VNAF Sqdn	Change to Phase II (Qtr/FY)
421st Trans	4/73 to 2/72
423d Trans	4/74 to 2/72
425th Trans	4/74 to 2/72
427th Trans (SAM)	3/70 to 3/69

*Conversion of H-34 to UH-1.

(S) In order to accomplish the accelerated activation schedule, it was deemed necessary to turn over quantities of US equipment to RVNAF. In this respect SECDEF requested a listing of major equipment items which would have to be transferred, including the losing and gaining units. On 26 December, COMUSMACV submitted this listing to SECDEF. Proposed transfers of equipment to VNAF are listed below:

US Unit	Equipment* Turnover (Qtr/FY)	VNAF Unit	Aircraft (UE)
121st AHC	2/71	223d Helo	UH-1 (31)
191st AHC	3/71	225th Helo	UH-1 (31)
162d AHC	3/71	227th Helo	UH-1 (31)
119th AHC	3/71	229th Helo	UH-1 (31)
71st AHC	4/71	233d Helo	UH-1 (31)
68th AHC	4/71	221st Helo	UH-1 (31)
170th AHC	4/71	235th Helo	UH-1 (31)
118th AHC	4/71	231st Helo	UH-1 (31)
205th ASHC	4/71	237th Helo	CH-47 (16)
19th TASS	1/72	118th Ln	O-1 (25)
19th TASS	1/72	120th Ln	O-1 (25)
19th TASS	1/72	122d Ln	O-1 (25)
310th AS	2/72	526th Ftr	A-37B (18)

US Unit	Equipment* Turnover (Qtr/FY)	VNAF Unit	Aircraft (UE)
1st SOS	2/72	530th Ftr	A-1 (18)
6th SOS	2/72	528th Ftr	A-1 (18)
4th SOS	2/72	419th Trans	AC-47 (16)
310th SOS	3/72	421st Trans	C-123 (16)
311th SOS	3/72	423d Trans	C-123 (16)
19th SOS	3/72	425th Trans	C-123 (16)

*Turnover of equipment should be completed approximately 90 days after unit activation.

(S) It was proposed that the conversion of the existing 213th, 215th, and 217th helicopter squadrons be accomplished by diversion in CONUS of a number of FY69 UH-1 deliveries originally programmed for USARV. Support equipment would be provided from CONUS through USAF/DA agency coordination. Otherwise, aircraft and equipment must come from transfer of in-country resources. Scheduled UH-1 deliveries to VNAF by end of June 1969 should provide sufficient aircraft to convert the fourth squadron (211th). [224]

Vietnamese Marine Corps

(S) As the year began, the Vietnamese Marine Corps (VNMC) was comprised of two brigades of three maneuver battalions each, one artillery battalion, and an amphibious support battalion. The assigned strength was 7,561. The VNMC was considered part of the General Reserve. [225]

(S) On 17 March 1968, COMUSMACV told CJCS that he felt that the VNMC had a military potential not yet fully realized and that jointly they should address ways and means of achieving its maximum effectiveness. In view of the demonstrated quality of leadership available within the VNMC, as well as its consistently high present-for-operations strengths, expansion of the Marine Brigade into a light division with two regiments of three battalions each appeared entirely feasible. However, if the reorganization were to take place, a fulltime division commander was required. As a General Reserve organization, this division had to be fully responsive to JCS. Improved control arrangements would enhance the training, supervision, and deployment of these regiments, either singly or as a division. The organization that COMUSMACV had in mind would provide for adequate division base units to support sustained combat operations and increased direct artillery support. The spaces required for the expansion could be included in the FY69 force structure plan since the VNMC was constantly able to maintain an overstrength through voluntary recruitment and the reorganization could be accomplished as soon as a division commander was appointed. On 25 June 1968, SECDEF approved activation of 22 spaces to provide for a fourth battery for the VNMC artillery battalion. These spaces were

released to JGS effective 1 July 1968. On 1 October, the VNMC was redesignated a division comprised of two brigades. [226]

(S) On 10 October, COMUSMACV requested a review of the FY70 force structure to determine if any adjustments would be required. CHNAVADVGP stated that the VNMC had sufficient personnel to form two additional artillery batteries in Phase I of the RVNAF Improvement and Modernization Program vice Phase II, where it was originally scheduled. These two batteries were considered highly desirable as they were intended to be used in support of expanding RF units. COMUSMACV recommended approval to CINCPAC on 18 November 68; the final approval was given on 18 December. The activation of one headquarters battery and the two 105mm Howitzer batteries was advanced from FY1/70 to FY4/69 and, when activated, would provide the VNMC with two full artillery battalions. [227]

(C) The estimated strength of the VNMC at the end of 1968 was 9,000. [228]

Regional Force/Popular Force

(C) As the year began the Regional Force (RF) strength was 152,549 and the Popular Force (PF) was 151,945. Authorized strength was 182,971 and 159,635 respectively. However, by the end of the year, both authorizations had greatly increased due to the Phase I and Phase II RVNAF Improvement and Modernization Plans. The RF authorization was 252,927 and the PF authorized strength stood at 178,140. [229] (For fuller discussion of the strength increases, refer to "Improvement and Modernization" section of this chapter.)

(S) At the beginning of 1968, there were 939 RF companies activated of the planned 1,053 in the FY68 program. New TOEs were authorized for priority Sector/Subsector Headquarters and administrative and direct support logistic (A&DSL) companies. New TOEs provided a greater command and control capability and improvement in logistic support units. The RF/PF Group Headquarters was formed to assist Sector and Subsector Headquarters in the command and control of RF and PF. Sixty-four RF/PF Group Headquarters were authorized in FY68 and all were activated by 30 June. The FY69 program continued to provide for improvement and modernization of RF/PF. The FY69 program included 143 RF companies, personnel increases to apply new TOEs to the remaining Sectors/Subsectors Headquarters and A&DSL companies, 113 RF/PF Group Headquarters, and 44 RF weapons platoons. As of 31 December, 1,197 RF companies and 162 RF/PF Group Headquarters were activated. During the third quarter FY69, 164 RF companies, 25 RF/PF group headquarters and spaces for TOE increases would be released to the JGS. The remaining 83 RF companies, 25 RF/PF Group Headquarters, and spaces for TOE increases would be released to the JGS as soon as training facilities and other constraints permitted.

(S) On 1 January 1968, PF consisted of 4,271 platoons of a total of 4,561 authorized in the FY68 program. The FY69 program added 300 PF platoons for a total of 4,861 platoons. As of the end of the year, all of these platoons had been activated. [230]

(C) At the end of the year, there were an estimated 219,000 RF troops and 174,000 PF soldiers. [231]

(U) In October 1967, MACV had held a conference to determine a means of upgrading and

improving the RF and PF. The most important program resulting from the conference was the establishment of the Mobile Advisory Teams (MAT). (A fuller discussion of the evolution, composition and mission of the MATs is contained elsewhere in this chapter.) Other programs resulting from the conference were:

1. A study on the use of a unit committee system to recommend promotion and awards to deserving soldiers.

JGS was not receptive to the use of a committee system to recommend soldiers for promotion, feeling that this would infringe upon the perogatives of commanders. However, the unit committee system (Comment and Discussion Method) proved successful in recommending awards of the Gallantry Cross for deserving personnel of the Regular and Regional Forces.

2. The placing of RF recruiting under the National Recruiting and Induction System.

JGS/RVNAF Memorandum 349, 3 February 1968, placed the Regional Force under the National Recruiting and Induction System. This provided for uniform and more effective recruiting techniques as well as more efficient processing.

3. Wider use of certificates of achievement by commanders at all level.

JGS/RVNAF Memorandum 601, 22 February 1968, provided guidance to commanders on types of awards available to individuals who distinguished themselves during the Tet Offensive. Pertinent JGS/RVNAF documents regarding the recognition of RF/PF personnel for valorous acts and meritorious achievements were translated and forwarded to US advisors in the field by letter on 16 May 1968. US advisors were urged to encourage the use of these certificates. Although the total number awarded was not available, advisors reported that there had been an increase in the use of these certificates for RF/PF personnel.

4. Development of a Presidential Unit Citation - type award to recognize successful accomplishments of pacification missions by RF companies and PF platoons.

Decree Laws 58 and 59, dated 20 January 1968, created the unit citation streamer and the unit citation emblem. The approving authority for these awards was the Chief, JGS.[232]

(U) RVNAF Decree 38/SL/KT, 20 December 1967, granted the rice allowance to dependents of PF servicemen retroactive to 1 Jun 67. This was considered to be a significant action which would do much to improve the morale and welfare of the PF soldier.

(U) Reports from Comptroller Advisors in the field indicated that many PF soldiers were not receiving the rice allowance for dependents, and, of those receiving the allowance, many had not received it retroactive to 1 Jun67. The reason for the former was difficulty in obtaining certification of dependency, and the reason for the latter was misinterpretation of implementation of instructions. In order to clarify instructions and expedite payment of this allowance, the MACV comptroller advisor, in a letter to the Director General of Finance and Audit, (DGFA), MOD, on 27 June 1968, requested that DGFA issue new instructions to the field regarding this problem.[233]

(U) On 1 June 1968, the RVN Prime Minister signed the PF Pay Raise Decree (Decree No

522 NT/QP). Listed below are the old and new rates. New rates were retroactive to 1 January 1968. It should be noted that this Decree established five new PF appointment positions: Assistant Platoon Leader, Rifle and Fire Team Leaders, Radio Operator, and Aidman.

Position	Present Pay Rates	New Pay Rates
Platoon Ldr	2700$VN	3300$VN
Asst Plt Ldr	2200	3100
Sqad Ldr	2500	2900
Rifle & Fire Tm Ldr	2200	2700
Radio Operator & Aidman	2200	2500
Rifleman	2200	2300

(U) The above pay rates were for the first pay echelon and low cost of living zone. An additional 200$VN was paid in the high cost of living zone. In addition to the above, each PF member and each authorized dependent was entitled to a 200$VN per month rice allowance. [234]

(U) Reports of inspections conducted by the RF/PF Inspection Department revealed that some sectors were short PF platoon and squad leaders. In this regard, JGS/RVNAF Memorandum No. 1269/TTM/1/NV/QT, 25 April 1968, provided for simplified procedures for recommendation and appointment for PF platoon and squad leaders. (A more complete coverage of the RF/PF is contained in Chapter VI.)

Civilian Irregular Defense Group

(U) Since 1 January 1968, commensurate with the goal of bringing Civilian Irregular Defense Group (CIDG) troops under the direct control of RVNAF and thereby eliminating CIDG as a separate US-sponsored military force, the 5th Special Forces Group Airborne (SFGA), in conjunction with the Vietnamese Special Forces High Command, converted four CIDG camps to RF status. In consonance with stated objectives, two CIDG camps, Ben Soi and Kinh Quan II, were transferred to RVNAF control--the Vietnamese Special Forces (VNSF). These transfers represented the goal of the program--to help train the VNSF to lead, fight, and command without advisors.

(U) During 1967 the CIDG AWOL rate varied from 12 per 1,000 in January to 11.5 per 1,000 in October with little fluctuation during the intervening months. During the second half of 1968, increased emphasis was given to accurate CIDG strength accounting. Strength reports were required as of payday by each detachment employing Camp Strike or Mobile Strike Force personnel to aid in eliminating unauthorized payments to CIDG personnel.

(U) Prior to 1968, few awards were given by the VNSF to CIDG personnel in recognition of valor. As a result of increased counterpart/advisor intensified reporting and awards management, the number of valor awards given to CIDG rose substantially. CIDG forces authorized

the 5th SFGA were several thousand understrength. In all Corps areas, VNSF recruiting teams were active in bringing up the CIDG troop strength level.

(U) In consonance with the established objectives of the Special Forces medical program, the 5th SFGA operated four permanent type CIDG hospitals and one large dispensary servicing 5,946 patients. Special Forces medical personnel trained 295 indigenous nurses and 1,230 CIDG medical aidmen to further help the subprogram of establishing an indigenous medical program in-country. Over 3,840 MEDCAP missions were conducted in treatment of 824,318 indigenous persons as compared with 723,890 indigenous personnel in 1967.

(C) CIDG strength at the end of 1968 was an estimated 45,000. [235]

FREE WORLD MILITARY ASSISTANCE FORCES

General

(S) The contributions of the FWMAF have grown each year since the end of FY65. The time of the greatest buildup was during FY66 and there has been a leveling off since that time (See Figure IV-3). The following table traces the growth in the assigned strength of these forces. The number of maneuver battalions, if any, is also shown.

Nation	End CY65	End CY66	End CY67	End CY68
Australia Strength	1,557	4,525	6,818	7,661
Maneuver Bns	1	2	2	3
Korea Strength	20,620	45,566	47,829	50,003
Maneuver Bns	10	22	22	22
New Zealand Strength	119	155	534	516
Philippine Strength	72	2,061	2,020	1,576
Republic of China Strength	20	23	31	29
Spain Strength	0	12	13	12
Thailand Strength	16	224	2,205	6,005
Maneuver Bns	0	0	1	3
TOTAL STRENGTH:	22,504	52,566	59,450	65,802
TOTAL MANEUVER BNS:	11	24	25	28

(S) The disposition of the FWMAF at the beginning of 1968 is as shown below: [236]

Nation	CTZ
Australia	III
Korea	
Army	II
Marine Corps	I
New Zealand	III
Philippines	III
Republic of China	All CTZ Hq
Spain	IV
Thailand	III

Republic of Korea

THIS PAGE DECLASSIFIED UNCLASSIFIED
Order Sec Army By DAC per
830324

DECLASSIFIED
E.O. 12356, Sec. 3.5
NSC Memo, 11/24/98
By STATE, NARA, Date

347 to 355

BLANK

80624

FRIENDLY FORCES -

1. B (TS), MACJ031, 16 Sep 68, Subj: MACV Command History, 1967 (U), Gp-1; Rpt (S), DA, 11 Dec 68, Subj: Army Progress Buildup Report (U), Gp-4.

2. Msg (S), COMUSMACV to CINCPAC, 091318Z Mar 68, Subj: Classified, Gp-4; Ltr (S), MACJ321 to CG III MAF, 3 Mar 68, Subj: Classified, Gp-4.

3. [illegible] (S), DA, 21 Aug 68, Subj: Army Progress Buildup Report (U), Gp-4.

4. Manual (U), MACCO, 1 Aug 67, Subj: Organization and Functions Manual, USMACV.

5. Msg (S), COMUSMACV to JCS, 100730Z Jun 68, Subj: Classified, Gp-4; Msg (S), COMUSMACV to CJCS, 031410Z Jun 68, Subj: Classified, Gp-4.

6. Msg (S), COMUSMACV to CG USARV, 140031Z Jun 68, Subj: US Control Headquarters for CMD (U), Gp-4; Msg (C), CG II FFORCEV to CG II FFORCEV (FWD), 200859Z Jun 68, Subj: Capital Military Assistance Command (U), Gp-4; Ltr (S), MACJ42-SU to DCG, USARV, 19 Jun 68, Subj: US Control Headquarters for CMD (U), Gp-4; Msg (S), COMUSMACV to Cdr 7AF, 221308Z Aug 68, Subj: Defense of Saigon/Gia Dinh (U), Gp-4.

7. Msg (TS), COMUSMACV to CINCPAC, 191132Z Feb 68, Subj: Command Relationships (U), Gp-1.

8. Paper (U), Mr. George Jacobson, Mission Coordinator, n.d., Subj: US Country Team in Vietnam.

9. Bklt (TS), MACJ031, 16 Sep 68, Subj: MACV Command History, 1967 (U), Gp-1; Msg (C), COMUSMACV to JCS, 051145Z Jan 69, Subj: Data on US and Other FWMAF (U), Gp-4; Msg (S), JCS to CINCPAC, 061701Z Apr 68, Subj: PACOM Force Levels (U), Gp-4.

10. Rpt (S), DA, 10 Jan 68, Subj: Army Progress Buildup Report (U), Gp-4; Msg (C), COMUSMACV to JCS, 051145Z Jan 69, Subj: Data on US and Other FWMAF (U), Gp-4.

11. Msg (TS), COMUSMACV to JCS, 310220Z Mar 68, Subj: Not Stated, Gp-4.

12. Msg (TS), COMUSMACV to JCS, 070530Z Apr 68, Subj: Additive Force (U), Gp-4.

13. Msg (S), JCS to CINCPAC, 061701Z Apr 68, Subj: PACOM Force Levels (U), Gp-4.

14. Msg (S), JCS to CINCPAC, 061845Z Apr 68, Subj: US Forces RVN (U), Gp-4; Msg (S), COMUSMACV to CINCPAC, 150833Z Apr 68, Subj: PACOM Force Levels (U), Gp-4; Rpt (S), DA, 25 Sep 68, Subj: Army Progress Buildup Report (U), Gp-4.

15. Rps (S), MACJ3, 21 Nov 68, Subj: Historical Summary for Oct 68 (U), Gp-4.

16. Rpt (TS), MACJ3, 20 Feb 68, Subj: Historical Summary for Jan 68 (U), Gp-4.

17. Msg (S) DCG USARV to CINCUSARPAC, 081140Z Feb 68, Subj: Deferral of Civilianization Program (U), Gp-4.

18. Msg (S), COMUSMACV to CINCPAC, 151058Z Feb 68, Subj: Deferral of Civilianization Program (U), Gp-4.

19. Msg (S), CINCUSARPAC to DA, 091840Z Mar 68, Subj: Deferral of Civilianization Program (U), Gp-4.

20. Msg (S), JCS to CINCPAC, 061701Z Apr 68, Subj: PACOM Force Levels (U), Gp-4.

21. Msg (S), CINCUSARPAC to DA, 091840Z Mar 68, Subj: Deferral of Civilianization Pro-Program (U), Gp-4; Msg (S), COMUSMACV to CINCPAC, 180915Z Jun 68, Subj: Civilianization Program (U), Gp-4; Msg (S), COMUSMACV to CINCPAC, 141210Z Jul 68, Subj: Quarterly Report, Civilianization Program (U), Gp-4.

22. Msg (S), CINCPAC to JCS, 041948Z Oct 68, Subj: Program 6 Civilianization (U), Gp-4.

23. Rpt (TS), MACJ3, 18 Dec 68, Subj: Historical Summary for November 1968 (U), Gp-4; Rpt (TS), MACJ3, 20 Jan 69, Subj: Historical Summary for December 1968 (U), Gp-4.

24. Bklt (TS), MACJ031, 16 Sep 68, Subj: MACV Command History, 1967 (U), Gp-1.

25. Rpt (S), MACMA, 10 Jan 69, Subj: Quarterly Historical Study, RCS/MACJ5-07 (U), Gp-None.

26. Op. cit. #24.

27. Msg (S), COMUSMACV to CINCPAC, 230411Z Jan 68, Subj: Infantry Battalions and Infantry Company Packets (U), Gp-4; Rpt (S), DA, 7 Feb 68, Subj: Army Progress Buildup Report (U), Gp-4.

28. Msg (S), DA to COMUSMACV, 310412Z Jan 68, Subj: Deployment of Infantry Battalions/Packets (U), Gp-4.

29. Msg (S), CG AMERICAL DIV to COMUSMACV, 031300Z Apr 68, Subj: COMUSMACV Visit to Americal Div, 3 Apr 68 (U), Gp-4.

30. Msg (S), COMUSMACV to CINCPAC, 201439Z Feb 68, Subj: Standardization of Army Bns (U), Gp-4; Msg (S), COMUSMACV to CG USARV, 120247Z Feb 68, Subj: Artillery Support for Light Infantry Brigades (U), Gp-4; Msg (S), COMUSMACV to CG USARV, 120248Z Feb 68, Subj: Artillery Support for Light Infantry Brigades (U), Gp-4.

31. Msg (S), CG USARV to COMUSMACV, 011156Z Jan 68, Subj: Assignment Status of 1st Brigade, 101st Abn Div (U), Gp-4; Msg (S), COMUSMACV to CG USARV, 210032Z Jan 68, Subj: US Airborne Force Requirements, RVN (U), Gp-4; Ltr (S), HQ USARV (ACHGC-P), 10 Jan 68, Subj: Requirement for US Airborne Forces in Vietnam (U), Gp-4; Msg (S), CINCPAC to COMUSMACV, 120519Z Jan 68, Subj: Second Airmobile Division (U), Gp-4; Msg (S), COMUSMACV to CINCPAC, 161131Z Feb 68, Subj: Second Airmobile Division (U), Gp-4; Msg (S), CINCPAC to JCS, 212239Z Feb 68, Subj: Second Airmobile Division (U),

Gp-4; Msg (S), JCS to CINCPAC, 052049Z Mar 68, Subj: Second Airmobile Division (U), Gp-3.

32. Msg (S), COMUSMACV to CINCPAC, 250649Z Jan 68, Subj: Requirements for Mobile Riverine Force (MRF) (U), Gp-4.

33. Memo (S), AVHGC-FD, HQ USARV, 7 Feb 68, Subj: Riverine Organization of the 9th Inf Div (U), Gp-4; Ltr (C), MACJ312, 21 Feb 68, Subj: Riverine Organization of the 9th Inf Div (U), Gp-4.

34. Msg (S), CG USARV to COMUSMACV, 010900Z May 68, Subj: Move of the 9th Infantry Division to the Delta (U), Gp-4; Rpt (S), DA, 31 Jul 68, Subj: Army Progress Buildup Report (U), Gp-4.

35. Msg (C), CG II FFORCEV to CG 1st Inf Div, 060912Z Sep 68, Subj: Battalion Exchange (U), Gp-4; Msg (U), CG II FFORCEV to COMUSMACV, 060913Z Sep 68, Subj: Riverine Force Generation.

36. Memo (C), MACJ322, 31 Mar 68, Subj: USARV Long-Range Patrol Conference, 28 Mar 68 (U), Gp-4.

37. Msg (S), CG PCV to COMUSMACV, 131535Z Aug 68, Subj: Status of the 3d Bde, 82d Abn Div (U), Gp-4; Rpt (S), DA, 7 Oct 68, Subj: Army Progress Buildup Report (U), Gp-4.

38. Msg (U), DA to CINCSTRIKE, 261353Z Aug 68, Subj: Redesignation of Airmobile Divisions.

39. Msg (S), COMUSMACV to CG USARV, 120348Z Mar 68, Subj: III MAF Augmentation (U), Gp-4; Msg (S), COMUSMACV to CG III MAF, 120347Z Mar 68, Subj: Augmentation, US Army (U), Gp-4; Msg (C), COMUSMACV to CG USARV, 021201Z Aug 68, Subj: US Army Augmentation to III MAF Staff (U), Gp-4.

40. Msg (S), JCS to CINCPAC, 081616Z Jun 68, Subj: Classified, Gp-4; Rpt (S), DA, 30 Oct 68, Subj: Army Progress Buildup Report (U), Gp-4; Rpt (TS), MACJ3, 18 May 68, Subj: Monthly Historical Summary, Apr 68 (U), Gp-4.

41. Rpt (S), DA, 18 Dec 68, Subj: Army Progress Buildup Report (U), Gp-4; Msg (C), COMUSMACV to JCS, 051145Z Jan 69, Subj: Data on US and FWMAF (U), Gp-4.

42. Rpt (S), DA, 10 Jan 68, Subj: Army Progress Buildup Report (U), Gp-4; Rpt (S), MACJ-341, 9 May 68, Subj: Quarterly Evaluation Report, Jan-Mar 68 (U), Gp-4; Bklt (TS), MACJ031, 16 Sep 68, Subj: MACV Command History, 1967 (U), Gp-1.

43. Msg (S), COMUSMACV to CINCPAC, 131625Z Feb 68, Subj: Additional US Forces to RVN (U), Gp-4; Msg (S), JCS to CINCPAC, 132252Z Feb 68, Subj: Additional Air Support SVN (U), Gp-4; Msg (S), JCS to CMC, 130341Z Feb 68, Subj: Classified, Gp-4; Msg (S), COMUSMACV to Cdr 7AF, 161043Z Feb 68, Subj: Ivy Tree (U), Gp-4; Msg (S), CG III MAF to CG 1st MARDIV, 171544Z Feb 68, Subj: Not Stated, Gp-4; Msg (TS), CG III MAF to COMUSMACV, 251426Z Jun 68, Subj: Not Stated, Gp-4; Msg (S), COMUSMACV to CINCPAC, 280812Z Jul 68, Subj: Deployment of RLT-27 (U), Gp-4; Msg (S), JCS to CMC, 10194 Z Aug 68, Subj: Redeployment of RLT-27 (U), Gp-4; Msg (S), COMUSMACV to JCS,

060433Z Sep 68, Subj: Redeployment of RLT-27 (U), Gp-4; Rpt (S), DA, 20 Mar 68, Subj: Army Progress Buildup Report (U), Gp-4.

44. Msg (C), COMUSMACV to JCS, 051145Z Jan 69, Subj: Data on US and Other FWMAF (U), Gp-4; Rpt (S), DA, 18 Dec 68, Subj: Army Progress Buildup Report (U), Gp-4.

45. Rpt (S), 7AF, Jan 68, Subj: Command Status Report (U), Gp-3.

46. Rpt (S), 7AF, Jun 68, Subj: Command Status Report (U), Gp-3.

47. Rpt (S), 7AF, Dec 68 and Jan 69, Subj: Command Status Report (U), Gp-3; Msg (C), COMUSMACV to JCS, 051145Z Jan 69, Subj: Data on US and FWMAF (U), Gp-4.

48. Bklt (TS), MACJ031, 16 Sep 68, Subj: MACV Command History, 1967, Gp-1; Rpt (S), MACV, n.d., Subj: Year-End Review of Vietnam, 1968 (U), Gp-4; Msg (C), COMUSMACV to JCS, 051145Z Jan 69, Subj: Data on US and FWMAF (U), Gp-4.

49. DF (S), MACJ311, 16 Jan 68, Subj: Modernization of RVNAF (U), Gp-4.

50. Rpt (TS), MACJ3, Jan 68, Subj: Monthly Historical Summary, Jan 68 (U), Gp-4.

51. Msg (S), COMUSMACV to CINCPAC, 091250Z Mar 68, Subj: FY69-70 RVNAF Force Levels (U), Gp-4.

52. Msg (S), JCS to CINCPAC, 172116Z Apr 68, Subj: RVNAF Improvement & Modernization (U), Gp-4.

53. Msg (S), COMUSMACV to CINCPAC, 150106Z Mar 68, Subj: RVNAF Force Levels (U), Gp-4.

54. Ltr (C), MACJ311 to CJCS, 9 Apr 68, Subj: Not Stated, Gp-4.

55. Op. cit. #52.

56. Op. cit. #52.

57. Msg (S), COMUSMACV to CINCPAC, 240205Z Apr 68, Subj: RVNAF Improvement and Modernization (U), Gp-4.

58. Rpt (TS), MACJ3, 18 May 68, Subj: Monthly Historical Summary, Apr 68 (U)m Gp-4.

59. Rpt (TS), MACJ3, 21 Jul 68, Subj: Monthly Historical Summary, June 1968, (U), Gp-4.

60. Msg (S), JCS to CINCPAC, 152255Z Nov 68, Subj: RVNAF Improvement and Modernization (U), Gp-4; Rpt (S), DA, 31 Jul 68, Subj: Army Progress Buildup Report (U), Gp-4; Ltr (S), MACMA-FS to COMUSMACV, et al., 27 Aug 68, Subj: RVNAF Improvement and Modernization (U), Gp-4.

61. Msg (S), JCS to CINCPAC, 252158Z Oct 68, Subj: RVNAF Improvement and Modernization (U), Gp-4.

62. Fact Sheet (S), MACMA-SA, 6 Oct 68, Subj: Force Structure Increases (U), Gp-4.

63. Rpt (S), DA, 6 Nov 68, Subj: Army Progress Buildup Report (U), Gp-4; Msg (S), COMUSMACV to CINCPAC, 090515Z Nov 68, Subj: Implementation of the Phase II Plan for RVNAF Improvement and Modernization (U), Gp-4.

64. Msg (S), COMUSMACV to CINCPAC, 090515Z Nov 68, Subj: Implementation of Phase II Plan for RVNAF Improvement and Modernization (U), Gp-4; Ltr (S), CofS, MACV to CofS, JGS, 22 Dec 68, Subj: Not Stated, Gp-None.

65. Msg (S), COMUSMACV to CINCPAC, 240442Z Nov 68, Subj: RVNAF Improvement & Modernization (U), Gp-4.

66. Rpt (S), DA, 27 Nov 68, Subj: Army Progress Buildup [illegible], Gp-4.

67. Rpt (S), MACMA, 10 Jan 69, Subj: Historical Summary, 4th Qtr CY [illegible], Gp-4; Msg (S), COMUSMACV to CINCPAC, 231430Z Dec 68, Subj: T-Day Planning for the RVNAF Improvement and Modernization Program (U), Gp-4.

68. Msg (S), COMUSMACV to CINCPAC, 261320Z Dec 68, Subj: RVNAF [illegible]ment and Modernization-Phase II (U), Gp-4.

69. Msg (S), COMUSMACV to CINCPAC, 280130Z Feb 68, Subj: Weaponry for RVNAF (U), Gp-4.

70. Op. cit. #49.

71. Ltr (C), MACJ311 to CofS, MACV, 20 Jan 68, Subj: Not Stated, Gp-4.

72. Msg (C), COMUSMACV to DCG, USARV, 210015Z Feb 68, Subj: Issue of M-16A1 Rifles to RVNAF (U), Gp-4.

73. Msg (S), JCS to CINCPAC, 142325Z Mar 68, Subj: Weaponry of RVNAF (U), Gp-4.

74. Msg (S), COMUSMACV to CINCPAC, 240205Z Apr 68, Subj: RVNAF Improvement and Modernization (U), Gp-4.

75. Ltr (C), MACJ42-SU to CofS Log, JGS. 13 Jun 68, Subj: Not Stated, Gp-4.

76. Rpt (S), DA, 10 Jul 68, Subj: Army Progress Buildup Report (U), Gp-4.

77. Rpts (S), DA, 24 Jul 68, 18 Sep 68, 13 Nov 68, 5 Jan 69, Subj: Army Progress Buildup Report (U), Gp-4.

78. Rpts (S), DA, 17 Jul 68, 5 Jan 69, Subj: Army Progress Buildup Report (U), Gp-4.

79. Op. cit #69.

80. Op. cit. #73.

81. Op. cit. #74

82. Rpts (S), DA, 24 Jul 68, 5 Jan 69, Subj: Army Progress Buildup Report (U). Gp-4.

83. Msg (S), COMUSMACV to CG USARV, 020555Z Feb 68, Subj: Equipment for RVNAF (U), Gp-4.

84. DF (C), MACJ311, 11 Mar 68, Subj: M-60 Machine Gun Distribution Plan (U), Gp-4; Ltr (C), MACJ311, 13 Mar 68, Subj: Not Stated, Gp-4.

85. Op. cit. #73.

86. Msg (S), COMUSMACV to CINCPAC, 240205Z Apr 68, Subj: RVNAF Improvement and Modernization (U), Gp-4; Rpt (S), DA, 17 Jul 68, Subj: Army Progress Buildup Report (U), Gp-4.

87. Rpts (S), DA, 17 Jul 68, 24 Jul 68, 18 Sep 68, 18 Dec 68, 5 Jan 69, Subj: Army Progress Buildup Report (U), Gp-4.

88. Talking Paper (C), 6 Mar 68, Subj: 105mm Howitzers (U), Gp-4. Rpt (S), MACJ3 to JCS J3, 5 Apr 68, Subj: Status of Outstanding Actions (U), Gp-4; Rpt (S), DA, 5 Jun 68, Subj: Army Progress Buildup Report (U), Gp-4.

89. Msg (S), COMUSMACV to CINCPAC, 240205Z Apr 68, Subj: RVNAF Improvement & Modernization (U), Gp-4.

90. Rpts (S), DA, 24 Jul 68, 18 Dec 68, 5 Jan 69, Subj: Army Progress Buildup Report (U), Gp-4.

91. Op. cit. #89.

92. Rpts (S), DA, 25 Sep 68, 27 Nov 68, 5 Jan 69, Subj: Army Progress Buildup Report (U), Gp-4.

93. DF, MACJ311, 11 Mar 68, Subj: M29 81mm Mortar Issue Plan (U), Gp-4; Ltr (C), MACJ311 13 Mar 68, Subj: Not Stated, Gp-4; Msg (S), JCS to CINCPAC, 142325Z Mar 68, Subj: Weaponry for RVNAF (U), Gp-4.

94. Op. cit. #89.

95. Rpts (S), DA, 18 Sep 68, 6 Nov 68, 5 Jan 69, Subj: Army Progress Buildup Report (U), Gp-4.

96. DF (C), MACJ311, 2 Mar 68, Subj: M113 APCs (AVLB) (U), Gp-4.

97. Rpts (S), DA, 24 Jul 68, 18 Sep 68, 20 Nov 68, 5 Jan 69, Subj: Army Progress Buildup Report (U), Gp-4.

98. Op. cit. #89.

99. Op. cit. #97.

100. Fact Sheet (C), MACJ311, 14 Feb 68, Subj: Antitank Capability (U), Gp-4.

101. Op. cit. #73.

102. Rpt (S), MACV, 3 Feb 68, Subj: Year-End Wrap-up Report, CY67 (U), Gp-4.

103. Rpt (S), MACJ1, n.d., Monthly Historical Report, Jan 68 (U), Gp-4.

104. Memo (C), COMUSMACV to AMEMB SAIGON, 16 Jan 68, Subj: Corson Manpower Report (U), Gp-4.

105. JGS Dir (U), MOD JGS RVNAF, 14 Feb 68, Subj: Recall of Prior Servicemen.

106. Fact Sheet (C), MACJ14, 1 Apr 68, Subj: Mobilization Procedures (U), Gp-4.

107. Memo (C), COMUSMACV to AMAMB, 2 Feb 68, Subj: MACV Recommendations for Exemptions from the Draft (U), Gp-4.

108. Memo (U), MACJ00 COMUSMACV to AMAMB, 4 Feb 68, Subj: MACV Recommendations for Exemptions from the Draft.

109. Fact Sheet (C), MACJ14, 4 Mar 68, Subj: Mobilization Measures (U), Gp-4.

110. Memo (U), MOD JGS/RVNAF, 3 Feb 68, Subj: Conscriptees Drafted into the Regional Forces.

111. Ltr (U), MACJ14, 8 Mar 68, Subj: Central and Regional Committees to Encourage Military Recruiting, w/1 incl; Decree Law #90, 18 Feb 68.

112. Memo (U), MACJOIR to AMAMB, 30 Apr 68, Subj: Including Paramilitary Forces in GVN General Mobilization. Fact Sheet (C) MACJ14, 1 Apr 68, Subj: Mobilization procedures (U), Gp-4.

113. Ltr (S), MACJ14 to AMAMB, 3 May 68, Subj: Additional Mobilization Procedures (U), Gp-4.

114. Rpt (S), MACV, 13 Dec 68, Subj: Year-End Wrapup Report (U), Gp-4.

115. Fact Sheet (U), AMEMB SAIGON, 9 Sep 68, Subj: Mission Council Mobilization; Minutes (C), AMEMB SAIGON, 4 Nov 68, Subj: Mission Council Meeting (U), Gp-None.

116. Minutes (C), AMEMB SAIGON, 4 Nov 68, Subj: Mission Council Meeting (U), Gp-None.

117. Ltr (S), CofS MACV to CofS JGS, 22 Oct 68, Subj: Not Stated, Gp-4; Ltr (S), CofS MACV to CofS JGS, 22 Nov 68, Subj: Not Stated, Gp-4.

118. Rpt (S), MACV, 3 Feb 68, Subj: Year-End Wrap-up Report, CY67 (U), Gp-4.

119. Rpt (S), MACJ341, 9 May 68, Subj: Quarterly Evaluation Report, Jan - Mar 68 (U), Gp-4.

120. Rpt (S), MACJ341, 18 Aug 68, Subj: Quarterly Evaluation Report, Apr - Jun 68, Gp-4.

121. Fact Sheet (C), MACJ14, n.d., Subj: RVNAF Desertions, CY67/CY68 by Month (U), Gp-None.

122. Msg (S), SECDEF to AMEMB SAIGON, 291942Z Aug 68, Subj: Not Stated, Gp-4.

123. Ltr (U), MACJ14 to CJGS, 11 Sep 68, Subj: Not Stated.

124. Memo (U), MOD JGS/RVNAF, 11 Jan 68, Subj: Preventive Measures Against AWOL and Desertion During the Tet Season.

125. Embtel (C), COMUSMACV to CJCS, 110440Z Dec 68, Subj: RVNAF Desertions (U), Gp-4.

126. Op. cit. #118.

127. Fact Sheet (S), MACJ311, 5 Feb 68, Subj: Monthly Evaluation of the Reorganization of RVNAF (U), Gp-4.

128. Msg (S), COMUSMACV to CINCPAC, 211112Z Mar 68, Subj: Report-Assessment of RVNAF Status (as of 29 Feb 68) (U), Gp-1.

129. Ltr (U), COMUSMACV to MND, 5 Mar 68, Subj: Not Stated.

130. Memo (U), MOD JGS/RVNAF, 5 Feb 68, Subj: Promotion of RVNAF Military Personnel.

131. Ltr (U), COMUSMACV to CJGS, 17 Feb 68, Subj: Not Stated.

132. Data Sheet (U), MACJ14, 26 Feb 68, Subj: Morale Services.

133. DF (U), MACJ1 to Cof S, 10 Dec 68, Subj: RVNAF Promotions.

134. JGS Dir #630-400 (U),n.d., Subj: Procedures for Promotion of RVNAF Personnel.

135. DF (U), MACJ1 to CofS, 10 Dec 68, Subj: RVNAF Promotions; Msg (C), COMUSMACV to CINCPAC, 160448Z Jan 69, Subj: RVNAF Promotions (U), Gp-4.

136. Rpt (S), MACV, 13 Dec 68, Subj: Year-End Wrap-up Report (U), Gp-4; Fact Sheet (C), MACJ14, 8 Jan 69, Subj: RVNAF Promotions (U), Gp-4.

137. Fact Sheet (C), MACJ14, 8 Jan 69, Subj: RVNAF Promotions (U), Gp-4.

138. Memo (U), JGS/RVNAF #601/TTM/1/PCTT/HCG/TTM/TQT/QSV/HCh, 22 Feb 68; NLtr (U), MACJ1, 15 Feb 69, Subj: Personnel Newsletter.

139. Fact Sheet (U), MACCO, n.d., Subj: Current Status of Pay, Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces (RVNAF).

140. Rpt (S), MACJ341, 3 Feb 68, Subj: MACV Year-end Wrap-up Report CY67 (U), Gp-4.

141. Ltr (U), COMUSMACV to MND, 4 Jan 68, Subj: Not Stated.

142. Memo (U), MACJ1, 19 Jan 68, Subj: Information Progress Report (U).

143. Rpt (C), MACJ1, 20 Sep 68, Subj: Monthly Historical Summary, August 1968 (U), Gp-4.

144. Ltr (U), MACJ16 to MND, 27 Jan 68, Subj: Not Stated.

145. Rpt (S), MACJ341, 9 May 68, Subj: Quarterly Evaluation, Jan - Mar 68 (U), Gp-4; Rpt (S), MACJ341, 18 Aug 68, Subj: Quarterly Evaluation , Apr - Jun 68 (U), Gp-4.

146. Ltr (U), MACJ14 to MR. GEORGE D. JACKSON, 10 Sep 68, Subj: Veterans Benefits.

147. Rpt (S), MACJ341, 3 Feb 69, Subj: MACV Year-End Wrap-up Report CY67(U), Gp-4; Rpt (S), MACJ4, Subj: Historical Summary for May, 1968 (U), Gp-4.

148. Bklt (TS), MACJ031, 16 Sep 68, Subj: MACV Command History, 1967 (U), Gp-1; Rpt (S), MACJ4, n.d., Subj: Historical Summary for Jun 68 (U), Gp-4.

149. Rpt (S), MACV, 3 Feb 68, Subj: Year-End Wrap-up Report CY67 (U), Gp-4; Fact Sheet (U), MACJ46, n.d., Subj: The RVNAF Commissary System.

150. Ltr (U), MACJ46, COMUSMACV to CJGS, 21 Jan 68, Subj: Not Stated; Fact Sheet (U), MACJ46, 18 Dec 68, Subj: RVNAF Commissary System.

151. Ltr (U), MACJ46 to MOD, GVN, 28 Apr 68, Subj: Not Stated; DF (U), MACJ4 to OMCAD 22 Aug 68, Subj: Taxation of RVNAF Commissary.

152. Rpt (S), MACJ4, n.d., Subj: Historical Summary for Dec 68 (U), Gp-4.

153. DF (C) MACT to SJS, 20 Mar 69, Subj: Draft 1968 MACV Command History (U), Gp-None.

154. Op. cit. #119.

155. Op. cit. #120.

156. Rpt (S), MACJ341, 13 Nov 68, Subj: Quarterly Evaluation Report (U), Gp-4.

157. Rpt (S), MACMA, n.d., Quarterly Historical Summary for 3d/4th Qtr CY68 (U), Gp-4.

158. Bklt (U), C&GS College, Dec 68, Subj: Military Review.

159. Rpt (TS), MACJ3, n.d., Subj: Monthly Historical Summary for Jun 68 (U), Gp-4; Rpt (S), MACMA, n.d., Subj: Quarterly Historical Summary for 3d/4th Qtr CY68 (U), Gp-4.

160. Rpts (TS), MACJ3, n.d.,, Subj: Monthly Historical Summary for March/June 1968 (U), Gp-4; Rpt (S), MACMA, n.d., Subj: Quarterly Historical Summary for 3d/4th Qtr CY68 (U), Gp-4.

161. Op. cit. #153.

162. Ibid.

163. Msg (C), COMUSMACV to DIA, 181011Z Mar 68, Subj: RVNAF Strength & Order of Battle (U), Gp-4; Bklt (TS), MACJ031, 16 Sep 68, Subj: MACV Command History, 1967 (U), Gp-1; Rpt (S), MACV, n.d., Subj: Year-End Wrap-up Report 1968 (U), Gp-4; Msg (C), COMUSMACV to DIA, 310856Z Mar 68, Subj: RVNAF Strenght and Order of Battle (U), Gp-4.

164. Rpt (S), MACJ3 MACV to J3 JGS, 15 Mar 68, Subj: Status of Outstanding Actions (U), Gp-4; Rpt (TS), MACJ3 Historical Summary for January 1968 (U), Gp-4.

165. Op. cit. #118.

166. Ltr (U), MACTN-AB, 5 Mar 68, Subj: Not Stated; Rpt (TS) MACJ3 Historical Summary for March, 1968 (U), Gp-4.

167. Rpt (S), MACJ3 to J3 JGS, 5 Apr 68, Subj: Status of Outstanding Actions (U), Gp-4.

168. Op. cit. #59.

169. Msg (C), COMUSMACV to SA I CTZ, 150455Z Mar 68, Subj: ARVN Utilisation of Forces (U), Gp-4.

170. Rpt (C), MACJ341, 30 Jun 68, Subj: Evaluation of the Impact of Arming the Vietnamese Army with the M-16 Rifle (U), Gp-4.

171. Briefing (C) MACJ312 to COMUSMACV, 7 Sep 68, Subj: Not Stated , Gp-None.

172. Rpt (TS), MACJ3, n.d., Subj: Monthly Historical Summary Nov 68 (U), Gp-4.

173. Op. cit. #114.

174. Msg (S), COMUSMACV to CINCPAC, 261320Z Dec 68, Subj: RVNAF Improvement & Modernization-Phase II (U), Gp-4.

175. Msg (C), COMUSMACV to JCS, 071428Z Jan 69, Subj: GVN Force: Strength Data (U), Gp-4; Rpt (TS), MACJ3, n.d., Monthly Historical Summary for No 68 (U), Gp-4.

176. MACV Dir 551-5 (U), n.d., Subj: Foreign Nationals-ARVN Interpreter Program; Nltr (U), MACJ1, 10 Jan 68, Subj: Personnel Newsletter.

177. Nltr (U), MACJ1, 16 Jun 68, Subj: Personnel Newsletter.

178. Nltr (U), MACJ1, 15 Aug 68, Subj: Personnel Newsletter.

179. Bklt (TS), MACJ031, 16 Sep 68, Subj: MACV Command History, 1967 (U), Gp-1; Rpt (S), MACJ341, 4 Feb 68, Subj: Quarterly Evaluation Report (U), Gp-4; Ltr (U), CHNAVADGRP VN to various commands, 1 May 68, Subj: Naval Advisors Handbook; Ltr (S), CINCPAC to various commands, 3 Aug 68, Subj: Military Assistance Plan for Vietnam (U), Gp-4.

180. Ltr (U), CHNAVADGRP VN to various commands, 1 May 68, Subj. Naval Advisors Handbook.

181. Ltr (U), COMUSMACV to CJGS, 20 Feb 68, Subj: Not Stated.

182. Ltr (U), COMUSMACV to MND, 4 Apr [illegible], Subj: Not Stated.

183. Rpt (S), MACJ3-051, 19 Oct 68, Subj: USMACV Regular Forces Advisory Report, Jul-Sep 68 (U), Gp-4.

184. Op. cit. #180.

185. Ltrs (C), COMNAVFORV to CINCPACFLT, 5 Nov 68, 8 Dec 68, 8 Jan 69, Subj: USNAVFORV Monthly Historical Summary, Oct, Nov, Dec 68 (U), Gp-None.

186. Op. cit. #180.

187. Ltr (C), COMNAVFORV to CINCPACFLT, 9 Feb, 5 Mar, 4 Apr 68, Subj: USNAVFORV Monthly Historical Summary, Jan-Mar 68 (U), Gp-None; Rpt (S), MACJ341, 9 May 68, Subj: Quarterly Evaluation Report (U), Gp-4.

188. Ltrs (C), COMNAVFORV to CINCPACFLT, 7 May, 5 Jun, 7 Jul 68, Subj: USNAVFORV Monthly Historical Summary, Apr-Jun 68 (U), Gp-None.

189. Op. cit. #185.

190. Op. cit. #187.

191. Ltrs (C), COMNAVFORV to CINCPACFLT, 4 Aug, 4 Sep, 4 Oct 68, Subj: USNAVFORV Monthly Historical Summary, Jul-Sep 68 (U), Gp-None.

192. Op. cit. #187.

193. Op. cit. #188.

194. Op. cit. #179.

195. Op. cit. #185.

196. Ltr (S), COMUSMACV to CJGS, 29 Mar 68, Subj: Not Stated, Gp-4.

197. Ltr (S), ACofS MACV to ACofS JGS, n.d., Subj: Not Stated, Gp-4.

198. Op. cit. #185.

199. Ltr (U), COMUSMACV to CJGS, 13 Jan 69, Subj: Not Stated.

200. Ltr (S), CINCPAC to various commands, 3 Aug 68, Subj: Military Assistance Plan for Vietnam (U), Gp-4.

201. Msg (C), CINCPAC to SECDEF, 022259Z Nov 68, Subj: Ship Loan Extension, CY69 (U), Gp-4.

202. Op. cit. #52.

203. Msg (S), COMNAVFORV to CINCPACFLT/COMUSMACV, 031011Z Sep 68, Subj: Classified, Gp-4.

204. Msg (S), CINCPACFLT to CINCPAC, 090421Z Nov 68, Subj: Classified, Gp-4.

205. Msg (S), COMUSMACV to CINCPAC, 180831Z Nov 68, Subj: Implementation of the Phase II Plan for RVNAF Improvement and Modernization (U), Gp-4.

206. Ltr (S), COMUSMACV to COMNAVFORV, 18 Nov 68, Subj: Implementation of the Phase II Plan for RVNAF Improvement and Modernization (U), Gp-None.

207. Msg (S), COMUSMACV to CINCPAC, 261320Z Dec 68, Subj: RVNAF Improvement and Modernization Phase II (U), Gp-4.

208. Op. cit. #200.

209. Rpt (S), MACJ341, 16 May 68, Subj: USMACV RVN Regular Forces Advisory Report (U), Gp-4.

210. Rpt (S), MACJ341, 31 Aug 68, Subj: USMACV RVN Regular Forces Advisory Report (U), Gp-4.

211. Rpt (S), MACJ3-051, 19 Dec 68, Subj: Addendum Number 1 to USMACV Regular Forces Advisory Report, 3d Qtr, CY-68-Air & Naval Forces Evaluations (U), Gp-4.

212. Rpt (C), MACJ3-051, 13 Mar 69, Subj: USMACV ARVN/Marine and Naval Forces Advisory Report (U), Gp-None.

213. Msg (S), COMUSMACV to CINCPAC, 212212Z Mar 68, Subj: Report - Assessment for RVNAF Status (as of 29 Feb 68) (U), Gp-4.

214. Rpt (S), MACJ341, 21 Mar 68, Subj: Assessment of RVNAF Status (U), Gp-4.

215. For a careful breakdown of the expansion and modernization program of VNAF prior to July, see Project CHECO Report, "Organization, Mission and Growth of the Vietnamese Air Force 1949-1969." Hq PACAF, Directorate, Tactical Evaluation CHECO Division, 8 Oct 68, Gp-1.

216. USMACV RVN Regular Forces Advisory Reoprt, "Air and Naval Forces Evaluations, 3d Qtr CY68," (S), Gp-4.

217. Ibid.

218. Msg (S), JCS to CINCPAC, 172116Z Apr 68, Subj: RVNAF Improvement and Modernization (U), Gp-4.

219. Msg (S), COMUSMACV to CINCPAC, 030610Z May 68, Subj: RVNAF Improvement and Modernization (U), Gp-4.

220. Memo (S), DEPSECDEF, 25 Jun 68, Quoted in Msg (S), JCS to CINCPAC, 261847Z Jun 68, Subj: RVNAF Improvement and Modernization (U), Gp-4.

221. Ltr (S), AFGP-XPR to MACV (MACMA-FS), 21 Aug 68, Subj: RVNAF Improvement and Modernizations (U), with 4 Atch, Gp-4.

222. Msg (S), COMUSMACV TO CINCPAC, 091515Z Nov 68, Subj: Implementation of the Phase II Plan for RVNAF (U), Gp-4.

223. Msg (S), COMUSMACV to CINCPAC, 250120Z Nov 68, Subj: Implementation of Phase II Plan for RVNAF Improvement and Modernization (U), Gp-4.

224. Rpt (S), DA, 27 Nov 68, Subj: Army Progress Buildup Report (U), Gp-4; Msg (S), COMUSMACV to CINCPAC, 261320Z Dec 68, Subj: RVNAF Improvement and Modernization-Phase II (U), Gp-4.

225. Bklt (TS), MACJ031, 16 Sep 68, Subj: MACV Command History, 1967 (U), Gp-1; Msg (C), COMUSMACV to DIA, 181011Z Mar 68, Subj: RVNAF Strength and Order of Battle (U), Gp-4.

226. Ltr (S), MACJ311 to CJCS, 17 Mar 68, Subj: Not Stated, Gp-None; Ltr (S), MACMA-FS to Chief, Naval Adv Gp, 31 Jul 68, Subj: Release of Vietnamese Marine Corps (VNMC) Spaces (U), Gp-3; Msg (S) CHNAVADVGRP to COMUSMACV, 190716Z Dec 68, Subj: VNMC Force Structure Increase (U), Gp-4.

227. Msg (S), COMUSMACV to CINCPAC, 261320Z Dec 68, Subj: RVNAF Improvement and Modernization-Phase II (U), Gp-4.

228. Msg (C), 071428Z Jan 69, Subj: GVN Forces Strength Data (U), Gp-4.

229. Msg (C), COMUSMACV to DIA, 181011Z Mar 68, Subj: RVNAF Strength and Order of Battle (U), Gp-4; DF (S), MACJ311 to CofS, et al., 31 Mar 68, Subj: Unit Authorization List for RVNAF FY68-69 (U), Gp-4.

230. Op. cit. #114.

231. Msg (C), COMUSMACV to JCS, 071428Z Jan 69, Subj: GVN Forces Strenght Data (U), Gp-4.

232. Nltr (U), MACJ1, 16 Jan 68, Subj: Personnel Newsletter.

233. Nltr (U), MACJ1, 15 Jul 68, Subj: Personnel Newsletter.

234. Nltr (U), MACJ1, 16 Jun 68, Subj: Personnel Newsletter.

235. Op. cit. #114.

236. Bklt (TS), MACJ031, 30 Jun 67, Subj: MACV Command History, 1966 (U), Gp-1; Rpt (S), MACJ341, 9 May 68, Subj: Quarterly Evaluation Jan-Mar 68 (U), Gp-4; Msg (C), COMUSMACV to JCS, 051145Z Jan 69, Subj: Data on US and other FWMAF (U), Gp-4.

237. Op. cit. #24.

238. Msg (TS), DA to CINCUSARPAC, 192227Z Jan 68, Subj: Classified, Gp-1.

239. Msg (S), DA to CINCUSARPAC, 260315Z Jan 68, Subj: Classified, Gp-3.

240. Msg (S), AMAMB SEOUL to SECSTATE, 310825Z Mar 68, Subj: Classified, Gp-4.

241. Msg (S), COMUSMACV to CINCPAC, 110535Z Feb 68, Subj: Classified, Gp-4.

242. Msg (S), SECDEF to JCS, 261729Z Feb 68, Subj: Classified, Gp-4.

243. Ltr (C), MACJ312 to COMROKFV, 30 Mar 68, Subj: Not Stated, Gp-4; Ltr (S), MACJ312 to DCG USARV, 2 Apr 68, Subj: Not Stated, Gp-4; Ltr (C), MACJ312 to COMROKFV, 19 May 68, Subj: Not Stated, Gp-4.

244. Msg (S), JCS to CINCPAC, 291609Z Feb 68, Subj: ROKAF Participation in South Vietnam (U), Gp-3.

245. Msg (S), CINCPAC to JCS, 292245Z Mar 68, Subj: ROKAF Participation in South Vietnam (U), Gp-4.

246. DF (C), MACJ14 to CofS, n d., Subj: ROKFV Retrograde Cargo (U), Gp-4; Ltr (U), MACJ45 to COMROKFV, 25 Apr 68, Subj: Not Stated.

247. Msg (C), COMUSMACV to COMUSKOREA, 181350Z Jul and 131952Z Aug 68, Subj: Classified, Gp-4; Msg (C) COMUSMACV to COMUSKOREA, 210855Z Jul 68, Subj: Classified, Gp-4; Msgs (C), COMUSKOREA to COMUSMACV, 070942Z Aug 68, 081232Z Aug 68, 030535Z Sep 68, Subj: Classified, Gp-4.

248. Briefing (S), MACJ312, 31 Oct 67, Subj: Additional Thai Forces for Vietnam (U), Gp-None.

249. Rpt (TS), MACJ3, 10 Dec 67, Subj: Monthly Historical Summary, Nov 67 (U), Gp-4; Fact Sheet (S), MACJ312, 28 Dec 67, Subj: FWMAF Authorized Strengths, FY65-67 and Current Disposition of Forces (U), Gp-4; Msg (C), COMUSMACTHAI to CINCPAC, 190803Z Dec 68, Subj: RTAVF Status Update Message No. 20 (U), Gp-4.

250. Fact Sheet (S), MACJ312, 17 Jan 68, Subj: US Force Requirements Thailand (U), Gp-4.

251. Fact Sheet (S), MACJ312, 9 Feb 68, Subj: Status of Royal Thai Army Expeditionary Division (RTAED) (U), Gp-4.

252. Msg (C), COMUSMACV to COMUSMACT, 201415Z Feb 68, Subj: Royal Thai Army Volunteer Force (RTAVF) (U), Gp-4.

253. Msg (C), COMUSMACTHAI to CINCPAC, 200545Z Apr 68, Subj: Headquarters Royal Thai Forces Vietnam (RTAVF) (U), Gp-4; DF (S), MACFWMAO, 18 Oct 68, Subj: FWMAF Historical Summary for the period 1 Jul - 30 Sep 68 (U), Gp-1; Table (U), HQ RTFV, 19 Jun 68, Subj: TDA, HQ RTFV (U).

254. Msg (C), AMEMB MANILA to SECSTATE, 310832Z Jul 68, Subj: PHILCAG (U), Gp-2; Msg (C), AMEMB MANILA to SECSTATE, 061027Z Aug 68, Subj: PHILCAG (U), Gp-None; Msg (S), AMEMB MANILA to SECSTATE, 08 829Z Aug 68, Subj: PHILCAG (U), Gp-None; Msg (S), 315 AD to CHJUSMAGPHIL, 230532Z Aug 68, Subj: Manifest Verification (U), Gp-4.

255. DF (U), MACFWMAO, 20 Sep 68, Subj: Change in FWMAF Designation (U).

256. Msg (U), AMEMB MANILA to SECSTATE, 050829Z Sep 68, Subj: PHILCAG (U); DF (U), MACFWMAO to MACJ03, 13 Oct 68, Subj: Summary of Weekly Activities (U).

257. Fact Sheet (S), MACJ312, 28 Dec 67, Subj: FWMAF Authorized Strengths, FY65-67 and Current Disposition of Forces (U), Gp-4; DF (C), MACFWMAO to MACJ031, 20 Apr 68, Subj: Free World Military Assistance Historical Summary for the period 1 Jan - 31 Mar 68 (U), Gp-1; DF (S), MACFWMAO to MACJ031, 18 Oct 68, Subj: Free World Military Historical Summary for the period 1 Jul - 30 Sep 68 (U), Gp-1; Rpt (S), USMACV, 4 Dec 68, Subj: Year-end Review of Vietnam (U), Gp-4.

258. Rpt (S), USMACV, 4 Dec 68, Subj: Year-end Review of Vietnam (U), Gp-4; DF (U), MACFWMAO to MACJ02, 2 Dec 68, Subj: Change in Organization of New Zealand Armed Forces (U).

259. Rpt (S), USMACV, 4 Dec 68, Subj: Year-end Review of Vietnam, CY68 (U), Gp-4.

260. DF (S), MACFWMAO to MACJ031, 18 Oct 68, Subj: Free World Military Historical Summary for the period 1 Jul - 30 Sep 68 (U), Gp-1.

CHAPTER V

OPERATIONS IN THE REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM

GROUND OPERATIONS

Background

(U) Before discussing the ground operations in RVN during 1968, it is well to consider the various environments in which these operations took place. The Republic of Vietnam is almost 570 miles in length and its width varies from 135 in the south to 45 miles near the 17th parallel; its area is about 66,000 square miles. Starting at the south, the Mekong Delta is low, flat, and poorly drained. A few miles north of Saigon, a forest-covered mountain range with peaks up to 8,000 feet begins and extends to the north beyond the 17th parallel. Between these extremes of Delta and mountains are coastal plains and jungle-covered plateaus. The climate of RVN, generally typical of that of all SEASIA, is characterized by alternate dry and rainy seasons. In the south the summer monsoons prevail from June through September, while during the winter months it is very dry. The seasons are reversed in the north. From north to south, RVN is divided into four CTZ for tactical operations--I CTZ the most northern zone and IV CTZ the most southern zone. See Figure V-1 for location and Chapter IV for command assignments of friendly forces.[1]

(C) During the past several years, the great majority of ground operations were referred to in both official correspondence and the national press as "search-and-destroy" operations. In April COMUSMACV directed that this general term be discontinued and that operations be defined in basic military terminology which appropriately described the type of operation. Some examples cited were: "spoiling attack, ambush, raid, and reconnaissance-in-force." Regardless of the name assigned, the major share of US, RVNAF, and other FWMAF effort continued to be the tedious and seemingly endless task of locating and then destroying small enemy formations. Literally thousands of these small unit actions were conducted each week. In addition, hundreds of major (battalion size or larger) operations were conducted during the year. The large number of both major and minor operations conducted during 1968 precludes detailed coverage in this history. Annex D contains a listing of operations resulting in greater than 99 enemy KIA. The operations which follow were selected for inclusion here as representative of ground action and/or were of special significance within the several CTZs.[2]

Rules of Engagement

(TS) During 1968, as in 1966 and 1967, US/FWMA forces, when operating near a border of RVN, were subject to ground rules that were primarily politically-based. These ground rules, called Rules of Engagement, were established by JCS for the border areas of Cambodia, Laos, and the DMZ and were modified and updated as necessary and republished quarterly. The instructions and even the knowledge of their existence, would be held closely, with access limited

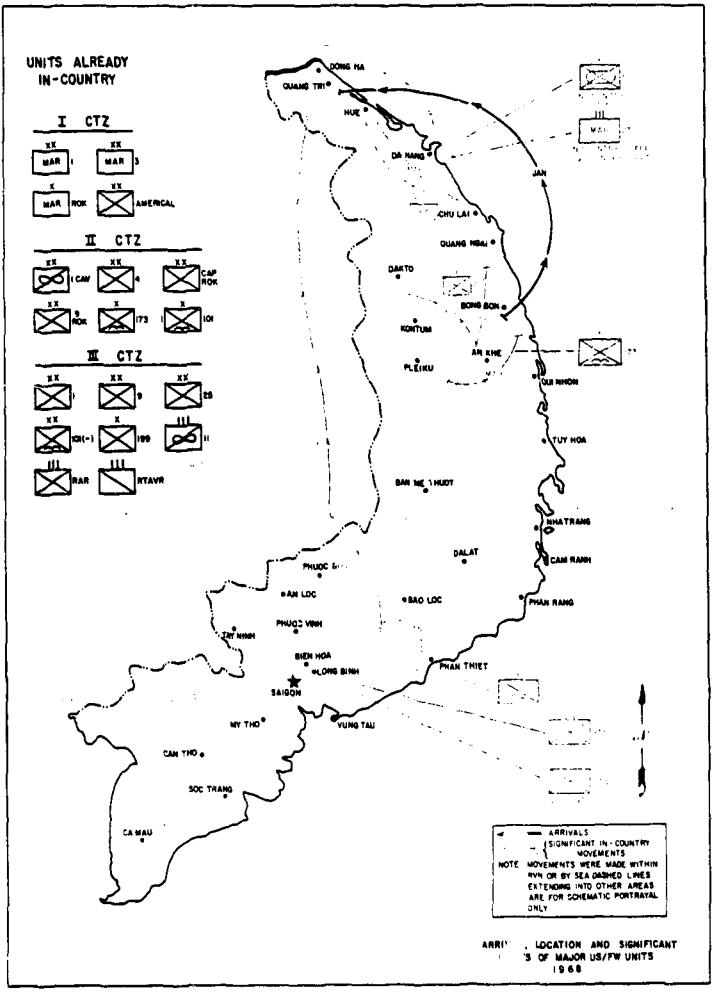

UNITS ALREADY IN-COUNTRY
I CTZ
MAR 1
MAR 3
MAR ROK
AMERICAL
II CTZ
1 CAV
4
CAP ROK
ROK
173
IOH
III CTZ
1
9
25
IOH(-)
199
11
RAR
NTAVR
DONG HA
QUANG TRI
HUE
DA NANG
CHU LAI
QUANG NGAI
DAKTO
BONG SON
KONTUM
AN KHE
PLEIKU
QUI NHON
TUY HOA
BAN ME THUOT
NHATRANG
DALAT
CAM RANH
PHUOC
AN LOC
BAO LOC
PHAN RANG
PHUOC VINH
TAY NINH
BIEN HOA
LONG BINH
PHAN THIET
SAIGON
MY THO
VUNG TAU
CAN THO
SOC TRANG
CA MAU
ARRIVALS
SIGNIFICANT IN-COUNTRY MOVEMENTS
NOTE: MOVEMENTS WERE MADE WITHIN RVN OR BY SEA DASHED LINES EXTENDING INTO OTHER AREAS ARE FOR SCHEMATIC PORTRAYAL ONLY
LOCATION AND SIGNIFICANT
'S OF MAJOR US/FW UNITS
1968

FIGURE V-1

to persons specifically authorized on a need-to-know basis. No public disclosure of any of the substance contained in the messages pertaining to the Rules of Engagement or actions taken under any authority contained in the messages would be made, except as authorized by MACV. The Rules of Engagement for the three border areas applied to US and FWMA forces only. However, JCS, CINCPAC, and COMUSMACV constantly stressed the fact that personnel in positions to influence RVNAF operations conducted near the borders would make every reasonable effort to insure that such operations were conducted under the Rules of Engagement applicable to US and FWMA forces.[3]

(TS) The "Ru[illegible]ere not to be construed as prohibiting commanders from defending their units against armed a[illegible]k. All US and other FWMAF commanders were authorized to take necessary counteractions against VC/NVA forces in exercising the right of self-defense and defending their units against armed attack with all means at their disposal.[4]

Cambodia

(TS) The Rules of Engagement for Cambodia, at the beginning of 1968, required that major subordinate commanders would, when planning operations near the RVN/Cambodian border, request approval in advance for necessary actions or counteractions against VC/NVA forces which might involve returning fire or maneuvering into Cambodia, either in attaining objectives in RVN or in the exercise of the right of self-defense. In emergency situations, US and FWMA forces were authorized to take counteractions in exercising the right of self-defense against VC/NVA attacks directed at US/RVN/FWMA forces from locations inside Cambodia. Such countermeasures might include artillery and air strikes against an enemy firing from the Cambodian side of the border or even the maneuver of friendly forces into Cambodia if actually engaged with an enemy force and in the judgement of the friendly force commander, such maneuver was necessary for the preservation of his force. However, no Cambodian force would be engaged except in self-defense, nor would Cambodian villages or populated areas be attacked by air, artillery fire, or ground forces.[5]

(TS) Two additional but minor restrictions, originated in 1967, continued into 1968. Defoliation, crop destruction, and herbicide operations in the vicinity of the border were restricted. In addition, the use of clear searchlights was limited to the degree that no clear lights were to be directed into Cambodia against populated areas for the purpose of harassment. Infrared light could be directed into Cambodia as required for effective surveillance.[6]

(S) Authority was not granted to initiate operations in Cambodia to obtain objectives in SVN.

Laos

(TS) The 1968 Rules of Engagement for Laos, while essentially the same as those for Cambodia were slightly less restrictive. Authority was granted to employ artillery fire against valid military targets in Laos except for certain limitations in firing on populated areas. Advance approval for planning operations near the Laos/RVN border, where involvement with forces in Laos was probable, was not required; however, commanders were required to keep MACV Hq informed during such planning. In addition, Laotian villages and populated areas could be attacked when fire was received therefrom or when, in the judgment of the US/FWMAF commander involved, such an attack was essential for the preservation of his force.[7]

The Demilitarized Zone and North Vietnam

(TS) The Rules of Engagement for the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) allowed ground forces to conduct operations in the DMZ south of the provisional military demarcation line (PMDL). Ground forces were permitted to return fire across the PMDL but were not allowed to advance north of the PMDL. Tactical air strikes were permitted in the DMZ both north and south of the PMDL. Artillery fire (land and naval) could be directed against valid military targets in the DMZ, both north and south of the PMDL. Artillery fire (land only) could be directed against valid targets in NVN north of the DMZ. Naval gunfire support (NGFS) could be employed against suitable targets ashore in NVN between 17 degrees north latitude and 20 degrees north latitude. Also, defoliation operations in certain specified portions of the DMZ were authorized. COMUSMACV required that commanders acting under authority of the Rules of Engagement would immediately report any action taken. [8]

(TS) The RVNAF Rules of Engagement for the DMZ were similar to those of US and FWMA forces. US advisors assigned to ARVN units were authorized to accompany these units into the southern half of the DMZ but not to cross the PMDL. US advisors were to be detached from ARVN units that took any action which was beyond that contained in the above paragraph. [9]

(S) After 2100 on 1 November 1968, all offensive operations were discontinued against NVN, the DMZ, and within the 12 NM territorial waters. All air strikes, artillery fire, and naval bombardment were terminated as well as the delivery of electronic sensors. Overflight of NVN and the DMZ by strike forces enroute to and from Laotian targets was prohibited.

(S) Other authorizations and procedures included:

1. No US ground forces would cross the southern boundary of the DMZ without specific orders from COMUSMACV to do so.

2. Prior to returning fire against enemy fire received from north of the southern boundary of the DMZ, commanders would ascertain positively that, without any doubt, such fire was actually, in fact, coming from north of the southern boundary of the DMZ.

3. Enemy artillery, mortar, and rocket fire would be answered with heavy counter-battery fire and/or air attack until enemy weapons were silenced. Commanders concerned were authorized and directed to take the actions required for self-defense.

4. In the event that SAMs or AAA were fired at friendly aircraft over SVN, friendly forces were to destroy the enemy's weapons, installations and immediate supporting facilities.

5. In case of attacks by fire or ground attacks by small units (up to battalion size) from north of the southern boundary of the DMZ, it was directed that commanders concerned take whatever action was necessary to defend their commands, including counterattacks south of the southern boundary of the DMZ to destroy the enemy.

6. In the event of large-scale general attacks from north of the southern boundary of the DMZ by ground forces, artillery, or air which required a response that went beyond local action, commanders concerned were to take the necessary action south of the southern boundary of the DMZ to defend their commands. Simultaneously, they were to report the situation through command channels to COMUSMACV, requesting further guidance or orders.

7. Immediate pursuit was authorized in NVN territorial seas or air space in response to hostile acts and in pursuit of any vessel or aircraft where actions indicated, with reasonable certainty, that it was operating in support of the VC/NVA insurgency in SVN. US naval and air forces engaged in immediate pursuit of NVN naval and air elements were not authorized to attack other unfriendly forces or installations encountered, except in response to an attack by them, and then only to the extent necessary for self-defense.

8. Reaction to enemy fire from positions in the southern half of the DMZ against friendly forces would be immediate and the weight decisively destructive.

9. Observation aircraft under 3d Mar Div control would maintain surveillance of the southern half of the DMZ but would remain always south of the PMDL (Ben Hai River).

10. Enemy personnel and positions identified in the southern half of the DMZ would be promptly attacked by fire and destroyed.

11. Under no circumstances were advisors to RVNAF units to enter into the DMZ after 1 November without specific approval of higher headquarters. Artillery advisors were prohibited from assisting in the planning of fires into the DMZ except as authorized above.

(TS) On 22 November CG, III MAF was authorized to conduct squad-sized patrols, with platoon-sized backup to assist extraction if required, into the southern portion of the DMZ as far north as the PMDL for a period of ten days commencing 2400 23 November and ending 2400 3 December 1968. Patrols could walk or be inserted by helicopter. Authorizations was also given to coordinate with CG, I Corps to arrange the employment of ARVN forces. The purpose of the patrols was to capture prisoners and obtain positive proof that the NVA, rather than the VC, was operating in the DMZ south of the PMDL.[10]

Holiday Stand-down

(TS) Related to the subject of Rules of Engagement are the periods of cease-fire normally held during the Christmas, New Year, Tet holidays and Buddha's Birthday. During Christmas 1967, a stand-down for 24 hours was observed during which 118 incidents occurred, 40 of these being major. The 1968 New Year's stand-down was observed for 36 hours, from 1800 on 31 December 1967 until 0600 on 2 January 1968. Although the latter was a shorter period of time than the 48 hour stand-down during the 1967 New Year's period, 170 incidents occurred, 63 of them being major--a significant increase over the 1967 New Year period.[11]

(TS) Observing the number of truce violations during previous cease-fire periods and the little apparent differentiation between the enemy's cease-fire and non-cease-fire hostile actions, COMUSMACV called the latest New Year's truce a "hoax" and advised CINCPAC, JCS, and DOD that it was "quite apparent we cannot expect the enemy to honor any future cease-fire agreement."[12]

(S) CINCPAC concurred with COMUSMACV's evaluation of cease-fires when he advised JCS that, with the evidence of previous cease-fires, "there was, in fact, no cessation of hostilities" and that by continuing to honor cease-fires, we have "placed ourselves in the position of halting our attacks in NVN while the war . . . continues (at VC/NVA initiation) unabated in the south." He further stated, "it is essential that we maintain continuous military pressure if we are to

deny the enemy the opportunity of refurbishing and repositioning his forces and to minimize US and friendly losses. I again strongly recommend that if a stand-down is unavoidable [during Tet], it be of shortest possible duration."[13]

(TS) While the basic position of COMUSMACV remained as before--no cease-fire--the CJGS was bound by traditional and morale reasons to observe at least a token respite for the Tet celebration. The significance of the lunar holidays to the SVN people was recognized, and at a meeting with President Thieu on 15 January, COMUSMACV and the President of RVN agreed to a shortened cease-fire period of 36 hours from 1800 on 29 January to 0600 on 31 January 1968. In directing the cease-fire by US forces, COMUSMACV directed that "reaction and support plans be established and executed without delay when required. More specifically, all US air and artillery assets must be alert to provide immediate response to enemy attacks on friendly forces and civilians during the cease-fire, when requested by tactical commanders."[14]

(U) At noon on 29 January, GVN released a statement, concurred in by COMUSMACV, to the effect that the previously announced provisions of the Tet truce could not be applied in I Corps or in NVN in the area south of Vinh through which massive amounts of supplies had flowed during previous cease-fire periods.[15]

(C) On 30 January the GVN, followed by COMUSMACV, cancelled the Tet cease-fire after the enemy launched his Tet Offensive throughout SVN. US forces were ordered "to resume intensified operations." The bombing north of Vinh was not resumed until later in the month.[16]

(S) The Christmas stand-down was observed for 24 hours, commencing 1800 on 24 December 1968. Instructions were issued to insure compliance with the spirit of the cease-fire while, at the same time, taking all actions and precautions necessary to posture US, RVN, and FWMA forces in order to counter VC/NVA initiated attacks with full strength of all arms, to assure the safety of friendly forces and to minimize VC/NVA military exploitation of the curtailment period. During the stand-down period, 133 incidents were reported, of which 47 were considered significant. As a result of the incidents involving US forces, two US personnel were killed and one suspect detained. No stand-down was observed by US, RVN, or FWMA forces during the 1969 New Year's period.[17]

I CTZ

(U) Smallest of the CTZs, both in area and population, I CTZ encompases five provinces and two broad geographical areas, the Highlands (inland) and the Central Lowlands (coastal area). The Highlands is that portion of the Chaine Annamitique paralleling the Laotian border. Elevations average from 400 to 1,300 feet, with some peaks exceeding 2,000 feet. The area is narrow and very rugged. The southern half of the Central Lowlands contains extensive and fertile plains where two rice crops are grown yearly. The northern half of the coastal area is marked by several mountain spurs jutting into the sea and narrow lines of sand dunes backed by intensively cultivated flat fertile areas.[18]

(U) The continuing military build-up of northern I CTZ was greatly accelerated during the first two months of 1968. By March, the 1st Cav Div (AM), 101st Abn Inf Div and the newly created Headquarters, Provisional Corps Vietnam had reinforced the two northern provinces. Operations in I CTZ were highlighted by the fighting in Hue during the Tet Offensive and the operations in and around Khe Sanh during February, March and April.

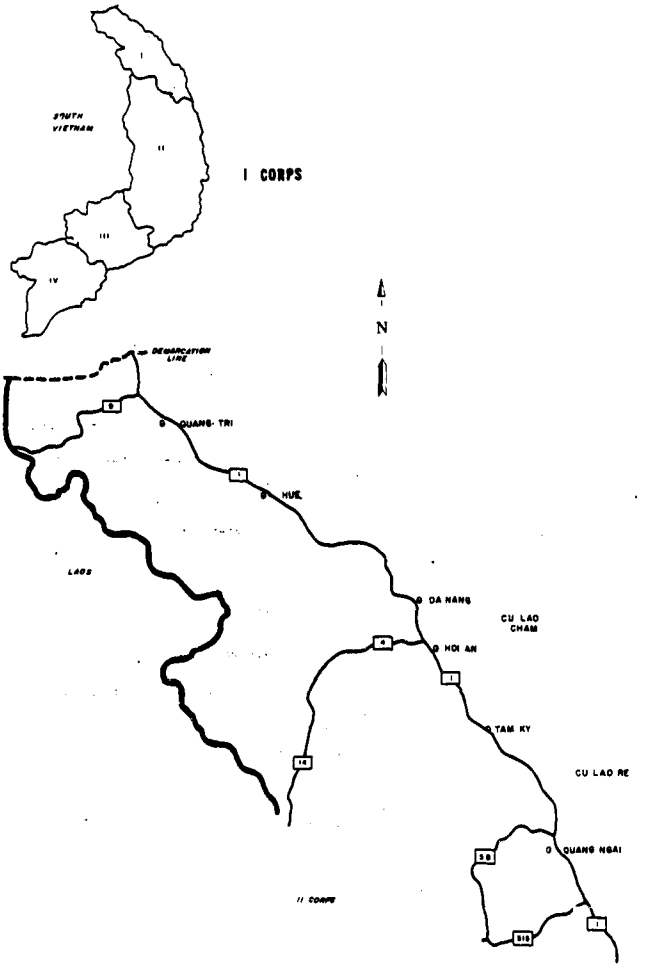

SOUTH VIETNAM
I
II
III
IV
I CORPS
N
DEMARCATION LINE
QUANG TRI
HUE
LAOS
DA NANG
CU LAO CHAM
HOI AN
TAM KY
CU LAO RE
QUANG NGAI
II CORPS

FIGURE V-2

(C) As the new year opened, Allied forces in I CTZ were positioned as follows: the 3d Mar Div and 1st ARVN Div in the two northern provinces; the 1st Mar Div and 51st ARVN Regt in Quang Nam Province; and the Americal Div, 2d ROK Mar Bde and the 2d ARVN Div in the southern two provinces.[19]

(S) As the magnitude of the enemy effort in northern I CTZ became clear during the latter part of 1967, plans were initiated to shift major forces to the north. In January COMUSMACV directed the establishment of a forward headquarters to control and coordinate this planned buildup. In spite of the enemy Tet activity, the MACV Forward headquarters was established at Phu Bai on 9 February. Later, on 10 March, this headquarters was replaced by the newly activated Provisional Corps Vietnam (PROVCORPSV) under the command of LTG William B. Rosson. PROVCORPSV, under the operational control of III MAF, was assigned control of all US forces in Quang Tri and Thua Thien (less the southeast corner) Provinces. During the latter part of 1968, PROVCORPSV was redesignated XXIV Corps on 15 August and remained under the operational control of III MAF.[20]

(C) During the second week of January, the 1st Mar Div had extended its Da Nang-centered AO into southern Thua Thien Province. The 1st Mar Div's TF XRAY moved to Phu Bai, deploying its two Marine regiments along the trace of National Route 1 north of Hai Van Pass. The vacuum created by this move was filled by shifting the 2d ROK Mar Bde from Chu Lai to Hoi An. TF XRAY was thereby in a position to react, in conjunction with the 1st ARVN Div, when the city of Hue was attacked during the enemy-launched Tet Offensive.[21]

(C) On 29, 30, and 31 January, the enemy launched coordinated attacks on the major population centers throughout I CTZ. By 2 February he had been repulsed from the cities of Quang Tri, Da Nang, Hoi An, Tam Ky, and Quang Ngai. However, the enemy had established a firm hold within the city of Hue. Enemy units in Hue were identified as the 9th and 6th NVA Regts, 810th NVA Bn, 804th NVA Bn, 12th VC Sapper Bn and the Hue City Sapper Bn. In addition, a total of 2,500 prisoners had been released from the local jail and approximately 500 of these were impressed into the enemy's ranks. By 12 February, ARVN forces had confined the enemy to three fortified strong points within the Citadel while USMC elements cleared the enemy from the area immediately south of the Perfume River. Determined enemy resistance and bitter house to house fighting resulted in the destruction of large sections of the city. Hue was finally cleared of all enemy on 25 February. Enemy KIA totaled 5,113 at a cost of 142 US Marines and 384 RVNAF personnel KIA.[22]

(C) As 1968 began the 3d Mar Div forces continued to be oriented to prevented enemy infiltration through the DMZ and the Laotian/Quang Tri Province border area. From west to east three regimental-size operations were in progress. The 26th Mar Regt held the westernmost TAOR, centered on the Khe Sanh Combat Base, under the code name SCOTLAND. The 9th Mar Regt held the Con Thien/Gio Linh area in Operation KENTUCKY. Operation LANCASTER was assigned the area between SCOTLAND and KENTUCKY. On 20 January LANCASTER became LANCASTER II under the control of the 4th Mar Regt. The coastal area, primarily an ARVN responsibility, was reinforced with various US Marine battalions in the Cua Viet area to insure the availability of this vital river LOC.[23]

(C) Initially the 26th Mar Regt held the Khe Sanh Combat Base with two battalions. During the first part of January, there were numerous sightings and daily contact with enemy forces. As the month wore on, the size and intensity of the contacts increased. On 21 January, the Combat Base and Hill 881S and 861 came under heavy mortar and rocket attack. Concurrently, the

village of Khe Sanh was attacked by a NVA battalion. By the next day, all friendly forces and civilians in the Khe Sanh village area, except for the combat outposts, had withdrawn to the Combat Base. During the next several days, several thousand refugees were airlifted to Quang Tri City. A third USMC battalion had been airlifted into the Khe Sanh Combat Base on 17 January and a fourth USMC battalion arrived on 23 January. On 27 January, the 37th ARVN Rgr Bn was airlifted in, giving the Commanding Officer of the 26th Mar Regt a total of five combat battalions.

(C) During the night of 6 February, the Khe Sanh Combat Base and the Lang Vei US Army Special Forces Camp, five miles southwest of Khe Sanh, came under heavy artillery, rocket, and mortar fire. The airfield at the Khe Sanh outpost was cratered but by 1030 the next morning was fully operational. The enemy, employing tanks (Soviet type PT-76 amphibians) for the first time in RVN, overran the Lang Vei Camp. One ground attack had been repulsed by the Marines the night of 6 February and another the morning of 8 February which resulted in 124 enemy KIA. The heaviest shelling of Khe Sanh occurred on 23 February when over 1,000 rounds of mixed artillery and rocket rounds fell between the hours of 1300 and 1900. On the night of 29 February, three probing attacks were made by a NVA battalion against the positions held by the 37th ARVN Rgr Bn. By 0430 the next morning, the position was reported as secure and 71 additional enemy killed at a cost of one Ranger KIA.[25]

(S) During March the siege of Khe Sanh Combat Base continued with heavy artillery, mortar and rocket attacks. Friendly forces responded with heavy artillery, TACAIR, and B-52 strikes. In late March USMC patrols had three major contacts with enemy units resulting in 172 enemy KIA. With Operation PEGASUS, designed to relieve the siege of Khe Sanh, in the offing, Operation SCOTLAND was terminated on 31 March. The Allies had lost 204 KIA at a cost to the enemy of 1,561 KIA. The operation had been supported by 5,561 TACAIR sorties and 2,854 ARC LIGHT sorties.[26]

(C) The 1st Cav Div (AM) had arrived in Quang Tri Province from the PERSHING AO in II CTZ on 21 January. The air cavalrymen immediately commenced Operation JEB STUART which was designed to preempt enemy operations in and north of enemy Base Area 101 (See Figure III-12). The division was quickly established in this highly populated area and ready to react to the enemy's Tet attacks on 29-30 January.[27]

(C) During February, the 1st Cav Div (AM) operated throughout the area along the trace of Route 1 between Quang Tri City and Hue and the area to the east of Quang Tri City. Daily contact with enemy forces resulted in a rapidly growing number of kills while the enemy responded with frequent attacks by fire on the division's base camp. The division had been assigned the new mission of lifting the enemy siege of Khe Sanh in upcoming Operation PEGASUS. Therefore, on 31 March, Operation JEB STUART was terminated. A total of 3,628 enemy had been killed, a fact which attested to the effectiveness of that operation.

(C) Hq, 101st Abn Div had been deployed from III CTZ to Phu Bai on 19 February and elements of the division had assumed the major share of the US Army effort in the area immediately north of Hue. The 101st Abn Div on Operation CARENTAN II assumed responsibility for the cavalrymen's old operating area as the 1st Cav Div (AM) became operational at LZ STUD in central Quang Tri Province on 31 March and assumed control of the entire SCOTLAND AO in preparation for the commencement of PEGASUS. At the same time the 26th Mar Regt at Khe Sanh shifted to 1st Cav Div (AM) control from the 3d Mar Div. Two days earlier, two Marine battalions had been assigned to the PEGASUS Task Force from the 1st Mar Div.[28]

(U) Operation PEGASUS/LAM SON 207 was launched on 1 April to open Route 9 and relieve the Khe Sanh Combat Base by land. In airmobile operations, elements of the 1st Cav Div (AM) and three ARVN airborne battalions seized the commanding positions south of Khe Sanh while two Marine battalions drove west from the base at Ca Lu along Route 9, clearing and repairing the road as they went. Both forces met little resistance but did find ample evidence of the destructive effort of our massive firepower, including over 1,000 enemy bodies.[29]

(C) The siege of Khe Sanh was lifted in quick order. The enemy had withdrawn from the field. From later evidence it appeared that the enemy, having sustained staggering casualties and realizing he could no longer mount an assault, abandoned the siege and began to withdraw on 21 March. On 15 April Operation PEGASUS was terminated and Operation SCOTLAND II was initiated in the western Quang Tri AO.[30]

(U) As a follow-up and to preempt the enemy from massing further attacks in the Hue area, the forces from PEGASUS were shifted and a major spoiling attack, Operation DELAWARE/LAM SON 216, was mounted in the A Shau Valley, located in westernmost Thua Thien Province. Here the VC/NVA had been constructing a huge logistics base complex since 1966. On 19 April, two brigades of the 1st Cav Div (AM) and three battalions of the 3d ARVN Inf Regt conducted an airmobile assault into the valley. They found a vast storehouse of materiel, including 2,500 individual and 59 crew-served weapons, 30 flame throwers, eighteen 1 1/2 ton trucks, 3 tons of automotive spare parts, 37mm anti-aircraft guns, Soviet PT-76 tanks, 122mm artillery pieces and tons of munitions. These were quickly destroyed. This operation not only denied to the enemy another option--an assault from the A Shau Valley towards Hue to Da Nang--but also cost him 869 men killed before the operation was terminated on 17 May 1968. The 1st Cav Div (AM) immediately initiated Operation JEB STUART III in Thua Thien and Quang Tri Provinces. JEB STUART III continued with significant action until it was terminated on 3 November 1968. The enemy lost 2,114 soldiers killed, 261 detained, and 60 returnees in this successful 1st Cav Div (AM) search-and-clear operation. Included in the cumulative figures were the final results of two smaller operations, COMMANCHE FALLS I and II, conducted by elements of the 1st Cav Div (AM) in the JEB STUART III AO, which terminated on 7 November.[31]

(C) CARENTAN II, a 101st Abn Div operation, was suspended during the period 18-25 April, then resumed on 26 April and continued through 17 May when it terminated with 2,100 enemy KIA during the operation. At the same time, Operation NEVADA EAGLE commenced in Thua Thien as two brigades of the 101st Abn Div with the 3d Bde, 82d Abn Div began a clear-and-search operation. The concept of NEVADA EAGLE, an airmobile operation, was to conduct clear-and-search activities to seek and destroy or capture enemy personnel, materiel and installations within the area of operations, with emphasis on rice denial, interdiction of enemy movement in the Piedmont Zone and offensive sweeps along Route 547 and Song Bo.[32]

(C) Operation NAPOLEON had been initiated in the Dong Ha area in November 1967 by Marine amtrac and artillery units to provide security to the Cua Viet port facility, the main supply terminal in Quang Tri Province. In late January 1968, the Marine infantry battalion which had just completed ARG/SLF Operation BADGER CATCH began Operation SALINE along the Cua Viet River to provide additional protection to this major supply line. On 29 February the two operations were combined into Operation NAPOLEON/SALINE under the operational control of the 3d Mar Regt. On 11 March, while operating in the NAPOLEON/SALINE AO, elements of the 2d ARVN Regt, supported by US artillery, TACAIR, and helicopter gunships, accounted for 305 NVA KIAs in one day during Operation LAM SON 193/11. By 26 August, operational control had passed to the 1st Brigade, 5th Inf (Mech) as the 1st Mar Regt redeployed to Da Nang.

NAPOLEON/SALINE continued in the same area and with the same mission until the AO was expanded in November to cover a part of the area vacated by the 1st Cav Div (AM). The operation terminated on 9 December with 3,495 enemy KIAs.[33]

(C) Operation LANCASTER II and KENTUCKY continued with their essential task of preventing enemy infiltration through the DMZ in north central Quang Tri Province. The 4th and 9th Mar Regts, initially assigned operational control of these two operations, were established in fixed base camps strategically placed throughout their TAORS. The camps were frequently shelled, rocketed, and mortared but never to the extent that Con Thien was subjected in September 1967. Daily patrols of up to company size resulted in frequent contact with NVA units. Operational control of the KENTUCKY AO was assumed by the 1st Bde, 5th Inf (Mech) in late August. LANCASTER II, the multi-battalion search-and-clear operation conducted by elements of the 3d Mar Div, had commenced on 21 January and lasted for a ten-month period prior to its termination on 23 November. This operation accounted for 1,801 enemy soldiers killed and 207 detained while US casualties were 359 KIA and 2,101 WIA.[34]

(C) 1st Mar Div operations were conducted in southeast Thua Thien and eastern Quang Nam Provinces throughout the year. After the Battle of Hue, TF XRAY shifted its attention to the south. Their new operation, HOUSTON, commenced on 26 February with the mission of destroying enemy forces and material in the Thua Thien and Quang Nam border region and ensuring the security of Route 1 as a dependable overland line of communication through the Hai Van Pass. The operation, which terminated on 12 September, accounted for 702 enemy soldiers killed, 29 captured, and 258 weapons seized, primarily the result of aggressive and wide-ranging small unit patrols and ambushes.[35]

(C) Continuous operations were conducted in the 1st Mar Div Da Nang-centered TAOR to protect the vital airfield and supply and command installations contained therein. Two highly successful search-and-clear operations were commenced in May along the periphery of the TAOR. Starting on 4 May, Operation ALLENBROOK had, by the time it terminated on 24 August, accounted for 1,017 enemy KIA in its assigned AO in the south central area. Operation MAMELUKE THRUST in north central Quang Nam Province had started on 19 May and by 30 June had accounted for 781 enemy KIA. Upon termination of MAMELUKE THRUST on 23 October, 2,728 enemy soldiers had been killed and 682 detained.

(C) The 5th Mar Regt immediately initiated Operation HENDERSON HILL, a multi-battalion search-and-clear operation in the same AO as MAMELUKE THRUST. This highly successful operation terminated on 6 December with 700 enemy KIA and 94 detained while friendly losses were 35 KIA and 272 WIA.[36]

(C) During 1968 the Americal Division had primary US responsibility for the two southern provinces, Quang Tin and Quang Ngai, of I CTZ. As the year began, two major search-and-clear operations were in progress. The first, Operation WHEELER/WALLOWA, had started on 11 November 1967. By January, major elements of the 3d Bde, 1st Cav Div (AM), and the 196th Lt Inf Bde were continuing with the operation in its original AO of north central Quang Tin Province. The other operation, MUSCATINE, was initiated on 19 December 1967 in the Quang Ngai City area of Quang Ngai Province and continued in that AO with elements of the 3d Bde, 4th Inf Div, and 198th Lt Inf Bde during January and February.[37]

(C) During the latter part of January the 3d Bde, 1st Cav Div (AM) deployed to the north to join its parent division on Operation JEB STUART. In February, the 3d Bde, 4th Div began

deployment to northern I CTZ. These losses were somewhat offset by the assignment of elements of the 11th Lt Inf Bde which had arrived in RVN on 24 December 1967, to Operation MUSCATINE. When MUSCATINE terminated on 30 June, 1,119 enemy had been killed. [38]

(C) On 8 April the 198th Lt Inf Bde, in conjunction with elements of the 2d ARVN Div, commenced Operation BURLINGTON TRAIL in northern Quang Tin Province between the Operation WHEELER/WALLOWA AO and the coast. The purpose of the operation was to locate and neutralize insurgent forces in that portion of enemy Base Area 117 lying within the assigned AO and Route 1 extending between the villages of Tam Ky and Thien Phuoc. During the seven month operation which terminated 11 November 1968, the infantrymen and supporting fires killed 1,931 enemy soldiers and detained 1,289 suspects. [39]

(C) In late April the 196th Lt Inf Bde was deployed to northern I CTZ where it became PROVCORPSV reserve during Operation DELAWARE. At the conclusion of that operation on 13 May, the 196th returned to the control of the Americal Division and resumed Operation WHEELER/WALLOWA, which finally terminated on 11 November with 10,020 enemy killed and 5,195 suspects detained. [40]

(C) Operation CHAMPAIGN GROVE, a multi-battalion search-and-clear operation centered 37 km west-southwest of Quang Ngai City, commenced on 4 September under the control of TF GALLOWAY with troops from the 11th Lt Inf Bde, Americal Division participating. On 13 September, elements of the brigade engaged an unknown-size enemy force 4 miles west of Quang Ngai City and killed 61 enemy soldiers. On 18 September 49 enemy were killed by TF GALLOWAY 19 miles west of Quang Ngai City. The 21-day operation terminated on 24 September after accounting for 378 enemy KIAs. [41]

(C) Operation SOMERSET PLAIN/LAM SON 246 began 4 August with elements of the 1st Bde, 101st Abn Div and the 3d Inf, 1st ARVN Div in a coordinated US and ARVN search-and-clear operation in the A Shau Valley. Upon termination of the operation on 19 August, results were 133 enemy KIA. [42]

(C) A significant example illustrating PSYOP effectiveness in a combined operation was Operation LAM SON 260, conducted on Vinh Loc Island in mid-September by elements of the 101st Abn Div (AM), RF/PF units, ARVN units and combined naval units. Selective and controlled PSYOP, coordinated with cordon-and-sweep tactics, contributed substantially to the success of the operation in which 311 VC were captured and 32 hard-core VC returned under the Chieu Hoi program. Many of the detainees were infrastructure members. Seventy-six enemy were killed at the loss of one ARVN soldier. [43]

(C) Operation MAUI PEAK/HUNG QUANG 1/74, a multi-battalion search-and-clear operation, commenced on 6 October and was centered in an area 18 km northwest of An Hoa. The combined operation involved elements of the 51st ARVN Regt and the 1st Mar Div with the mission to locate and capture or eliminate enemy forces, installations and materiel within the operational area which encompassed the general vicinity of the Vietnamese CIDG Camp at Thuong Duc in Quang Nam Province. Upon termination of the two week operation on 19 October against enemy forces threatening the camp, the ARVN soldiers had accounted for 151 enemy KIA and US Marines were responsible for 202 enemy KIA. [44]

(TS) Intelligence reports indicated that during October the enemy generally continued to avoid large-scale engagements with Allied forces. Most enemy main force regiments moved

away from forward combat areas into base areas, border sanctuaries or out-of-country, apparently to resupply and refit, thus reducing the immediate threat of major offensive activity. [45]

(C) On 23 October ARVN forces, supported by US tanks, found and assaulted an enemy company northeast of Gio Linh, killing 112 enemy and capturing 200 mortar rounds and two tons of rice. Two days later, reacting to reconnaissance reports, units of the 1st Bde, 5th Inf (Mech) found and attacked an estimated enemy battalion northeast of Con Thien. Heavy action continued for seven hours, during which time 322 enemy soldiers were killed. Friendly losses were four killed and 23 wounded. [46]

(C) With a lessening of the enemy menace in I CTZ but with the still substantial threat in the Saigon area in III CTZ, the 1st Cav Div (AM), was shifted to the northern III Corps area in late October. It took over responsibility for portions of Tay Ninh, Binh Long and Phuoc Long Provinces between Saigon and the Cambodian border. TAORs of remaining units in northern I Corps were extended. [47]

(C) The use of reconnaissance teams to find the enemy and attack by fire with artillery and other supporting arms proved to be a successful tactic on many occasions in I Corps. On 18 November in Quang Nam Province, a 1st Mar Div Reconnaissance Team observed 80 enemy dressed in khaki, moving west. Artillery fire was directed on the enemy unit killing 20 and setting off five secondary explosions. Later, on the same day, the same reconnaissance team observed 75 more enemy dressed in khaki. Artillery fire was directed on the enemy killing 28 and setting off eight secondary explosions. Again, on 19 November another reconnaissance team upon observing 75 enemy in khaki called an artillery mission on the enemy unit, killing 51, raising the total enemy losses to 99 killed by artillery fire in two days. There were no US casualties. [48]

(C) In a significant action 9 km west-northwest of Hoi An in Quang Nam Province on 17 November, the 2d Bn, 51st ARVN Inf located and attacked an estimated enemy battalion. The contact was supported by a reaction force consisting of the 2d Bn, 11th ARVN Cav, the 14th Coastal Surveillance Group, a Marine Combined Action Platoon and the 342d RF Company. The 2d Bn, 51st ARVN Inf accounted for 223 enemy killed during the one day action, with the reaction force being credited with another 82 enemy KIAs, for a total of 305 enemy soldiers KIA. [49]

(C) Upon termination of LANCASTER II on 23 November, the SCOTLAND II AO was expanded to include the northwest area of Quang Tri Province. On 28 November Operation DAWSON RIVER commenced in Quang Tri Province, with its AO centered 23 km south of Cam Lo. The 9th Mar Regt maintained an offensive posture during the northeast Monsoon period by conducting mobile operations with one or more battalions and were prepared to provide exploitation forces up to regiment size in the division AO. [50]

(C) When NAPOLEON/SALINE terminated on 9 December, the 1st Bde, 5th Inf (Mech) immediately commenced Operation MARSHAL MOUNTAIN in the same AO. Its mission was to conduct pacification operations in cooperation/conjunction with the 1st ARVN Regt in the densely populated coastal area, maintain security of LOCs and conduct offensive operations in the vicinity of the enemy Base Area 101. [51]

(C) Operation MEADE RIVER, a highly significant operation in support of the Accelerated Pacification Campaign, commenced on 20 November in Quang Nam Province. The multi-battalion cordon-and-search operation was centered 14 km west of Hoi An and commenced with a

Marine heliborne assault (Operation SWIFT MOVE) from US Navy ships of the 7th Fleet's Amphibious Task Force (TF 76). The mission was to conduct combat operations within the area in conjunction with ARVN, ROKMC and Vietnamese NP elements and to capture or eliminate enemy forces and installations within the AO. A tight cordon was established and a relocation center set up where province CORDS personnel, NP and Special Police interrogated over 3,000 civilians in the search for and elimination of the VCI. The highly successful pacification operation terminated on 9 December with 1,019 enemy KIA and 100 NVA and 71 VCI captured. As units were removed from the cordon, they were shifted to the west into the opening phase of Operation TAYLOR COMMON, an operation targeted on eliminating elements of the 2d NVA Div.[52]

(C) The 196th Lt Inf Bde, Americal Division, initiated Operation FAYETTE CANYON on 15 December. The clear-and-search operation was centered in an area 12 km south-southeast of An Hoa in Quang Nam Province. On 18 December, 103 enemy soldiers were killed in a nine-hour engagement, with only three US infantrymen being wounded.[53]

(C) As the year came to a close, action continued in Quang Nam Province. Elements of the 21st ARVN Rgr Bn, in Operation LE LOI, engaged an enemy force on 26 December 6 km northwest of An Hoa and were reinforced by elements of the 37th and 39th ARVN Rgr Bns. The action resulted in 84 KIAs. In the same general area, on 27 December, while sweeping the area, elements of the 39th ARVN Rgr Bn engaged an enemy force. Elements of the 37th ARVN Rgr Bn reinforced the contact which was supported by TACAIR and artillery. Final results of the 27 December action were 114 enemy KIA. Again on 29 December 9 km north of An Hoa, elements of the 29th ARVN Rgr Bn, after receiving small arms fire from an estimated reinforced enemy company, attacked the enemy positions in force. When contact ended after six hours, 70 enemy KIA had been accounted for at a loss of eight ARVN Rangers. During a 21-day period, ARVN Rangers had killed 536 enemy and detained 32.[54]

(C) As the year came to a close, activity in I Corps was light and scattered with the exception of Quang Nam Province, where 1st Mar Div elements and ARVN Rangers continued to report sharp contacts as they thrust deeper into Base Area 112 attacking elements of Front 4 and the 2d NVA Div. Although intelligence sources continued to point to renewed enemy action, Allied search-and-clear operations continued to locate the enemy's pre-stocked logistical caches and to disrupt many enemy preparations for offensive action.[55]

II CTZ

(U) Largest of the Corps Tactical Zones, II CTZ encompasses 12 provinces and two broad geographical areas, the Central Highlands and the Central Lowlands. The Central Highlands, actually the southern plateau area of the Chaine Annamitique, can also be divided into two distinct parts. The northern part extends from the vicinity of Ban Me Thuot northward for about 175 miles, and averages in elevation from 600 feet to 1,600 feet, although individual peaks are much higher. Irregular in shape with an area of about 5,400 square miles, this region is covered mainly with bamboo and tropical broad-leaf forests, interspersed with farms and rubber plantations. The southern portion, which centers around Dalat, has about 4,000 square miles of usable land, much of it below 3,000 feet in elevation. Evergreens predominate at the higher reaches and bamboo at the lower elevations. Sloping gradually in the west to the Mekong Valley in Laos, the Highlands fall steeply in the east to the Central Lowlands. The fertile extensively cultivated Lowlands extend as far inland as 40 miles in some areas, while in others they have

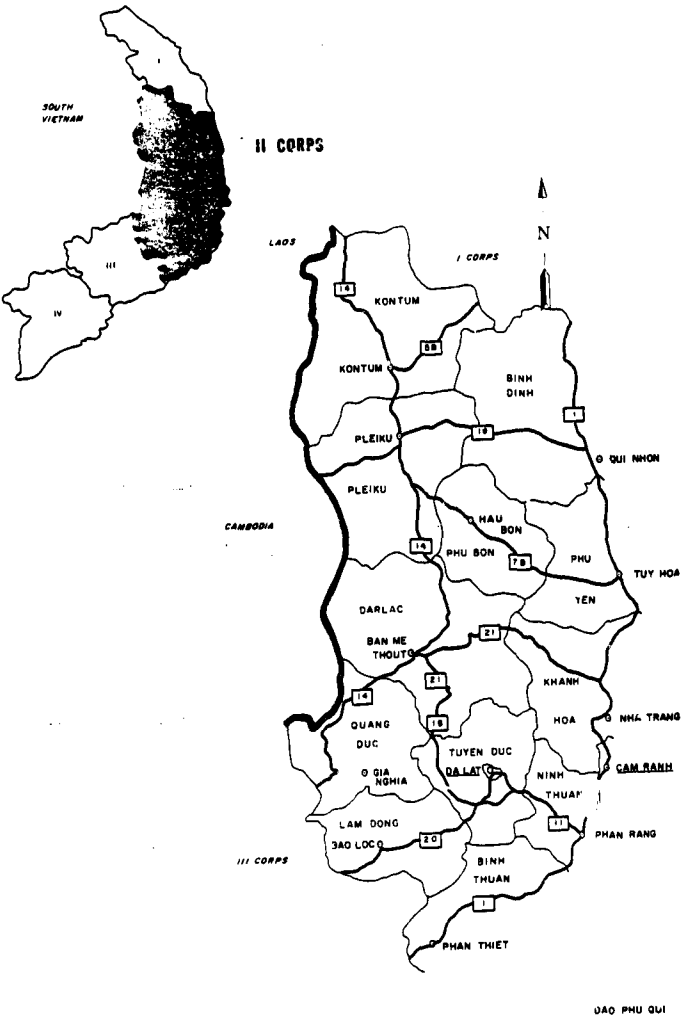

SOUTH VIETNAM
II CORPS
I
II
III
IV
N
LAOS
I CORPS
CAMBODIA
III CORPS
KONTUM
KONTUM
PLEIKU
PLEIKU
BINH DINH
QUI NHON
HAU BON
PHU BON
PHU YEN
TUY HOA
DARLAC
BAN ME THOUOT
KHANH HOA
NHA TRANG
QUANG DUC
TUYEN DUC
DA LAT
CAM RANH
GIA NGHIA
NINH THUAN
LAM DONG
BAO LOC
PHAN RANG
BINH THUAN
PHAN THIET
DAO PHU QUI
14
88
19
1
14
79
21
21
14
19
20
11
1

FIGURE V-3

been crowded almost into the sea by the encroaching Highlands. Rice is the principal crop, although considerable sugar cane is also grown. In Cam Ranh Bay, II CTZ had one of the finest natural deep-draft harbors in SEASIA.[56]

(C) During the year, II CTZ continued to play an economy-of-force role as the buildup of I CTZ was further accelerated. With the exception of Binh Dinh Province, where several heavy contacts occurred with elements of the 2d VC and 18th NVA Regts, enemy activity was at a low level at the beginning of the year.[57]

(C) With the Tet Offensive the enemy launched ten major ground attacks against population centers in the Corps area; among these were seven provincial capitals and the autonomous city of Dalat. With the exception of Phan Thiet, Binh Thuan Province, which was cleared on 10 February, and Dalat City, all were cleared during the first week of fighting. The final enemy stronghold in the northwest section of Dalat was captured by the 11th ARVN Rgr Bn on 12 February, ending organized enemy activity in that area.[58]

(C) The 1st Cav Div's highly successful search-and-clear Operation PERSHING had been initiated on 11 February 1967 in Binh Dinh Province and terminated on 19 January 1968 with 5,401 enemy KIA. The Div (-) immediately deployed to northern II CTZ in reaction to the enemy buildup in that area. Elements of the 1st Cav Div (AM) continued the operation in the same AO under the code name Operation PERSHING II. An additional 614 enemy were KIA by 29 February when PERSHING II terminated.[59]

(C) Operation PATRICK, a follow-on of PERSHING II, commenced 29 February in the same AO under the control of the 3d Bde, 4th Inf Div, which had just arrived from southern I CTZ. Operation PATRICK terminated on 30 March when the decision was announced to return the 3d Bde to its parent division in the MAC ARTHUR AO. The infantrymen had killed 235 enemy during the month-long operation. Operation COCHISE GREEN commenced immediately upon termination of PATRICK in the same AO and under the control of the 173d Abn Bde. It was terminated on 29 September and accounted for 164 enemy soldiers killed.[60]

(C) The 173d Abn Bde had participated in Operation MAC ARTHUR from its commencement on 12 October 1967. On 19 September 1967 elements of the brigade had begun Operation BOLLING along the border of Phu Bon and Phu Yen Provinces. On January 1968 other elements of the brigade commenced Operation WALKER in the old DAZZLE AO centered on the city of An Khe. The remaining two battalions of the 173d Abn Bde, which had continued operations in the Highlands, returned to airborne control in preparation for the relief of the 3d Bde, 4th Inf Div. This placed all elements of the 173d Abn Bde in the coastal area by the end of March.[61]

(U) Operation MAC ARTHUR in Kontum and Pleiku Provinces was initiated by the 4th Inf Div on 12 October 1967 and continued under the control of that unit. The assigned AO in the Central Highlands encompassed the largest land area of any operation to date in RVN.[62]

(C) During January contact with the enemy was light and scattered as the 4th Inf Div and the 44th ARVN Inf Regt continued to provide security to the towns, villages and land LOCs. The enemy-launched Tet Offensive, within the MAC ARTHUR AO centered on the cities of Pleiku and Kontum. Fighting was fierce and determined on both sides, but by 4 February the cities were declared secure. Enemy contacts returned to the pre-Tet level for the remainder of the month.[63]

(C) A series of light enemy contacts occurred in March, but for the most part the enemy continued to avoid contact. One exception was the attack during the last week of the month on the Fire Support Base of the 3d Bn, 8th Inf, west of Kontum City, by elements of three enemy battalions. This action was responsible for the majority of the 223 enemy KIA in the MAC ARTHUR AO during the week and represented the highest weekly kill rate to date since the Tet Offensive.[64]

(S) While enemy activity remained low in the Central Highlands, COMUSMACV continued to regard the threat to this area as the greatest in II CTZ and only slightly less serious than the enemy threats in Saigon and the DMZ. In January the CG, II FFORCEV had been directed to prepare contingency plans for the deployment of brigades of the 101st Abn Div from the III CTZ to both the coast and highlands of II CTZ. As events had overtaken these plans and intelligence indicated possible major enemy attacks in the Highlands, new instructions were issued in April concerning the deployment of the 3d Bde, 101st Abn Div. This brigade, the only combat element of the 101st Abn Div then remaining in III CTZ was to prepare for probable deployment to the Pleiku/Kontum or Ban Me Thuot areas on 48-hour notice. Advance reconnaissance of the potential areas of deployment was to be made in a manner which would preclude disclosure of prospective deployment of the unit to II CTZ. Patches, markings and other 101st Abn Div indicators were not to be worn nor displayed in the Western Highlands or Ban Me Thuot areas. Discussions concerning the contingency plans were not to be conducted in the presence of non-US personnel.[65]

(C) In May the 325C NVA Div, with two regiments and elements of the 2d NVA Div was identified in western Kontum Province. COMUSMACV decided to preempt the enemy offensive plan by initiating friendly offensive action. On order, the 3d Bde, 101st Abn Div, deployed to the Kontum area on 25 May. This additional unit provided the 4th Inf Div with the necessary flexibility and density-of-force for the planned offensive ground operations in the MAC ARTHUR AO. By the middle of June it was apparent that the massive application of firepower, including B-52 strikes, and the occupation of key terrain by the ground force had, in fact, preempted the enemy's plans. The 3d Bde, 101st Abn Div commenced its return to III CTZ on 10 June with its final battalion arriving on 17 June.[66]

(C) The Capital and 9th ROK Divs continued to maintain effective control of the central coastal area from Phan Rang in Ninh Thuan Province to the north of Qui Nhon in Binh Dinh Province. The Capital ROK Inf Div had commenced Operation MAENG HO 9 on 17 December 1967 in Binh Dinh Province. During the period 23-29 January 1968 elements of the division made contact with an enemy force in the vicinity of Phu Cat. Reacting swiftly, the Koreans deployed six companies in an encircling maneuver and trapped the enemy force in their cordon. The Korean troops gradually tightened the circle, fighting the enemy during the day and maintaining their tight cordon at night, thus preventing the enemy's escape. At the conclusion of the sixth day of fighting, 278 NVA had been KIA with the loss of just 11 Koreans KIA, a kill ratio of 25.3 to 1. Operation MAENG HO 9 terminated on 30 January with cumulative results of 749 enemy KIA.[67]

(C) Operation BAEK MA 9 commenced at 0600 on 11 October 1968. It was controlled by the 9th (White Horse) ROK Div with 25 infantry companies participating and six artillery battalions in support. During the period 0715 to 1715 on 15 October (18th anniversary of the 9th ROK Div), ROKA elements in the Khanh Hoa Province AO accounted for 204 enemy KIA without the loss of a single ROK soldier. When the successful operation came to an end on 4 November, 382 enemy soldiers had been killed and the 7th Bn 18th NVA Regiment had been rendered ineffective.[68]

(C) The ground war had settled to a slow pace from late June into August. In late August this inactivity gave way to a flurry of enemy military activity throughout RVN. Special Forces (SF) camps situated along borders and infiltration routes leading to urban areas were prime targets of the enemy throughout the year and particularly during this period. A significant example was the Duc Lap Special Forces Camp in northern Quang Duc Province. Intelligence reports indicated that Ban Me Thuot was a target of the enemy and that the Duc Lap SF camp had to be neutralized in order to move troops and supplies for the attack.[69]

(C) The Duc Lap SF camp was attacked by an estimated two battalion enemy force on 23 August. The enemy penetrated the camp and for a short period occupied about one-half of the defensive bunkers. Driven out by the CIDG defenders, the enemy continued his attack and the camp was reinforced by elements of the 47th ARVN Inf and the 503d Abn Inf plus 300 Mobile Strike Force personnel. Results were tabulated under Operation TIEN BO 20 and totaled 1,091 enemy KIA and 11 detained. The operation was terminated on 9 September, but enemy activity continued with major elements of the 320th, 66th and 95C NVA Regts of the 1st NVA Div active in the area until October at which time it appeared that the enemy's plans for attacking Ban Me Thuot had been preempted.[70]

(C) Operation BYRD, initiated in Binh Thuan Province in August 1966, had been suspended during December 1967. This battalion-size economy-of-force operation was reinitiated on 8 January and then terminated on 20 January with the relatively small forces involved having accounted for 849 enemy killed. In January 1968, the 1st Bde, 101st Abn Div deployed to I CTZ, leaving behind one battalion (3d Bn, 506th Abn Inf) which assumed responsibility for Operation MC LAIN that had begun in the same AO when BYRD terminated. The airborne soldiers continued to play their economy-of-force role in this large and important area throughout 1968.[71]

(C) During late 1968 Allied forces in II Corps continued to place emphasis on operations in support of the Accelerated Pacification Campaign. Operations were focused on the destruction of enemy units, base areas and LOCs, upgrading contested hamlets, and identifying and eliminating the infrastructure. Although the enemy refused to accommodate Allied units with pitched battles, Allied forces stepped up the offensive in and around base areas from which the enemy launched his attacks on the population centers.

III CTZ

(U) Though not popularly thought to be a part of the Mekong Delta, III CTZ nevertheless included the northern part of the Delta. It is a low-lying area, most of it being under 625 feet elevation and large portions lying as low as 10 feet above sea leve. The area is drained by three rivers: the Vam Co, the Saigon, and the Dong Nai; the latter two flowing into the Nha Be River near Saigon on their way to the South China Sea. Tidal influence is shown by the fact that differences of six feet between high and low tide have been recorded on the northern reaches of the Saigon River. While much of the land has been cleared for rice production, there are still large tracts of rain forest, especially in the east and north along the Cambodian border and in the coastal provinces. Mangrove swamps are found in Gia Dinh Province where the Nha Be River empties into the sea.[72]

(C) During the latter part of 1967 the bulk of the VC/NVA main forces had been driven from the heavily populated central area of III CTZ into the sparsely settled border regions. A

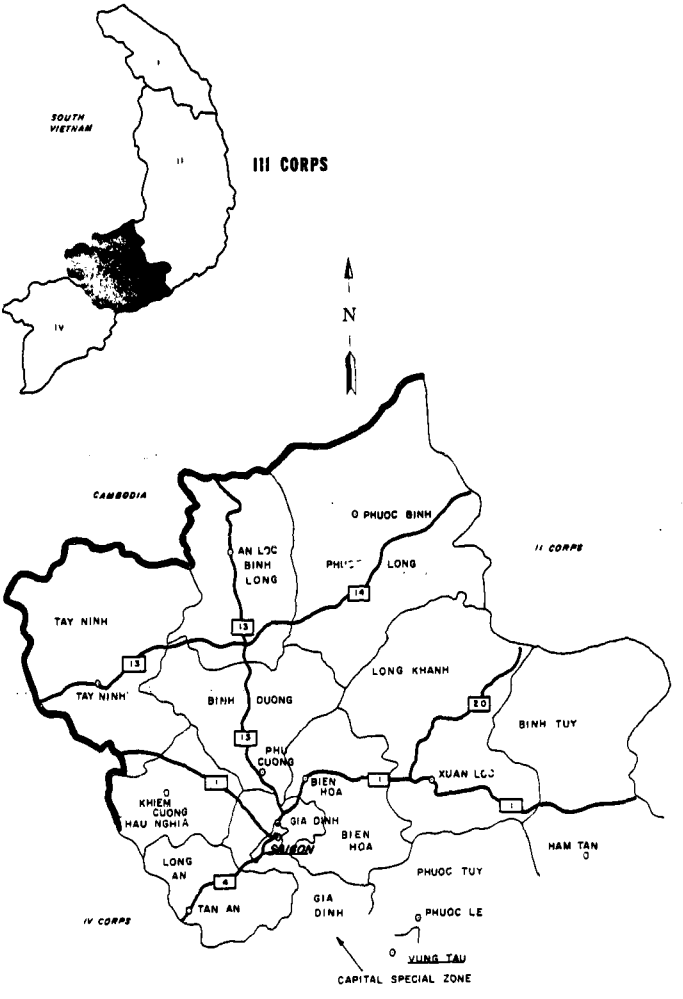

SOUTH VIETNAM
III CORPS
II
IV
N
CAMBODIA
PHUOC BINH
AN LOC
BINH LONG
II CORPS
TAY NINH
LONG KHANH
BINH DUONG
BINH TUY
PHU CUONG
BIEN HOA
XUAN LOC
KHIEM CUONG
HAU NGHIA
GIA DINH
SAIGON
HAM TAN
LONG AN
PHUOC TUY
TAN AN
PHUOC LE
VUNG TAU
IV CORPS
CAPITAL SPECIAL ZONE

FIGURE V-4

captured document showed that his losses in 1967 in the Saigon area had been three times the losses suffered in 1966. The threat in Gia Dinh Province had been reduced to the point that the 199th Lt Inf Bde had phased out of Operation FAIRFAX in this area and moved to War Zone D, leaving the 5th ARVN Rgr Gp with the responsibility for security of the Capital Military District (CMD).

(C) To the east of Saigon, the 18th ARVN Div was disposed generally along the trace of Route 1, while the 9th Inf Div was in the process of shifting operations to the southeast and south. The 5th ARVN Div was concentrated in Binh Duong Province; the 1st Inf Div, also to the north of Saigon, had succeeded in opening Route 13 to Quang Loi, thus separating War Zone C from D. To the west of Saigon the 25th Inf Div had shifted operations to Tay Ninh Province while the 25th ARVN Div continued pacification efforts in Hau Nghia Province.

(C) In November 1967 it appeared that the enemy in III CTZ had decided to employ the majority of his main force units along the Cambodian border and, in particular, to strengthen and consolidate his hold over MR 10 (Binh Long, Phuoc Long, and Quang Duc Provinces). By the middle of December 1967 intelligence information indicated a change in VC strategy to the effect that their next offensive would be aimed at the populated areas of the III CTZ. By 29 January 1968 the deployment of US units had been adjusted to meet this new threat, although at this time it was not concluded that the attacks would occur during Tet nor that the main objective would be Saigon itself.[73]

(C) The large-scale enemy attacks that signaled the commencement of the Tet Offensive in the III CTZ began during the early morning hours of 31 January, a day later than in the I and II CTZ. Principal enemy actions occurred in Long Binh, Bien Hoa and Tan Son Nhut and at the American Embassy, Presidential Palace and in the Cholon Section of Saigon. During the period 31 January - 5 February, 11 major enemy ground attacks were launched in the III CTZ. Additional ground attacks were made against Tay Ninh City on 6 and 16 February and Tan An City on 10 February. Numerous attacks by fire were made throughout the Corps Zone. The second wave of ground attacks on 17-18 February was again concentrated in the Saigon-Long Binh area but included attacks against Song Be, Tan An, and An Loc. These attacks, ordered by C/ SVN, were intended to be stronger than the Tet attacks but by comparison were feeble. The 10 ground attacks and 57 attacks by fire during the second wave resulted in 446 VC killed at an Allied cost of 28 US and 82 ARVN KIA. During the period 29 January to 19 February, 12,614 enemy were killed at a loss of 944 US, other FWMAF and RVNAF personnel for a favorable kill ration of better than 13 to 1.[74]

(U) The period 1-5 February was transitional between a predominance of VC-initiated attacks and the regaining of the initiative by FWMAF and ARVN forces. On 5 February, Operation TRAN HUNG DAO, under the direct operational control of RVNAF JGS, began in the Saigon area. The mission of the ARVN force of six VNMC, five airborne, and four ranger battalions was to clear the city of Saigon of all enemy units. The operation had accounted for 953 enemy killed upon its termination on 17 February. TRAN HUNG DAO II began immediately in the same area with only slightly reduced forces. When this operation ended on 9 March, 713 additional enemy had been killed. During the initial TRAN HUNG DAO operation, the DCG, II FFORCEV had, on 9 February, at the request of CJGS RVNAF, moved a US battalion to the Phu Tho Race Track in Saigon in order to free ARVN forces for operations in the Cholon section. On 12 February this unit (3d Bn, 7th Inf), acting on intelligence from ARVN, located the main VC command post in a pogoda 2 km west of the race track. They surrounded the enemy CP, destroyed the VC defending force and captured the headquarters. Among the enemy killed in this action was General Tran Do, COSVN political chief, who was in command of all VC forces attacking Saigon.[75]

(C) The 1st Australian Task Force (ATF) commenced its first operation outside Phuoc Tuy Province on 24 January with Operation COBURG 2 km to the east of Bien Hoa City. Since the attacks on Long Binh had shown that the bulk of the VC were in that area, the Australians did a tactical about-face and deployed a series of company- and platoon-size day and night ambushes between the Dong Nai River and Route 1. During the period 31 January-15 February, Australian units killed 202 VC in 60 separate small unit engagements.[76]

(C) On 8 December 1967, the 25th Inf Div had gone back into War Zone C to locate and destroy VC/NVA forces and installations. Conducted primarily by the 1st and 3d Bdes, the operation had been assigned the code name YELLOWSTONE. The major encounter of the operation occurred during 1-2 January when the enemy launched an attack against the 3d Bde's Fire Support Base Burt. The massive ground assault by two NVA regiments was repulsed with an enemy loss of approximately 400 KIAs. Operation YELLOWSTONE was terminated on 24 February with a total of 1,254 enemy killed, for a favorable kill ratio of greater than 9 to 1. Also on 8 December 1967, the 2d Bde, 25th Inf Div, had begun Operation SARATOGA in southern Tay Ninh and Hau Nghia Provinces. The mission of the 2d Bde was to destroy the VC/NVA and to protect the rice harvest in its AO. Several heavy actions were fought during the first week of the new year accounting for 99 enemy KIA. During January, Rome Plow operations had cleared 4,325 acres on the Filhol Plantation and 4,000 acres in the Hobo Woods. The 2d Bde was involved in heavy fighting during February and early March. By 10 March when the operation terminated, 3,862 enemy had been killed, attesting to the competency of the infantrymen and the enemy interest in these Cambodian border provinces.[77]

(S) The 1st Bde, 101st Abn Div, rather than the division-size force originally scheduled, initiated Operation SAN ANGELO in Phuoc Long and Quang Duc Provinces, 13 miles northeast of Song Be on 16 January 1968. The unilateral search-and-destroy operation had the mission of destroying all enemy forces within the assigned AO. On the morning of 22 January an element of the brigade in night defensive positions 8 miles northeast of Song Be was probed by the enemy using Montagnard civilians as shields. The civilians detonated flares and hand grenade booby-traps on the defensive perimter resulting in seven friendly casualties. The operation terminated on 9 February after a series of light contacts had resulted in 63 enemy KIA. The brigade began immediate preparations for deployment to northern I CTZ. Other units of the 101st Abn Div participated in operations in the southern part of War Zone D and in the Filhol Plantation area prior to the division, minus its 3d Bde, deploying to I CTZ on 19 February.[78]

(C) After its relief by the 5th ARVN Rgr Gp in the Operation FAIRFAX AO surrounding Saigon, the 199th Lt Inf Bde moved to Bien Hoa Province. There, Operation UNIONTOWN was begun on 17 December 1967 and continued until 8 March. The majority of the 922 enemy KIAs attributed to this operation occurred during the Tet Offensive. The 199th Lt Inf Bde began Operation BOX SPRINGS in Bien Hoa Province on 15 March. The objective of BOX SPRINGS was to destroy enemy forces north of Tan Uyan. Elements of the 3d Bde, 101st Abn Div, also involved in the operation, in one contact on 18 March, surprised an enemy force estimated at 300 troops. Maximum organic firepower was brought to bear on the enemy with gunships, TACAIR and artillery supporting the ground maneuver. Later, elements of the enemy force broke contact by employing CS gas, a temporary incapacitating agent. This contact resulted in 55 enemy KIA. The operation terminated on 28 March 15 miles northeast of Bien Hoa City in an area that was virtually one large base complex capable of accommodating an enemy division. The 199th Bde next came under operational control of the 25th Div in Operation WILDERNESS 12 miles southeast of Tay Ninh City on 31 March.[79]

(C) The largest operation of the war to date, Operation QUYET THANG (Resolve to Win), was initiated on 11 March in Gia Dinh, Long An, Hau Nghia, Binh Duong and Bien Hoa Provinces. The purpose of the operation was to search out and destroy enemy elements in Saigon and the surrounding provinces. Major US units involved were the 1st, 9th and 25th Inf Divs. ARVN forces involved were the 7th and 25th Inf Divs, an airborne division task force, a VNMC TF and elements of the 5th ARVN Rgr Gp and of the National Police force. Three major operations of the three US infantry divisions involved terminated in name only as the divisions continued operations in the same general areas. The 1st Inf Div's Operation LAM SON 68 had commenced on 1 February 1968 and was suspended for an indefinite period of time. The 9th Inf Div's Operation ENTERPRISE had commenced on 13 February 1967 and had accounted for 2,107 enemy KIA when terminated on 10 March 1968.[80]

(C) The 25th Inf Div's Operation SARATOGA started on 8 December 1967 with the heaviest fighting taking place in late January and February during Tet. The multi-battalion-size operation was initiated in support of the Revolutionary Development programs in the Hau Nghia area. It was also aimed at denying food resources to the enemy during the rice harvest season. Upon its termination on 10 March, it had accounted for 3,862 enemy KIAs.[81]

(C) While Operation QUYET THANG was in progress around Saigon, elements of the US and ARVN 25th Inf Divs were operating to the west and northwest of Saigon, conducting operations in and around the Filhol Plantation, Hobo Woods, Bo Loi Woods, Hau Nghia Province and in Tay Ninh Province in Operation WILDERNESS. Initial contacts were characterized by light and sporadic actions. Two heavy contacts occurred in the Duc Hoa/Boa Trai area of central Hau Nghia on 15 and 16 March resulting in 216 VC killed at a cost of 15 ARVN and no US KIA. A third heavy contact occurred the next day with 57 additional enemy killed but also resulting in 21 additional ARVN KIA. The 4th Bn, 49th ARVN Regt dealt the enemy a stunning blow on 20 March in eastern Hau Nghia Province. In this battle against elements of the 272d VC Regt, 142 enemy were killed against a loss of 7 ARVN and 1 US KIA. This significant loss of enemy personnel had a very beneficial effect on the morale and determination of the ARVN forces. Several attacks by battalion-size enemy forces in northern Hau Nghia Province during the latter part of March had equally disastrous results for the enemy.[82]

(C) The 1st Inf Div continued to provide security to Route 13 and to conduct reconnaissance-in-force and aerial surveillance in the An Loc/Quang Loi/Song Be areas of northern III CTZ to provide security to the rural population. The 9th Inf Div protected the southern approaches to Saigon by conducting offensive operations in both southern III CTZ and northern IV CTZ.

(C) Operation QUYET THANG was terminated on 7 April with the combined force accounting for 1,420 enemy KIA and numerous arms chaches. While QUYET THANG had been the main effort to date within the III Corps Zone, 10 other major operations had been in progress and were terminated at this time. Most significant in terms of enemy casualties inflicted were Operation RILEY in Bien Hoa Province under the control of the 1st Bde, 9th Inf Div; Operation NARASUAN, also in Bien Hoa Province, under the control of the Royal Thai Army Volunteer Regiment; and Operation WILDERNESS in Tay Ninh Province under the control of the 25th Inf Div.[83]

(C) On 8 April the TOAN THANG (Complete Victory) Campaign began. Utilizing 79 maneuver battalions (42 US and 37 RVNAF), the operation covered the entire corps area and was the biggest of the war to date. In concept, the campaign was to complete the destruction of enemy units within the CMD while concurrently developing the RVNAF territorial forces' capability to

maintain security and defense of the CMD. In the remaining provinces, combined offensive operations were to be conducted to locate and destroy enemy forces, penetrate and destroy enemy base areas, and to drive the enemy from the population centers.[84] Phase I ended on 31 May 1968, having done much to preempt the VC/NVA planning for the May attacks on Saigon. During Phase I, 11,894 enemy had been killed, 2,123 detained and 27 returned. Phase II of the operation continued into 1969.[85]

(C) Defeated on every battlefield, the enemy had, in April, elected to enter into diplomatic discussions under the philosophy that, "politics is an extension of war." In support of his forthcoming official conversations in Paris he launched his May Offensive.

(U) Although of greater strength then the January attacks, the VC/NVA May attacks were still a pale replica of their Tet Offensive. The first thrust of these attacks began on 5 May and it was aimed primarily at Saigon. In the remainder of the country, except for the Hue/Dong Ha/Quang Tri area, the enemy generally avoided contact. Allied disposition of forces around Saigon was particularly well sited, forming a protective ring around the city. These forces inflicted heavy losses upon the enemy beyond the city as he attempted to infiltrate and only small units survived to reach the city. By then these units became literally suicide squads and, in bitter fighting, were decimated by ARVN and National Police forces.

(U) The 5 May attack was followed by a similar attempt on Saigon on 25 May. The result was equally one-sided. The latter attack was aimed at no apparent or achievable military objective. It was apparently mounted for psychological and political purposes and was conducted by relatively small units dispersed over large areas. These units immediately entrenched themselves and conducted holding actions against ARVN and US forces.

(U) Rather than attempting to gain control of an area, which was clearly beyond his capability, the enemy sought to discredit the government. He attempted to raze parts of the city by fighting or by setting fires, thereby dislocating large numbers of the populace, and creating a refugee problem which he hoped would overburden the government's capacity to care for them. Feeding on the refugee's grievances and capitalizing on their plight, he would then propagandize the people in an attempt to incite a refugee uprising. Concurrently, by conducting small but tenacious attacks employing large volumes of random small arms fire, he sought to create the image of "Saigon under siege" for psychological purposes and to provide propaganda support for his negotiators in Paris.

(C) On 1 June an enemy element attempting to exfiltrate from the Saigon area was engaged by the 6th and 7th VNMC Bns. At the termination of the contact late in the afternoon, 182 enemy had been killed and 11 detained.[86]

(C) On 5 June, near the Phu Tho Race Track, another enemy element trying to break out of the city to the southeast was blocked by the 35th ARVN Rgr Bn which accounted for 135 enemy KIA and 20 detainees before contact was terminated late on 6 June.[87]

(C) During the period 22 July-5 August, the first increment of the RTAVF arrived in Vietnam, with the second increment due on or about 1 January 1969. This original increment replaced the Queen's Cobra Regt which had operated in RVN for 11 months. The RTAVF came under the operational control of CG, II FFORCEV while administrative and logistical support was provided by USARV.[88]

(C) After a lull in the enemy's attack, from June into mid-August, the enemy again stepped up his offensive throughout R.V.N. In Operation TOAN THANG in Long An Province on 12 August, elements of the 5th Bn, 60th Inf engaged an estimated enemy battalion 3 km west of Can Duoc. Reinforcements consisting of seven companies from the 2d Bn, 39th Inf, 2d Bn, 60th Inf, and 4th Bn, 47th Inf cordoned the area. During the two-day battle which followed, 104 enemy were killed and 24 were detained. [89]

(C) In the TOAN THANG Campaign, elements of the 9th Inf Div engaged an estimated enemy company 8 km south of Can Giuoc in Long An Province on 18-19 August, accounting for 81 enemy killed and 16 detained. [90]

(C) In mid-August, the enemy increased his pressure in the northern III CTZ. In two actions east of Tay Ninh City on 19 August, elements of the 25th Inf Div killed a total of 101 enemy soldiers. [91]

(C) In the early morning hours of 18 August, the 25th Inf Div's Fire Support Base Buell, 3 km northeast of Tay Ninh City, received rocket and mortar attacks, followed by a ground attack. The enemy attack was repelled resulting in 83 enemy KIA and 12 detained at the loss of one US soldier KIA. Buell was also attacked on 22 August and again on 12 September, the enemy suffering a total of 97 KIA in these two engagements. [92]

(C) In a significant action in the TOAN THANG Campaign, a mechanized element (C Co, 1st Bn, 5th Inf, 25th Inf Div) on 21 August engaged an unknown-size enemy force while conducting a sweep operation 3 km west of Dau Tieng in Tay Ninh Province. The enemy force employed heavy small arms and automatic weapons fire while the infantrymen were supported by US Army helicopter gunships, artillery and TACAIR. When the contact terminated, 182 enemy and two US soldiers had been KIA. [93]

(C) Early on 24 August, in a related action, an element of the 2d Bn, 27th Inf in a night defensive position 8 km west of Dau Tieng, was attacked by an enemy force of unknown size. The infantrymen, reinforced with tanks and APCs and supported by artillery, gunships and flareships, repelled the enemy force, killing 62 enemy while sustaining eight infantrymen killed. [94]

(C) Again, on 25 August a 25th Inf Div convoy moving from Cu Chi to Tay Ninh received automatic weapons and heavy mortar fire from an enemy ambush force dug in on both sides of the road. Upon termination of the contact, 96 enemy had been killed. [95]

(C) In an action that began on 27 August, elements of the 3d Bde, 101st Abn Div (AM) established a cordon around an estimated reinforced enemy company 7 km north of Trang Bang in Hau Nghia Province. Action continued until 29 August resulting in 103 enemy KIA and 22 detained. [96]

(C) The exchange of the 3d Bde, 101st Abn Div (AM) operating independently in III Corps and the 3d Bde, 82d Abn Div operating with the 101st Abn Div (-) in I Corps was initiated on 1 September 1968. The purpose of the exchange was to regroup the three 101st Abn Div Bdes in I Corps to facilitate reorganization to an airmobile configuration. The 3d Bde, 82d Abn Div came under operational control of the Capital Military Assistance Command (CMAC). All movement was completed on 31 October. [97]

(C) In another action in the TOAN THANG Campaign on 5 September, an element of the 3d Bde, 101st Abn Div (AM) air assaulted into a "hot" landing zone 5 km east of Trang Bang in Hau Nghia Province and engaged an estimated enemy battalion. Other elements of the brigade and several companies from the 25th Inf Div maneuvered into blocking positions. Contact continued until 6 September when the 2d Bn, 49th ARVN Regt, was inserted. Contact was finally lost when the enemy successfully evaded the cordon. During a sweep of the area on 8 September, 55 more enemy bodies were found, bringing the total enemy killed in the two-day battle to 103 while the US lost 31 soldiers KIA.[98]

(C) In another battle of the TOAN THANG Campaign, 99 enemy soldiers were killed early on 11 September during their attack on a night defensive position located 5 km southwest of Dau Tieng in Binh Duong Province, which was occupied by a mechanized element of the 2d Bde, 25th Inf Div.[99]

(C) On 12 September, elements of the 1st and 3d Bdes, 1st Inf Div, engaged an estimated enemy regiment in sporadic and heavy contact in an area 2-6 km east-northeast of Loc Ninh in Binh Long Province. Enemy losses were 121 KIA.[100]

(C) On 16 September the 25th Inf Div Fire Support Base POPE, located 15 km northeast of Go Dau Ha in Tay Ninh Province, received a mortar attack followed by a ground assault. Action continued until early morning when the enemy withdrew. A sweep of the area revealed 131 enemy bodies. In another significant action to the west on the Cambodian border, on 21 September, 9 km southwest of Ben Soi near Tay Ninh City, the 1st Bn, VNMC, received a mortar attack (200 rds) followed by a ground assault on all sides by two NVA battalions. The Vietnamese Marines killed 128 while sustaining only four friendly killed and 48 WIA.[101]

(C) Elements of the 1st Bn, 49th ARVN Inf engaged an estimated enemy company 5 km northwest of Bao Trai in Hau Nghia Province on 6 October. The five hour contact accounted for 48 enemy soldiers killed as the enemy withdrew. ARVN casualties were 14 wounded.[102]

(C) In the TOAN THANG Campaign combat operations, in Hau Nghia Province 8 km northeast of Trang Bang, elements of the 2d Bn, 12th Inf were engaged by an unknown-size enemy force on 7 October. Elements of the 3d Bn, 187th Inf, reinforced. When the contact terminated early on 8 October, 147 enemy had been killed and seven detained.[103]

(C) With intelligence reports estimating an enemy force of three NVA divisions building-up along the Cambodian border of northern III Corps, the 1st Cav Div (AM) was shifted from I Corps to III Corps in late October in order to eliminate the enemy threat in that area. Elements of the division initially became operational under the 1st Inf Div's control in the TOAN THANG Campaign until the entire division became fully operational in this area in mid-November.[104]

(C) At midnight on 13 November, an enemy force estimated at two NVA battalions attacked the 36th ARVN Rgr Bn position at Fire Support Base Dot in northwest Tay Ninh Province, 22 km east-southeast of Katum. The enemy attacked by fire, using mortars and RPG. While ARVN and US artillery, TACAIR, AC-47 gunships (Spooky) and helicopter gunships provided support, the rangers repelled four enemy assaults on their position. When the enemy withdrew at 0600, friendly troops counted 120 enemy bodies just outside the defense perimeter. In the sweep that followed 167 more enemy bodies were found which brought the total to 287 killed by the rangers

and supporting fires. Ten PWs were taken. In this significant victory wherein the ARVN troops effectively utilized the supporting fires available, only nine ARVN were KIA, one MIA, and 48 WIA, including seven US advisors.[105]

(C) On 25 November, elements of the 3d Bde, 1st Cav Div (AM), while conducting a search-and-clear operation, engaged an estimated enemy company in an area 33 km northwest of Tay Ninh City. Supported by artillery, TACAIR, helicopter gunships, and aerial rocket artillery, the 1st Cav soldiers accounted for a total of 123 enemy soldiers killed.[106]

(C) In late 1968 Allied forces continued intensive reconnaissance-in-force and search-and-clear operations to eliminate the VCI, destroy local force units, and to interdict the movement of enemy supplies and infiltrators. The 1st Cav Div (AM) kept the pressure on COSVN forces and sanctuaries along the Cambodian border. In Binh Long Province on 9 December, elements of the 5th Bn, 7th Cav had a six-hour running fight with enemy forces resulting in 78 enemy KIA.[107]

(C) During early December, in response to intelligence reports, Free World forces in III Corps were on an increased alert. Reconnaissance-in-force was intensified and search-and-clear operations, aimed at intercepting and destroying VC/NVA units reported to be infiltrating from Cambodia, were conducted.

(C) Throughout the year, FWMAF motor convoys were subject to enemy ambush. Many of these ambushes were turned into Allied victories by the aggressiveness of the infantrymen and the rapid reaction of reinforcing elements. To cite a significant example, on 17 December, a 25th Inf Div resupply convoy, enroute from Dau Tieng to Tay Ninh Province, was attacked by an unknown size enemy force in an area 6 km west-southwest of Dau Tieng. Convoy security elements engaged the enemy and were reinforced by mechanized infantry units from the 3d Bde and supported by TACAIR and helicopter gunships. Sweeping the area after the contact terminated, the US soldiers discovered 73 enemy bodies. US casualties were five KIA and 11 WIA.[108]

(S) Intelligence sources continued to indicate enemy movement and a possible major offensive aimed at the city of Saigon. To guard against this infiltration, two battalions of the 1st Cav Div (AM), (the 1st Bn, 7th Cav and the 1st Bn, 8th Cav) were moved into Hau Nghia Province astride the western approach to the city with the mission to detect and destroy the enemy.[109]

(C) One hundred and three enemy soldiers were killed by elements of the 3d Bde, 25th Inf Div and supporting artillery, helicopter gunships, TACAIR and AC-47 gunships during the early morning hours of 22 December when the US unit's night defensive position 12 km northwest of Go Dau Ha came under mortar and ground attack.[110]

(C) During the closing weeks of the year Allied forces remained on alert. Extensive ground and river patrolling and search-and-clear operations continued throughout the Corps. Significant enemy munitions caches were seized as intelligence reports predicted possible enemy offensive activity for early 1969.[111]

IV CTZ

(U) Known simply as "The Delta," IV CTZ embraces the low-lying alluvial plain formed by the Mekong River system in RVN. Except for isolated peaks, the land does not rise over ten feet above sea level. The region's fertile soil is intensively cultivated with rice being the chief crop. Canals criss-cross the area, and dense rain forests cover its western portion, while mangrove swamps abound along the coast. Until 1 January 1968 the zone was divided into three generally equal areas of operations with responsibility assigned for each to the 7th, 9th and 21st ARVN Divs. On that date, the 44th Special Tactical Zone was established. It was composed of the three provinces bordering Cambodia. This reorganization, utilizing RF, PF, and CIDG forces, allowed the 9th ARVN Div units to be concentrated in the central and central coastal area. Major unit operations within the zone were oriented to the destruction of VC main and provincial units and principal bases. Unlike the other CTZs the primary responsibility for ground operations rested with the several ARVN commanders. However, beginning in 1967 and continuing throughout 1968, the Mobile Riverine Force (MRF) consisting of elements of the 9th Inf Div and USN TF 117 played an important role in this zone.[112]

(U) Within IV CTZ, the Tet Offensive was launched at approximately 0230 on 31 January. During the first 48 hours, 13 of the 16 province capitals and many of the district towns had been struck.

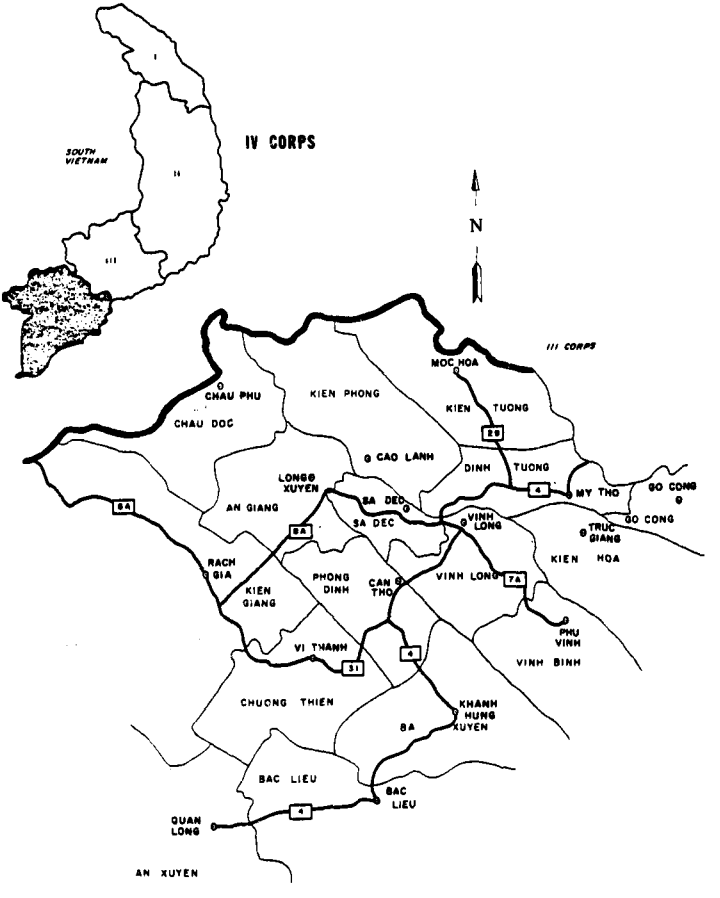
(U) In the upper delta area which was under the control of the 7th ARVN Div, the two hardest hit cities were My Tho in Dinh Tuong Province and Ben Tre in Kien Hoa Province although practically all of the province and district towns received either a mortar or ground attack. The enemy committed three battalions to the attack of My Tho and succeeded in approaching within 200 meters of the 7th ARVN Div CP before being beaten back. Two enemy battalions had been committed against Ben Tre and heavy fighting continued there until nightfall on 2 February. Operations to clear the surrounding area lasted well into the middle of the month.

(U) In the 9th ARVN Div's TAOR, the two primary objectives of the VC were Vinh Long City and airfield in Vinh Long Province and Tra Vinh City in Vinh Binh Province. While Tra Vinh City was cleared by the next day, Vinh Long City required both ARVN and US reinforcements before it was secured on 8 February.

(U) The enemy's major efforts in the 21st ARVN Div's TAOR were made against Can Tho City and airfield in Phong Dinh Province and Soc Trang City and airfield in Ba Xuyen Province. Soc Trang was cleared by 1 February but heavy fighting raged in Can Tho until 5 February when the VC were finally routed out of the university buildings.

(U) In the 44th Special Tactical Zone, intense fighting occurred in Chau Doc City and Tri Ton City in Chau Doc Province and in Moc Hoa City in Kien Tuong Province. Chau Doc and Tri Ton were secured after 36 hours of heavy fighting and Moc Hoa was secured 12 hours later. Additional attacks were launched against Cao Lanh, Kien Phong Province on 4, 6, and 9 February but the attacks were not pressed and died out by nightfall in all three cases.[113]

(U) Route 4, the main land LOC in IV CTZ, had been interdicted at 62 locations, and six bridges were damaged during the period 6-8 February. Efforts to open the road began 11 February and, by 16 February, the route was open from the III CTZ boundary to the Mekong River. However, it was not until 15 May, that a mud roadblock was removed 4 km southeast of


IV CORPS
SOUTH VIETNAM
I
II
III
N
III CORPS
MOC HOA
CHAU PHU
KIEN PHONG
KIEN TUONG
CHAU DOC
CAO LANH
DINH TUONG
LONG XUYEN
MY THO
GO CONG
AN GIANG
SA DEC
VINH LONG
TRUC GIANG
KIEN HOA
RACH GIA
KIEN GIANG
PHONG DINH
CAN THO
VINH LONG
PHU VINH
VINH BINH
VI THANH
CHUONG THIEN
KHANH HUNG XUYEN
BAC LIEU
QUAN LONG
AN XUYEN
4
80
8A
7A
31

FIGUR /-5

Phung Hiek in Phong Dinh Province and Route 4 was opened along its entire length in IV CTZ. The enemy constantly interdicted this route throughout the year. Even during periods of low-level enemy activity, the route would be cratered, a bridge would be blown, or dirt and mud roadblocks would be encountered. Major US and ARVN forces were utilized to counter the interdiction efforts.[114]

(C) The MRF had commenced Operation CORONADO IX on 2 November 1967 with the 5th Bn, VNMC, participating. During January the force conducted a series of rapid-reaction and search-and-destroy operations in Dinh Tuong, Vinh Long, Long An and Kien Hoa Provinces. The Operation, which terminated on 18 January, resulted in 434 enemy KIA. Operation CORONADO X immediately followed, primarily in Long An and Kien Hoa Provinces. During the Tet Offensive, the MRF demonstrated its operational flexibility by immediately moving to defend several beleaguered Delta cities. After eight days of continuous fighting in the My Tho, Dong Tam, Cai Lay and Vinh Long areas, the force returned to Dong Tam. Three hundred thirty-nine enemy had been killed by 13 February when the operation terminated. In Operation CORONADO XI which began on 13 February, the MRF joined ARVN units in their efforts to clear the VC from the Ba Se Road and thus expand the Can Tho defensive perimeter to safer limits. During this operation, which terminated on 4 March, the MRF was under the operational control of the SA, IV CTZ.[115]

(C) The MRF had begun CORONADO XII on 4 March but the operation was indefinitely suspended with the commencement of TRUONG CONG DINH under the control of the 9th Inf Div on 7 March. The assigned mission and AO of the MRF was assumed by the larger TRUONG CONG DINH force (1st Bde with three battalions in addition to the MRF's 2d Bde with two battalions). These elements of the 9th Inf Div were to conduct operations in eastern Dinh Tuong Province in coordination with the 7th ARVN Div to locate, fix and destroy the 261B VC MF Bn and other enemy elements in the AO.[116]

(C) On 17 March the 1st Bde, 9th Inf Div with its three organic battalions was withdrawn from Operation TRUONG CONG DINH and commenced Operation PEOPLE'S ROAD. The purpose of the operation was to open Route 4 in Dinh Tuong Province along the east/west trace to Cai Lay. TRUONG CONG DINH continued under the control of the 2d Bde in an area 10 km east of My Tho in conjunction with the 7th ARVN Div on Operation TRUONG CONG DINH 7/3. Little action was reported in March and April as the enemy continued to evade contact.[117]

(C) The 1st and 2d Bdes of the 9th Inf Div again participated in a single operation when TRUONG CONG DINH and PEOPLE'S ROAD were combined on 22 May. By that time, the infantrymen on both operations had accounted for a combined total of 800 enemy killed. Operations in this area continued through June with sporadic enemy contact.[118]

(C) Two battalions of the 2d Bde, 9th Inf Div normally operated with the MRF while the 3d Bn provided security to the My Tho area to west. These security operations, commencing on 1 June 1967, were initially called HOP TAC. The second HOP TAC operation (HOP TAC I) commenced on 8 February and terminated on 30 April, having accounted for 343 enemy killed. Operation KUDZU, in the same AO with the same mission and with the same size force, replaced HOP TAC I on 1 May. KUDZU terminated 20 November, having 116 enemy KIAs and 583 detainees to its credit. KUDZU II continued in the same AO.[119]

(C) Operation TRUONG CONG DINH became a corps-wide campaign when all ARVN forces in IV CTZ joined the operation in mid-March. By the end of March, ARVN forces had regained

the military initiative in the Delta. During June frequent clashes with VC forces led to increased control of the military situation and the campaign was terminated on 14 June.[120] Operation PEOPLE's ROAD continued until 30 July, accounting for 239 enemy killed and opening Route 4 to traffic.[121] With Operation TRUONG CONG DINH terminated, the corps-wide QUYET CHIEN Campaign commenced on 17 June.[122]

(C) On 30 July, the 3d Bde, 9th Inf Div MRF commenced operations in cooperation with the 5th Bn, VNMC in Chuong Thien Province and Base Area 480. As part of the QUYET CHIEN Campaign, this riverine operation resulted in 252 enemy killed and 39 detained before termination on 8 August.[123]

(C) A 7th ARVN Div controlled combat operation in the QUYET CHIEN Campaign in Kien Phong Province terminated late on 14 August. Results of the two-day operation were 53 enemy KIA and two detained.[124]

(C) A district (ARVN) controlled QUYET CHIEN Campaign combat operation sweep in Chuong Thien Province, 4 km south of Long My on 22 August engaged an unknown-size enemy force throughout the day. When the contact terminated, the RF/PF had lost seven KIA but had accounted for 50 enemy KIA.[125]

(C) In Ba Xuyen Province, 10 km southwest of Soc Trang, on 22 August, in the QUYET CHIEN Campaign, a 33d ARVN Regt controlled combat sweep terminated after two days, accounting for 75 enemy killed, and three detained.[126]

(C) On 24 August, elements of the 7th ARVN Inf Div engaged an estimated enemy battalion while conducting a sweep operation 19 km northwest of Cai Lay in Dinh Tuong Province. Elements of the 2d Bde, 9th Inf Div reinforced, and heavy contact with three enemy battalions continued into 25 August resulting in 44 enemy killed in the action. Contact was reestablished with an unknown size enemy force in the same area late on 25 August. Thirty-nine more enemy were killed raising the total to 87 killed in the QUYET CHIEN Campaign operation.[127]

(C) The 41st ARVN Rgrs and 7th Sqdn, 1st Cav made contact with an estimated enemy battalion early on 3 September, 24 km east of Cao Lanh in Kien Phong Province. By midnight the Rangers had killed 143 enemy, detained one and destroyed 27 sampans.[128]

(C) The 14th ARVN Inf Regt controlled QUYET CHIEN combat operation which commenced at 0700 on 4 September in Vinh Binh Province engaged two enemy companies. Upon termination at 2330, 40 enemy had been killed and 30 detained.[129]

(C) In Go Cong Province, 15 km west-northwest of Go Cong City on 19 September, an ARVN sector controlled combat operation with the 4th Bn, 12th ARVN Inf Regt and eight RF companies engaged an estimated enemy company in bunkers. When the QUYET CHIEN combat operation terminated at 1300 on 20 September, 38 enemy had been killed.[130]

(C) In Sa Dec Province, 12 km south-southeast of Sa Dec City a 9th ARVN Inf Div controlled combat operation commenced on 21 September with elements of the 15th and 16th ARVN Regts participating. The operation ended late on 22 September with 61 enemy soldiers killed and 5 detained.[131]

(C) A 32d ARVN Regt controlled combat operation commenced 28 km southwest of Ca Mau in An Xuyen Province on 23 September and terminated after moderate contacts reported with an estimated enemy company. Final results were 42 enemy killed and one detained.[132]

(C) In the QUYET CHIEN Campaign in an area 20 km southwest of Cai Be in Binh Tuong Province on 4 October a company from the 3d Bde, 9th Inf Div, engaged an estimated enemy company. A sweep the following morning revealed 48 enemy killed. In the same area on 5 October, helicopters from the Cavalry Squadron, 9th Inf Div, engaged three groups of enemy troops. Shortly after, elements of the 3d Bde were inserted into the area and confirmed 90 enemy killed, 64 of them by Army Air.[133]

(C) In Kien Phong Province, 10 km north-northeast of Cao Lanh, in the QUYET CHIEN Campaign, a 44th Special Zone controlled offensive sweep made heavy contact with an estimated enemy battalion on 5 November. The operation continued with elements of the 41st ARVN Rgrs and eight PF companies participating until termination late on 6 November. Cumulative results were 107 enemy killed.[134]

(C) A significant contact occurred on 23 November in Dinh Tuong Province when helicopter gunships from Troop A, 17th Cav, searching for the enemy, located a 30-man enemy force. A US infantry company reinforced the contact with final results reflecting 58 enemy killed and 15 detained and only one US soldier wounded.[135]

(C) On 17 November, an airborne assault operation supported by artillery, TACAIR, and armed helicopters was launched in the vicinity of the Seven Mountains area of Chau Doc Province, 6 miles southwest of Tri Ton. Part of the QUYET CHIEN Campaign, the 44th Special Tactical Zone controlled combat operation conducted in exploitation of an ARC LIGHT strike, began with the 43d and 44th ARVN Rgrs, one RF company, six CIDG companies, and 1st Bn, 12th Cav participating. By the end of the first day, 42 enemy had been killed and when the operation terminated on 29 November, 123 enemy had been killed, 93 VC captured, and 150 VC suspects detained.[136]

(C) A Corps-wide campaign against the VCI was initiated on 1 October as part of the countrywide Accelerated Pacification Campaign. The IV Corps Dry Weather Campaign also began 1 December, in support of the overall pacification mission, to continue to increase the preemptive spoiling operations in order to prevent VC units from interfering with pacification efforts. At the same time the Dry Weather Campaign, with the code name SPEEDY EXPRESS, employed offensive operations to interdict commo-liaison routes and deny the use of base areas to the VC. The 9th Inf Div had terminated its participation in the QUYET CHIEN Campaign on 30 November, accounting for 1,571 enemy KIA. The division then came under the operational control of SA, IV CTZ and participated in SPEEDY EXPRESS as the ARVN QUYET CHIEN operation continued.[137]

(U) Allied forces continued to engage enemy forces throughout the IV Corps area during the remainder of the year. Although most of the contacts with enemy forces in the Delta did not result in the destruction of units or even individually inflict heavy casualties on the Communists, the operations were effective in limiting the enemy's ability to either mass his forces or move troops with any degree of freedom.

AIR OPERATIONS

Introduction

(U) In so-called "Unconventional Wars," such as South Vietnam has experienced over the past few years, the role played by airpower, and particularly its accomplishments, has been very difficult to assess with accuracy. Measurements, such as sortie rates, tons of ordnance dropped, and troops airlifted, have given an indication of the magnitude of effort but then rarely revealed how effective that effort has been. Even moderately reliable bomb damage estimates and individual strike effectiveness were generally obscured by the terrain and the manner in which the counterinsurgency was fought. It follows, therefore, that while statistics may be used to measure magnitude, the overall contribution must come in general terms related to support of other military operations, just as the military operations themselves must be related to the political and ideological objectives for which the war is being waged. On this plane, the contributions are too obvious to miss. Airpower has added astonishing firepower and mobility to battlefield and/or campaign situations. Indeed, in many instances, the operation would certainly have been ineffective if not impossible without it. This has been particularly true in Vietnam where virtually all effort is devoted to the support role, rather than (as happened in World War II) diverting much of the energy in attempts to gain and maintain air supremacy.

(U) In this section on air operations, the emphasis has been on mobility and firepower. Some sortie rates are given and some functional breakdown is evident; however, the former is used primarily to indicate the amount of effort and the latter to show, in a general way, how that effort was expended.

(U) It should also be noted that selectivity was essential in dealing with something as large as air operations. There was no space or requirement, for example, to chronicle the vast amount of airlift that has transpired between CONUS and SEA, or on an intertheater basis. Nor has naval aviation been described as such. Although it strongly supported military activities in SEASIA, it fell outside the framework of being both MACV oriented and controlled. Finally, the vast amount of Army aviation, perhaps unfairly, has not been treated as a separate entity with a functional breakdown. Army aviation units were generally organically owned by the activities they supported and, except for the overall contributions to mobility and firepower, would be unintelligible unless related directly to the specific operations they supported.

Close Support of Ground Troops

(U) The use of Army, Air Force, Marine, and VNAF aviation units to provide close support of ground actions was easily the most massive demonstration of airpower in SEASIA during 1968. In many ways, it was also the most important. Total combat and combat support sorties of the various services came to well over six million sorties for the year and, while accomplishment of "support" functions are inherently difficult to measure with certitude, it goes almost without saying that it has been enormous. As noted in the introduction, it has added awesome firepower to battle areas, including some very remote ones. At the same time, it has added a measure of mobility to ground action that has quite literally revolutionized ground warfare. The "immediate

response" capability of TACAIR and Army gunships is a case in point, as are the insertion and extraction of troops, medevac flights that get wounded men to hospitals in a matter of minutes, reconnaissance and the ferrying of munitions and supplies. The overall result has been the substitution of firepower for manpower whenever possible.

(C) The bringing of firepower and mobility to the support of ground forces was admirably demonstrated in the Battle of Duc Lap, a relatively small engagement but nonetheless indicative of the relationship between air and ground throughout the Vietnamese War. The battle began at 0105 hours on the morning of 23 August 1968 when an estimated 4,000 VC/NVA soldiers attempted to overrun a RF/PF Subsector Station, a CIDG camp, and a scout outpost belonging to a RVN scout battalion. On the surface it must have seemed an easy operation for the VC/NVA. The Duc Lap area was only 7 kilometers from the Cambodian border, the RF/PF and the CIDG forces were not known for reliability in battle, and the area was more than 60 kilometers away from Ban Me Thuot, the nearest major support area. [138]

(C) But within 30 minutes after the urgent call went out from the hard-pressed defenders--by which time the defensive perimeter of the subsector station had been breached and firefights were going on inside the compound--US Army gunships were in the area providing, as the After Action Report later said, "close and continuous" support. Fifteen minutes later, the first of the Air Force C-47 "Spooky" gunships showed up, adding their incredible firepower. Both gunships and Spookies remained throughout the night, responding to one emergency after another.

(C) At first light, in the midst of intense ground fire, Army helicopters began offloading supplies and evacuating the wounded. By 0900 a Forward Air Controller (FAC) was in the area to direct the tactical air strikes which "began almost immediately." By noon, Army helicopters had brought in a Mobile Strike Force (MSF) from Ban Me Thuot and, by 1500 hours, yet another.

(C) Although the situation was "touch and go" at times, by nightfall of the 23d, a pattern had been set to provide continuous support of the beleaguered troops on the ground. Throughout the night the "Spooky" gunships roamed overhead, making it difficult for the enemy to concentrate for new assaults. Of these Spookies, one survivor wrote, "There is an insoluble bond rightly formed between the lone small forces on the ground and the lone 'Guardian Angel' in the sky that is not supplanted by anything else, day or night." Throughout daylight hours, Army gunship pilots provided continuous, close-in support, often on the very edges of the defensive perimeters. Further out, FACs directed tactical air strikes from first light until relieved by Spooky and oftentimes on into the night when ground commanders requested it. Later, nine B-52 ARC LIGHT sorties hit enemy concentrations with "awesome power."

(C) Meanwhile, Army helicopters kept bringing the supplies and reinforcements in, and taking the wounded out. At no time during the entire eight-day siege, the After Action Report stated, "was there a critical shortage of ammo, rations or water." On the 24th, two MSFs were heli-lifted in, and two more on the 25th, along with a battery of 105mm howitzers. Concurrent with this reinforcement, one MSF which had suffered heavy casualties was heli-lifted out. Despite the furious action, a wounded man could count on being in a medical facility at Ban Me Thuot within three hours.

(C) Of course such effort was possible only by exertions nearly as extreme as those on the ground. Pilots flew as many as 13 hours a day and aircraft were kept flying with a bare minimum of maintenance.

(C) By the time the enemy retreated into the jungle and the siege came to an end, the flexibility, mobility, and firepower of airpower had been aptly demonstrated. Flights ferrying in reinforcements ran into the hundreds as did the tactical air sorties and gunship missions. High explosive, napalm, and bomb cluster units dropped by USAF aircraft totaled nearly one and one half million pounds, while rounds expended by the gunships ran well into the millions. But these figures only reflect the amount of support to ground forces. The effectiveness of that support was to be measured in the value the ground forces placed on it. As the After Action Report put it:

> Spooky, gunships, and the FAC were constant companions of the defenders during the night, and air strikes and ARC LIGHTs were used throughout the day. The FACs, in addition to guiding TACAIR, also served as visual reconnaissance, artillery observers, and radio relay. On several occasions during these days the enemy was stopped at the perimeter wire of the compound or the battalion perimeter by Spooky, artillery defensive concentrations, and gunships, often working simultaneously in designated areas around the perimeter.

(C) The After Action Report also gave it as the "recorded opinion" of the defenders at Duc Lap that the camp would have been "overrun and destroyed" had it not been for the "exceptionally effective employment of . . . airpower." Actually, there was more to it than that. Because of the mobility and firepower available in SEASIA, COMUSMACV could let a defensive position such as Duc Lap exist with the assurance that timely support would be forthcoming if necessary and that it would be effective when it got there.

(U) Overall, close support of ground operations by airpower in SEASIA during 1968 was of such magnitude that statistics must be used to portray it. Here a word of caution must be added since statistics are notoriously subject to manipulation and misinterpretation. This is particularly true--and therefore particularly dangerous--in depicting missions of this type, where various Services are involved, where unavoidably different criteria are used to determine what is a "combat" as opposed to a "combat support" mission, and where the temptation to compare is almost irresistible. Moreover, caution must be used in equating one type mission flown by different type aircraft. This distinction is easily lost when reduced to numbers. A highly sophisticated tactical jet fighter-bomber, for example, staging from a complex airfield some distance away and delivering a heavy payload of bombs, machine gun and rocket fire is simply not to be compared, number for number, with a helicopter gunship, staging from a field close-by and supporting units to which it is organically assigned. It must be obvious, therefore, that tempting comparisons are generally much less meaningful than first glance might seem to suggest. For its part, MACV has taken the proper position that the various types of ground support missions are complementary to, rather than competitive with, each other. It is in this spirit that the following statistics are given:

US ARMY COMBAT AND COMBAT SUPPORT SORTIES IN SVN
1968

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
379,349	421,583	480,837	492,707	542,731	512,595
Jul	**Aug**	**Sep**	**Oct**	**Nov**	**Dec**
529,116	544,549	526,392	478,012	580,796	581,779

Source: Monthly Highlights of US Army Pacific, Activities, Jan - Dec 68.

(S) It follows that with an average of roughly 2,500 helicopters as compared to slightly less than 300 fixed-wing aircraft--none of which had an attack capability--that all of the Army's combat and almost all of the combat support sorties for the year were by rotary-wing aircraft. Moreover, Army aviation was entirely ground support oriented and flew its missions accordingly.

US AIR FORCE COMBAT AND COMBAT SUPPORT SORTIES IN SVN
1968

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
63,650	60,019	68,374	66,932	72,396	71,312
Jul	**Aug**	**Sep**	**Oct**	**Nov**	**Dec**
70,746	70,925	67,908	71,161	70,593	87,010

Source: Hq PACAF, Summary Air Operations Southeast Asia, Jan - Dec 68.

(S) The Air Force inventory for the year averaged around 650 "attack capable aircraft," 900 fixed-wing aircraft, and slightly more than 50 helicopters, most of which were used for rescue. All of the Air Force combat/combat support missions, therefore, were prop or jet driven and came in addition to other Air Force missions, such as interdiction and reconnaissance.

US MARINE CORPS COMBAT AND COMBAT SUPPORT SORTIES
IN SVN, 1968

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
14,700	18,163	20,407	21,743	24,416	29,903
Jul	**Aug**	**Sep**	**Oct**	**Nov**	**Dec**
29,715	28,465	24,268	29,852	61,618	52,872

Source: Hq PACAF, Summary, Air Operations Southeast Asia, Jan - Dec 68.

(S) The Marines had some 150 fixed-wing aircraft during the year. Helicopter strength varied just below 300. Since the Marines were strong believers in close air support, particularly with Marine pilots supporting Marine troops, both Marine fixed-wing aircraft and armed helicopters flew direct fire support missions, as well as the less spectacular combat support missions.

VNAF COMBAT AND COMBAT SUPPORT SORTIES IN SVN
CY68

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
12,230	9,742	7,089	9,401	13,127	12,963
Jul	**Aug**	**Sep**	**Oct**	**Nov**	**Dec**
13,772	13,962	13,769	16,769	15,531	14,564

Source: Hq PACAF, Summary Air Operations Southeast Asia, Jan - Dec 68.

(S) The VNAF inventory for the year included roughly 75 helicopters and 90 fixed-wing, attack-capable aircraft. The VNAF, therefore, like the Marines, used both fixed and rotary-wing aircraft for close ground support.

Interdiction

(U) In a message dated 9 January 1968, 7AF spelled out its accomplishments in 1967 and pointed to the continued value of these operations in the coming year. Among other things, the message announced that while "infiltration could not be entirely halted by direct military action alone, it was to be made less effective and more costly. Counterinfiltration programs were aimed at destroying the enemy's military and logistic base, interdicting his LOCs, forcing him into sustained combat operations, and inhibiting his effective use of Laos and Cambodia sanctuaries."[139]

(U) It follows that if interdiction was of such importance in 1967, it was even more so in 1968, the year of Tet, Khe Sanh, and the offensives of May-June and August. Indeed, except for political limitations imposed on Operation ROLLING THUNDER, the interdiction program throughout SEA during the year was characterized by constant pressure against enemy LOCs, storage areas and base camps. At times there were special campaigns or "surge efforts" of considerable magnitude. Of the latter, three can be taken as representative of the magnitude of operations of this sort. Operation TURNPIKE began in April and ended in June; Operation THOR, a week-long affair, began in July, and the third COMMANDO HUNT, which began in November was still going strong when the year ended. In addition, ROLLING THUNDER, the sustained operation over NVN, is treated in some detail in this section.

TURNPIKE

(S) Operation TURNPIKE was an integrated TACAIR and ARC LIGHT operation designed to destroy and impede infiltration traversing Route Package 1-TALLY HO area in North Vietnam and STEEL TIGER and TIGER HOUND areas of Laos. The operation grew out of a study by MACV and 7AF intelligence analysts which revealed "concrete evidence that the enemy has initiated a massive effort to move considerable quantities of equipment, supplies, and personnel through his LOCs during the next several weeks, with a goal of reaching pre-Tet strength levels by late June." This, in turn, led COMUSMACV to conclude that a "calculated, concentrated TACAIR and ARC LIGHT effort must be sustained in an integrated campaign to thwart this enemy logistic plan." "It is my opinion," he went on to say, "that such a comprehensive, hard-hitting campaign is absolutely essential during this critical period of transition in monsoon seasons, to assure that the enemy is denied any possibility of regrouping his position by massing his logistic traffic on multiple LOCs out-of-country and in-country."[140]

(S) As part of this integrated effort, COMUSMACV authorized the use of up to 50 percent of the ARC LIGHT force as a "matter of urgent priority." In addition, he directed that Navy and Marine aircraft participate in the operation although 7AF had overall jurisdiction. Moreover, COMUSMACV authorized CDR 7AF to coordinate directly with major field commanders on rapid identification of targets and the establishment of specified strike zones.[141]

(S) Operation TURNPIKE got underway on 19 April as B-52s and Marine, Air Force and Navy fighter-bombers struck at selected road interdiction targets, truck convoys, FAC developed truck parks and storage areas. As usual, immediate results were difficult to determine with accuracy; however, during those first days, sorties averaged more than 300 daily. There seemed, however, to be enough success to warrant expansion of the operation. On 26 April, COMUSMACV authorized an increase of the area covered by TURNPIKE, called for the use of additional "out-of-country" resources, and directed the inauguration of a complementary in-country interdiction effort. The purpose of the latter, according to 7AF, was to "identify and strike high threat LOCs, storage areas and enemy base camps which will enhance planned friendly ground operations and/or significantly reduce enemy supply and resupply of his in-country forces.[142]

(S) Both the magnitude and estimated success of TURNPIKE can be seen in the following table:

	AVERAGE DAILY TACAIR SORTIES	AVERAGE DAILY BDA RATES		
		Trucks (Dest and Dam)	Explosions and Fires	Road Cuts
19 Apr - 3 May	351	42	130	28
4 - 10 May	243	55	93	23
11 - 17 May	223	37	94	30
18 - 24 May	181	44	117	24

25 - 31 May	200	36	107	28
1 - 7 June	189	17	98	16

Note: Statistics for the period 8-24 June were not available when this history was compiled.

To achieve these impressive results, 7AF flew a total of 9,602 sorties, USN 1,397, USMC 1,390 and Strategic Air Command (SAC) (ARC LIGHT) 566.[143]

(S) As TURNPIKE progressed, road watch teams, sensors, and tactical reconnaissance noted a marked decrease of logistical flow in the interdicted area. The flow was never completely stopped, however, nor could the exact reduction be accurately determined since the enemy naturally moved all the supplies he could at night and/or in bad weather. Thus, on 24 June, when TURNPIKE was officially terminated, it was quite possible for MACV to say that the operation was successful, that is, the objectives had been largely achieved; yet refrain from speculating on just what percentage of the enemy movement along the interdicted routes had been interrupted.

Operation THOR

(S) In May 1968 and again the following month, CG, III MAF had expressed concern over the Cap Mui Lay Sector (CMLS), a relatively small area bordering the South China Sea, the south side of the DMZ, and running north and west several kilometers. From this strongly fortified area NVA forces had several times fired on Marine installations. Their heavy AA/AW and SAM fire made it extremely difficult to reconnoiter or direct fire by air, while their coastal guns kept Navy ships 12 to 18 kilometers off-shore. "The NVA," one report concluded, "was thus able to exploit the CMLS for the staging and infiltration of men and equipment into South Vietnam . . . ."[144]

(S) With the approval of COMUSMACV, III MAF drew up a plan for consideration. This plan, approved by COMUSMACV on 21 June, and given the code name "Operation THOR," had two main purposes, to be accomplished in three phases. One purpose was to destroy NVA AA, field and coastal artillery in the CMLS. The other was to make possible continued surveillance and attacks on NVA installations in the north of the DMZ. This action, it was reasoned, would dislocate any NVA preparations for a large scale invasion of GVN territory from the CMLS.

(S) The operation, scheduled to begin 1 July and run through 7 July, called for the first phase to consist of "massive air bombardment to obtain maximum destruction and to permit the forward positioning of artillery and naval gunfire ships." This phase, which would last only one day, was under control of 7AF. Phase II, beginning D+1, called for massive air, artillery, and naval gunfire attacks on enemy gunfire positions to "create a permissive environment for air observation and coastal bombardment." Phase III, beginning D+4 and continuing for three days, would consist of integrated air, artillery and naval gunfire attacks "to open the entire sector to close aerial observation and precision destruction." The latter two phases would be under control of CG, Provisional Corps Vietnam (PROVCORPSV).[145]

(S) In the vast integrated effort which got off as scheduled and was accomplished as planned, TACAIR flew 1,787 sorties. B-52s added 210 sorties, while seven ships and numerous artillery batteries added a total of 41,693 rounds to the holocaust. Best estimates were that nearly 2,000

enemy gun positions and structures were destroyed with several hundred others damaged. This destruction, however, was really a means to an end. The CG, PROVCORPSV reported that during the first day of THOR, US artillery "was able to occupy prepared positions at forward fire support bases without losses to friendly weapons or personnel. Naval gunfire ships were able to come within 10 kilometers of the coastline and engage enemy coastal batteries and other targets without being engaged themselves." In Phase II and III, according to the report, "observer aircraft were able to operate deep within the operational zone with no losses, and naval gunfire ships closed within five kilometers of the shore without being fired upon. Despite the high number of TACAIR sorties flown, only three aircraft losses to enemy ground fire were reported."[146]

(S) In the success of Operation THOR the enemy lost a valuable sanctuary. But equally important from the standpoint of MACV was the fact that the operation was overall an outstanding example of the successful integration and application of air, naval, and ground firepower on a relatively small geographical area. "At no time," the preliminary report concluded, "was there any lull in attack of targets by air, naval or artillery ordnance attributable to coordination problems. All participating elements displayed expert knowledge of fire support procedures and high professionalism throughout the operation."[147] Finally, there may well have been one contribution that could not then or perhaps at any later time be measured with assurance: If the enemy had intended using the CMLS as a staging point for staging a major infiltration program into the South, that possibility had been preempted. And preemption has always been one purpose of interdiction.

COMMANDO HUNT

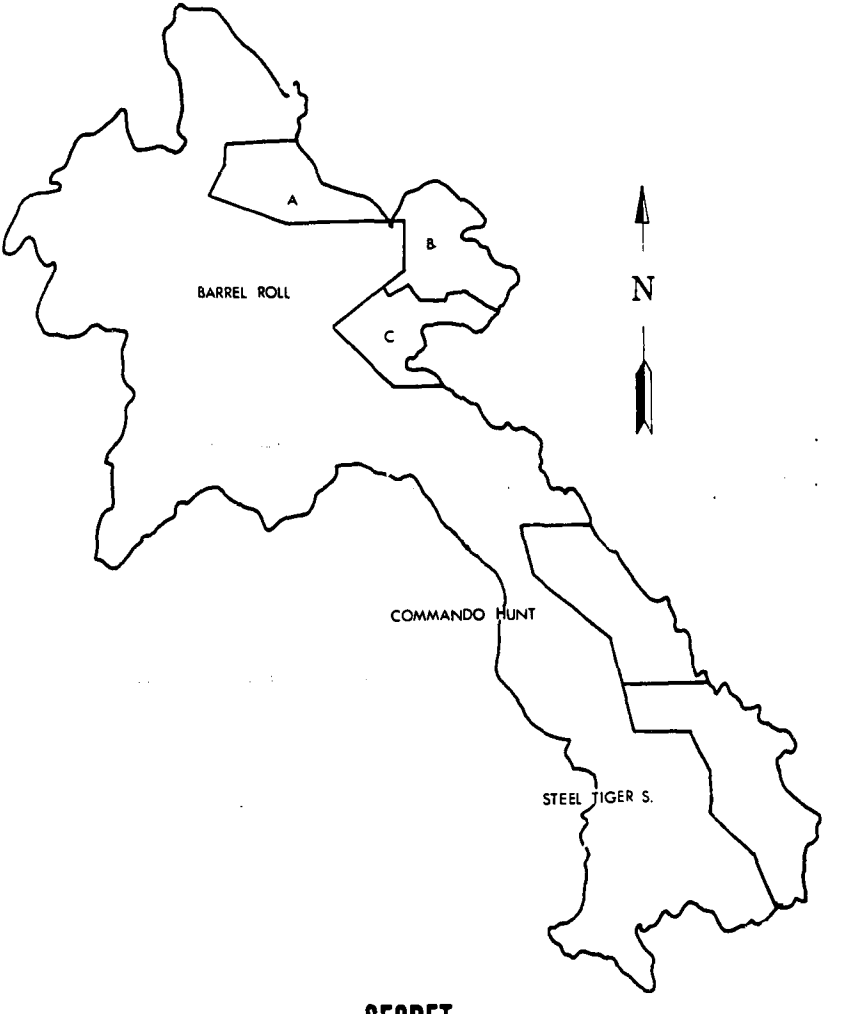
(S) COMMANDO HUNT was the last and in many ways the most important of the 1968 interdiction campaigns. Designed to counter a predictable shift in the enemy logistical flow brought on by the advent of the northeast monsoon season, it consisted of a sophisticated, concentrated, day-night interdiction effort covering some 1700 square miles of the Laotian Panhandle (see Figure V-6), an area laced by more than 450 miles of primary roads.[148]

(S) Those sections of Laos making up the COMMANDO HUNT area had long been subjected to regular day and night interdiction. COMMANDO HUNT, however, was a special operation in several respects. For one thing, it had no termination date. For another, it was specifically designed to exploit the successful IGLOO WHITE sensor barrier. In fact, to insure maximum effectiveness, 7th Air Force charged Task Force ALPHA, a unit at Nakhon Phanom Royal Thai Air Force Base, Thailand, which ran the IGLOO WHITE system, with control of COMMANDO HUNT air operations as well. Also, COMMANDO HUNT was intended to be both massive and sustained. Literally dozens of flying units were involved and aircraft used ranged from the heavy B-52s to AC-130 gunships and various fighter-bombers. Allocated sorties ran to more than 500 per day, including more than 20 B-52 strikes. Moreover, the whole operation was conducted with sufficient flexibility for some aircraft to operate without supervision of Forward Air Control (FAC) pilots.

(S) Tactically, COMMANDO HUNT down-graded the previous technique of "armed reconnaissance," wherein strike aircraft sought out and attacked targets of opportunity although this technique was still authorized. The new emphasis was on the selection and interdiction of certain segments or points in the road networks which, because of surrounding terrain, would be unusually difficult for the enemy to bypass. These so-called "choke points" would be hit hard

~~SECRET~~

INTERDICTION AREAS IN LAOS



~~SECRET~~

FIGURE V-6

with as many as 50 sorties in a single day with the intent of blocking all traffic until major repairs had been made. Then, when reconnaissance indicated traffic was about to move, the point would be struck again. Moreover, in the initial strike, a variety of munitions would be used: high explosives to tear up the terrain; aerial-seeded mines to make the repair dangerous; and, if possible, CS agents to disrupt repair work in the area for several days. Meanwhile, it could safely be assumed that there would be a buildup of vehicles, probably in carefully camouflaged "truck parks." Using advanced sensing equipment, these parks could be detected and hit from time to time.

(TS) COMMANDO HUNT officially got underway on 15 November although technically there had been a gradual acceleration in COMMANDO HUNT activity well before that date. Nevertheless, this date was later than originally intended. Delicate political considerations were involved and even though all problems were not resolved by 15 November, the operation could wait no longer. A period of good weather existed in the area and the 1 November bombing halt had greatly increased the importance of the Laotian LOCs to the VC and NVA. (The latter, it will be recalled, had agreed to respect the DMZ but they had not agreed to forego infiltration through Laos.) As a PACAF message of 18 November put it:

> There is no indication that the North Vietnamese are planning to do anything but attempt to push as much military material through the Laotian LOCs as is physically possible. Truck traffic over the main routes leading into Laos have increased dramatically since 1 November. Based almost entirely on photo-recce, vehicle movement has been . . . as high as 629 on a given day. Since 1 November, NVA logistical movement has increased by 560 percent.[149]

(TS) With an "increase in activity" to spur them on and with experience gained from months of intensive interdiction effort, US aircrews began COMMANDO HUNT with excellent prospects of success. In fact, as CINCPACAF pointed out in the message just cited, it would be an error to measure the effectiveness of air interdiction by the number of trucks destroyed as compared to those known to be using the target routes. "The effectiveness of high performance jet aircraft in overall air interdiction in Laos cannot be equated purely to truck-killing roles. The jet force in Laos accomplishes far broader roles by denying the enemy use of LOCs when they are most productive (daylight), and secondly, by attacking the infra-structure of the enemy's logistical system." Indeed, "the only inhibiting factor that can be detected in a steady upsurge in truck traffic volume over the Laotian LOCs is the period of absolute denial of movement through critical chokepoints caused by our bombing."[150]

(S) Understandably, the effectiveness of COMMANDO HUNT at year's end was, and would remain, a matter of value judgment. No informed person could doubt that the interdiction effort had decreased potential enemy traffic, a fact which had strategic as well as tactical importance. If, as the evidence seemed to indicate, the enemy had in mind another major move against RVN cities, particularly Saigon, COMMANDO HUNT was certainly hindering, and would possibly prevent, the necessary buildup for such attacks.

ROLLING THUNDER

(S) The purpose behind the well-known ROLLING THUNDER operation, which first began in 1965, was to apply heavy military pressure against the Government of North Vietnam, thereby compelling them to cease or at least decrease their support, control, and direction of insurgency in South Vietnam. To achieve this objective, this joint-Service, day-night, all-weather effort was pushed with vigor in an all-out effort to destroy men and material moving south and to disrupt critical LOCs north of the DMZ.

(S) CY68 witnessed several basic trends in this effort, along with two dramatic political decisions that limited and then ended ROLLING THUNDER. One trend was a cyclic one. During the winter months, when weather in the north has been traditionally poor, strikes were down. With good weather, the air effort increased proportionally. To offset this controlling cycle, however, US aircrews relied on advanced bombing techniques. The first, known as COMMANDO NAIL, utilized airborne bombing radar refined to the point where it could be carried by fighter type aircraft. Later, particularly when all effort was centered in the North Vietnam panhandle, more and more reliance was placed on COMBAT SKYSPOT, a system using ground radar to direct attacking aircraft to the bomb release point. 151

(S) Concurrent with these advances, technological improvements and tactical refinements were used to counter the MIG and SAM threat. Electronic countermeasures were prominent as were tactical innovations, such as using MIGCAP and SAM suppression missions.

(S) It should also be noted that two impressive bombing delivery systems were used during the year, both of which required visual contact with the target but which allowed the fighter-bombers to operate out of the low level, high risk anti-aircraft and automatic weapons (AW) area. One system, which dated back to 1967, was known as WALLEYE. Basically it linked up a television transmitting-monitoring device in the airplane with one in the bomb itself. The pilot picked up the target on his screen, locked the bomb on the TV picture, and sent it on its way. The bomb, while free falling, had moveable vanes which automatically adjusted to keep the TV sensor in the nose of the bomb aligned with the sensor in the cockpit. Later in the year, another system known as PAVEWAY went into operation. This required two aircraft, one of which picked out the target and spotlighted it with a laser beam while the second aircraft picked up the laser reflection off the target and locked the bomb onto it. Like WALLEYE, PAVEWAY free fell but had adjustable vanes to keep the bomb moving toward the target.

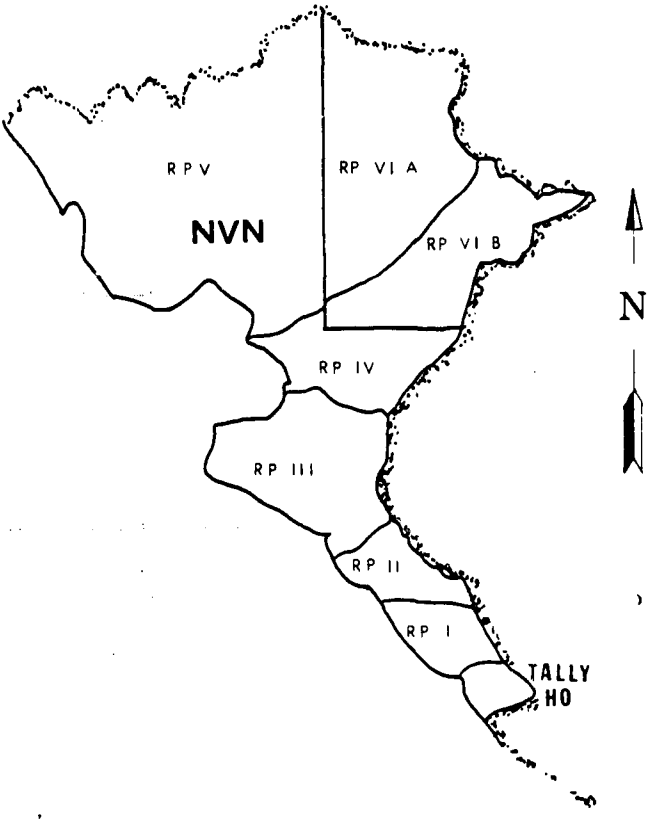
(S) Two political decisions which affected ROLLING THUNDER received world-wide attention when announced by the President of the United States. The first, announced on 31 March, ended all offensive air operations north of the 20th Parallel, and the second, announced on 31 October, ended all air and artillery operations in NVN with the exception of reconnaissance flights.

(S) Meanwhile, hampered by the usual bad weather of the northeast monsoons, American pilots got ROLLING THUNDER for 1968 off to a start by flying 6,349 attack and 2,391 protection and rescue (CAP and RESCAP) support sorties in January. This was considerably more than December 1967 (5,757 combat and 1,689 CAP and RESCAP), although it was still far below the all-time high of August 1967 (11,739 combat and 1,279 CAP and RESCAP sorties).

(S) To accomplish the January mission, 24 American aircraft--15 AF, 8 USN, and 1 USMC--were lost over North Vietnam. Six were lost to MIG fighters, and four to SAM missiles,

~~SECRET~~

ROUTE PACKAGES IN NORTH VIETNAM



~~SECRET~~

FIGURE V-7

almost all of them in the northern reaches of the country. Two were tragically lost because of premature bomb explosions during bomb release and 12 were apparently downed by anti-aircraft (AA) and/or ground fire.

(S) Weather over North Vietnam during February was reportedly the worst that Air Force, Navy and Marine pilots had encountered in three years of combat flying over the north. Indeed, it was proving so difficult to see and hit Hanoi and Haiphong that few flights into that area could be classified as "successful." As a result of the weather, the total sortie rate for the month declined from the January showing. (See the chart on ROLLING THUNDER sorties in this section for month-by-month totals.) Primary emphasis in ROLLING THUNDER thus continued to be in Route Package I, just above the DMZ. And here, despite the bad weather, some striking results were obtained. On 27 February, for example, 12 out of a convoy of 20 trucks were destroyed near the Mu Gia Pass and the remainder were all damaged.

(S) Losses in February were down considerably from the previous month. USAF lost three to MIGs, two to AA, two to SAMs, and one to unknown causes. The Navy lost two, one to SAMs and one listed as "unknown." The Marines lost one to a SAM missile.

(S) The bad weather which plagued the Route Packages during February continued into March, particularly in the northern areas. Nevertheless, radar target acquisitions and aiming of bombs in the north increased over the February total. In all 5,063 strike missions were flown, with 69 percent of this figure falling in the Route Package I area. Once again the results were good and at times spectacular. On 20 March, for example, a prolonged seven hour strike destroyed 40 trucks and damaged another 47 out of a 125 truck convoy.

(S) Later in the month, on 25 March, six F-111As joined ROLLING THUNDER in a program titled COMBAT LANCER. This effort, which had combat testing of the multi-million dollar aircraft as its prime objective, was short lived. One aircraft was lost on its first sortie, and another was lost on its fourth trip. Neither was due to combat damage, however, the setback was enough to halt the COMBAT LANCER program until the disasters had been throroughly checked.

(S) Combat losses for the month of March totaled nine, six USAF and three Navy. All of the Air Force craft fell victim to AA and/or AW/SA fire. The three Navy losses, all of which took place in the Red River area, were attributed to "unknown" causes. The most striking aspect of ROLLING THUNDER in March was the remarkable lack of aggressive MIG action. Enemy fighters were often sighted but the pilots were apparently waiting for a clear advantage before pressing the attack. US pilots flying MIGCAP saw to it that this advantage never came.

(S) ROLLING THUNDER operations in April 1968 were dominated in many ways by the "partial bomb halt" proclaimed by the President of the United States on 31 March. The proclamation ended offensive air operations north of 20 degrees north latitude effective 0800 hours, Saigon time, on 1 April. Inasmuch as 98 percent of all ROLLING THUNDER targets "worthy of strike" lay north of 19 degrees north latitude, the restriction was a major one. As far as total effort was concerned, however, ROLLING THUNDER operations increased rather than decreased. Partly because of increasingly good weather over the panhandle and partly because the Navy now had three large carriers on YANKEE STATION, April combat sorties shot up to 7,263, some 43 percent above the March level. Understandably, Route Package I received primary attention.

(S) Combat losses for the month sank to eight aircraft, a direct reflection of the shift away from the MIG and SAM high risk areas. The Air Force lost five to AA and/or ground fire and one crashed for unknown reasons, while the Navy lost two to AA fire.

(S) One loss during the month which was not a result of hostile action but which had an impact on the ROLLING THUNDER program was the crash of another F-111. COMBAT LANCER aircraft had been released for "local training" on 5 April and "night training" on 10 April. Normal operations began two days later. When the third F-111 accident in four weeks took place on 22 April, another grounding of the controversial aircraft was inevitable.

(S) The May ROLLING THUNDER program was characterized by two trends and/or events. In the first place the month witnessed another quantitative jump in the number of combat strikes, all against the panhandle. The reasons were because of the Navy's buildup, which was initiated the previous month, and the weather which was good over much of the panhandle area most of the time.

(S) Inevitably, the increased activity of May was reflected in an increased loss rate. The Air Force lost five to AA and/or ground fire, together with a photo-reconnaissance plane that disappeared without leaving evidence as to why it went down. The Navy lost nine aircraft, including one to a MIG-21, the first such loss since February, while the Marines lost one plane, probably due to ground fire.

(S) ROLLING THUNDER sorties further increased during June. This increase continued to reflect favorable weather conditions and in this instance, a decrease of activity over Laos where the Southwest Monsoon was in full force. This same monsoon weather also forced the VC/NVA to shift their resupply flow from Laos to the NVN Panhandle where eager US aircrews were waiting. The result, not unnaturally, was unusually heavy attrition of enemy vehicles, supplies, and manpower.

(S) For this performance, US forces paid with the loss of ten aircraft. The Air Force lost four to ground/AA fire, including a light FAC aircraft. The Navy lost six, two to ground fire, one to AA, one to a SAM missile, and yet another one to a MIG-21. The final craft vanished with its crew and had to be listed as lost to "unknown causes."

(S) July was easily the peak for ROLLING THUNDER in 1968 with an all-time high of 14,382 combat sorties and 2,676 CAP and RESCAP sorties flown. One reason for this impressive showing was the relatively good weather; another was the seven-day THOR operation described earlier. Also, July witnessed a major attempt to interdict key points in the mountains with the objective of forcing the enemy to shift his LOCs from the hard-to-hit mountain roads to the more vulnerable coastal regions.

(S) Considering the upsurge of activity, aircraft losses were relatively light. The Air Force lost eleven, all to ground or AA fire; the Navy lost three and the Marines lost one to the same causes.

(S) The August sortie rate, while lower than the July spectacular by 1,337 missions, was still the second highest month on record. While the weather overall remained relatively good, a number of summer tropical storms periodically cut into the activity, and no doubt interfered with the effectiveness of many missions. US fliers, however, continued to rely on the COMMANDO NAIL method of ordnance release, and on the use of the WALLEYE and PAVEWAY weapons.

(S) Aircraft losses for the month amounted to 13, of which nine were Air Force and four were Navy. The AF lost six to ground or AA fire and the Navy lost three. The three remaining AF losses had to be attributed to "unknown" causes while the Navy lost another plane to a MIG firing an air-to-air missile.

(S) Just as August had seen less ROLLING THUNDER activity than July, so September saw less than August. Again, as with the previous month, tropical storms proved a prime interference. More than any other time in the past three months, Air Force crews had to rely on COMMANDO NAIL and another radar-monitored drop procedure known as COMBAT SKY SPOT (CSS) to continue the heavy interdiction program. Air Force, Navy and Marine pilots continued to emphasize interdiction of key points, such as bridges, "hubs," and major intersections. The Navy proved particularly adept at hitting these points just prior to sunset each night so that it would be difficult--and hopefully impossible--to repair the damage and get the traffic moving again before strikes started working over the backed-up traffic the next morning.

(S) Results of interdiction efforts have always been difficult to determine with accuracy; however, in this instance there was ample evidence that the resupply effort through RP-1 had been badly hurt. For the week 15-21 July, shortly after the massive interdiction effort got underway, vehicle sightings for Routes 15, 101 and 137 totaled 988. By the week of 19-25 August, the observed count was down to 444. There was short rise after that but, during the week of 2-8 September, the score had "bottomed out" at 269.

(S) Because of enemy efforts to protect the "key" points with heavy AA and AW fire and because interdicting aircraft were naturally forced to strike at low levels, September costs were high. The Air Force lost seven aircraft, the Navy seven, and the Marines one. All of the AF aircraft fell to ground and/or AA fire as did the single Marine loss. The Navy lost five to the same causes, one to a SAM missile, and one had to be abandoned when it ran out of fuel after a MIG engagement.

(S) The bad weather which had characterized August and September grew even worse in October; nevertheless, there was a 12 percent increase in sortie rate over the September total. The reason, of course, was increased reliance on CSS and COMMANDO NAIL methods of ordnance delivery. During one week of very bad weather, for example, (14-22 October) an average of 315 sorties per day were flown, down only 17 percent from the overall average for the month. Again the heaviest emphasis was on certain interdiction points on Routes 15, 101, and 137. "Each of the six primary choke points," the PACAF Summary reported, "was struck an average of eight times daily with approximately 10 tons of bombs and CBUs. Although much of the effort was radar controlled in weather below minimum for visual operations, low level FAC and photo intelligence reported LOC closure for extensive periods of time."

(S) Aircraft losses for the month were down to 12. The Air Force lost five, the Navy four, and the Marines three. Five of the total, however, were non-strike losses. Both the AF and the Marines lost a reconnaissance plane and the AF lost a helicopter that went in to pick up the downed reconnaissance crew. The Marines lost two aircraft on tactical control missions. On the strike missions the Navy lost one aircraft to SAMs: the remainder were lost to ground fire.

(S) By Presidential proclamation, ROLLING THUNDER came to an end on 1 November although Air Force, Navy and Marine pilots managed to get in 346 attack sorties before the standdown became effective at 2100H. Its demise, while conditional, marked the end of a significant phase of air activity in SEASIA. Controversy in civil and political circles over the necessity of

ROLLING THUNDER SORTIES

	USAF		US NAVY		US MARINES		TOTAL	
	Attack	CAP/RESCAP	Attack	CAP/RESCAP	Attack	CAP/RESCAP	Attack	CAP/RFSCAP
Jan	2,930	674	2,638	1,689	181	28	5,749	2,391
Feb	1,840	672	778	1,943	694	35	3,312	2,650
Mar	2,835	563	1,628	1,644	580	3	5,043	2,210
Apr	2,850	52	3,403	1,218	1,010	3	7,263	1,273
May	3,164	119	5,839	2,139	736	3	9,739	2,261
Jun	4,151	157	5,437	2,295	848	5	10,436	2,457
Jul	6,512	360	5,935	2,300	1,935	16	14,382	2,676
Aug	6,366	116	5,260	1,763	1,419	4	13,054	1,883
Sep	5,216	122	4,535	1,555	948	0	10,699	1,677
Oct	5,107	132	5,458	1,993	1,366	16	11,931	2,141
Nov*	144	39	139	1,331	63	106	346	1,476
Dec	(ROLLING THUNDER discontinued, effective 1 Nov 68)							

SOURCE: Rpts (TS), HQ PACAF, Jan-Dec 68, Subj: *Summary of Air Operations Southeast Asia (U)*, Gp-1.

*The strike missions listed in November were flown in the hours before the bombing halt went into effect.

FIGURE V-8

ROLLING THUNDER would no doubt continue as would discussion about the necessity of reinstituting the program in case of severe Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV) provocation.

ARC LIGHT

(S) The ARC LIGHT program began in 1965 and expanded in 1966, particularly when the B-52s began staging out of Thailand as well as Guam. It reached its peak of power and efficiency, however, in 1968 after a vast increase in ARC LIGHT activity, largely brought on by Khe Sanh, produced a corresponding refinement and sophistication in staging and controlling the missions.[152]

(S) On 1 January 1968, SAC B-52 aircrews were flying 800 ARC LIGHT sorties monthly against selected targets in Laos, North Vietnam, the DMZ, and in each of the four corps tactical zones of South Vietnam. Understandably, these targets were the most renumerative available for this type of mission and in every instance target selection itself was based upon the most recent and careful intelligence. Generally speaking, these targets fell into the categories of enemy control centers, supply storage facilities, logistical systems, troop concentrations and lines of communication.

(S) For safety as well as firepower effectiveness, target "boxes" measuring one by two kilometers were established in and/or around the enemy positions. Simultaneously, buffer zones were drawn to protect noncombatants and friendly forces. In the case of noncombatants, the buffer was one kilometer wide; it was three kilometers wide if friendly troops were in the neighborhood, and if the anti-personnel bomblets were used, a six kilometer buffer zone on all sides was established. Three heavy bombers, arriving at altitudes between 24,000 and 38,000 feet, and carrying 60,000 pounds of 500, 750 or 1,000 pound high explosive bombs or cluster bombs, would strike each box. Ideally, with bomb release determined by a ground controlled radar or by the airborne bombing systems, the bombs would begin hitting the ground 500 feet inside the approach end of the box, scar a path of destruction for 5,000 feet, and end 1,000 feet from the far end of the box.

(S) Prisoner of war reports, ground follow-up exploitation and visual and photo reconaissance provided grim testimony to the effectiveness of this type of mission. To a "friendly," watching it from a safe distance, it was "truly awesome." Among the enemy, it was one of the most feared attacks imaginable, earning the nickname of "the silent death" because the approach of the high-flying bombers was unnoticed.

(S) Since, in keeping with official policy, all in-country ARC LIGHT strikes were directly connected with actual or impending ground operations, the ground rules had to contain enough flexibility to allow for sudden changes in target priorities. There were some control problems and limitations, particularly with aircraft coming into the target areas from two different countries. Nevertheless, by the end of January 1968, a system had been developed which was working well. It involved categorizing the strike forces according to reaction capability. A Quick Reaction Force (QRF), for example, was capable of reacting with a minimum of nine hours notification prior to desired time-on-target (TOT). A Ground Diverted Force (GDF) was a strike that was diverted to a target of higher priority; a minimum of three hours advance notice prior to takeoff was required. An In-Flight Diverted Force (IDF) was all or part of a preplanned attack force that was diverted to a new target enroute to take advantage of late

intelligence. Finally, the In-Flight Diverted Mission (IDM) was one which diverted to a pre-planned alternate because of SA-2 threat or the presence of friendlies in the primary target area.

(S) Overall, ARC LIGHT operations for 1968 were characterized by three basic trends. The first, which came early in the year, was a drastic increase in the sortie rate, an indication of the effectiveness of the program. The second was an impressive improvement in flexibility, leading to suitable in-flight diversions against "immediate" targets. Third, there was a broad and growing appreciation for ARC LIGHT accomplishments, an appreciation made all the more evident by reaction to SAC's wish to decrease what was originally a surge effort.

(S) As mentioned earlier, SAC B-52 aircrews were flying at the rate of 800 ARC LIGHT sorties a month at the opening of 1968. Plans had been underway for some time, however, to increase the rate to 1,200 a month, a reflection not only of the value of ARC LIGHT and improvements in scheduling, maintaining, and flying the heavy bombers but also in official concern for the growing enemy activity. Inauguration of the new phase began on 21 January, and by the end of the month the sortie rate was up to a 40 per day average.

(S) On 15 February, the rate was increased again, this time to 60 per day or a monthly total of 1,800. The reason, of course, was the quantitative increase in enemy activity in Vietnam and particularly in the Khe Sanh area. (Because of the nature of the famous Khe Sanh and Tet attacks, airpower operations in these two battles, including ARC LIGHT, are treated separately in this chapter.) This rate was possible only by utilizing part of the PORT BOW B-52 contingency force at Kadena AFB, Okinawa as well as further improvement in aircraft utilization. But born of an emergency, this sortie rate was later held to be of such great value to the Vietnam War that it was retained throughout the year.

(S) This effort was possible because of a number of factors: first was the all-out effort of the SAC air and maintenance personnel, who soon had reason to feel that they were pushed to the limit; another was the close coordination between SAC and MACV in utilizing the bombers to the maximum, insuring that targets were timely and the strikes productive. Also, there was significant progress in directing the B-52 traffic, improvement made mandatory by the fact that the aircraft were coming in from Thailand, Okinawa and Guam, and the airspace above such critical areas as Khe Sanh was, to say the least, crowded.

(S) At Khe Sanh, ARC LIGHT directors turned to a system which they called BUGLE NOTE. Basically, it required that all aircraft coming from the west fly to a common point west of Khe Sanh, and then continue on to their particular target under control of MSQ-77 ground radar. Aircraft coming in from the east also had a common fly-over control point before proceeding on to the target area. "These improved procedures," one report noted, "have reduced the reaction time, allowing target decisions to be made as late as three hours prior to TOT, if necessary." In fact, the BUGLE NOTE procedure negated the requirement for a Quick Reaction Force completely.

(S) So successful was BUGLE NOTE during the Khe Sanh crisis that efforts were soon initiated to develop a similar type operation for all of SVN. By March therefore, there were a number of "pre-initial points" (pre-IPs). A group of aircraft would proceed to one of these points, come under radar control, and then branch off towards the various targets. Up to the arrival at the pre-IP therefore, it was quite possible to shift any or all of the strike force to one or more of the selected targets. Moreover, by increasing the number of pre-IPs so that each regulated a

fairly small area, a shift in attack strength was possible to within a very short time to TOT. Needless to say, this was a very significant refinement, adding about as much flexibility to the ARC LIGHT program as the system would allow. As the monthly ARC LIGHT Activity Summary for October 1968 put it "The in-flight diversion capability of the BUGLE NOTE system continued to prove its extreme effectiveness."

(S) While there is not always a direct correlation between renown and value, in the case of the ARC LIGHT program the former apparently does not do full justice to the latter. This is true, even though it is obvious that few missions ever have a perfect profile, and that the nature of the B-52 operations precludes precise and proper evaluation of bomb damage. There have unfortunately been some tragic incidents, such as took place in February 1968 when some 65 percent of one mission's bombs fell outside the box, but within the buffer zone. Because the ARVN had reported an erroneous clearance concerning civilian location, 44 friendly civilians were killed and 57 wounded. Nevertheless, overwhelming evidence indicates that the program has been very successful and, as the following incidents indicate, at times spectacular.

(S) On 30 January 1968 a force of 45 B-52s, the largest strike of the war up to that time, struck a command and control complex in eastern Laos near the DMZ. Eighty-five secondary explosions were observed and reconnaissance the next morning revealed numerous cave-ins on the valley floor, indicating the destruction of extensive tunnel complexes. The following month, on 22 February, a strike near this same region produced "two hours of continuous secondary explosions too numerous to count."

(S) Every month during 1968, it seems, had its own spectacular or series of spectaculars. One of the most impressive came in October, when 19 strikes (108 sorties) struck a large VC base camp area in Quang Ngai Province. A "follow-on" ground search revealed that 95 percent of the camp had been "exposed and destroyed." "There were many pieces of flesh strewn through the area," and it was estimated that 150-200 enemy were killed or wounded in addition to the 24 whole bodies left by the enemy.

(S) Because of the fierce fighting around Khe Sanh, the Tet Offensive, and enemy ground attacks during May, June and August, some months were more critical than others. June, for example, was one of those critical months. Heavy ARC LIGHT strikes were directed toward checkmating the announced VC assualt on Saigon, with its "100 rockets a day for 100 days." The results of this broad offensive operation, as reported in the monthly J-3 summary, were as follows:

> There has been a dramatic reduction in enemy activity over the past few days. This is probably due to crippling ground and air strikes. The strikes along the Vam Co Dong River attacked one of the enemy's main approaches to the CMD. The field positions of the 274th Regt in Long Khanh Province were struck twice, with excellent results. Forty-one secondary explosions were reported in these strikes. As a result, a marked decrease in enemy activities along Highway 20 has been noted. Although specific units have not been identified, strikes on Phuoc Long Province reportedly killed approximately 260 enemy on 23 June. This obviously disrupted resupply and infiltration

activities in this area. The Dong Nai Regt after being badly mauled in the CMD, pulled back to its old base area north of the Dong Nai River. This area was struck, and there is concrete evidence of casualties and physical destruction so extensive that it was no longer suitable for rest and regrouping activities. There were four secondary explosions in this area. This area was struck 19-21 June with 16 strikes. LRRP reconnaissance elements found substantial evidence to support PW reports of extensive base facilities, and detected a definite stench of death in the area. Nine bodies, fresh graves, and extensive post-strike enemy movements were observed. These strikes forced the Regt to move to an area not previously used along the Song Be. On 26 June 1968 B-52 strikes in the Binh My area inflicted serious damage on the subregion 5 headquarters and their base area. It was reported that as a result of these strikes, the forward headquarters of subregion 5 planned to depart War Zone "D" after 1 July 1968.

Agent reports reveal that units have not been receiving ammunition and supplies as anticipated. In the RSSZ ten strikes resulted in 46 secondary explosions. One such series lasted for 15 minutes. It is reasonable to assume that mines and rockets destined for Saigon and other enemy munitions were destroyed here. The threat of 100 rockets a day for 100 days has not been carried out. The strikes have obviously had a drastic effect on the enemy's rocket resupply.

There is strong evidence. . .that numerous enemy have been killed, harassed, confused and badly hurt throughout III CTZ, and that enemy plans for the third phase offensive have been delayed. The fact that enemy forces have failed to attain their forecasted schedule can be credited in large measure to the destructive B-52 program just completed.

(S) As the year drew to a close, it was obvious that the continuing 1,800 monthly sortie rate for ARC LIGHT was straining SAC to the limit. In November, after COMUSMACV asked SAC to comment on its ability to maintain the authorized rate after December, SAC replied that it had been "severely extended" by the effort and the "situation worsens with time. We cannot continue to provide 1,800 S/M [sorties per month] and maintain our posture without additional resources." SAC went on to recommend that if additional resources could not be provided, "primary emphasis should be placed on fulfilling JCS committed tasks, which will require a reduction of the SEA sortie rate."[153]

(S) COMUSMACV's position vis-a-vis a reduction in ARC LIGHT sorties had been stated with clarity in mid-October. He declared that the current rate of 1,800 sorties monthly "is the equivalent of the punching power of several ground divisions." Retention and control of these sorties by COMUSMACV gave him "the means for influencing the battle without a constant shift

ARC LIGHT STRIKES AND SORTIES

	LAOS	NVN	DMZ	I CORPS	II CORPS	III CORPS	IV CORPS	TOTAL
Jan	29/243	1/9	4/23	59/401	22/109	23/127	0/0	138/912
Feb	38/164	0/0	0/0	204/936	53/157	34/200	0/0	329/1457
Mar	30/163	0/0	6/35	222/1266	58/204	27/161	4/20	347/1849
Apr	57/326	0/0	2/9	173/1004	66/294	19/111	7/42	324/1786
May	76/445	1/6	13/78	71/404	123/705	27/157	10/60	321/1855
Jun	22/129	0/0	10/58	24/135	84/425	171/964	11/16	322/1777
Jul	32/187	45/263	7/42	25/133	37/156	53/875	26/148	328/1804
Aug	1/6	10/59	14/84	71/415	54/263	163/935	14/80	327/1842
Sep	14/78	8/47	1/6	58/333	57/257	169/985	16/87	323/1793
Oct	48/271	15/88	2/12	87/493	34/95	129/755	24/141	339/1855
Nov	113/654	0/0	0/0	46/247	36/160	106/628	17/97	318/1786
Dec	123/685	0/0	0/0	52/294	21/49	124/724	18/102	338/1854
Total	583/3351	80/472	59/347	1092/6061	645/2874	1145/6622	147/703	3751, 20520

SOURCE: ACofS, J-3, HQ MACV, SUMMARIES OF ARC LIGHT ACTIVITY, JAN-DEC 1968.

FIGURE V-9

of major troop units. In the classical sense he 'released his reserves' to his subordinate commanders, always having the reserve instantly reconstituted in a matter of hours by the upcoming B-52 sorties which can be used in the same or other areas."

(S) COMUSMACV then went on to suggest additional reasons why the B-52s were so important:

> The restriction of the bombing of North Vietnam and Cambodia has permitted the enemy to move his supply bases even closer to the battle area and debouch quickly for attacks against friendly outposts lightly held. COMUSMACV has been able to meet this tactic quickly with B-52 strikes which are followed up by ground attacks. In one instance, where no ground forces were available (NW Kontum Province), the enemy was stopped by repeated B-52 attacks alone. Every time the enemy is found massing anywhere within South Vietnam, he is hit in this way. The B-52s used in this manner under centralized control become a tool of such effectiveness that the theater commander has no possible substitute within the conventional arsenal. Without B-52 sorties the theater commander would need more ground troops to achieve the results obtained since initiation of this B-52 concept. This concept has been so effective that ground commanders' requests for B-52 strikes continue to exceed available sorties.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> In summary, the B-52s are the theater commander's reserve, his artillery, his interdiction tool, his means for influencing the battle, and in some instances his only means for meeting the enemy immediately upon discovery, e.g., the engagement in NW Kontum Province. The current sortie rate is sufficient under present conditions. It is requested that the 1,800 per month rate be continued until there is some major change in the strategic and tactical situation which would warrant its reduction.[154]

Special Operations

Operation NIAGARA

(S) Operation NIAGARA, at the time of its execution, was the largest and most significant air campaign ever undertaken in South Vietnam. It was planned and carried out in two phases; NIAGARA I, a comprehensive intelligence effort to locate the enemy in the western DMZ area

around Khe Sanh and adjacent areas in Laos and NVN; and NIAGARA II, coordinated B-52 bombing attacks and tactical air strikes on a sustained basis against the enemy buildup in the area. Although NIAGARA II, the attack phase, began on 22 January and terminated on 31 March, the plan itself began on 5 January when COMUSMACV directed the MACJ3 and the MACJ2 to plan to conduct a SLAM-type (seek, locate, annihilate, and monitor) operation in north-western Quang Tri Province and the contiguous area of Laos. The next day the plan to provide massive fire support to the Marines at Khe Sanh was named NIAGARA and the CG, III MAF was informed of the operation and the requirement for intelligence collection. Concurrently, the SLAM committee met to coordinate preliminary tasking. The committee decided to send representatives from MACJ2, MACSOG, 7AF, 5th SFG and MACCOC to the III MAF headquarters to insure coordination and to correlate intelligence with ARC LIGHT and TACAIR targeting. Between 9-15 January, the MACV and III MAF staff met to insure that plans for collection and targeting were coordinated, during which time both ARC LIGHT and TACAIR strikes were flown in the Khe Sanh area as part of their normal operations.

(S) COMUSMACV was briefed on the plan on 15 January. He then visited the CG, III MAF and oriented key officers on the importance of the operation, stressing the great need for coordination. Commander, 7AF was tasked as the controlling agency, with close coordination by CG, III MAF for in-country operations. COMUSMACV also emphasized the necessity for expediting clearances and for secure clearance procedures. Accordingly, free strike areas were designated. On 15 January the plan was submitted to CINCPAC for approval and to AMEMB, Vientiane for concurrence. Concurrence was received from Vientiane on the 16th and approval was received from CINCPAC on the 17th. COMUSMACV then directed that operation NIAGARA be executed on 21 January.[155]

(S) Accumulated bomb damage (ABD) recorded is:

Secondary Expl/Fires	KBA	Structures Dest/Dam	Bunkers Dest/Dam	Trucks Dest/Dam
4,705/932	1,288	1,061/158	891/99	253/52

Verifiable statistics alone, however, cannot tell the full story of the defense of Khe Sanh. At the Khe Sanh Combat Base (KSCB), some 6,000 Marines and ARVN Rangers, backed by artillery and airpower, held off a force of at least two NVA divisions. In the end the enemy was forced to withdraw some of his forces from the area due to heavy losses. Although evidence indicated that the enemy intended to crush and destroy Khe Sanh Combat Base in the manner of Dien Bien Phu, a concerted ground attack never occurred. Intense attacks by fire were made on 18, 23, and 24 March, but thereafter the general level of activity steadily declined. This phenomenon led to the question--what happened at Khe Sanh to blunt the threatened ground attack?

(C) The principal offensive weapon unleashed in the defense of Khe Sanh Combat Base was a concentrated air campaign during which about 96,000 tons of air ordnance were delivered in support of the perimeter. What were its effects? Although no positive, all-inclusive answer could be given, the MACV Systems Analysis Office (MACEVAL) made some estimates, using the techniques of mathematical analysis. Since a definite answer could not be developed from so many unknowns, three separate models were built. The results of these analyses showed the spread of estimated casualties, including those wounded requiring evacuation, to be from 49 percent to 65 percent of the total enemy personnel committed to the Khe Sanh operation. From this

and other evidence it is concluded that these losses forced the enemy to abandon his plan to assault the KSCB.[156]

(C) Of the 95,430 tons of bombs dropped at Khe Sanh, 59,542 tons were delivered by B-52s. Bombs carried by the B-52s were 250, 500, and 750 lbs. The 250 lb bombs were anti-personnel. The 500 and 750 lb bombs were to crater the relatively shallow caves, bunkers, and tunnels. The objective in determining the bomb load was to enhance the concussion effect of the pattern bombing of which the B-52 was capable. The success of the technique was perhaps best attested in the confusion and fear of the B-52 which spread throughout the NVA troops besieging the Khe Sanh outpost. In his notebook, Hoai Phong, a cadre of the 9th Regiment, 304th NVA Division described 60 tense days of living in the Khe Sanh area during the encirclement of the base. The passage was written in March 1968:

> Here the war is fiercer than in all other places. It is even fiercer than in Co Roong and Dien Bien Phu. All of us stay in underground trenches except the units that engage in combat. We are in the sixtieth day, and B-52s continue to pour bombs onto this area. If visitors come here, they will say that this is an area where it rains bombs and cartridges. Vegetation and animals, even those who live in deep caves or underground, have been destroyed. One sees nothing but the red dirt removed by bombs.

As of early March 1968, the strength of the 1st Bn, 9th Regt, 304th NVA Div, which was located in the vicinity of KSCB, was 554, but only 283 were able to fight. Sixty-four died, 83 were wounded, and 85 deserted. A few days later, four additional NVA died, 14 were wounded, and 61 deserted. The total number of deserters during March was 146. Three hundred members . . the infiltrated Doan Group 926 deserted when the unit reached Khe Sanh. Still other reports of PW interrogations brought to light the "concussion sickness" in victims of a B-52 strike. This "sickness" was characterized by bleeding from the mouth, nose, ears, and internally, with no apparent external wounds, it was felt to be caused by the concussion of detonating bombs from the B-52s.[157]

(S) During the attack phase of Operation NIAGARA, tactical air of the USAF, USMC, and USN added 25,788 tons of aerially delivered ordnance to that released by the B-52s. During the operation, USAF aircraft averaged 138.4 sorties per day in support of Khe Sanh, dropping 14,724 tons of bombs while the USN, operating from two carriers in the Gulf of Tonkin, launched an average of 76.5 sorties per day delivering a total of 7,941 tons of munitions. Because of the persistent fog and low ceilings, a large portion of the ordnance drops were made on radar-directed bombing passes. Both the MSQ-77 (COMBAT SKYSPOT) and the TPQ-10 systems were employed. Generally, tactical air was employed in the role of close air support by virtue of its capacity for precision bombing. In February, however, a change to the CINCPAC Basic ARC LIGHT Operations Order allowed bombing within one kilometer of friendly forces. The reduction from the previous three kilometers minimum could be applied only in emergency situations and with the specific approval of COMUSMACV. The first "close-in" strike was conducted near the KSCB, 1.2 kilometers from friendly forces, on 26 February.[158]

(S) The magnitude of the targeting effort to support Operation NIAGARA was as enormous as the air effort. Faced with the problems of providing intelligence support for employment of the combined tactical air resources available to MACV, the 7AF DCS/Intelligence established a special task force to identify, locate, and nominate for attack tactical targets in the NIAGARA

area. The task force, from the outset, correlated information from all available sources with photo reconnaissance to develop an integrated tactical target list. To provide for the management of intelligence resources and the orderly flow of materials for this massive targeting campaign, an Intelligence Control Center was established. Here, all the products of the intelligence and analysis systems were displayed. The reconnaissance section of the Intelligence Control Center determined requirements and priorities and scheduled imagery exploitation. Optimum use was made of the full range of photographic sensors (black-and-white, color, camouflage detection, infrared, and high acuity). A total of 1,398 reconnaissance sorties were flown in the NIAGARA area from 1 January through 31 March 1968. More than 911,000 feet of original negatives and nearly one and one-half million feet of duplicate negative and positive film were produced by aerial reconnaissance during Operation NIAGARA. Over 600 tactical target folders were developed and distributed to operating units and FAC organizations.[159]

(S) During the siege of Khe Sanh and continuing until 8 April when Route 9 was opened, the combat base was supplied completely by air, as were the two outposts, Hill 881 South and Hill 861. The Air Force's 834th Air Division had primary responsibility for the supply effort at Khe Sanh, while helicopters from III MAF at Da Nang delivered supplies to the outposts, using a system of close air support and flak suppressing fire provided by a TACAIR escort. From 22 January until 7 April, C-130s made 273 landings, 503 container delivery system (CDS) drops, 58 low-altitude-parachute-extraction system (LAPES) drops, and 15 ground-proximity-extraction system (GPES) deliveries in support of KSCB. C-123s made 174 landings and 103 CDS drops during the same period. C-7As were used on eight occasions. A total of 12,437 tons of supplies were delivered, approximately 65 percent of which were dropped when landing was impossible, either because of weather or enemy fire on the base and runway.

(S) Contributing to the success of the aerial supply of Khe Sanh was the introduction of a new technique for imploying the CDS when weather conditions prevented visual acquisition of the drop zone. The technique had two essentials, a ground-controlled approach (GCA) radar and the C-130s' Doppler Navigation System. In the Khe Sanh operation, the aircraft navigator would acquire the GCA approximately 1,600 yards from the runway threshold, using the Doppler for azimuth, and compensating for windage. The GCA operator would direct the aircraft to a point over the runway threshold. From there, the navigator would time the aircraft's arrival over the drop zone, and direct the loadmaster to release the cargo. During the siege, enemy action knocked out the GCA units on five different occasions, once for a period of five days. At such times the GCA was replaced by the Marine TPQ-10 Radar, although in such instances the drop altitude was raised from 600 to 800 feet to permit the ground radar to lock onto the aircraft.[160]

VC/NVA Tet Offensive

(S) At 0300 hours on 31 January, simultaneous attacks occurred throughout South Vietnam. At Hue, the Air Force lost eight observation planes when the enemy overran the airstrip and most of the city. South from Quang Tri City, the major towns were attacked although around the DMZ, the enemy held back and seemed to mass for the siege of Khe Sanh. In II CTZ, heavy battles took place in the major cities although DaLat was not attacked until 1 February. In III CTZ the pattern was somewhat different. Instead of attacking the province capitals, the VC concentrated on a cluster of cities and bases around Saigon and Bien Hoa. In Saigon, the American Embassy, the Presidential Palace, and the Tan Son Nhut Air Base experienced heavy fighting. In IV CTZ, however, the pattern of attacking province capitals was repeated. Across the country the unprecedented magnitude of the enemy offensive threw the FWMAF onto the

defensive, forcing the abandonment of much of the countryside in the effort to protect the cities.

(S) On 18 February, another (though much weaker) enemy offensive began, with the main thrusts in III and IV CTZs. At Saigon, Tan Son Nhut and Bien Hoa, intermittent 122mm rocket bombardments began and continued sporadically throughout the month. These attacks put a heavy drain on strained FAC resources by causing a continuous 24-hour per day "rocket watch" to be flown over the Saigon/Bien Hoa area. By the end of the month the flying hours on "rocket watch" were reduced and the FACs freed for more VR missions over the border regions and traditional enemy sanctuaries. They reported observing more traffic from Cambodia than they had ever before encountered.

(S) As in the case of Khe Sanh, the Air Force played a major role in countering the enemy's widespread Tet Offensive. Along the edges, and occasionally deep into the cities, the close air support--in conjunction with artillery and ground forces--killed enemy troops by the score whenever they gathered for an assault. The reliance of Army troops on TACAIR, used for the first time in built-up areas, caused heavy urban damage--the price paid for clearing out an infiltrated enemy. The successful resistance of all air bases to ground attacks helped blunt the offensive, and provided staging areas for Allied counterattacks.[161]

(S) Although aircraft and airfields were among the targets struck by the enemy during Tet, the air capability was not seriously hampered by the assaults. (See the section on "Ground Operations" for a discussion of the attacks on airfields.) The following table, which compares attack sorties for the nine days preceding the offensive (21-29 January) with the peak period of the attack (30 January-7 February) reveals an increase from 5,357 for the earlier period to 5,629 for the later one. This increase was largely attributable to 7AF sorties, which rose from 2,612 to 3,407.[162]

Air Attack Sorties

	21-29 Jan						30 Jan-7 Feb				
CTZ	USAF	RAAF	VNAF	USMC	TOTAL	CTZ	USAF	RAAF	VNAF	USMC	TOTAL
I	620	11	207	1,914		I	811	19	163	1,548	
II	785	24	40			II	1,112	27	82		
III	919	26	334			III	984	20	203		
IV	288	20	169			IV	500	7	153		
Total:	2,612	81	750	1,914	5,357		3,407	73	601	1,548	5,629

(S) During the Tet attacks, tactical airlift, in essence, became the lifeline of support for combat operations but not without considerable disruption to the common service airlift system and the normal resupply mission, as well as to the MACV priority system. Disruption of normal supply missions, to respond to the surge requirements, created an upgrading of emergency requests, thus causing cargo backlogs. Unfilled routine requirements became emergency requests, taxing the priority system with unrealistic required delivery dates, which further

Fixed-Wing Transportation Sorties, SVN, 1968

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
USAF	34,608	32,812	37,964	36,642	37,707	37,294
USMC	1,162	871	1,154	997	1,061	1,008
VNAF	1,539	876	816	1,112	1,131	1,372
USA	3,185	2,737	3,113	3,510	3,605	5,494
RAAF	680	762	645	545	628	628
TOTAL	41,174	38,058	43,692	42,806	44,131	46,065

	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
USAF	37,367	37,090	36,923	37,578	35,171	38,491
USMC	1,014	1,050	904	859	706	545
VNAF	1,296	1,344	1,196	1,346	1,451	1,454
USA	5,158	4,757	4,348	5,095	4,954	5,927
RAAF	866	895	915	1,002	839	965
TOTAL	45,701	45,136	43,371	45,880	43,121	47,382

SOURCE: Hq PACAF, Summary, Air Operations Southeast Asia, Jan-Dec 68.

NOTE: These figures do not include Navy transport sorties, primarily because most Navy logistical flights were outside SVN. Nor do the figures include Army helicopter sorties. While not many helicopters flew supply missions per se, the Army did fly nearly one million passengers a month. As mentioned above, however, most of these missions were technically combat support sorties.

FIGURE V-10

disrupted normal operations, until routine scheduled missions essentially ceased. This partial breakdown lasted through February, when the arbitrary resumption of scheduled runs (recommended by an ad hoc committee representing the Airlift Control Center (ALCC) and MACTMA, MACJ45 and MACCOC) relieved the situation and normal operations were resumed.

(S) The SEASIA tactical airlift system had the capability to provide for surge requirements by bringing C-130s from an offshore base to operate in RVN. For months prior to Tet, expanding requirements had resulted in a gradual, but sizable, increase in the C-130 fleet. During the first five months of 1967, the 315th Air Division at Tachikawa AFB, Japan, was obligated to provide 44 aircraft daily. From May 1967 to January 1968, the average number of C-130s available in-country gradually climbed from 44 to 73. By mid-January, the NVA infiltration of northern I Corps brought a counter-US buildup. On 21 January, the airlift to the KSCB began, causing an immediate and severe strain on the airlift system. Thus, on the eve of Tet, the airlift was already in a surge effort and saturated.

(S) To meet the unprecedented emergency requirements throughout South Vietnam, several actions were taken. In order to cope with the large number of emergency requests, the ALCC schedulers improvised by sending out only partial frag orders, thus avoiding extensive unnecessary rescheduling upon receipt of the inevitable Tactical Emergency (TE) and Emergency Resupplies (ER) they had come to expect. Another step was to incorporate the UC-123 defoliation aircraft into carrier service. The most significant step taken, however, was the movement of an additional 24 C-130s into RVN on TDY from the Tactical Air Command to absorb the surge requirements.[163]

Airlift

(U) Airlift was used extensively in SEA during 1968 with all Services and the VNAF participating. At the individual Service level, however, there was a breakdown into "missions" of sorts although there was also considerable overlapping. The Air Force, for example, generally handled the heavy equipment and the mass movement of troops, primarily because it was the "owner" of the heavy transport aircraft. But just as the Air Force supported its own logistical needs--along with the heavy requirements of the other Services--each of the other Services used airlift to supplement individual needs. The Army flew tens of thousands of sorties, carrying personnel to and from remote places, and moving in supplies when the occasion warranted it. The Marines, Navy and VNAF did likewise although in nowhere near the quantity of the Army. The difference, of course, lay in the fact that much of the Army's logistical flights were actually combat support missions whereas almost all of the other transport flights, excepting some USAF paradrop, Low Altitude Parachute Extraction System (LAPES) and Ground Proximity Extraction System (GPES) sorties were pipeline supply or reposition flights. Overall, however, the basic objective of airlift in SEASIA remained the same everywhere, i.e., support of the war effort through the mobility available through airpower. Statistically, the airlift flow within the Republic of South Vietnam, the center of activity in SEASIA, is shown in Figure V-10.

(S) Buried among these cold statistics were some notable achievements in airlift capability. The various Services proved able to handle the surge requirements of Tet, Khe Sanh, the May Offensive, etc. Early in the year, for example, eight additional C-130s were brought in country to assist in handling the surge. Indeed, at the height of Tet and Khe Sanh, the overall fleet of 96 C-130s were flying more than half their missions on an "emergency" basis.[164]

(S) The emergencies during the first half of the year also helped bring about two significant advances in cargo extraction from the C-130. This became necessary when relatively small areas and airfields unable to handle the large aircraft, nonetheless urgently needed supplies in quantity that only the C-130 could carry. In other cases, similar to the situation at Khe Sanh, the runway may have been long enough but it was too risky to park aircraft for off-loading. Fortunately, American ingenuity was ready with an answer to the problem, an answer that involved two novel methods of off-loading without the aircraft even slowing down.

(S) In the LAPES system, the C-130 flew to within inches of the runway surface. At a given moment, the crew deployed a parachute which yanked the carefully packed, palletized cargo from the rear service door of the C-130. The cargo then skidded to a stop on the runway while the aircraft continued flying and cleared the area as soon as possible.

(S) The GPES method was even more exact. In this system, the aircraft touched down only long enough for a cargo hook to catch an arresting cable. This procedure had the advantage of extracting the payload precisely on the landing zone.[165]

(S) Although these systems were somewhat rough on the cargo, they had the overwhelming advantage of being able to provide large resupply payloads to pinpoint minimum facility targets with minimum risk to the aircraft.[166]

Search, Rescue and Recovery

(U) Search and rescue, an organized function of air operations in SEASIA, continued throughout 1968 to be the most humanitarian and in some ways the most daring of all air activities. The reason is the traditional American concern for an individual whose life is in danger. As one search and rescue officer put it: "When a man is downed, he is far more than a statistic. He is a fellow American, with a family at home, with hopes and dreams, and a potential that cannot be measured. He is a man in trouble and he needs help fast."[167]

(S) Search, rescue and recovery under MACV continued to be the responsibility of the 3d Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Group (ARRG), a unit of 7AF with detachments at Da Nang, Nakhon Phanom, and Udorn. As of January 1968, this unit had 65 assigned aircraft of which 54 were helicopters, an indication of the fact that almost all ARRG recoveries were land extractions. (During ROLLING THUNDER operations over North Vietnam the Navy ran a superb rescue service. This story, however, lies outside the MACV history.) At the same time, the Army, while not charged with rescue and recovery as such, nonetheless extracted numerous persons from dangerous situations, at times showing considerable ingenuity in getting the rescued into aircraft not designed for this type of operation.

(S) Operational statistics for the 3d ARRG for CY68 are as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
Sorties	165	95	174	149	216	120
Combat Saves	41	22	196	23	62	28
Non-Combat Saves	22	55	21	23	8	14

	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Sorties	113	111	135	139	215	141
Combat Saves	11	12	26	35	38	64
Non-Combat Saves	16	15	24	43	17	30

Source: PACAF, Summary, Air Operations Southeast Asia, Jan - Dec 68.

(U) Buried among the cold rescue and recovery statistics for 1968 were several milestones and events of major importance, particularly to the men flying these missions. One came on 28 February when a crew from the 3d ARRG made the group's 1,000th rescue of the war. The following month another crew had the distinction of making the first recovery of a F-111A crew. This "save" was made within one hour after the accident. The next day, a HH-53 helicopter plucked the entire capsule from the jungle. In May, a record was set when 189 sorties were flown in three days to rescue an A-7 Corsair pilot shot down southwest of Khe Sanh. The high point in the year's activities came on 14 May 1968 with the awarding of the Congressional Medal of Honor to Captain Gerald O. Young, a "Jolly Green C[illegible]t" (HH-3) pilot. This rescue attempt of an aircrew on a highly classified mission marked [illegible]rst time in American military history that the Nation's highest award had been presented to [illegible]ember of the Air Force assigned to rescue services.[168]

(S) During the year, the 3d ARRG lost six aircraft to enemy action, including the plane and entire crew of a Jolly Green helicopter shot down in the rescue attempt of a Marine Corps pilot on 9 June. The unit also lost two HC-130Ps to an enemy artillery/mortar attack on Da Nang on 29 July 1968. By way of compensation, however, the group could point to 571 combat and 344 non-combat saves for the year. These statistics meant that between 80 and 90 percent of all rescue attempts were successful.

Reconnaissance

(C) Aerial reconnaissance in SEASIA during 1968 was a broad, highly-sophisticated, and invaluable system for gathering vital intelligence information. From among the four units specifically assigned this type of mission--the 432d and 460th Tactical Reconnaissance Wings, the Marine Composite Reconnaissance Squadron (VMCJ-1) and the Army's 131st Surveillance Airplane Company--a wide variety of aircraft carrying an even wider variety of equipment ranged over Laos, South and North Vietnam. From their visual, photo, radar, ELINT, acoustical, infrared and ultraviolet devices these reconnaissance units provided the information on which all levels of command in MACV based much of their planning.

(U) Statistically, the missions flown by the Air Force reconnaissance wings and the Army surveillance company during 1968 are shown in Figure V-11.

(S) The overall reconnaissance effort in SEASIA, however, was much greater than the statistics would suggest. The Navy, SAC, and JCS ran several high-priority programs on sensitive areas which were responsible to MACV needs. At the same time, there was a flood of reconnaissance data available from organic Army air assets, the vast number of FAC missions, weather reconnaissance sorties, and the like. Add these to the tactical reconnaissance and the average totals for reconnaissance missions comes to more than 30,000 monthly.

(TS) The value of aerial reconnaissance to MACV intelligence and planning experts was beyond the ability of statistics to express. An indication of its major role is reflected in the

SECRET

TACTICAL RECONNAISSANCE SORTIES

	USAF		USA
	In-Country	Out-of-Country	Out-of-Country
Jan	1,601	1,989	354
Feb	1,484	1,515	284
Mar	1,880	1,663	330
Apr	1,761	1,583	261
May	1,943	1,893	260
Jun	2,013	1,852	246
Jul	2,250	2,103	212
Aug	1,989	1,890	304
Sep	2,041	1,771	225
Oct	2,827	1,771	225
Nov	1,729	1,777	271
Dec	1,954	1,551	317

SOURCE: Hq PACAF, Summary, Air Operations Southeast Asia, Jan-Dec 68.

NOTE: Exact sortie statistics for the Marine VCMJ-1 were not available to the Military History Branch, SJS, HQ MACV, at the end of the year. Some idea of the amount of Marine effort can be gathered from the fact that in August and September, which can be considered representative months, the Marines flew a total of 657 in-country and 1,200 out-of-country sorties.

SECRET

FIGURE V-11

emphasis placed on reconnaissance over North Vietnam after President Johnson ordered the 1 November bombing halt. The President had specifically excluded reconnaissance from the "prohibited" actions; however, Hanoi naturally took the position that reconnaissance was an "offensive action" against the Government of NVN. To cover this delicate situation, JCS announced three programs for surveillance of the north: the currently authorized drone and SR-71 effort, manned tactical reconnaissance effort south of 19 degrees north latitude and reconnaissance in the peripheral area. The first program and the last were already in operation and would remain so. The "new" manned reconnaissance effort, on the other hand, had two basic purposes. One goal was to "determine as soon as possible, the reaction of intentions of the enemy with regard to a manned tactical reconnaissance program south of 19 degrees." The second aim was "to accomplish that reconnaissance necessary to determine the status of resupply or troop buildup and threat to the Free World Forces south of the DMZ."[169]

(TS) Although there was a complete standdown between 1 and 4 November, a total of 187 manned recce missions were flown over the north in November and in 64 instances (34.2 percent) the aircraft were fired on. Three were lost. On 2 December, escort aircraft were authorized to suppress AAA and SAM sites. Another aircraft was lost in December but, of the 236 recce missions flown that month, only forty (17.0 percent) were fired on by the enemy.[170]

(S) From these statistics, two conclusions were obvious: NVN resented greatly the aerial reconnaissance which revealed that which it wished to conceal; by the same token, the United States was willing to maintain reconnaissance programs even if it meant fighting for the information.

Single Manager for Air in RVN

(S) On 8 March 1968, COMUSMACV designated his DEPCOMUSMACV for Air Operations as the Single Manager for control of tactical air resources in South Vietnam. At the same time, COMUSMACV directed the Commanding General, III MAF to assign all USMC fixed-wing strike and reconnaissance aircraft and their associated air control assets to the mission direction of DEPCOMUSMACV for Air Operations. COMUSMACV explained that:

> Because of the increased deployment of Army forces to I Corps area, the concentration of air effort in support of all ground forces being deployed and the overriding requirement to maintain the flexibility to concentrate this effort as directed by the enemy threat, I have concluded that it is of paramount importance to achieve a single manager for control of tactical air resources.[171]

(S) The ground situation facing COMUSMACV at the time of his decision to establish centralized control of tactical air resources in South Vietnam was characterized by a greatly expanded enemy effort throughout RVN and the extended battle area, i.e., the southern portion of North Vietnam, the DMZ, and the infiltration corridors leading through Laos into South Vietnam. Enemy forces had shifted their strategy from localized areas of intense activity on the periphery of RVN to increased offensive activity in all four CTZs of South Vietnam. This change in strategy dictated a modification of the posture of the FWMAF to meet the enemy threat.

(S) As early as mid-1967, intensification of the VC/NVA threat in I Corps reached a point where reinforcement by US Army forces became necessary. As a result, the Americal Div was deployed into the southern portion of the I CTZ. Ten battalions were included in this deployment originally, with an additional three battalions deployed by October 1967. In January 1968, the intensity of the war and the associated threat in Quang Tri and Thua Thien Provinces required the deployment of two additional US Army divisions into I Corps. These were the 1st Cav Div (AM) and the 101st Abn Div which deployed in increments over the next three months as the tactical situation intensified.[172] Figure V-12 indicates the change in the posture of the FWMAF that occurred between 1 April 1967 and the end of April 1968.

(S) The deployment of two US Army divisions into the III MAF TAOR created new considerations regarding command and control arrangements for the US ground forces in I CTZ which are discussed in the Ground Operations portion of this chapter. The changing tactical situation in I Corps and the modification of the FWMAF posture also dictated a new and objective look at the command and control of tactical air resources. A critical requirement to apply maximum effective firepower on the enemy in support of both Army and USMC units, which were not intermingled in the area, led COMUSMACV to consider placing operational control of the 1st Marine Air Wing (MAW) under his Deputy Commander for Air Operations.[173]

(S) Prior to the positioning of the two US Army divisions in northern I Corps and the establishment of the Single Manager concept, three separate air teams, each with its own air control system, were operating in the area. The III MAF was supported by the 1st Marine Air Wing (MAW), which was organic to III MAF. The result was a finely tailored ground/air effort, backed by the traditional Marine view on the use of close ground support and unequaled in effectiveness by any of the sister services.

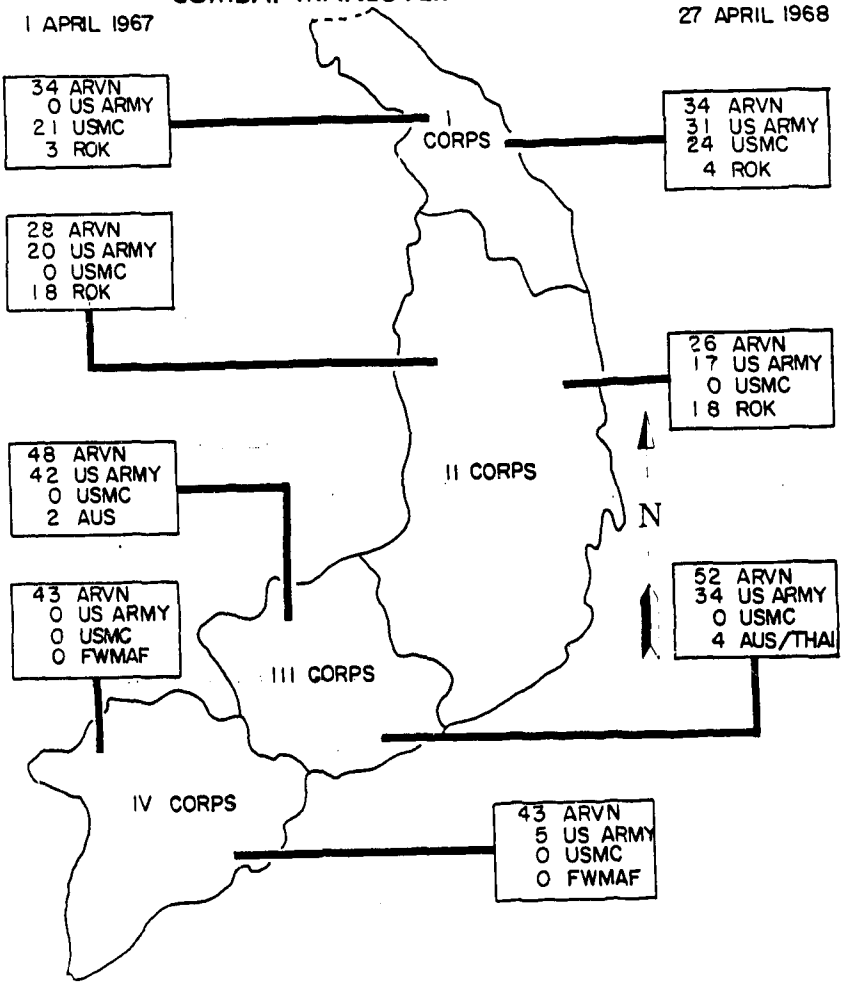
(S) ARVN, ROK Marines, and the American Army divisions, on the other hand, were supported by 7AF assets. Control of these assets was maintained by the 7AF Tactical Control Center (TCC) in Saigon through its Direct Air Support Center (DASC) at Da Nang. On a much lesser scale, Navy aircraft, while operating out of the Gulf of Tonkin primarily against North Vietnam, flew missions from time to time in I Corps. The naval assets were outside MACV jurisdiction but were responsive to MACV when COMUSMACV requested them and CINCPAC approved.

(S) Under the system then existing, there was natural and seemingly beneficial overlap. The 1st MAW willingly supported 7AF with strike sorties when it could spare them and 7AF, in turn, ofttimes supported III MAF with FAC missions, photo reconnaissance, and B-52 strikes. The Navy, of course, used its surplus assets to assist other air units as necessary.

(S) This system worked well enough as long as I Corps remained relatively stable. In 1967, however, the increased activity made it obvious that the extended battle area required coordinated effort. Under existing circumstances, the divided lines of command and control for tactical air could become a disruptive factor in providing adequate tactical air support. This situation seemed particularly true after the two Army divisions was inserted into the zone in early 1968.

(S) A logical answer was a single manager for air and the logical choice was the Cdr, 7AF who was already Deputy COMUSMACV for Air. The solution, however, was not as simple as it might appear. Separating the 1st MAW from the III MAF would run directly counter to Marine doctrine on TAC air support, break up the outstanding team relationship, and unquestionably

~~SECRET~~



~~SECRET~~

FIGURE V-12

work less effectively for the Marines than their current system. Moreover, combining two control systems into one larger one, while gaining an overview of the corps area and more or less standardizing criteria for priorities, nonetheless increased the complexity and hence the possibility of delay and error in getting air support where it was most needed, i.e., to the men on the ground. Finally, as history has abundantly shown, incidents involving the sacrifice of military autonomy, even for "temporary" periods, are inherently touchy, often having long-range consequences not envisioned by the originators.

(S) On the other hand, the question facing COMUSMACV was whether he could get more out of his TACAIR under the Single Manager concept than under the multiple coordinating systems then in use. As he explained it in a message to CINCPAC dated 18 January:

> . . . the changing situation placed a demand for greater organization and control of air resources and a premium on the need for rapid decision making. It is no longer feasible nor prudent to restrict the employment of the total tactical air resources to given areas. I feel the utmost need for a more flexible posture to shift my air effort where it can best be used in the coming battles. Consequently, I am proposing to give my Deputy for Air operational control of the 1st Marine Air Wing less the helicopters . . . .[174]

(S) In accordance with instructions from COMUSMACV, the 7AF Commander met with the CG, III MAF and his staff on 18 January to discuss the Single Manager Concept. In this meeting the Cdr, 7AF stressed that the concept envisioned only integration of the 1st MAW fixed-wing resources into the overall tactical air picture and that the capability of the Marine helicopters would remain with the III MAF. Explaining that there was no intent to change the system within the 1st MAW for application of sorties, the 7AF Commander defined the proposed integration:

> Preplanned sorties would be requested by III MAF to 7AF where the TASE (Tactical Air Support Element) representing COMUSMACV allocates available preplanned sorties to the different Corps in accordance with priorities established and operations in being. Naturally troops in contact receive priority. I MAW would be notified of its commitment to support III MAF and other operations within the priority system. Aircraft checking into the system could be diverted to other troops in contact in critical areas, by the 7AF Tactical Air Control Center, or aircraft on ground alert could be scrambled with a view to being responsive to the entire MACV area of responsibility.[175]

(S) The response of the Commanding General, III MAF, was a rebuttal of the Single Manager Concept on the grounds that it was not doctrinally or functionally suited to his requirements. To him, the concept meant "replacing my aviation commander and control over his assets with one who is not directly under my command; yet my overall operational responsibilities in I CTZ remain the same." He stressed the unity of the Marine air/ground team as a combat entity, expressed concern over possible long-range consequences, and concluded the message with:

"I must therefore state that I am unalterably opposed to any change . . . and to any fractionalization of the Marine air/ground team."[176]

(S) CINCPAC, for its part, found these objectives valid and expressed opposition to changing the existing arrangement for control of air assets in I Corps.[177]

(S) The question of the Single Manager Concept for I Corps was then tabled, only to be raised again in February when the intensity of the enemy threat in I CTZ and throughout RVN was made more evident by the Tet Offensive and the siege of Khe Sanh. In particular, the increased demands placed on tactical air resources in the defense of Khe Sanh where the CG, 7AF was responsible for providing the most effective air support possible without having full control over air resources being flown into the area seemingly underscored the need for continuity and flexibility in support of the total MACV mission. COMUSMACV now expressed his sentiments in the following words:

> . . . I have given long and detailed thought to this complex problem and have concluded that the situation dictates the creation of a single management arrangement. In essence, it is essential that I look to one man to coordinate this air effort and bring this firepower to bear in the most effective way in line with my day-to-day guidance. . . .[178]

(S) Deeming the step to be an essential one, COMUSMACV directed the 7AF Commander to have his staff draw up plans to integrate the 1st MAW resources into the 7AF TACC in a manner which would "maintain to the maximum extent the present modus operandi." (A primary consideration in the planning was the new organizational structure and command relationship COMUSMACV had outlined for ground operations in I CTZ. See Figure V-13.) A series of intense planning sessions followed during which the Marines consistently expressed grave concern over the efficacy of the proposed plan and possible long-rang effects on the Marine air/ground team concept. Nevertheless, on 10 March, conforming to the basic plan drawn up by DEPCOMUSMACV for Air Operations and approved by CINCPAC with minor revisions, COMUSMACV issued the directive that Single Manager of air resources in I CTZ be implemented. Preplanning began on 21 March and on 22 March the first programmed missions were flown. For purposes of evaluation, the period 10 March to 31 March was considered a period for training and indoctrinating air crews and controller personnel. The system actually became effective approximately 1 April 1968.[179]

(S) Because of the controvery surrounding the Single Manager Concept, COMUSMACV asked both 7AF and III MAF to evaluate the program after it had been in operation for a period of time. Both did so before the end of April. 7AF views, as stated by the DCS/Operations, were as follows:

> No significant problems, other than those associated with training and familiarity with a new system, have been encountered at the working level. This is attested to by numerous 7AF staff visits and by constant communications with the DASC director involved. The attitude and motivation of both USAF and USMC officers assigned have proven to be outstanding. They

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE AND COMMAND RELATIONSHIPS

I CORPS: MARCH 1968

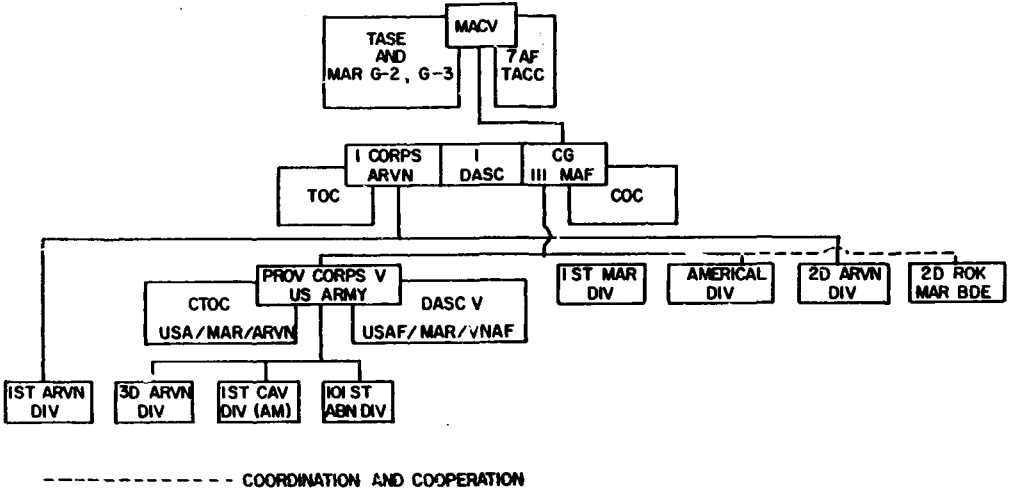


FIGURE V-13

> are now working jointly and constantly to improve the system to the mutual advantage of all concerned.
>
> In our view the system is working, not perfectly as yet, but with better understanding by the Marine ground units and more experience on the part of all concerned in the joint operation of the USAF and Marine tactical air system, this system will work for the betterment of the overall repeat overall war effort in SVN. This is particularly true in consideration of proposed large-scale ground offensive operations in being and planned, wherein the air effort available must be concentrated, flexible and integrated to provide the tactical air support essential to all ground units.[180]

(S) III MAF took a different view. In a lengthy message to COMUSMACV, the CG, III MAF complained that "single management of strike and recon assets is less effective and less efficient than our present system." He suggested that the system "permits convenient and orderly programming, but only at the expense of the consumer." The result is an "elaborate system" which requires an "excessive lead time" and which, as a consequence, fails to provide the ground commander with accurate, appropriate, and timely fire support. Citing several examples of delay, confusion, and error, the CG, III MAF concluded:

> My dissatisfaction with the Single Management System may be summarized as follows: It is not responsive to our tactical needs; it has inadequate provision for coordination of air with the total effort; it increases the administrative burden; and it is not compatible with Marine equipment and force structure. Furthermore, I do not foresee significant improvement in these shortcomings under the present system.
>
> In view of the above, I strongly urge that management of Marine strike and reconnaissance aircraft in III MAF be returned to me, and that the very workable procedures outlined in MACV Directive 95-4 be reinstituted.[181]

(S) The opposing points of view were thoroughly weighed by COMUSMACV, CINCPAC, and the Joints Chief of Staff in relation to the overall mission in RVN, with the issue eventually being resolved in Washington. On 20 May, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff relayed the decision of the Deputy Secretary of Defense to CINCPAC and COMUSMACV.

> I am in agreement with the view expressed by the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff . . . that the Unified Combat Commander on the scene should be presumed to be the best judge of how the combat forces assigned to him are to be organized, commanded and deployed to meet the threat facing him (just as the Unified Commander is presumed to be sensitive to the need of his subordinate commanders and responsive to guidance

from higher echelons). Furthermore, I do not believe that the assignment of Marine air units under the single management of the Deputy COMUSMACV for Air should constitute a precedent for centralized control of air operations under other combat conditions, or need pose a threat to the integrity of the Marine air/ground team. I note . . . the assurance made by COMUSMACV to the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, that the single manager arrangement over tactical air operations in South Vietnam will not be continued beyond that necessary to keep the specific combat situation for which it was devised. Accordingly, COMUSMACV should revert to normal command arrangements for the III MAF when the tactical situation permits.[182]

country resources were the carrier forces (TF 77), the amphibious forces (TF 76), the salvage and supply forces (TF 73) and the naval gunfire support (NGFS) assets (TG 70.8). There were usually three aircraft carriers (CVAs) of the SEVENTHFLT's Attack Carrier Striking Force (TF 77) on station off North Vietnam and a fourth in reserve in the Western Pacific at any one time. Planes from these carriers generally struck targets in North Vietnam but were also called upon to divert to target areas in I CTZ (See Air Operations chapter) After the 1 November bombing halt all TF 77 assets were shifted south of the 17th parallel.

(C) At least one, and often two, amphibious task groups (TGs 76.4 and 76.5) of the SEVENTHFLT's Amphibious Task Force (TF 76) were in constant readiness (96 hour alert at the most) off the Vietnamese coast, each embarking a complete Marine Battalion Landing Team (BLT) of some 1,800-2,000 Marines and Navy personnel, with their organic landing craft and helicopters. As the year progressed and fighting ashore in I CTZ intensified, the two Special Landing Forces (SLF) of the Amphibious Ready Groups (ARG) spent more and more time ashore providing an additional two battalions to the total I CTZ strength, while still maintaining readiness to fulfill their other contingency duties as assigned by CINCPAC.

(U) Furthering US control of the sea and aiding our forces up and down the length of the Republic with their mobile and accurate guns were the cruisers, destroyers and rocket ships of the SEVENTHFLT and, starting in September, the main and secondary batteries of the battleship USS NEW JERSEY (BB-62). South of the 17th parallel NGFS operations were carried out in support of Allied forces. North of the DMZ surface naval operations were known as SEA DRAGON and included shore bombardment and interdiction of waterborne logistics craft (WBLC) along the coasts, rivers and estuaries of North Vietnam. After the 1 November bombing halt, SEA DRAGON assets were shifted south of the 17th parallel.

(U) In the water along the 1,172 mile coastline of the Republic of Vietnam, TF 115, conducting Operation MARKET TIME, maintained a constant vigil to prevent enemy infiltration of arms and ammunition by sea. From the DMZ south around the Ca Mau Peninsula to the Cambodian border, US Navy and US Coast Guard units of the Coastal Surveillance Force, consisting of "Swift" boats (PCF) and USCG patrol boats (WPB) on inshore patrol stations; destroyer escorts (DE/DER), patrol gunboats (PG), coastal and ocean minesweepers (MSC and MSO) and USCG high endurance cutters (WHEC) on offshore patrol stations; and P-2 and P-3 aircraft on air barrier patrol stations, operated in coordination with Vietnamese Navy (VNN) to provide a tight coastal surveillance net. In five harbors along the coast, TG 115.9, carrying on Operation STABLE DOOR, protected ships and craft at berth and anchor from swimmer/sapper attacks, employing units of the WESTPAC Detachment of Mobile Undersea Warfare Group ONE (MIUWG-1).

(C) Naval power was extended into the mangrove swamps and waterways of the III and IV CTZ's Mekong River Delta, the rivers about Saigon and into the Rung Sat Special Zone by Operation GAME WARDEN. The River Patrol Force (TF 116), using PBRs and armed helicopters, pressured the enemy, interdicted his movements and assisted the forces and local populace in numerous ways through their Civic Action Program. Navy SEAL teams--commando-trained frogmen (UDT)--using the enemy's own tactics ambushed his units, destroyed his installations and disrupted his operations. TF 116 minesweeping craft, making their daily sweeps, kept clear the vital shipping channels between Saigon and the sea.

(C) The Navy portion of the Mobile Riverine Force (MRF), TF 117, had the mission of destroying enemy main and local force units and their resources in the Mekong River Delta in

PREVIOUS PAGE IS BLANK

order to assist the government of South Vietnam in achieving control of waterways and contiguous land areas. The MRF was made up of River Flotilla (RIVFLOT) ONE and the 1st and 2d Bdes of the Army's 9th Inf Div. The River Assault Force (RAF) was the naval element of the MRF. It operated out of a Mobile Riverine Base (MRB) from which Army forces were launched against the enemy and supported these forces in boats configured especially for riverine assault operations--armored troop carriers (ATC), command communications boats (CCB), assault support boats (ASPB) and monitors. Having commenced combat operations in early 1967, the RAF opened a new era in naval warfare analogous to the shallow water Navy of the Civil War days.

(C) In late October 1968 COMNAVFORV initiated, for the first time, operations employing the combined assets of the three Navy task forces in-country in a series of strike/pacification, interdiction, and harassment campaigns on the waterways of III and IV CTZs. These campaigns, carried out under the code name Operation SEA LORDS, were initiated as a precursor to the IV CTZ dry season offensive and carried out under a special task organization, TF 194, commanded by the FIRST SEA LORD, CTG 194.0, who was co-located with SA, IV CTZ at Can Tho. The degree of success achieved in Operation SEA LORDS in seizing the initiative in once secure enemy base areas and disrupting enemy supply lines soon led to an expansion of this operation. By year's end, construction was underway for the additional base camps and logistics facilities needed to maintain continuous naval operations in the areas opened to US/GVN forces by Operation SEA LORDS.

(C) In-country logistics support was provided by two major commands under COMNAVFORV: Naval Support Activity (NAVSUPPACT), Saigon and NAVSUPPACT, Da Nang. In support of naval forces in II, III and IV CTZs, NAVSUPPACT, Saigon operated 11 outlying detachments and mobile bases at Qui Nhon, Cat Lo, Nha Be, An Thoi, Sa Dec, Binh Thuy, Dong Tam, My Tho and various river anchorages in the upper Mekong River Delta plus the Naval Support Facility, Cam Ranh Bay. In addition to support of I CTZ naval forces and operation of the port and harbor security at Da Nang, NAVSUPPACT, Da Nang was responsible for all common-user logistics support of I CTZ ground forces, a troop population which grew from 136,000 on 1 January to over 190,000 by 31 March. Outlying detachments were operated by NAVSUPPACT, Da Nang at Chu Lai, Hue/Tan My, Phu Bai, Dong Ha/Cua Viet and after 1 August at Sa Huynh.

(C) Naval Construction Battalions (Seabees) were organized under the Third Naval Construction Brigade headquartered at Da Nang. In I CTZ from 10 to 12 Naval Mobile Construction Battalions (NMCB) were engaged in construction of hospitals, galleys, barracks, warehouses, POL storage, water supply systems, roads and bridges, airfields,etc., as well as numerous pacification programs. Fifteen 13-man Seabee teams worked with the US Agency for International Development (USAID) in support of Revolutionary Development at the province level. Projects were jointly planned by the provincial government and CORDS and approved by the Seabees. The purpose of the program was to supplement the CVN provincial construction capability and to augment the pool of skilled manpower available by giving locally hired personnel on-the-job training in construction techniques, equipment and maintenance and repair.

(S) In summary, the Navy's effort in Vietnam in 1968:

1. Took the war to the enemy in NVN by unremitting but selective application of air and surface naval power.

2. Sought out and destroyed the Communist forces and infrastructure in South Vietnam by offensive military operations and conducted an advisory effort to improve the capability of the Vietnamese Navy (VNN).

3. Extended the secure areas of SVN by coordinated civil-military operations and assisted the GVN in building an independent viable society.[184]

Operation MARKET TIME

(U) The Coastal Surveillance Force, TF 115, conducted operation MARKET TIME under the command of a US Navy captain headquartered at Cam Ranh Bay. This force was charged with the responsibility to interdict the infiltration of arms and other contraband by coastal/sea routes within the contiguous zone (12 miles offshore) along the entire coastline of the Republic of Vietnam; to enforce restricted areas established by the Joint General Staff; to provide combat support with naval gunfire and blocking patrols for Free World and RVN forces operating in the coastal region; and to conduct psychological warfare with PSYOPs broadcasts and civic action activities. US units participating in Operation MARKET TIME included DE/DERs, MSC/MSOs, PGs, WHECs, WPBs, PCFs and an LST, maintaining patrols on 13 offshore barrier stations and 55 inshore barrier stations. In addition, seven patrol stations were manned by a Thai Royal Navy PGM and VNN Fleet Command units at the beginning of 1968. Ashore, there were jointly operated Coastal Surveillance Centers at Da Nang, Qui Nhon, Nha Trang, Vung Tau and An Thoi where US and VNN personnel worked side-by-side. Overhead USN patrol craft flew visual and electronic patrols, augmenting surface surveillance operations on three air barrier patrols 70 miles offshore.

(C) The MARKET TIME Order of Battle at the beginning of 1968 was:

Coast Guard Division 11 (WPB)	An Thoi	Phu Quoc Island
Coast Guard Division 12 (WPB)	Da Nang	Quang Nam Prov.
Coast Guard Division 13 (WPB)	Cat Lo	Phuoc Tuy Prov.
Coastal Division 11 (PCF)	An Thoi	Phu Quoc Island
Coastal Division 12 (PCF)	Da Nang	Quang Nam Prov.
Coastal Division 13 (PCF)	Cat Lo	Phuoc Tuy Prov.
Coastal Division 14 (PCF)	Cam Ranh	Khanh Hoa Prov.
Coastal Division 15 (PCF)	Qui Nhon	Binh Dinh Prov.
PATRON 17 (SP-2H)*	Cam Ranh	Khanh Hoa Prov.
PATRON 2 (SP-2H)	Saigon	Gia Dinh Prov.
PATRON 26 (P-3B)	U Taphao	Thailand

2 DER	At Sea	
2 WHEC	At Sea	
2 PG	At Sea	
5 MSO/MSC	At Sea	
1 LST	At Sea/Vung Tau	Phuoc Tuy Prov.
Thai PGM	At Sea	
Shore-based radar station	Con Son Island	
Shore-based radar station	Pouli Obi Island	
Shore-based radar station	Cu Lao Re Island	
MIUWG-1 WESTPAC Detachment Unit	(Operation STABLE DOOR):	
IUWU-1	Vung Tau	Phuoc Tuy Prov.
IUWU-2	Cam Ranh	Khanh Hoa Prov.
IUWU-3	Qui Nhon	Binh Dinh Prov.
IUWU-4	Nha Trang	Phong Dinh Prov.

*PATRONs rotated and therefore varied as did their beddown locations.

Operations

(S) T. 115 USN/USCG assets remained constant throughout the first half of 1968. There was a total of 116 ships and craft assigned. These included 84 PCFs, 26 WPBs and one to three PGs. (DE/DERs, LST, MSC/MSOs and PATRONs were SEVENTHFLT assets under the OPCON of CTF 115.) During the first quarter of the year, the crews of these craft detected 140,077 ships and boats, boarding 29,527 of these. In the second quarter there were 282,511 detections and 57,397 boardings.

(C) In January alone, 1,500 steel-hulled craft were detected transiting MARKET TIME areas. MARKET TIME units supported four ground operations and conducted 152 NGFS missions during the month. As in the past, and in response to the heavy fighting which erupted throughout Vietnam during the last days of January, Coastal Surveillance Forces provided aid to other Allied forces in the form of gunfire support, SAR and intelligence gathering. The main operational event of the month in the harbor surveillance effort was the capture of an enemy swimmer on 31 January at Cam Ranh Bay (CRB). A STABLE DOOR unit on a routine patrol in the vicinity of the Norwegian tanker, SS Pelican, brought a swimmer to the surface through the use of offensive grenade drops, the first such instance in the history of STABLE DOOR operations. During his questioning about a half-hour after capture, an explosion occurred on the bow of the tanker

causing moderate damage. Initial interrogation revealed that swimmers in the CRB area operated as three-man teams.

(C) In February routine MARKET TIME activity decreased sharply as heavy fighting erupted throughout the Republic, and adverse weather in I, II and III CTZs caused further decline of indigenous coastal fishing and shipping. Furthermore, the strict enforcement of GVN imposed curfews drastically reduced waterway traffic during this period. A total of 201 NGFS missions were fired during the month. In addition, numerous exfiltration/infiltration patrols were conducted in support of ground operations by Allied forces ashore.

(C) For the first seven days of February all STABLE DOOR units maintained maximum patrols and surface surveillance in their assigned harbors. On 8 February, all units returned to normal operations. Despite the intensity of the VC Tet Offensive on the cities of the Republic no known attacks or attempted attacks were made on Allied port complexes or anchorages. On 15 February IUWU-5 commenced limited STABLE DOOR operations in Vung Ro Bay, just south of Tuy Hoa in Phu Yen Province.

(C) In late February COMUSMACV restated measures to be followed to prevent mutual interference between naval forces, particularly MARKET TIME units and those other units operating in and off the Republic of Vietnam--air, naval and ground. The need to update and reemphasize these measures was due to the steady increase in USN and VNN forces operating in the MARKET TIME and GAME WARDEN areas which necessitated that stringent precautionary measures be taken to prevent incidents in which friendly watercraft would be subjected to attack by other friendly units. Control of watercraft within the territorial limits of RVN was primarily a function of the VNN, assisted by USN MARKET TIME and GAME WARDEN forces. Rules of Engagement (ROE) required that control measures be exercised through boarding and search rather than by the use of destructive fires. Control and coordination of friendly fires was exercised through local area operations centers, such as Tactical Operations Centers (TOC), Fleet Surveillance Control Centers (FSCC) and Coastal Surveillance Centers (CSC).

(C) COMUSMACV stated:

> Because of the relatively slow speeds of most watercraft, there is usually time to obtain a positive identification prior to initiating an attack. Therefore, the following measures are effective within the MARKET TIME and GAME WARDEN Riverine areas:
>
> 1. No watercraft shall be taken under fire by artillery or mortar fire, naval gunfire, air attack, or any other armed attack except under one of the following conditions:
>
> a. The watercraft is conducting hostile maneuvers or other hostile actions and coordination has been effected with the center.
>
> b. The watercraft is firing on friendly forces. In this case, the hostile craft may be taken under fire but the responsible local area operations center will be notified immediately.
>
> c. The watercraft has been verified as non-friendly by the cognizant local area operations center.

In assessing the non-friendly nature of such targets, maximum consideration shall be given by the operations center to the presence of VNN units and/or other friendly military or non-military watercraft.

2. Ambushes established along rivers and waterways in the GAME WARDEN/Riverine areas must be coordinated with appropriate local area operations center.[185]

(C) The MARKET TIME highlight of the year, if not of the whole program, was the sinking of three enemy trawlers and the turning back of a fourth in a series of events which commenced on 28 February and culminated on 1 March. The post-Tet period was one in which the VC/NVA resupplied and regrouped their forces. Their need for supplies was acute and they took the bold step of trying at least four infiltration attempts simultaneously, using a faster more sophisticated type of infiltration trawler than ever before. Out of 1,176 steel-hulled craft detected by MARKET TIME units during February, these four were correctly identified as possible infiltrators while still far at sea.

(C) The northernmost infiltration attempt was off Quang Ngai Province where, on the afternoon of 29 February, a MARKET TIME patrol aircraft spotted a trawler 103 miles east of Cape Batangan, headed on a westerly course as a speed of 12 knots. Early on 1 March the enemy trawler crossed into the Republic's 12-mile contiguous zone, 22 miles northeast of the Cape. Refusing to acknowledge challenges and attempting to evade, the trawler was taken under fire shortly after 0100 by two PCFs, USCGC ANDROSCOGGIN (WHEC-68), and two WPBs, plus Army helicopter gunships. At 0214 the trawler, in a running gunfight, was driven aground and shortly thereafter attempted self-destruction with limited success. At 0235 another self-destruction attempt was successful, and the vessel, including all cargo, was completely destroyed.

(C) Also on 29 February another patrol aircraft of the MARKET TIME barrier sighted a trawler, this time 120 miles northeast of Qui Nhon (off Binh Dinh Province), headed southwest at 8 knots. This trawler was about 100 feet in length. At 0015 on 1 March the trawler reversed course and commenced moving out to sea. Her closest point of approach had been 30 miles from the coast at a point 32 miles northwest of Qui Nhon. Surveillance of the trawler was continued until she neared the coast of mainland China.

(C) Towards dusk on 29 February, this time 91 miles east-northeast of Nha Trang, another MARKET TIME patrol aircraft spotted a third trawler. Steaming at 12 knots on a southwesterly course the trawler was kept under surveillance by USN, USCG and VNN units until she crossed into the contiguous zone about 28 miles northeast of Nha Trang. On her final approach to the beach MARKET TIME units and AC-47 "Spooky" aircraft took her under fire. At 0200 she beached in the Hon Heo Secret Zone. A half hour later a 2,000-foot fireball erupted from the trawler as VNN PCE-12 and PGM-617 and US forces poured deadly fire into her. Upon later inspection this trawler turned out to be 140 feet long. A rudimentary radar device subsequently found on the shore indicated that the ship had reached its intended destination. Other evidence suggested that sufficient enemy personnel had been in the area to unload approximately 100 tons of cargo.

(C) The southernmost trawler was sighted by an aerial surveillance unit at 1830 on 28 February, some 150 miles east-southeast of Vung Tau. Surveillance of the trawler was maintained as the ship proceeded on a southeasterly course at about 10 knots. At 2100 the next day the

trawler changed course to northwest and increased speed to 13 knots as the USCGC WINONA (WHEC-65) commenced covert surveillance. At 0120 on 1 March, she crossed the 12-mile line and 40 minutes later started a run for the beach at a point 43 miles northeast of Ca Mau Point. While in deep water, she was attacked and sunk after refusing (by her actions) to halt and surrender.

(C) Since the inception of MARKET TIME in 1965 there have been no confirmed reports of successful trawler infiltrations. The 1968 Tet trawler incidents once again proved the value of the MARKET TIME inner and outer surface and overhead aerial surveillance barriers. Prior to this series of interceptions there had been nine trawler incidents involving MARKET TIME forces. The most recent incident prior to this series had occurred on 21 February 1968 when a trawler was detected approaching Quang Ngai Province. It was tracked until it returned to CHICOM waters. An earlier infiltrating trawler was tracked, run aground and captured at Cape Batangan on 15 July 1967.

(S) The failure to engage the Binh Dinh trawler because it did not enter the contiguous zone of RVN brought forth clarification/reemphasis of the MARKET TIME ROE by CINCPAC. He considered that letting the trawler go was due to a misinterpretation of the MARKET TIME ROE, and he drew attention to GVN Decree Number 81/NG of 27 April 1965 which had announced the following security and defense measures:

1. Establishment of its three mile territorial sea as a defensive sea area.

2. Future exercise of the control authorized by international law over a contiguous zone of nine miles seaward of the three mile limit.

3. Future action on the high seas beyond the contiguous zone to prevent or punish any infringement of its laws by SVN vessels or vessels reasonably believed to be South Vietnamese, though flying a foreign flag or refusing to show a flag.

4. Future exercise of the right of hot pursuit as provided for in international law.

(S) In his message after discussing the above points, CINCPAC went on to point out that:

> This decree further announced that GVN had requested and obtained the assistance of USG for full cooperation of the US Navy with the SVN Navy in enforcing the new security and defense measures.
>
> That decree was issued to give MARKET TIME operations legitimate, legal image under then existing conditions.
>
> The decree is still useful with respect to MARKET TIME operations vis-a-vis vessels whose identity is other than NVN (or suspected NVN) and which are not considered hostile, since in the case of such vessels, the requirements of international law, as embodied in the decree, should be carefully observed. However, in the instance of a hostile vessel, the law of naval warfare, and the rules of engagement . . . provide in part, as follows:

"A. Hostile Vessel (Surface or Subsurface):

(1) A vessel in RVN or Thailand internal waters and territorial seas or SEASIA international waters which is engaged in one of the following acts:

(a) Attacking or acting in a manner which indicates within reasonable certainty an intent to attack US/Friendly forces or installations, including the unauthorized landing of troops or material on friendly territory."

. . . . . .

A review of the situation which then prevailed indicates that the fourth trawler . . . was probably a hostile vessel and could have been taken under fire and destroyed had it not been for misinterpretation of the Rules of Engagement. . . .[186]

(C) The remainder of March for the Coastal Surveillance Forces was routine and rather uneventful even though 1,284 steel-hulled craft were detected in transit in MARKET TIME areas, 44 of which were boarded. NGFS missions during the month numbered 258.

(C) On 1 April MARKET TIME air surveillance forces suffered the loss of a P-3B Orion and its entire crew of 12. The aircraft, operating out of U Taphao, Thailand, was on a routine patrol over the Gulf of Thailand when the CSC at An Thoi requested that it conduct close-in visual reconnaissance of a Cambodian LSIL which was reported by PCF-49 to be offloading cargo to sampans close to the Cambodian border (Brevie Line) near Phu Quoc Island. The aircraft commander responded to the request and the P-3B was then sighted by the PCF crew passing about 500-800 feet above the Cambodian ship. Shortly thereafter the PCF crew noticed the plane's outboard starboard engine was on fire. A large hole in the outer section of the starboard wing was also observed. The plane flew southward for 28 miles before crashing south of Phu Quoc Island with no survivors.

(S) This incident occasioned a query from the JCS as to whether or not the MARKET TIME ROE had been violated in that the Cambodian border may have been crossed. JCS, on preliminary evidence, believed that CSC, An Thoi, in requesting the aircraft commander to obtain photos of the contact, had caused a violation, if one had actually occurred. COMNAVFORV conducted an investigation of the incident. The net result of this investigation was later summarized in a CINCPAC message to the JCS. CINCPAC drew attention to both the inexact nature of the Brevie Line and also to the MARKET TIME ROE which called for no approach by any US forces closer than five miles to the Cambodian border. CINCPAC felt that "in this instance it is doubtful that photographs of useful intelligence value could have been obtained by the P3-B aircraft without entering Cambodian territorial airspace, that the aircraft commander was ultimately responsible" but that "the aircraft commander should have been advised specifically (by CSC, An Thoi) that the LSIL was in Cambodian claimed territorial waters." There was no further action on the matter and a proposed State diplomatic protest to the RKG was not sent.

(C) The other significant MARKET TIME event of April took place in the vicinity of Qui Nhon and was illustrative of MARKET TIME's worth in other than a purely coastal surveillance role. Between 20 and 27 April a combined operation, MAENG HO II involving ROK forces and USN PCFs and PBRs, worked over an area along the coast just north of Qui Nhon and the exposed MARKET TIME base there. The TF 115 "Swift" boats provided blocking patrols to

seaward and NGFS services. At the same time shallow-draft PBRs, shifted from TF 116 employment north to Qui Nhon for MAENG HO II, thwarted the enemy's ability to use the upper reaches of Qui Nhon Bay for escape routes. This operation, which also utilized helicopter gunships, artillery, attack aircraft and landing craft, resulted in enemy losses of more than 200 KIA, 76 captured and 90 individual and 14 crew-served weapons captured.[187]

(U) As a reflection of the growing complexity of the Coastal Surveillance Forces, Coastal Flotilla (COSFLOT) ONE was commissioned on 1 April at CRB, combining Coastal Squadron ONE (PCFs and WPBs) and Coastal Squadron THREE (PGs) under one "hat." Administratively, COSFLOT ONE came under Commander Amphibious Forces Pacific, a CINCPACFLT type commander. Operationally, COSFLOT ONE was a COMNAVFORV component responsible for providing craft and trained crews for Operation MARKET TIME.

(U) This action did not change operational command relationships or structure within MACV as it was purely a Navy administrative matter. In the NAVFORV structure, this action removed administrative control of the Coastal Surveillance Forces from COMNAVFORV to make them more responsive in material and personnel matters to the overall small boat combat force commander, COMPHIBPAC. The new organization closely resembled that of the Mobile Riverine Force (MRF) and the River Patrol Force (RPF) and was in consonance with standard Navy operating procedures.[188]

(C) Steel-hulled traffic in MARKET TIME patrol areas remained steady with 1,256, 1,368 and 1,184 of these craft detected in April, May and June respectively. Beginning in May and extending into the third quarter of the year indigenous coastal activity in the inshore patrol areas underwent its normal seasonal increase with total detections exceeding 100,000 per month. With this increased traffic density in inshore areas, patrol responsibilities were adjusted to avoid saturation of individual patrol unit capabilities to check out detected craft by either visual inspection or boarding. Effective surveillance requires that 65 to 70 percent of the craft detected be checked for suspicious activity.

(C) Throughout the third quarter development of the secondary mission of NGFS by TF 115 units was emphasized. Since the decentralization of control of TF 115 NGFS in May--by delegating authority to authorize missions to individual CSCs--NGFS had increased from 258 missions in March and 242 in April to 357, 335, 604, 859 and 875 missions in the months of May, June, July, August and September respectively. In this quarter, it was reaffirmed that the current MARKET TIME inshore patrols and aircraft barrier patrols were the primary deterrents to enemy coastwise movement and infiltration from the sea, and it was determined that the offshore patrol ships could be assigned to additional duties other than the primary mission of surveillance. A policy was instituted of bringing the offshore reaction ships (primarily 3" and 5" gun ships) off station during daylight hours for coastal NGFS as targeting allowed and returning them to station for surveillance prior to darkness. The decentralized control of NGFS also provided improved targeting and greater utilization of the .50 caliber machine guns and 81mm mortars of the inshore PCFs and WPBs. Improved liaison and contacts with local authorities and ground forces led to continued improvement in the availability of spotters and the reporting of gun damage assessment.

(C) Consequently, the 2,293 NGFS missions by MARKET TIME units during the third quarter inflicted steadily increasing enemy losses in terms of personnel killed or wounded and structures/bunkers/craft destroyed or damaged. In addition to tens of thousands of sampan sightings/inspections/boardings, 3,587 steel-hulled vessels were detected by the force during the quarter of which 2,432 were either inspected or boarded.[189]

(C) Indigenous coastal activity in the First and Second Coastal Zones (see Figure IV-4) decreased considerably during October due to heavy weather caused by the northeast monsoons. MARKET TIME unit detections were considerably less than in the preceding months. Steel hull traffic remained high, however, with 1,224 detections during the month.

(C) MARKET TIME units fired a record number of NGFS missions in October for the sixth consecutive month with a total of 1,027.

(C) A significant expansion of MARKET TIME efforts to keep pressure on the enemy occurred with the initiation of incursions into rivers of the Third and Fourth Coastal Zones. During the month, PCFs made numerous successful river transits deep into areas which had long been havens for the enemy. At mid-month, this extension of MARKET TIME operations became a part of Operation SEA LORDS.

(C) During November coastal activity continued to drop off due to sea and surf conditions, and the total detections of junks and sampans were considerably less than in preceding months. Steel-hulled traffic remained steady with 1,123 detections recorded by MARKET TIME units. Adverse weather also contributed to a decrease in NGFS to 634 missions.

(C) In IV CTZ river incursions in support of Operation SEA LORDS continued. The PCFs were supported by naval gunfire from offshore patrol units and accounted for approximately two-thirds of the damage and destruction inflicted on the enemy by TF 115 during November. Again in connection with Operation SEA LORDS, PCFs relieved TF 116 PBRs of river patrol duties in the lower portion of the Ham Luong and Co Chien Rivers in the Mekong River Delta plus portions of the Nha Be and Long Tau Rivers in the RSSZ. In addition, in mid-November PCFs began routine patrol operations on the Rach Giang Thanh up into the Vinh Te Canal to interdict enemy supply lines from Cambodia and to disrupt enemy extortion of VN river craft.[190]

(C) Coastal surveillance operations were normal during December with indigenous coastal activity starting to pick up again; 1,450 steel-hulled craft were detected. In addition to the river patrol responsibilities taken over in November, CTF 115 provided more PCFs for river patrol duties in December and at month's end assumed operational control of the lower Ham Luong and Co Chien Rivers. This permitted redeployment of additional TF 116 PBRs for the GIANT SLINGSHOT campaign of Operation SEA LORDS.

(C) NGFS and river intrusion operations again increased during December. Of the 43 river operations carried out all but two took place in IV CTZ as a part of Operation SEA LORDS. Units of TF 115 fired 889 gunfire support missions during the month.[191]

Mines and Mining

(U) The threat to shipping and installations from mines and swimmers in 1968 continued to be of concern, particularly in view of the dramatic increase in the enemy's mining activity. There were over 100 mining incidents in 1968; in 1967 there were 42.

(U) Of primary concern was the ever-present danger that a merchant ship might be sunk in the channel leading to Saigon. Herbicide operations to keep the channel banks in the RSSZ clear of dense jungle growth continued and were of singular importance in the Allied effort to keep the Long Tau and Nha Be Rivers free. USARV and COMNAVFORV, with ARVN elements,

established fast reaction procedures in this area so that within one to two minutes of a reported mining or an attack on shipping in the Saigon channels Navy PBRs, Army and/or Navy helicopter gunships, SEAL units and ARVN ground reaction forces were either on the scene or enroute--a very unhealthy situation for the enemy. Attacks on underway merchant shipping did occur throughout 1968 but they were ineffective. As a result no major damage to any ship was incurred nor was the channel to Saigon ever closed during the year.

(U) Within the harbors and port facilities throughout the Republic US Navy STABLE DOOR patrols (part of TF 115) and Army river boat patrols kept their daily vigil, as did USN and VNN frogmen who made constant checks of ships' bottoms. Again in 1968 the enemy failed to sink any major ship unit although there were several mining attempts. However, some small craft, particularly in northern I CTZ, were disabled or lost to enemy mines during the year.

(C) The following operational rundown gives some idea of the enemy's continued interest in swimmers and water mining in 1968 as an effective means to counter the Allied effort and to tie down Allied resources. The year's first report of enemy swimmer activity took place on 11 January when GAME WARDEN units reported the sighting of an enemy swimmer/sapper on the Co Chien River. The swimmer was seen to be clad in a full rubber suit, face mask and a single air tank--rather sophisticated gear. Two previous reported incidents involving swimmer/sappers had occurred at the end of 1967--on 14 and 16 December when swimmers attempted to damage two PBRs--but this report of 11 January was the first sighting of a fully equipped frogman and it suggested that the enemy was attempting to increase the use of underwater ordnance.[192]

(C) In January the VC/NVA initiated an extensive campaign to disrupt Allied shipping on the Cua Viet River. The campaign, which consisted primarily of the mining and ambushing of logistics boats, continued for many weeks and resulted in one LCM-8 sunk and eight other boats damaged in its first few weeks. On 21 January, another NAVSUPPACT, Da Nang LCM-8 was mined on the Cua Viet River. The first explosion triggered a second explosion which did heavy damage to the craft. The next day an Army LCU was subjected to two close-aboard underwater explosions. Navy YFU-62 was damaged on the 23d by a nearby underwater explosion. On the 24th a NAVSUPPACT, Da Nang LCM-8 which had been following two minesweeping boats and another LCM were mined on the Cua Viet River and sank. Six other LCMs in the convoy escaped undamaged.

(C) Despite daily chain drag minesweeping on the major rivers of Vietnam successful minings continued to occur. On 2 February an LCM-8 was mined on the Perfume River. During February, in Gia Dinh Province on the Dong Hai River near Nha Be, a PBR patrol found six floating mines. These mines were brought ashore at Cat Lai for analysis. The mine cases were found to be made of US five gallon trash cans with conical covers. Each mine contained four 75mm RR rounds and a simple contact fuze.[193]

(C) In the month of March a total of six logistic craft were mined on the Cua Viet River. During a sweep operation west of Cam Ranh Bay, between 14 and 20 March, elements of the 39th ROK Regt captured a large weapons cache including one limpet mine. This mine was a half-cylindrical shell with recesses on either end for two horseshoe magnets and a center recess for an RDX-type explosive charge. Its flat rectangular surface measured 3 x 10 inches and the diameter was approximately 3 inches. The mine explosive charge weighed 2 1/2 pounds and was set to be activated by a Soviet time delay-type device. This was the first limpet mine recovered in South Vietnam and represented a significant advance in enemy underwater demolition

munitions. COMNAVFORV in his evaluation considered that from "the high quality of machining evident in the manufacture of the mine, it was probably produced in the Soviet Union or Eastern Europe," a fact partly borne out by the capture of a Soviet time delay table near the mine. The only previous indications that the enemy had employed limpet mines were:

1. 6 August 1967 - Fragments of magnets were recovered from a mined LCU near Dong Ha in I CTZ.

2. 4 November 1967 - The CO of the VC Nha Trang City unit, captured during the Tet Offensive, stated that a 5 kg limpet mine was used to destroy an American speedboat on 31 October. (This was probably a referral to an LCPL damaged by an explosion in Nha Trang harbor on 4 November.)

Discovery of this limpet mine plus the recovery of some relatively sophisticated underwater breathing equipment in I CTZ on 5 February, as well as a case in IV CTZ on 7 January, indicated an overall increase in the sophistication of the enemy's UDT effort.[194]

(C) On 2 May, 3 km north of Dong Ha, a patrol boat took a group of 30 NVA under fire. Two large cylindrical objects, each estimated to be about 6 feet in length and one foot in diameter, were observed during the action. The objects were taken under fire resulting in a large explosion with a 40 foot fireball, followed closely by several secondary explosions. Later that day in the same area Navy EOD personnel recovered one completely assembled influence mine and parts of another. These were judged to be 600 pound magnetic types. On 3 May, during a bottom sweeping operation in the Cua Viet, EOD personnel located another similar and completely assembled mine. A fourth mine, also completely assembled, was later discovered in a slough 30 yards from this one. On the morning of 5 May another large mine was located cached in a small creek near the Cua Viet River. Another also fully assembled was found near this one. The firing mechanism of the first (5 May) mine had been exploded, probably by detonation of a grenade from a patrol craft, resulting in the flooding out of one firing mechanism. The second mine was found intact and in excellent condition. Both mines were recovered with a safety fork installed in the extender mechanism (the hydrostatic arming device) and the detonator and booster inserted in preparation for firing. The counting mechanism was of a fairly sophisticated type.

(S) These captured mines were approximately 74 inches in length and 17 1/2 inches in diameter, including flanges. Total loaded weight of each mine was estimated at 850 pounds. The mines had a negative buoyancy and thus would normally have been employed on the bottom. The firing mechanism section was of Soviet manufacture. The mines were designed so that they could be carried overland by porters and assembled at the mine plant site so that despite the size of the complete mine it was easily transported to the mining site. A rallier who returned on 3 May confirmed this and revealed that he was a member of a four man team which had been assembling two mines for emplacement in the Cua Viet River. This claim was partly confirmed by the fact that mines recovered up to that date had been set in pairs and their ship counter devices had been set to explode on the first or second ship passovers. The rallier further stated that his regiment's mission was to disrupt and destroy Allied river traffic by use of mines and other explosive devices. Use of sophisticated mines in the Cua Viet River was further evidence of the importance placed by the NVA on interdiction of friendly water LOCs.[195]

(S) Because of the threat of magnetic/influence mines in the Cua Viet and Dong Ha Rivers COMNAVFORV requested COMSEVENTHFLT to provide mine-countermeasures craft to eliminate the problem. On 2 May COMSEVENTHFLT directed that action be taken by the

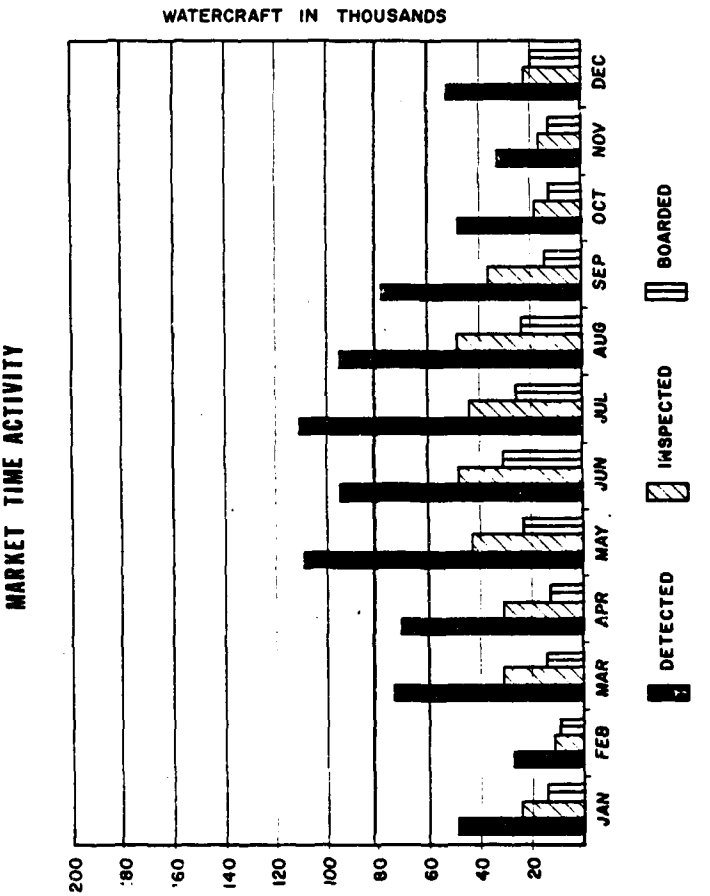

WATERCRAFT IN THOUSANDS
MARKET TIME ACTIVITY
200
180
160
140
120
100
80
60
40
20
JAN
FEB
MAR
APR
MAY
JUN
JUL
AUG
SEP
OCT
NOV
DEC
DETECTED
INSPECTED
BOARDED

FIGURE V-14

SEAL Team Det "A" 4th Plt	Vinh Long	Vinh Long Prov.
SEAL Team Det "A" 5th Plt	My Tho	Dinh Tuong Prov.
SEAL Team Det "A" 6th Plt	Nha Be	Gia Dinh Prov.
SEAL Team Det "G" "A" Plt	Sa Dec	Vinh Long Prov.
SEAL Team Det "G" "C" Plt	Vinh Long	Vinh Long Prov.
HAL-3 Det 1	USS HUNTERDON COUNTY	Vam Co Dong River
HAL-3 Det 2	Nha Be	Gia Dinh Prov.
HAL-3 Det 3	Vinh Long	Vinh Long Prov.
HAL-3 Det 4	Dong Tam	Dinh Tuong Prov.
HAL-3 Det 5	YRBM-16	Upper Bassac River
HAL-3 Det 6	Dong Tam	Dinh Tuong Prov.
HAL-3 Det 7	Binh Thuy	Phong Dinh Prov.

(S) During the first quarter of 1968 GAME WARDEN assets included 146 PBRs, 7 MSBs, 6 LCMMs, and three support LSTs. Three months later this total of 163 ships and craft had increased to 204 with the addition of 47 PBRs and the deletion of the 6 LCMMs which had been turned over to the VNN.

(C) Operationally, the first 1968 event of note in Operation GAME WARDEN was the commencement of operations in northern I CTZ on 9 January. PBR Mobile Support Base I and River Section 521 (10 PBRs) were relocated from IV CTZ to Tan My near Hue. They conducted operations on the Hue River, the de L'Ouest and de L'Est Lagoons and Cau Hai Bay. This force became Task Force CLEARWATER in February.

(U) In IV CTZ on 28 January, four PBRs were shifted from Binh Thuy to the Special Forces Camp at Chau Doc to permit extended patrolling into the waters of the upper Bassac River during the Tet Holiday period when increased infiltration from Cambodia was expected. Five PBRs were also based at the Thuong Thoi Special Forces Camp to counter infiltration on the upper Mekong River.

(C) On 31 January the enemy launched the nationwide Tet Offensive. In the ensuing days TF 116 played a prominent role in the defense of the beleaguered cities and outposts in the I and IV CTZs. Actions included support by PBRs and SEAWOLF LPHs to units at Saigon, Ben Tre, Vinh Long, Chau Doc, Tra Vinh and Can Tho, as well as support of Hue in I Corps. At My Tho,

SEAL and PBR personnel augmented the defense of US billeting areas in that city. PBRs attacked VC infiltrators from the waterways adjacent to My Tho and Ben Tre, and LHFTs supported friendly forces in these two cities almost continuously. Vinh Long was the scene of the heaviest fighting and around Sa Dec, PBRs maintained a blocking force as ground units counterattacked to expel the VC from the city. At Chau Doc, SEALs and PBRs contributed significantly to saving the city from seizure by the insurgent forces. Four times PBR crews went ashore to secure helicopter landing zones and to join SEALs in the defense of the US Special Forces Camp there. In the Saigon area, armed SEAWOLF helicopters from the task unit at Nha Be were in support of US elements at the US Embassy and at Tan Son Nhut Air Base and vicinity.

(C) Of the above actions the most critical was that at Vinh Long. There, on 1 February, USN personnel were forced to evacuate their compound and move to the VNN RAG base. From there the enemy forced them to take refuge on the PBR support ship USS GARRETT COUNTY (LST-786), which had moved upriver to support the friendly troops engaged at Vinh Long. The ship also took aboard over 150 American, Korean and Vietnamese civilians.

(U) In recognition of the role played by GAME WARDEN units in IV Corps during the Tet Offensive, MG G. S. Eckhardt, SA, IV Corps sent the following message to CTF 116 on 12 February:

> Since the VC offensive started 31 Jan, I have received many reports from advisors throughout IV Corps of the effectiveness of your command in coming to their assistance during these crucial times. I know you have suffered some grievous losses but your men have covered themselves with glory because of their courage and dedication. You have dealt the aggressors a heavy blow which speaks well for the professionalism and capability of your organization.

(C) Between 20 and 26 April, one section of PBRs (10) embarked in USS HUNTERDON COUNTY (LST-838) and sailed for II CTZ where they provided blocking forces for a Korean ground sweep, Operation MAENG HO II, on the Qui Nhon peninsula. This move marked the first entry into II CTZ of GAME WARDEN forces.

(U) On 10 June responsibility for chain drag operations on the Nha Be and Long Tau Rivers was transferred to the VNN, although Mine Division 112 retained responsibility for countermeasures against moored mines. At the same time there was a rise in the number of enemy attempts to sink shipping on the channels leading to Saigon. The average of five incidents per month during March, April and May trebled in June. Concurrently, to counter the VC movement toward the CMD patrols for 10 PBRs were extended northward to the Dong Nai River, between Nha Be and the Long Binh Bridge northeast of Saigon. Also, for the first time SEALs commenced operations along the waterways to the east of Saigon.

(S) For the first half of the year MACV evaluated Operation GAME WARDEN's effectiveness thusly:

> Since 1 January Task Force 116 has been successful in maintaining control of the major rivers

of the Mekong Delta and has continued to interdict and harass the enemy's logistic LOCs throughout the GAME WARDEN TAOR. Curfews continue to be rigidly enforced. A considerable effort has been made in conjuction with US Army Advisory Group (USAAG), Regional Forces and Popular Forces to maintain waterway communications with isolated outposts off the main rivers. This effort . . . has bolstered RF/PF morale and has provided an excellent basis for future operations. The Long Tau main ship channel has remained open and clear of mines throughout and although recoilless rifle attacks on merchant ships have occurred none have resulted in [illegible] damage . . . .

(By [illegible] GARDEN forces . . . restored commerce [illegible] rivers to the pre-Tet level and have extended operations to the Upper Mekong and Bassac [illegible] The number of merchant ships ambushed on [illegible] Tho and Mekong Rivers has decreased . [illegible] enemy retains the capability to attack [illegible] where he chooses. However, such attacks [illegible] costly to him in men and materiel.[200]

(C) GAME WARDEN operations during the third quarter of the year continued apace with emphasis remaining on the enforcement of curfews; interdiction of VC infiltration, movement, and resupply efforts; assistance to the GVN; and keeping the Long Tau River channel open to ocean-going traffic and clear of mines. In July TF 116 assumed the responsibility for preventing inadvertent border crossings into Cambodia on the Mekong River. Towards the end of the quarter there was a significant rise in the number of attacks on GAME WARDEN craft and support ships including an attack on USS HUNTERDON COUNTY on the Ham Luong River. However, none of these attacks were of such significane as to slow operations.

(C) During July there was a resurgence of attacks on shipping on the Long Tau River. Three merchant ships--two US and one Japanese--were fired upon with little or no damage being inflicted. In August, there were eight attacks, the second highest total of any month in 1968. Again the enemy's attacks were ineffective. In all cases damage was minimal and commercial shipping was not disrupted. The ships attacked during August were: SS Southport II on 10 August; the British tanker Caltex Newcastle, SS Lakewood Victory and the SS Cibao on 22 August; the SS Transnorther on 25 August; the SS Transglobe on two separate occasions on 30 August; and the Japanese ship Yotoku Maru, also on 30 August. In addition to the attacks on the Long Tau River, the USNS LT. ROBERT CRAIG and SS Santa Monica were hit while unloading ammunition at Cat Lai but with only minor damage resulting. Reaction forces responding to the Southport II attack killed 20 VC. In September the number of enemy attacks on ocean shipping on the Long Tau River fell to two--neither scoring a hit. These attacks were on the SS Sea Train Texas on 7 September and the SS Kalydon on 17 September.

(C) Attacks on merchant shipping in the channels to Saigon were up appreciably in November. Five attacks were recorded that month as opposed to the single attack in October. All attacks were ineffective, however, and shipping to Saigon was not disrupted.

(C) GAME WARDEN forces detected over 200,000 watercraft in November--the largest number of detections in any single month since the inception of the GAME WARDEN operation. On 4 November VNN PBRs relieved US PBRs of Dong Nai River patrol responsibilities.

(C) In addition to their normal mission TF 116 forces were deeply involved in Operation SEA LORDS with its related Can Tho crossing corridor blockade, sweeps of the Bassac River islands and patrols in the Rach Gia-Long Xuyen and Vinh Te Canals.[201]

(C) In December operations conducted in support of Operation SEA LORDS necessitated redeploying some river patrol units from the major rivers of the Delta. Accordingly, there was a corresponding decrease in numbers of contacts detected and numbers of persons checked. Using previous experience and tactical intelligence, remaining patrols were positioned in the most active areas to counter the enemy. This balanced, somewhat, the decrease in detections and was the best solution possible under the circumstances. To further offset the decreased patrol capability of the major rivers by TF 116 units, PCFs of TF 115 began patrolling the lower portions of the Co Chien, Ham Luong and Nha Be Rivers.

(C) There were four attacks against merchant ships on the Long Tau River during December. The only attack to cause any damage was on 4 December. In that instance a detonation occurred amidships of the SS Kara which was moored alongside the Shell Pier at the Nha Be Fuel Farm. The ship suffered minor damage but there were no friendly casualties.[202]

Task Force CLEARWATER

(S) On 29 January, the day before the Tet Offensive started, COMUSMACV expressed concern to CG, III MAF about an ambush of landing craft that had occurred on the Cua Viet River. He requested details regarding what coordination between ground troops and water craft there had been and the reason for the lack of communications in this incident between the logistic watercraft and supporting helicopter gunships. CG, III MAF in reply stated that:

> Communications with helo gunships was not available because of lack of FM radio equipment in landing craft. Subsequent acquisition of four PRC-25s for patrol craft will alleviate this shortcoming.
>
> Naval Support Activities Det, Cua Viet now provides daily convoy on the first run up the river and back and then dispatches boats in small groups (two to three), while two radio equipped craft patrol the river.
>
> Checkpoints have been established on the river where boats can report their location in relation to any enemy activity. This permits rapid orientation for artillery, naval gunfire and air, as well as support by airlifted quick reaction ground forces.
>
> Each patrol craft is manned with armed Marines, two National Policemen and an ARVN interpreter to conduct river patrol operations.

(C) Concomitantly with the above situation an increase of logistical requirements for northern I CTZ, due to the 60,000 troop increase in the first three months of 1968, made the uninterrupted transport of cargo on a 24-hour daily basis on the Perfume, Hue and Cua Viet Rivers mandatory; added to this was the heightened enemy activity and deteriorated conditions of land LOCs due to the enemy's capture of Hue at the start of the Tet Offensive. Therefore, the importance of these rivers as primary LOCs became immediately most critical in February. River security and security of convoys came to be of paramount importance in view of the numerous hostile fire and mining incidents in and along these land routes. As a result, CG, III MAF requested that COMUSMACV send additional PBRs to I CTZ to augment the then assigned 10-boat PBR river section, thereby providing additional protection to the Cua Viet and Hue Rivers LOCs.

(C) The intensity of the enemy's continuing attacks was so great that on 20 February DEPCOMUSMACV (FWD) requested that COMNAVFORV organize a naval task force to coordinate overall activities concerning the movement and protection of the utility craft which were plying the two rivers with strategically important supplies and ammunition. A DEPCOMUSMACV (FWD) message best summarized the situation then existing in northern I CTZ:

> There is an immediate requirement to improve the naval supply of the troops fighting the Battle of Hue. The principal problem is the coordination of movement of LCUs and LCMs from Tan My to Hue. Additionally there is the problem of moving troops, supplies, and equipment north from the ramp southeast of Hue for offloading at the northeastern ramps.
>
> Enemy activity on banks of inland waterways has necessitated employment of PBRs, gunships, fixed-wing aircraft, and artillery for protection of LCUs and LCMs. Overall coordination of these assets presents unusual problems. Command coordination of naval units (LCUs, LCMs, and PBRs), Army and Marine helicopter gunships and ground security elements has been lacking. Therefore, it is mandatory that a task force be organized to insure full coordination of these assets in order to keep the waterways secure.
>
> To accomplish this, I request you provide a senior naval officer to act as Task Force Commander with a small staff at III MAF Headquarters to coordinate overall activities. III MAF, along with elements of your organizations located in Da Nang, will provide representation, CG III MAF has concurred . . . (to) have Task Force operational by 1200 23 Feb.
>
> This Task Force will direct its immediate attention to improving naval supply of forces

> fighting the Battle of Hue. This same force can simultaneously coordinate operations in the Cua Viet River area.

(C) In response to this request COMNAVFORV organized Task Force CLEARWATER (TFCW). The task force, with headquarters at Tan My, became operational on 24 February and was placed under the direct operational control of CG, III MAF. CTFCW had, in addition to PBRs, helicopter gunships, attack aircraft, artillery and ground security troops at his disposal for protecting the utility craft convoys on the Hue and Cua Viet Rivers as they conducted transits of their respective rivers from the deep-water port of Da Nang or from the LST ramps at the river mouths, or after being loaded at sea from the well decks of SEVENTHFLT amphibious ships. In addition, ten ATCs, three Monitors, one CCB and a task group staff arrived aboard an LSD to augment the PBR section. The LCM-6 minesweepers then at Tan My also became part of the force. CG, 1st MAW was tasked to provide armed UH-1s responsive to CTFCW during periods when convoys were moving on the Perfume River. Preplanned and on-call artillery support as requested by CTFCW was the responsibility of CG, 1st Mar Div and CG, 1st ACD.

(S) Before this, COMUSMACV's original request to COMNAVFORV for MRF assets indicated that ASPBs were the craft desired, due to their speed. However, CTF 117 in a message of 4 March had recommended that ATCs would be the better craft. CTF 117 pointed out that the ASPB had a buoyancy compartmentation problem, whereas the ATC was a far more durable boat and had more formidable firepower. "In addition it was pointed out that the "slow speed of the ATC should not present a major problem in escort of LCU/LCM-6 types. In addition the ATC has considerable (10 ton) payload of its own for cargo lift within the armored envelope."

(S) One major problem in moving MRF assets to I CTZ was maintenance. The TFCW PBRs were being supported by a mobile base while the NAVSUPPACT, Da Nang LCUs and LCMs were supported by the Navy Repair Facility in Da Nang. CTF 117 outlined the problem thusly:

> The logistic problems for the River Assault Division deploying to I CTZ will be great . . . RIVFLOT/SUPPRON SEVEN was designed to operate as a unitary logistics organization. Neither RAS or RAD have organic maintenance or supply capabilities. On the basis of experience, originator predicts that combat readiness will drop off very rapidly unless adequate spare parts and maintenance facilities for these specialized craft can be provided in the Hue area by NAVSUPPACT Da Nang or CTF CLEARWATER. MRF mobile maintenance capability (ASKARI) would be of little use in view of lack of protected anchorage Hue area. The qualities of armor and armament which make the monitor desirable for this assignment preclude its operation in an open sea environment. Availability of lift for underwater repairs on assault craft displacing from 70 to 82 tons also appears a practical necessity in view of lack of pronounced tidal range (in Hue area) . . . Experience factors indicate that about one third of force will need underway repairs requiring lifting during the course of a thirty day period.

These problems were overcome, however, by transporting and storing repair parts and spare parts and components in shipping of the SEVENTHFLT Amphibious Force (TF 76) whose ships provided the lift to bring the MRF boats to I CTZ. Chief among the fleet units which provided the vital maintenance assistance and support to the MRF units of TFCW was USS VANCOUVER (LPD-2).[203]

(C) Initially TFCW concentrated on protection of shipping on the Perfume River between Tan My and Hue. However, on 29 February the Dong Ha Supply River Security Group was established to perform the same function on the Cua Viet River between Cua Viet and Dong Ha. Despite these actions enemy harassment and ambush of supply convoys on the rivers continued throughout February and well into March, at times seriously delaying needed supplies for troops in the immediate area or further up the river towards and at Khe Sanh. In the last 27 days of February alone, 52 Perfume River resupply craft suffered hits from enemy gunners and Cua Viet River convoys were attacked 35 times, either enroute or at the Cua Viet or Dong Ha ramps.

(C) Extensive enemy efforts to disrupt and interdict logistic convoy transits on the Cua Viet River continued throughout March. Enemy initiated incidents on the Perfume River were nonexistent during early March, primarily because of friendly forces' control of the river banks. Based on this situation, CTFCW discontinued the convoy mode of operation on the Perfume River on 3 April. Thereafter, logistic craft were allowed to make individual or group transits of the river, which was, however, continually patrolled and swept for mines. Only one incident occurred during the remainder of the month--on the 25th--when an LCU received a rocket and .50 caliber machine gun attack about four miles north of Hue.

(C) On 1 May five more PBRs were assigned to TFCW to reinforce the security of the Cua Viet River convoys. This brought to 15 the number of PBRs operating in I CTZ--ten at Tan My and five at Cua Viet.[204]

(U) TFCW continued in operation in this configuration until early June when the MRF assets were returned to IV CTZ while additional GVN and SEVENTHFLT mine-countermeasures assets were added to the TF. Thereafter, increased Allied effectiveness and decreasing enemy activity lessened the need for escorted convoys although the ambush and mine threats remained, and TFCW continued as an organizational entity throughout the remainder of the year. The improved tactical situation on the Perfume River permitted an expansion of TFCW operations into the bays and lagoons accessible to patrol craft at the mouth of the Perfume River. TFCW PBRs, and later PACVs, achieved notable success operating in coordination with ground sweeps of the areas bordering these waters extending 40 miles to the northwest and southeast of the mobile base at Tan My.

(C) TFCW assets were increased by the addition of eight LCPLs and four LCMs in the third quarter of the year. In addition, the three PACVs of Coastal Division 17 which began operations from Tan My in late July proved especially effective on the shallow waters of Cau Hai Bay where PBRs were unable to pursue enemy personnel evading in small sampans. At year's end TFCW assets included:[205]

PBR	-	20
PACV	-	3
LCPL	-	8
LCM	-	4

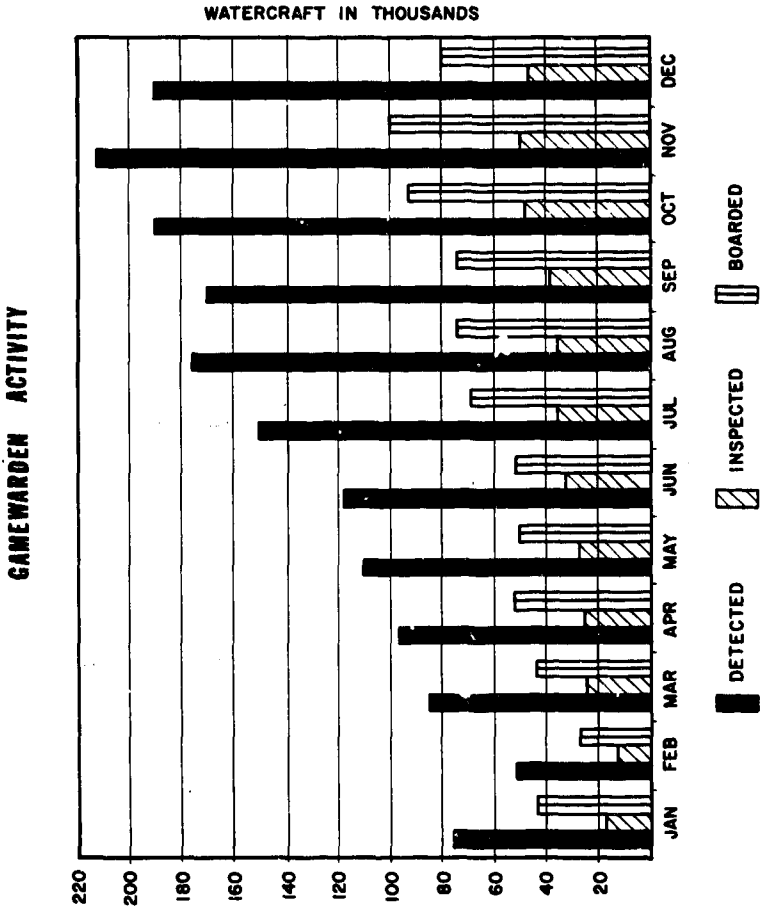
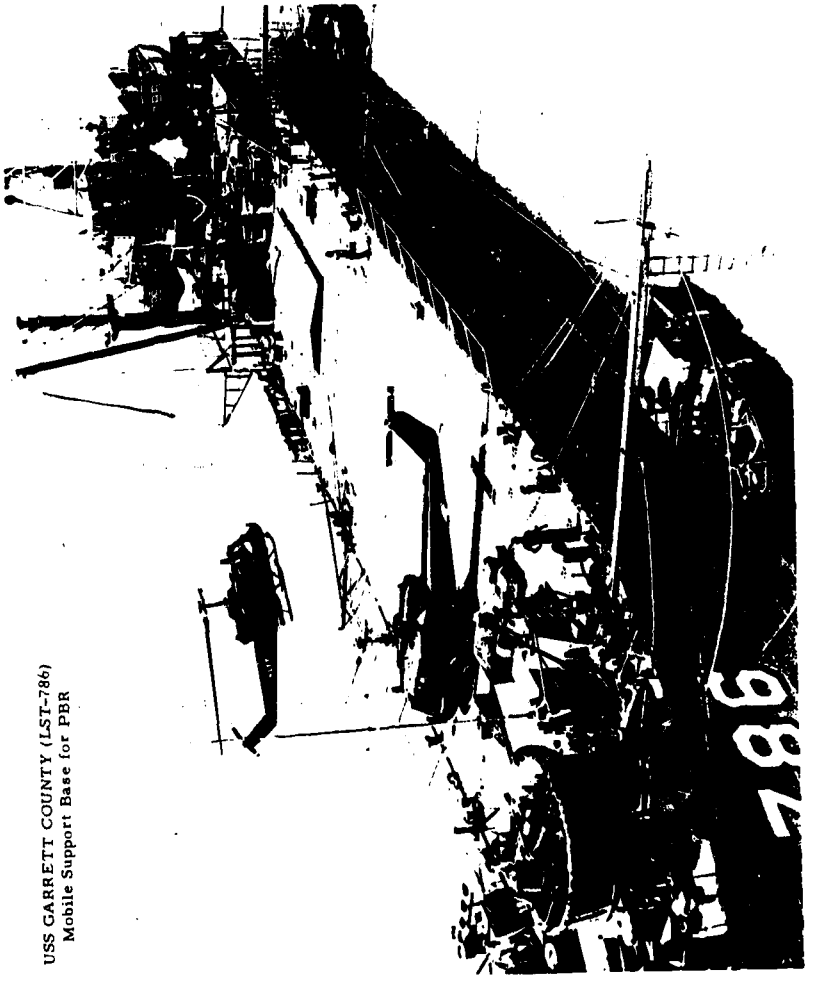

GAMEWARDEN ACTIVITY
WATERCRAFT IN THOUSANDS
220
200
180
160
140
120
100
80
60
40
20
JAN
FEB
MAR
APR
MAY
JUN
JUL
AUG
SEP
OCT
NOV
DEC
DETECTED
INSPECTED
BOARDED

FIGURE V-15



USS GARRETT COUNTY (LST-786)
Mobile Support Base for PBR

FIGURE V-16

Mobile Riverine Force

Background

(C) The Mekong Delta Mobile Riverine Force (MDMRF) had been conceived in 1965 by MACV to provide the US Army and Navy with a means to stage riverine operations in order to destroy VC units and their resources in the IV CTZ and the RSSZ, thus assisting the GVN in achieving control of the waterway system and the contiguous land area of the Mekong River Delta. The first package authorized was an MRF consisting of a command staff (COM RIVFLOT ONE), one support squadron (RIVSUPRON SEVEN) and two river assault squadrons (RIVASRON NINE and ELEVEN). Each RIVASRON was made up of 26 ATCs, 2 CCBs, five Monitors (MON), 16 ASPBs and one Refueler (a bladder-carrying Navy LCM-6). The ASPB was the only boat designed from the keel up for the MRF; the others were modifications of the standard LCM-6. The RIVSUPRON contained the major ship units: two self-propelled barracks ships, USS BENEWAH and USS COLLETON (APBs 35 and 36); two LSTs on rotating loan from SEVENTHFLT; a landing craft repair ship, USS ASKARI (ARL-30); a non-self-propelled barracks craft (APL); a repair, berthing and messing barge (YRBM); two large harbor tugs (YTB) and a net laying ship, USS COHOES (AN-78). Based on an approximately 75 percent availability of landing craft, each of the two RIVASRONs at the beginning of 1968 had the capability to lift one reinforced infantry battalion from the Mobile Riverine Base (MRB) to the area of combat operations.

(C) The MRF established a mobile riverine base in the My Tho River near Dong Tam on 1 June 1967 adjacent to the 9th Inf Div base camp. After a brief shakedown period engaged in local operations with troops embarked in the Dong Tam area, the MRF began full-scale operations in the RSSZ and Mekong River Delta regions. Initial operations took place in the provinces to the north of and adjacent to the Mekong River--Long An, Dinh Tuong, Go Cong, Kien Hoa, Vinh Binh, Vinh Long and Sa Dec. These provinces contained 2.75 million people (17 percent of RVN's population) and in 1966 produced approximately 28 percent of the RVN rice crop. Operations were planned and conducted to extend the IV CTZ RD program into national priority areas, to interdict major enemy supply routes, to destroy enemy resources and to relieve enemy pressure on southern III CTZ and Saigon. In addition, operations were conducted in other Delta areas to take advantage of opportunities presented for the destruction of enemy units.

(U) During 1968 growth of the MRF continued. In June a third River Assault Squadron was formed (RAS 13); in July the MRF was reorganized into two Mobile Riverine Groups (MRG ALFA and MRG BRAVO), and in October the fourth and last-planned RAS was formed. The MRF then reached full-planned strength of four RASs totalling 184 river assault craft (RAC), four barracks ships, three repair ships, two non-self-propelled barracks barges, two support ships, two resupply ships and various support craft.[206]

Operations and Developments

(C) Throughout January assault craft trooplifted units of the 3d Bn, 60th Inf and 4th Bn, 47th Inf of the 9th Inf Div to conduct search-and-destroy operations in Dinh Tuong, Vinh Long, Long An and Kien Hoa provinces. On several occasions heavy enemy contact was gained. On 7 January two battalions were landed in the Don Nhan district of eastern Vinh Long province. This area had not previously been penetrated by US forces. Two platoons of enemy guerrillas were engaged by Army troops while naval craft established water blocks to prevent the escape of the

enemy. In this battle which lasted until 8 January, 30 VC were KIA while eight USA and two USN were wounded. A second significant engagement occurred on 10 January in the Cai Be district of Binh Tuong during Operation CORONADO IX designed to locate, entrap and destroy the 261st VC Main Force Battalion and local VC guerrillas. Forty-five riverine craft inserted troops of the 4th Bn, 47th Inf and 3d Bn, 60th Inf into the selected operating area. Fierce fighting developed and resulted in heavy casualties on both sides. Seventy-three enemy were killed while USA casualties were 21 KIA and 59 WIA in this battle which lasted until the afternoon of 11 January. Other actions throughout the month were scattered and only light contact developed.

(U) During the Tet Offensive the MRF, supporting units of the 9th Inf Div and ARVN units, played an important role in blunting enemy attacks and in subsequent establishment of accelerated pacification efforts in the Delta. An indication of the effective participation of the MRF in countering enemy offensive actions was the high monthly total of 544 VC killed in action during the month.

(C) On 1 February the MRF moved from Dong Tam to support friendly forces engaged in the recapture and defense of My Tho and friendly operations on 2-4 February in the vicinity of Cai Lay. The MRF carried 9th Inf Div troops to My Tho and landed them at the city's waterfront. As ground units conducted a northward advance through the western portion of the city waterborne elements provided blocking and fire support along the waterfront. By the next day the VC were subdued sufficiently for the MRF to withdraw to other areas of heavy engagement in the Delta. The My Tho action proved to be one of the more significant ones, resulting in 115 VC KIA.

(C) Remaining operationally flexible the MRF next shifted to Vinh Long on the fourth of the month. There, an estimated three VC battalions had infested the city and overrun all but the airfield and naval bases. Part of the MRF was airlifted to the southwestern side of the city and was landed at the airfield while others were landed at beach sites southeast of Vinh Long in order to block enemy escape routes. Thereafter, riverine craft established waterblocks and fire support stations in the area. The Vinh Long battle continued with diminishing intensity until the afternoon of 7 February when the area was deemed relatively secure and the MRF units were withdrawn. This time the MRF moved back to Dong Tam to be in position to support the again threatened city of My Tho.

(C) Organizationally, while this intense fighting was taking place, the last four of the originally programmed 32 ASPBs in Package IV arrived in-country at Vung Tau by sealift. This completed the original MRF package of two RIVASRONs and a RIVSUPRON, with headquarters staff.[207]

(S) Coincident with the start of the Tet Offensive COMUSMACV changed the operational control command arrangement with respect to MRF operations. A decision had been made to place the Mobile Riverine Force under the OPCON of the SA, IV CTZ effective 31 January. This decision affected the 2d Bde of the 9th Inf Div and its combat and combat service support elements then attached as well as the RAF and its combat and combat support elements. This new arrangement meant passing OPCON of this combined force from CG, II FFORCEV at Long Binh to a commander in the Delta (Can Tho). OPCON of the Army element of the MRF was passed that same day. But on 6 February that portion of the directive referring to naval forces was rescinded. At that time it was again reemphasized that "command relationships between Navy Riverine Forces and SA, IV CTZ will be that of coordination and/or mutual support." In

addition "the base commander for all joint Army or Navy bases, whether ashore or afloat, will be the Commander, Army Riverine Force. The MRB will normally be relocated on the authority of COMUSMACV, based on recommendation of COMNAVFORV and/or SA, IV CTZ. Emergency relocations may be made at the discretion of the base commander." CG, II FFORCEV was directed to continue to support riverine operations with appropriate helicopter support, on a mission basis, when requested by SA, IV CTZ.[208]

(S) MRF operations continued at a heavy pace and did not decrease as the fighting diminished in the cities of the Delta and III CTZ (except Saigon) toward the middle of February. On 12-13 February the MRF moved to Can Tho where it operated for the next 18 days, accounting for 245 VC KIA and numerous arms and munitions captures.

(S) On 3 March COMUSMACV directed that elements of one River Assault Division (RIVASDIV) be deployed for a period of about 30 days to provide heavy escort services for waterborne logistic convoys on the Cua Viet and Perfume Rivers (Task Force CLEARWATER). The deployment of 10 ATCs, three MONs and one CCB, along with a task group staff, decreased the MRF troop lift capability by about 25 percent. The selected RIVASDIV was embarked in two SEVENTHFLT LSDs at Nha Be and taken north where, at the Cua Viet they were disembarked on 9 and 10 March. Operations on the Cua Viet began immediately. On the second day one boat narrowly escaped the effects of a mine. On the third day the riverine assault craft detachment was subjected to an enemy artillery attack which completely destroyed the maintenance, messing and berthing facilities at the Cua Viet Naval Support Activity Detachment loading ramp. On the 14th of March an ATC was completely flipped over by an estimated 900 pound mine. These incidents and numerous firefights quickly showed the intensity of the fighting in the DMZ/northern I CTZ area and were typical for the month.

(C) Occasional heavy contact with enemy forces continued in March as offensive MRF actions sought out the enemy in Phong Dinh and Dinh Tuong Provinces. Enemy retaliation against the presence of the MRF came in the form of several ambushes. Units of the 7th ARVN Div, as component forces of the MRF, uncovered several large caches of enemy weapons and ammunition during an operation in Dinh Tuong Province.

(C) During the month of March four units of the MRB were attacked in three separate incidents by RR and mortar fire while anchored in the vicinity of the Dong Tam support base. The first attack was early on 5 March in which USS SEDGWICK COUNTY (LST-1123) the MRF resupply ship was hit, but with minimal damage and no personnel casualties. On 14 March, in similar circumstances, USS WASHTENAW COUNTY (LST-1166) was also hit. USS BENEWAH was hit twice by 75mm RR fire on 22 March. Again damage was minimal and there were no personnel casualties.

(S) Overall, the MRF during the first three months of 1968 made steady progress towards its goal of helping to rid the Delta of the enemy and establishing firm GVN control there. During this time several new areas in the Delta felt the presence of the MRF, including Vinh Long and Phong Dinh Provinces, and Don Nhan, Phung Hiep, and Truc Giang Districts, the eastern reaches of Cho Gao District and the upper 470 Base Area. This was in addition to continued emphasis on operations in Dinh Tuong Province. The MRF moved almost constantly in the Delta during these three months with the major units traveling some 980 kilometers.[209]

(C) TF 117 operations during the month of April consisted primarily of supporting the 2d Bde, 9th Inf Div's participation in Operation TRUONG CONG DINH. At its conclusion, this

operation against the 514th VC Main Force Bn in the Long Dinh and Cai Lay Districts of Dinh Tuong Province accounted for 98 enemy KIA, nine weapons and eight tons of rice captured, as against four friendly KIA and 30 WIA. The biggest kill of May occurred when the MRB was located on the Nha Be River (III CTZ) from 17-21 May in support of an operation in the Can Giuoc/ northern Cho Gao areas. VC KIA totaled 126.

(C) TF 117 was reorganized in June when RIVASRON 13 became operational. Also in June, TG 117.2, Mobile Riverine Group BRAVO, commenced riverine operations in the RSSZ in coordination with the 3d Bde, 9th Inf Div and ARVN forces. This operation was staged from the naval base at Nha Be in Gia Dinh Province.

(S) During the second quarter TF 117 operations continued at a pace limited only by the physical capabilities of the infantry troops assigned--so stated the MACV evaluation report of that quarter. The MRF accounted for a total of 687 enemy KIA in this period, and deeper penetrations were made into enemy controlled areas than ever before. Expansion of the MRF continued when a third riverine assault squadron (RAS 13) commenced combat operations at mid-June and received its baptism of fire on the 16th. On 22 June, to relieve pressure on Saigon, the MRF deployed to northern Long An Province for operations near the city of Ben Luc, approximately 20 km southwest of Saigon. With the return to the Delta of the craft formerly assigned to operations in I CTZ, the MRF reached its highest combat capability to date.[210]

(U) The major highlight of the third quarter, with respect to the MRF, was expansion. This took two forms--assets and organization. In July MRG BRAVO (TG 117.2), consisting of USS WINDHAM COUNTY (LST-1170) from the SEVENTHFLT and RIVASRON 13 joined MRG ALFA (TG 117.1). The latter TG at the time was composed of a MRB and RIVASRONs 9 and 11. On 1 August the second package of barracks ships--USS MERCER (APB-39) and USS NUECES (APB-40)--arrived at Vung Tau, nearly doubling the afloat berthing capacity of the MRF. These two ships, joined by a SEVENTHFLT LST and USS SATYR (ARL-23) then made up the major units of MRG BRAVO. By the end of the quarter RIVASRON 15 had joined the BRAVO force and was the second task unit of TG 117.2. With the arrival of RIVASRON 15, the four squadron, two task group concept of the MRF, as conceived by MACV in late 1965, became a reality and two brigades of the 9th Inf Div could be continually supported in an afloat posture. RIVASRONs 13 and 15 were each made up of 3 CCBs, 5 MONs, 26 ATCs, 2 ASPBs and one LCM refueler.

(C) In August the MRF engaged in aggressive and virtually continuous operations which ranged across the Mekong River Delta. These actions severely limited Communist initiative in the long expected enemy "Third Phase Offensive." The MRF penetrated to the U Minh Forest 48 miles southwest of Can Tho in early August in a well-coordinated combined operation which included US Army, Navy and Air Force units as well as VNMC and ARVN forces. This was the first major Allied ground operation in that area in more than a decade and another amplification of the original MRF operational concept which had envisioned operations no more than 20-30 miles from the MRB. The ten-day operation was also significant in that it substantially exceeded the conceptualized 2-3 day operations of the force (as foreseen in 1965). This operation resulted in 249 enemy KIA, 10 POWs and 17 VCI captured plus 74 detainees. There were 278 individual and 24 crew-served weapons and thousands of rounds of ammunition and tons of supplies and food captured or destroyed. Friendly casualties were the highest to date as the enemy retaliated to MRF presence in its strongholds with numerous ambushes.

(C) A valuable addition to MRF firepower came into being as 105mm howitzers installed on some monitors were successfully test fired on 17 August.

(C) Normal MRF operations were the rule throughout September as the MRF continued to seek out and destroy the enemy in his home territory. Again the enemy resisted fiercely as riverine craft were ambushed by rocket, recoiless rifle and small arms fire. MRF suppressive fire blunted and subdued the enemy attacks in every case.

(C) During October MRG ALFA supported intensive and sustained pacification operations in Kien Hoa Province with the 3d and 4th Bns, 47th Inf, the 3d Bn, 60th Inf, elements of the 3d Bn, 34th Arty and the 3d Bn, VNMC Bn. MRG BRAVO, in keeping with the emphasis on mobility assigned it, operated with various US and VN ground forces in Vinh Dinh, Vinh Long, Long An, Kinh Tuong and Phong Dinh Provinces in troop lift and blockade activity.

(C) In order to obtain maximum utilization of MRF assets during the extended period of pacification in Kien Hoa, Dinh Tuong and Long An Provinces, the MRF was reorganized on 15 October. MRG ALFA, supporting the 9th Inf Div pacification ops was assigned USS BENEWAH, USS ASKARI, USS SPHINX (ARL-24), USS WESTCHESTER COUNTY (LST-1167), APL-26, and YLLC-4. MRG BRAVO, carrying out more mobile operations ranging throughout the western Delta region, was assigned USS MERCER, USS NUECES, USS VERNON COUNTY (LST-1161) and USS CAROLINE COUNTY (LST-525). Five river assault divisions were assigned to MRG ALFA, three to MRG BRAVO.

(C) By the end of October TF 117 had conducted liaison and training with the 21st ARVN Div and had conducted operations as well with the 4th VNMC Bn in connection with planned SEA LORDS operations. Extensive survey of the western Delta canals was also accomplished in anticipation of future operations in that area.

(C) In November the MRF continued the pattern of operations which began with the reorganization in October, with MRF ALFA operating in the eastern Delta and MRG BRAVO operating to the west. Of the five RIVASDIVs assigned to MRF ALFA, RIVASDIV 91 supported the 3d VNMC Bn in operations in Kien Hoa Province, RAD 92 was assigned base defense duties, RAD 111 supported the 3d Bn, 34th Arty of the 9th Inf Div, RAD 112 operated with the 3d Bn, 60th Inf in Kien Hoa Province, and RAD 151 continued to work with the 3d Bn, 39th Inf in eastern Long An Province. Of the three RADs assigned to MRG BRAVO, RAD 121 provided for base defense, RAD 132 supported SEA LORDS interdiction operations, and RAD 152 supported the 4th VNMC Bn. Riverine assault craft also supported other troop units in particular operations during the month.

(C) A significant incident in November was the mining of USS WESTCHESTER COUNTY (LST-1167) as she lay at anchor with the other ships of MRG ALFA on the My Tho River. At 0323 on 1 November, two explosions ripped separate holes on the starboard side of the LST. Damage to WESTCHESTER COUNTY was major. Three of the assault craft which were tied up to pontoons alongside and two helicopters which were on the LST were also damaged. Although not in danger of sinking, several compartments were flooded and internal blast damage was extensive. There was no damage to the ship's main engines or other machinery and she sailed to Dong Tam for emergency repairs before proceeding to a repair facility. Personnel casualties casualties caused by the blasts, which were apparently the result of a VC swimmer/sapper attack, were 25 KIA, 27 WIA and 4 MIA.

(C) Enemy swimmers/sappers again struck the MRF on the night of 15 November when the YLLC-4 was mined and sunk while at anchor on the Ham Luong River. Casualties in this instance were 2 KIA and 13 WIA. Due to extensive damage and the hazardous location it was determined that salvage would be uneconomical, and the craft was destroyed to eliminate it as a navigational hazard.

(C) Riverine warfare in December was again characterized by interdiction, escort and patrol, base area search and pacification operations. Small unit actions over wide areas in Kien Hoa, Kien Giang, Chuong Thien and An Xuyen Provinces accounted for 454 VC killed. MRG ALFA operations were confined for the most part to activity in Kien Hoa Province and the support of the 2d Bde, 9th Inf Div. MRG BRAVO operations consisted largely of a variety of special operations in the southern Delta in coordination with units of the 2d, 3d and 4th Bns of the VNMC.[211]

(C) The following table shows river assault craft employment on a typical day in December and is indicative of the scope of MRF operations as the year ended.

ACTIVITY/OPERATION	MRF CRAFT ASSIGNED				
	ASPB	ATC	MON	CCB	REFUELER
2d Bde, US 9th Inf Div	13	32	6	2	
2d Bn VNMC Bde	2	25	6	1	
Operation GIANT SLINGSHOT	11	14	3	3	
Rach Gia-Long Xuyen Campaign	2	2			
OPCON CTG 116.9			3	1	
MRB ALFA Defense	5	10	2	1	
MRB BRAVO Defense	7	8	1	2	
Support CTG 117.1					2
Support CTG 117.2					2
Casualty report	2				
Overhaul/Conversion/Backfit	2	7	1	1	
OPCON CTG 115.4		1			
TOTAL	44	99	22	10	4

(C) During December MRG ALFA engaged in a series of operations (code name KIDNEY FLUSH) designed to keep constant pressure on the VC. With frequent insertions in the Ham Long, Mo Cay and Truc Giang districts of Kien Hoa Province, Army ground elements continued to seek out and destroy the enemy. These operations employed riverine, air and ground assets and produced significant results. The daily toll to the VC was approximately 10 KIA coupled with loss of supplies and equipment. Of the many detainees taken during these actions about 20 percent were subsequently classified as VC while the remainder were determined to be innocent civilians.

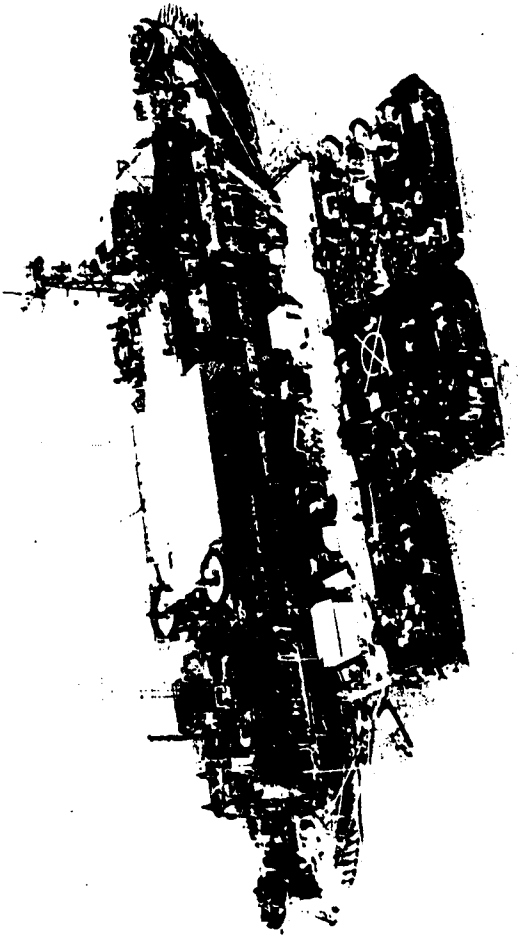
(C) Night ambush patrols were incorporated into the operations of the 3d Bn, 60th Inf requiring a definite change in MRF procedures. Previously night landings had been avoided as being too dangerous. Procedures were changed to provide for troop rest during the day, landing after dark and extraction the following morning.

(C) On 5 December RIVASRON 15 got underway from MRB BRAVO at Can Tho with 30 assault craft for operations in Base Area 480. Three companies of the 4th VNMC Bn boarded on 6 December and the task unit proceeded to the area to begin operations which lasted until 11 December. Throughout the period, VNMC troops conducted ground sweeps in selected locations and the RAS patrolled in the general area within a 10-mile radius to the south and southwest of Kien Hung on the Cai Lon River. Enemy reaction to this presence came in the form of 12 rocket ambushes during this period resulting in damage to two assault craft and four USN WIA. This operation resulted in 55 VC KIA. Only one VNMC was KIA. In addition to the large body count a VC prison camp was discovered by the VNMC units, and 10 VN prisoners were released. Several tons of military supplies were captured or destroyed.

(C) The MRF concept was projected into the open sea for the first time with the conduct of Operation SILVER MACE in the western end of the Cua Lon River. Starting late on 16 December, Monitors, ASPBs, and ATCs, with one Mobile Strike Force Company from Binh Thuy embarked, traversed Phong Dinh, Chuong Thien, and Kien Giang Provinces to the western coast of SVN in 36 hours. During the same period USS MERCER with another MSF company and a 30-man UDT/EOD element embarked, USS SATYR and USS IREDELL COUNTY (LST-839) proceeded to the rendezvous point in the Gulf of Thailand in three separate transits via the South China Sea and around the southern tip of Vietnam. Rough seas delayed the commencement of the operation designed to destroy a series of fish-trap type barricades erected across the western end of the Cua Lon River. After encountering difficulty on the mud flats at the Cua Lon entrance the task unit negotiated the shallows with the aid of a VNN junk pilot. Strike forces were positioned on the bank and UDT/EOD units destroyed the barricades. Meeting with light enemy resistance the SILVER MACE forces had completed barricade destruction on the morning of 22 December and the task unit began withdrawal from the area.

Summary

(C) During 1968 Mobile Riverine Forces have carried and established its presence in areas that were formerly considered Viet Cong havens. The additional assets brought to bear by the growth of the force has occasioned an increase in the scope and sophistication of operations. The Army-Navy team has proved to be an indispensable arm of riverine warfare; combined watermobile, airmobile and land operations provide the requisite flexibility and adaptability for the MRF to reach even into areas of the Delta which lack navigable waterways. During the year the MRF sought out the enemy throughout the entire Delta region--from the Vinh Te Canal adjacent to the Cambodian border in the west to the RSSZ in the east and from the Ca Mau Peninsula at the southern tip of SVN to the upper reaches of the Vam Co Dong River in the north as component forces of Operation GIANT SLINGSHOT.



USS BENEWAH (APB 35)
MOBILE BASE FOR MOBILE RIVERINE FORCE

FIGURE V-17

Operation SEA LORDS

(U) By October 1968 TF 115 had greatly expanded its naval gunfire support operations and had begun raids into IV CTZ rivers and canals while continuing to maintain effective coastal surveillance. The River Patrol Force had increased its strength sufficiently to maintain patrols on all the major rivers of the Mekong River Delta. Operations of the MRF had been expanded following the arrival of a second task group. These developments made it feasible to commence coordinated operations of TF 115, 116, and 117 units for the first time.

(C) Operation SEA LORDS (Southeast Asia Lake-Ocean-River-Delta Strategy) was initiated by COMNAVFORV in late October 1968 for the conduct of joint operations involving units of all three task forces by striking deep into previously secure enemy strongholds along the network of rivers and canals south of the Bassac River. These operations were directed at achieving the objectives of:

1. Interdicting enemy LOCs from the Gulf of Thailand to the Bassac River.

2. Opening the trans-Delta waterways and pacification of the adjacent areas.

3. Clearing and pacifying the Bassac Islands.

4. Harassing the enemy to keep him off balance.

(U) Primary emphasis was placed on the interdiction of VC infiltration and liaison routes with riverine strike operations clearing enemy fortifications and base camps from these routes on the canal system south of the Bassac River. Patrols by units of TF 116 and 117 were established in early November northeast of Rach Gia on the Rach Gia-Long Xuyen and Rach Soi-Vam Cong Canals. These strike operations and patrols were supplemented by the introduction of RF/PF units to hold and pacify these areas and to maintain patrols on the waterways. Obstructions were cleared from the canals, opening them to commercial traffic which had previously been either heavily taxed or blocked by the enemy. By the end of December pacification efforts had achieved the resettlement of many refugees who had fled their homes in this region following the enemy Tet attacks.

(C) Following a TF 115 "Swift" boat transit of the Rach Giang Thanh and Vinh Te Canals on 16 November, demonstrating the feasibility of operations on this waterway, a second patrol line was established in late November to interdict movement across the Cambodian border south of the Bassac River. "Swift" boats of TF 115 operated on the Rach Giang Thanh Canal and were joined by a TF 117 ATC after strong enemy opposition was encountered in early December. On the Vinh Te Canal, PBRs of TF 116 patrolled and operated with troops from RF outposts and Special Forces camps along the Canal to help counter enemy reaction to this interference with his supply lines. These craft were joined by TF 117 ASPBs to provide additional fire power until falling water levels prevented ASPB operations after 23 December.

(C) A third interdiction campaign (Operation GIANT SLINGSHOT) was initiated in early December. Units of TF 116 and TF 117 conducted interdiction patrols on the Vam Co Tay and Vam Co Dong Rivers in an effort to cut enemy infiltration from the "Parrot's Beak" area of Cambodia. This operation extended from the Nha Be River south of Saigon west to Moc Hoa on the Vam Co Tay River and northwest to just south of Tay Ninh on the Vam Co Dong River. Although

heavy enemy opposition was encountered, especially along the Vam Co Dong 15 to 30 miles west of Saigon, notable success was achieved in the discovery of large enemy arms caches in this area. At year's end patrol craft were being positioned to fill the remaining gap in the interdiction line from Tay Ninh to the Gulf of Thailand. Operation BARRIER REEF, scheduled to begin in early January 1969, would extend from the Vam Co Tay River at Tuyen Nhon to An Long on the upper Mekong River via the Lagrange and Ong Lon Canals.

(U) Pacification of the two island complexes in the Bassac River was undertaken in November when TF 116 patrol craft established a tight blockade at known VC crossing points southwest of Can Tho. During the Can Tho crossing campaign, Tan Dinh and Nai Islands were covered by RF ground sweeps with good effect. A subsequent operation was carried out for the Dung Island complex in the lower Bassac River as a combined TF 115/116/117 effort. Patrol craft of TF 116 were made available for these tight blockades and expanded interdiction campaigns, by replacing them with TF 115 PCFs on the lower portions of the major Delta rivers.

(U) Strike operations by MRG BRAVO which had initiated the Rach Gia interdiction campaign in November were followed by more operations with VNMC units along the Cai Lon and Cai Tu Rivers southeast of Rach Gia in Chuong Thien Province until mid-December. In the latter part of the month, after completing Operation SILVER MACE on the Cua Lon River in An Xuyen Province (see MRF section), MRG BRAVO moved into the area south of Rach Gia in Kien Giang Province and began operations along the Can Cao Canal.

(C) Numerous "Swift" boat incursions, SEAL operations, and air strikes and naval gunfire continued to harass the enemy in southern An Xuyen and Ba Xuyen Provinces. In addition to the river incursions from the Gulf of Thailand and the South China Sea, PCFs patrolling the lower Co Chien, Ham Luong and Nha Be Rivers carried out frequent incursions in the adjoining rivers and canals and conducted numerous gunfire support missions.[212]

Third Naval Construction Brigade

(C) At the beginning of 1968 the Third Naval Construction Brigade (NCB), commanded by a Navy flag officer, was organized into two Naval Construction Regiments composed of a total of 11 Naval Mobile Construction Battalions (NMCB). All were located in I CTZ as follows:

NMCBs 6 and 40	Chu Lai	Quang Tin Province
NMCBs 7 and 128	Da Nang East	Quang Nam Province
NMCBs 9, 58, and 74	Da Nang	Quang Nam Province
NMCB 121	Hue	Thua Thien Province
NMCB 3	Gia Le	Thua Thien Province

NMCB 10	Quang Tri	Quang Tri Province
NMCB 5	Dong Ha	Quang Tri Province

NOTE: NMCBs deployed for eight-month tours with six months in CONUS for training and refitting between tours. NCB organization and locations at the end of 1968 are shown in Figure V-18.

(U) In addition there were 14 Seabee Teams (15 after June) stationed throughout the Republic but mainly in IV CTZ. These teams, composed of 12 enlisted men and one officer, were engaged primarily in Civic Action programs as part of the overall Revolutionary Development Program. Locations of the Seabee Teams are shown in Figure V-19.[213]

(S) In January the primary efforts of the Construction Battalions were directed toward expansion of port, road and pipeline facilities in northern I CTZ. Included among construction projects finished that month was a 6.5 mile pipeline along Route 551, connecting the storage facility at Hue with the port of Tan My. Also in January, when the 1st Cav Div (AM) moved into the Quang Tri area, NMCB 10 directed many combat support projects, including pioneer roads, tactical fueling stations, a helicopter pad and a dirt airstrip. At Chu Lai NMCBs 6 and 40 completed the major portion of a 400-bed expansion for the Army's 44th Med Bde hospital (it was finished the following month). Also completed in January was a 257,000 square meter helicopter repair facility for the 1st Cav Div (AM) at Red Beach, Da Nang. It provided the division with a rear area maintenance facility which was vital to the support of the forward units.

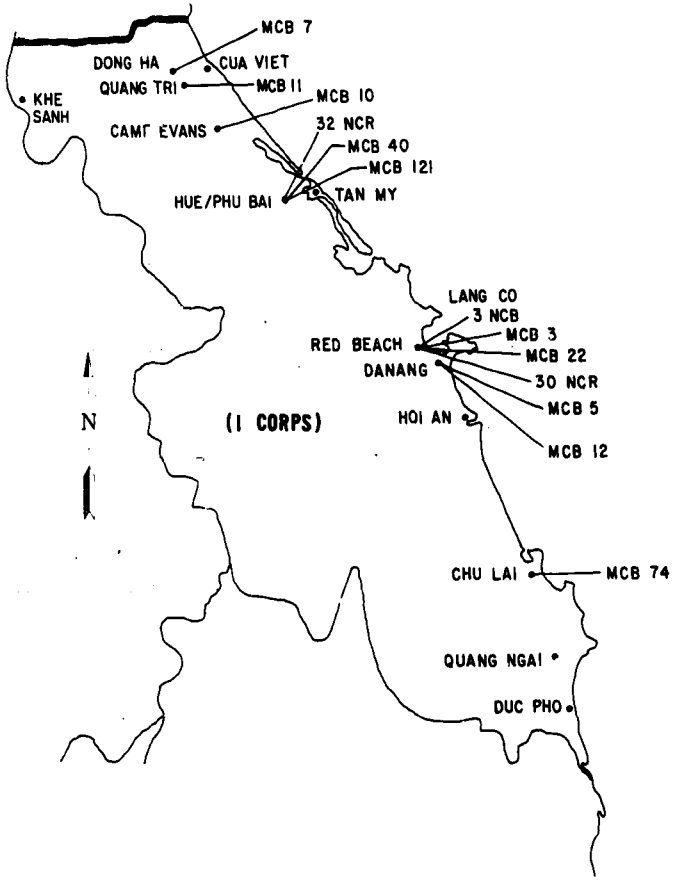
(C) In late 1967 THIRD NCB had been tasked to design and construct two prefabricated concrete fighting bunkers for demonstration and display in Da Nang. One bunker was constructed of concrete logs and the other consisted of a concrete parapet slanted inward at 60 degrees. THIRD NCB also tested these bunkers to determine the protection offered against .30 and .50 caliber machine gun fire and against 155mm shells. Upon completion of the demonstration and display on 14 January, COMUSMACV directed that three additional slightly modified concrete fighting bunkers be constructed for evaluation: a concrete log bunker, a slanted wall bunker and a vertical wall bunker. Upon completion of construction these prefabricated bunkers were displayed to COMUSMACV on 25 January. The principals agreed that the slant sided parapet would be used in places requiring hand lift. THIRD NCB began mobilization of material and personnel to prefabricate the bunkers at Dong Ha. Concomitantly, THIRD NCB tested the ability of various lifting devices to place the concrete slant-walled bunker on position.

(S) During February Route 1 and other roads sustained considerable damage as a result of the enemy's Tet Offensive. Continuous enemy action throughout the month rendered many sections of road inaccessible to work and repair crews. In spite of the tactical situation Seabee units were able to reopen Route 1 in northern I CTZ from Da Nang to Gio Linh, a distance of over 115 miles. During the month the emphasis of Seabee construction in northern I CTZ was placed on improved logistics. An 8.6 mile road was opened between Hai Long and the South China Sea in just seven days, six days ahead of schedule. The road provided access from Route 1 to an amphibious cargo facility on the coast. The electric power distribution systems at Red Beach in Da Nang and at Chu Lai were energized during February. The latter, of 10,000 KW capacity, provided power to the flight lines of MAG 12 and 13. Work was then begun to establish links between these two electric power systems and all other nearby military facilities.

UNCLASSIFIED

NAVY CONSTRUCTION FORCES

(31 DEC 68)



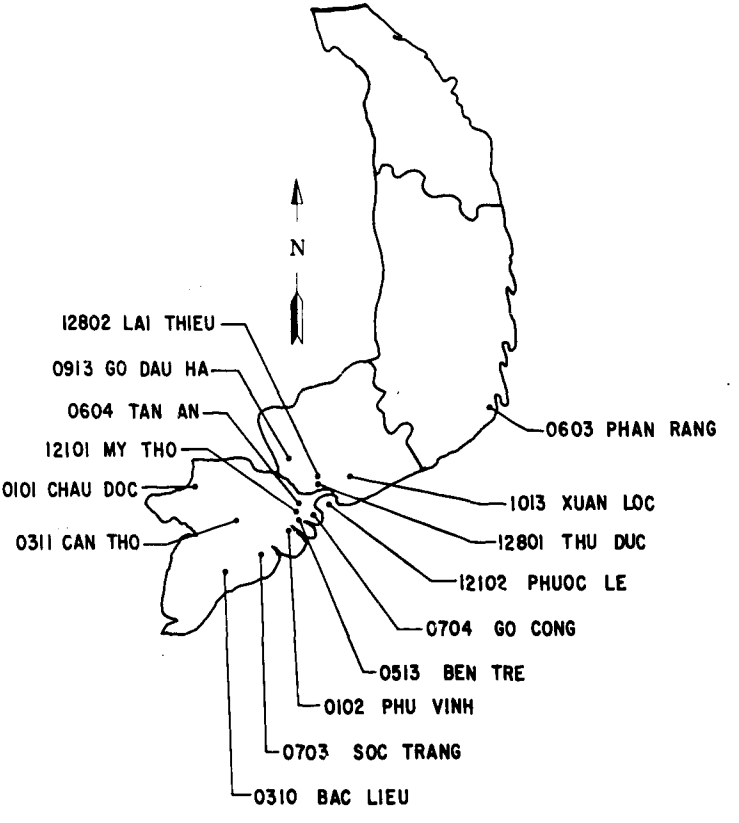
UNCLASSIFIED

FIGURE V-18

CONFIDENTIAL

SEABEE TEAMS

(31 DEC 68)



CONFIDENTIAL

FIGURE V-19

(C) In March improvements in the overall POL system in northern I CTZ progressed rapidly with the completion of a 10.5 mile six-inch POL pipeline from Hue to Phu Bai and 8 miles of similar pipeline from Dong Ha to the Quang Tri combat base. The first AMMI pontoon bridge to be installed in Vietnam was opened for traffic on 30 March, spanning a 140-foot river on Route 1 south of Da Nang. The bridge, constructed by NMCB 53, was used to evaluate the AM-MI Bridge concept under actual field conditions.[214]

(C) On 4 February JCS directed that a twelfth NMCB be deployed to Vietnam because of the urgent need to add to in-country military construction resources. The unit chosen was to be told "to close SVN as soon as possible." On 5 February NMCB 4 which, during the previous four months, had been undergoing technical and military training at Port Hueneme, California for a planned return to Vietnam on 1 April, was alerted. Within hours after notification the first part of the battalion was enroute to Da Nang. Airlift of the entire battalion was completed by 17 February. Heavy equipment and organic cargo was loaded aboard the SS Seatrain Georgia for arrival at Da Nang on 5 March. (The deployment of this twelfth NMCB to RVN caused numerous problems in that it and other deployments and expansions of naval forces led to an excess of better than 1,500 Navy personnel in-country beyond the restrictions of Programs V and VI. This excess is discussed under US Force Structure, Chapter IV.)

(C) Significant Seabee construction events during the second quarter of the year included the construction of a C-123 airfield at Ca Lu, 9 miles east of Khe Sanh in Quang Tri Province. This facility proved to be crucial in the drive to relieve Khe Sanh (Operation PEGASUS) and in the battles of the combat base's final days of siege.[215]

(C) Upgrading of Route 551 between Hue and the Tan My Port had the highest priority in I CTZ road construction. Utilizing hydraulic fill from the Tan My dredging project Seabees began widening this narrow road to accommodate all-weather two-way traffic. Widening was virtually complete by the end of June and paving started in August. This project was completed in October. Seabees also constructed a new 400-foot timber trestle bridge to replace the Truoi Bridge between Phu Bai and Phu Loc which had been sabotaged in April. After the enemy's mid-May attack on Saigon, a 50-man Seabee detachment was sent to the capital to assist in building houses for those Vietnamese whose houses were destroyed during the attack.[216]

(C) In mid-July the first step was taken in reopening the Hue-Da Nang Railroad when Seabees began repairing the Truoi River Railroad bridge. This was the first of four bridges on which work would include raising dropped spans and repairing or replacing damaged sections. The AMMI bridge at Nam Hoa, a 560-foot span over the Perfume River, was dedicated at mid-month.

(C) Also in July the largest single CB construction effort to date in RVN was accomplished with the completion of all vertical construction on the 14 individual camps making up the 2d ROK Bde cantonment at An Hoi.

(C) In August Naval Construction Battalion effort was divided as follows: 33 percent to operational support, 19 percent to LOCs and 48 percent to base development. Resurfacing of the Phu Bai Airstrip (5,600 feet) and construction of the Quang Tri Ammunition Supply Point were completed. Additionally, a 400 ton/hour rock crusher was installed at Da Nang, the 600-foot timber trestle bridge on Route 551 was completed, and Route QL9 from Dong Ha to Ca Lu was upgraded. NMCBs were also employed in upgrading Route QL1 and the roads in the vicinity of Hue and completed the POL line from Hue to Quang Tri.[217]

(S) In July COMNAVFORV requested the redeployment of two NMCBs without relief in September-October due to the fact that Navy strength in RVN was expected to exceed authorized spaces in the near future. CG, III MAF was strongly opposed to this redeployment in view of the current construction level in I CTZ and the magnitude of the construction backlog. Subsequent message traffic solicited alternatives or modifications to the loss of two NMCBs which would have less effect on operational capabilities and still meet the requirements for the Navy military space ceiling. COMNAVFORV was unable to identify trade-off spaces to substitute for the redeployment of two NMCBs and no alternative was found, therefore two NMCBs were redeployed in October.[218]

(S) Navy military personnel strength in-country continued to be a problem. In September COMNAVFORV requested authority to maintain the 10 NMCBs in I CTZ at a total strength of 7,000 (7,620 authorized) to permit retention of other Navy units in-country which were not in Program VI. CG, III MAF informed COMUSMACV that this proposal was unacceptable because of the mounting backlog of construction work in I CTZ. COMUSMACV concurred with CG, III MAF and requested that CINCPACFLT take action to maintain the in-country NMCBs at full strength. CINCPACFLT subsequently stated to COMNAVFORV that NMCBs in RVN would be maintained at full strength.[219]

(C) In the final quarter of 1968 NMCBs completed resurfacing the runway at Camp Evans Airfield and upgraded a 10-mile section of Route 1 between Hue and Phu Bai. The majority of the construction effort was devoted to constructing "minimum essential requirements" for Army and Marine Corps units north of Hai Van Pass. These MER consisted of tent frames, floors, latrines, showers, mess halls and dispensaries and would require two construction battalion months. During the quarter progress was slowed considerably due to the bad weather caused by the northeast monsoon.[220]

Naval Gunfire Support

(S) With respect to naval gunfire support (NGFS) of units ashore the war in Vietnam had been a further expansion of the techniques learned and developed in World War II and Korea. Once again the naval gun was used to good effect in the coastal waters off North and South Vietnam. In South Vietnam the fires were in support of maneuver elements ashore. In North Vietnam naval gunfire ships were used in Operation SEA DRAGON, whose mission was to destroy those North Vietnamese vessels transporting supplies (below 20 degrees north latitude before the bombing pause of 1 April, and below 19 degrees north after that date, until the total bombing halt of 1 November), to interdict lines of communication and to destroy or harass supply vehicles ashore. This use of NGFS was similar to the use of naval gunfire in Korea and supplemented aerial bombings during adverse weather or where terrain and AA hazards made air attack infeasible.

(S) FWMAF maneuver elements in South Vietnam, other than USMC, received their shore fire control parties from Sub Unit One of the 1st ANGLICO, Fleet Marine Force, Pacific, which was headquartered at the MACV Annex, Tan Son Nhut, Saigon. For Marine units, the ANGLICO was organic to division headquarters and to the three 105mm howitzer battalions of each division.

(S) The general ship types and principal armament of the naval ships available for NGFS in SEASIA were:

Type Ship	Principal Armament*
Battleship (BB)	16"/50, 5"/38
Heavy Cruiser (CA, CAG)	8"/50 SF or RF, 5"/38
Guided Missile Cruiser (Light) (CLG)	6"/47, 5"/38
Destroyer (DD)	5"/38 or 5"/54
Destroyer, Guided Missile (DDG)	5"/54
Inshore Fire Support Ship (LFR)	8-Twin 5" Spin Stabilized Rocket Launchers, and 5"/38

*The number of guns and the magazine capacity varied by ship class and by ships within a class.

(S) All NGFS assets used in Vietnam were drawn from the SEVENTHFLT Cruiser-Destroyer Force. Planned allocation of cruiser-destroyer assets was as follows:

SEA DRAGON/NGFS/Special Operations	2 cruisers
YANKEE Station (three carriers)	9 destroyers
Search and Rescue	5 destroyers
ASW Group	6 destroyers
NGFS	8 destroyers
Miscellaneous (port visits, upkeep, amphibious ops)	20 destroyers
TOTAL	50

(U) The inland range of the 5"/54 gun, assuming a ship is positioned at the six fathom (36 feet) curve, is shown in Figures V-20 through V-23.

(S) The NGFS system in Vietnam did not have any aircraft permanently assigned or organic to NGFS units. However, experience was that aerial spotters in low-performance aircraft (light observation aircraft--the desired type) were habitually available to spot NGFS missions, a recognition by commanders ashore of the value of NGFS. The ANGLICO spotter teams used voice communications for effective control of NGFS missions.

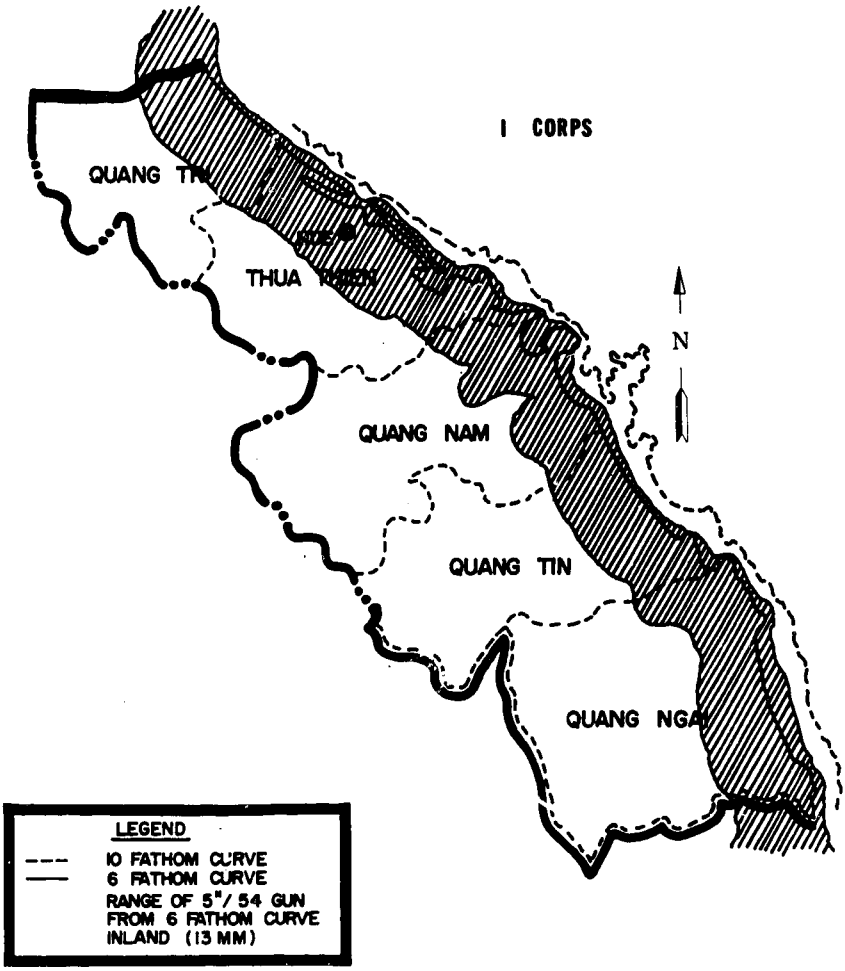

I CORPS
QUANG TRI
THUA
N
QUANG NAM
QUANG TIN
QUANG NGA
LEGEND
10 FATHOM CURVE
6 FATHOM CURVE
RANGE OF 5"/54 GUN FROM 6 FATHOM CURVE INLAND (13 MM)

FIGURE V-20

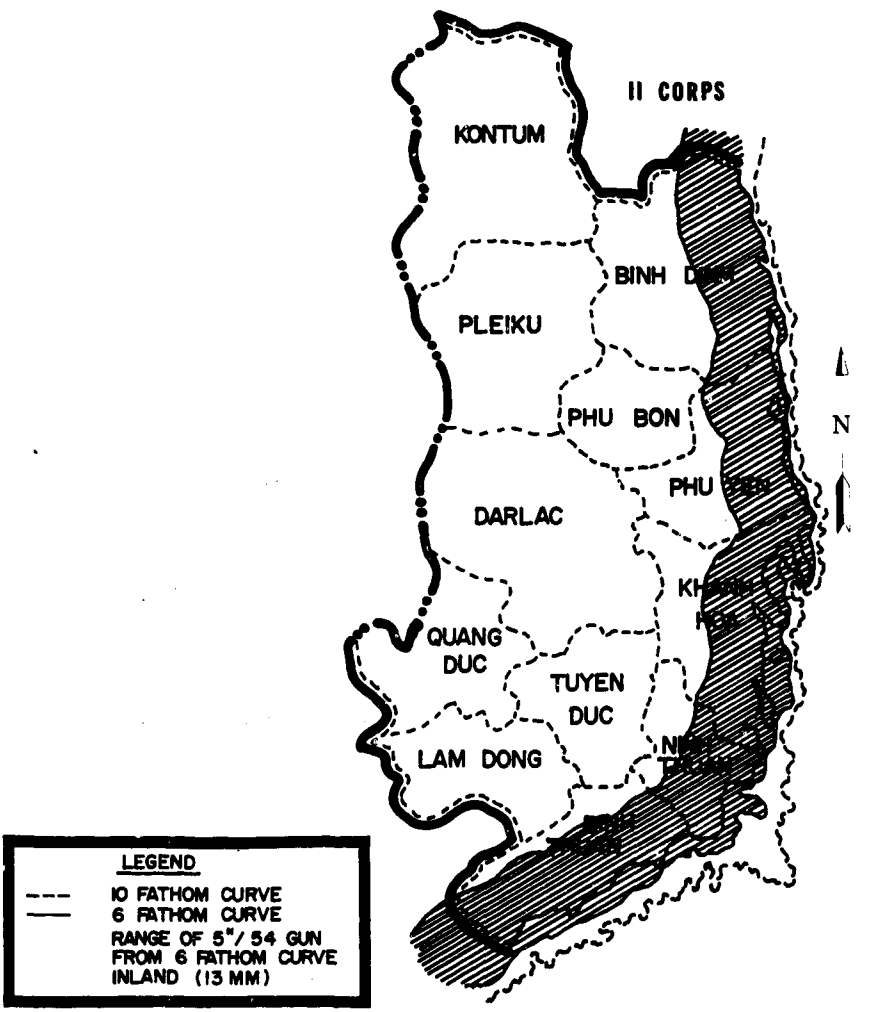

II CORPS
KONTUM
BINH
PLEIKU
PHU BON
PHU
DARLAC
QUANG
DUC
TUYEN
DUC
LAM DONG
N
LEGEND
10 FATHOM CURVE
6 FATHOM CURVE
RANGE OF 5"/ 54 GUN
FROM 6 FATHOM CURVE
INLAND (13 MM)

FIGURE V-21

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

FIGURE V-22

N
LEGEND
10 FATHOM CURVE
6 FATHOM CURVE
RANGE OF 5"/54 GUN FROM 6 FATHOM CURVE INLAND (13 MM)
IV CORPS
KIEN TUONG
KIEN PHONG
CHAU DOC
AN GIANG
DINH TUONG
GO CONG
KIEN HOA
VINH BINH
PHONG DINH
KIEN GIANG
CHUONG THIEN
BA XUYEN
BAC LIEU
XUYEN
PHU QUOC

FIGURE V-23

(S) Responsibility for providing NGFS to forces ashore in SVN was assigned by CINCPAC to COMSEVENTHFLT. To accomplish the mission COMSEVENTHFLT directed Commander Cruiser-Destroyer Group, SEVENTHFLT (CTG 70.8) and Commander Amphibious Force, SEVENTHFLT (CTF 76) to provide the necessary NGFS assets. As directed in the SEVENTHFLT Quarterly Employment Schedule CTG 70.8 provided the necessary cruiser-destroyer force and CTF 76 provided the necessary LFR to the designated surface unit commander CTU 70.8.9) who was authorized direct liaison with COMUSMACV for utilization of assets south of the 17th parallel.

(S) At the beginning of 1968 Commander Cruiser-Destroyer Group, SEVENTHFLT was tasked to provide a minimum of four destroyers and CTF 76 was tasked to provide two rocket ships on station on a continuing basis for NGFS. One heavy cruiser was also provided for at least six days a month. Overall operational priorities among the CTZs were applicable throughout each of the monsoon seasons with variations for specific operations or changes in the tactical situation. Assignment priorities as established by COMUSMACV were:

1. For all types of NGFS ships:

	No. Available									
CTZ	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
I	4	5	5	5	5	6	6	7	7	7
II	1	1	2	2	3	3	3	3	4	4
III	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
IV	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	3

2. For 5"/54 ships:

	No. Available					
CTZ	1	2	3	4	5	6
I	1	2	2	2	3	3
II	0	0	0	1	1	2
III	0	0	0	x	x	x
IV	0	0	1	x	x	x

x-Ship was shared by III and IV CTZs.

3. For LFR:

CTZ	No. Available 1	2	3	4
I	0	1	1	2
II	0	0	1	1
III	0	0	0	0
IV	1	1	1	1

4. For CA/CL:

CTZ	No. Available 1	2	3	4
I	1	2	3	3
II	0	0	0	x
III	0	0	0	x
IV	0	0	0	x

x-One ship shared by CTZ indicated.

(C) The most consistent requestors and users of NGFS were the 1st and 3rd Mar Divs, the 1st Cav Div (AM), and the 101st Abn Div (AM) in I CTZ and a battalion of the 101st in II CTZ. In comparison, a relatively small but continuous amount of support was given to FWMAF in III and IV CTZ. This was primarily due to hydrographic restrictions and troop density along the coast. During the first half of 1968 70 percent of the targets struck in RVN by naval gunfire were struck by destroyers, 20 percent by cruisers and 10 percent by other types (primarily LFR but also WHEC, PCF and WPB). (A detailed analysis and series of statistics of NGFS in SEASIA may be found in CINCPACFLT's monthly Pacific Area Naval Operations Review, a Secret publication.)[221]

Reinforcement of Northern I CTZ and Hue City

(TS) On 14 January COMUSMACV, in a message to CINCPAC, informed the latter of the then current significant enemy buildup in northwest Quang Tri Province which imposed a requirement for reposturing and augmenting Allied forces in I CTZ. Among additional forces called for were increased NGFS assets. COMUSMACV requested CTU 70.8.9 resources to the maximum extent feasible and ' to preclude denuding all other CTZs of NGFS" he requested "that SEA DRAGON forces be concentrated south to provide augmentation to I CTZ on short notice until the situation clarifies." CINCPAC in his reply of the 20th stated that:

> . . . .present SEA DRAGON posture provides a fully responsive emergency reaction force. One SEA DRAGON unit is normally within three hours or less of DMZ area, while a second unit is within ten hours or less. These forces, coupled with previously augmented in-country NGFS units which now total 6-9 DD/CLG/CA, should support adequately I CTZ requirements under emergency conditions. Request for NGFS to meet any additional short notice requirement should be addressed direct to COMSEVENTHFLT . . . .

Such was necessary and effected during the Tet Offensive, particularly during the lengthy battle to recapture the city of Hue. In this battle USS PROVIDENCE (CLG-6) and USS CANBERRA (CAG-2) supported friendly elements ashore and used their large calibre, high velocity guns to assist in neutralizing the enemy in his heavily fortified sanctuary inside the Citadel. During the month of Feburary a total of nine NGFS ships were engaged at various times in action against targets in and around Hue.[222]

Redistribution of NGFS Priorities

(C) On 17 June, in view of the changed tactical situation and the increased number of suitable NGFS ship priorities, new priority assignments were established as follows:

1. For all types of NGFS ships:

	No. Avaiable									
CTZ	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
I	4	5	5	5	5	6	6	7	7	7
II	1	1	2	2	3	3	3	3	4	4
III	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
IV	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	3

2. For 5"/54 ships:

	No. Available					
CTZ	1	2	3	4	5	6
I	1	2	2	2	3	3
II	0	0	0	1	1	2

III	0	0	0	x	x	x
IV	0	0	1	x	x	x

x-Ship was shared by III and IV CTZs. This ship would be scheduled to be in IV CTZ waters whenever there was no LFR assigned or when the assigned LFR was off station.

3. For LFR:

	No. Available			
CTZ	1	2	3	4
I	0	1	1	2
II	0	0	1	1
III	0	0	0	0
IV	1	1	1	1

4. For CA/CL:

	No. Available			
CTZ	1	2	3	4
I	1	2	3	3
II	0	0	0	x
III	0	0	0	x
IV	0	0	0	x

x-One ship shared by CTZ indicated - assignment to be made for planned operations when requested.

(C) In the message announcing these revised priorities it was reemphasized that "COMUSMACV frequently may provide CTU 70.8.9 exceptions to the foregoing overall order of priority to meet special requests from field commanders and/or changing tactical situations." CTU 70.8.9 was requested to inform Hq MACV "in advance when augmentation assets will be available for 72 or more hours, particularly when cruisers or 5"/54 DDs are involved" so that COMUSMACV could review the situation and provide guidance. As before, upon receipt of the message from CTU 70.8.9 allocating NGFS assets to the CTZs, FFV commanders and SA, IV CTZ were to advise CTU 70.8.9 of priorities within their CTZ and of any special coordination or support requirements.[223]

(C) After the above priority list was promulgated which assigned one 5"/54 DD to IV CTZ when more than two such ships were available, Commander Service Force SEVENTHFLT(CTF 73) informed COMUSMACV, on 19 June, that fleet ammunition ship underway rearming schedules could not be changed to include service to IV CTZ without causing a detrimental effect on service to Yankee Station and I and II CTZs. On 23 June CTF 73 stated that he was unable to comply with the requirement to rearm a 5"/54 DD in IV CTZ because of the above limitation. SA, IV CTZ in commenting on this problem noted that in the past a 5"/54 DD had previously operated in IV CTZ waters for an extended period, and he requested that one LFR and one 5"/54 DD be assigned to IV CTZ. He also proposed that a rearming site at Vung Tau be established so as to reduce off-station time and to alleviate 5"/54 rearming problems.

(C) COMUSMACV's evaluation of the problem was that "the infiltration effort, resupply, and base camp activity in IV CTZ requires a revised allocation of NGFS ships. Due to numerous lucrative targets along east coast IV CTZ the assignment of a 5"/54 DD to this area is considered essential, when available under priorities established (below) . . . . Sailing time and rearming in southern II CTZ is acceptable."

(C) New priorities for assignment of NGFS assets were established on 4 August superseding those of 17 June and were as follows:

1. For all types of NGFS ships:

	No. Available									
CTZ	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
I	3	3	4	4	4	5	6	7	7	7
II	2	2	2	3	3	3	3	3	4	4
III	0	x	x	x	1	1	1	1	1	1
IV	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	3

x-Indicated III CTZ/RSSZ shared 5"/54 DD assigned to IV CTZ based upon request to and approval by COMUSMACV.

2. When one NGFS ship was assigned to IV CTZ it was either an LFR or a 5"/54 DD. When two or more NGFS ships were assigned to IV CTZ one was an LFR and one a 5"/54 DD.

3. For 5"/54 ships:

	No. Available				
CTZ	1	2	3	4	5
I	1	1	2	2	3
II	0	0	0	1	1

III	0	x	x	x	x
IV	0	1	1	1	1

x-Indicated that III CTZ/RSSZ shared ships assigned to IV CTZ based upon request to and approval by COMUSMACV.

4. For LFR:

	No. Available			
CTZ	1	2	3	4
I	0	1	1	2
II	0	0	1	1
III	0	0	0	0
IV	1	1	1	1

5. For CA/CL:[224]

	No. Available		
CTZ	1	2	3
I	1	2	3
II	0	0	0
III	0	0	0
IV	0	0	0

(C) COMSEVENTHFLT, in commenting on this new priority of assignments, stated:

> The requirement for a long range 5"/54 ship in IV CTZ appears valid due to the shallow water and the enemy activity in that area. In addition, the presence of a mobile artillery platform, whether utilized full time or not, does provide a certain deterrent. The fact that almost 75 percent of expenditures during August were for spotted missions is encouraging.

But then, under the assumption that the latest priority assignment called for 5"/54 DD in IV CTZ even when only one was available COMSEVENTHFLT went on to state:

The problem of mutual interference in the DMZ dictates positioning CTU 70.8.9 in that vicinity. 5"/54 ships have additional facilities for unit commanders, consisting of additional command and control spaces and increased communication capabilities. They are designed specifically to provide a means for the embarked unit commander. In this case, CTU 70.8.9 has been tasked in GUN 13 (the basic NGFS SOP manual) with additional liaison functions in the vicinity of the DMZ with CG, 7th AF in surface and air coordination that are designed to assist in the prevention of mutual interference. The 5"/38 ships, without exception, constructed during World War II, do not have adequate command and control facilities to full support CTU 70.8.9.

In view of the above, it is requested that consideration be given towards modifying the present CTZ NGFS ship distribution priorities to provide assignment of a 5"/54 ship to IV CTZ only when two or more ships of this type are available.

(C) COMUSMACV, in his reply to this request, stated that the basic intent of the 4 August message "was to stress the need for a 5"/54 ship in IV CTZ" and that the confusion arising from a discussion of this fact in the body of the order did not supersede the tabular allocation which allocated one 5"/54 ship to IV CTZ only when two or more such ships were available.[225]

15-17 June Mutual Interference Near DMZ

(S) Commencing on the evening of 15 June and running on into the early morning hours of 17 June a series of incidents involving Navy and Coast Guard ships and small craft, US Air Force, US Marine Corps and US Navy aircraft engaging and being engaged by unidentified types of "hostile forces" took place offshore in the vicinity of Cap Lay, the Song Ben Hai and the southern portion of the DMZ. The series of incidents resulted in the loss of PCF-19, two USN personnel KIA, one WIA and 5 MIA, two KIA on HMAS HOBART with minor damage incurred, and also minor damage incurred by USS BOSTON (CAG-1). The seaward part of the incident centered around USS BOSTON which was engaged in NGFS and Swift boats of TF 115 on patrol near shore in the DMZ area. Initial reports by forces ashore and then forces afloat, which much later proved to be false, claimed enemy helicopters were sighted in the area, both over land and over water, and that several were shot down.

(S) The incident commenced at 152030H June when a report was received from Dong Ha that unidentified airborne helicopters were active in the vicinity of the DMZ. Visual sightings claimed that the "contacts" were taken under fire by Marine artillery and F-102s and F-4s from Da Nang. All known US commands were queried and all stated they had no helicopters operating in the area. Marine units continued to report helicopter sightings. At 2300 Navy surface craft "confirmed" these "sightings". From then on and during the next evening there were a series of reports of enemy air activity, helicopter "kills", flares, rockets and missile hits. USS BOSTON, during the first night, reported receiving hostile fire from the direction of the

southern portion of the DMZ. Her lookouts and bridge personnel reported sighting unlighted jet aircraft passing overhead. As a result, combat air patrol was launched by USS ENTERPRISE (CVAN-65), USMC units ashore at the Cua Viet reported sighting PCF-19 under attack by rocket fire (actually, it was later shown to be from friendly aircraft). Shortly thereafter USCGC POINT DUME proceeded to the rescue of the sinking PCF and reported "enemy air attack." So it went, with doubts as to the veracity of the evaluations rising as the confused actions continued.

(S) A CTG 77.0 summation of 17 June made the following points, all of which cast doubt that the incident was enemy initiated:

1. No wreckage was found in the area to confirm enemy kills over the water or over land.

2. Types and numbers of "enemy aircraft" involved and their base of operations remained unknown.

3. There was no preliminary intelligence buildup indicating enemy likelihood or capability to support an extensive helicopter operation in the area. Estimates of the enemy order of battle did not support the number of helicopters alleged by observers.

(S) On 18 June COMSEVENTHFLT made an initial evaluation of the air incidents in the Cap Lay area and assessed that the damage to SEVENTHFLT units was inflicted by friendly aircraft. He then ordered sanitization of the area in question during hours of darkness until procedures could be worked out to ensure control of friendly aircraft to the extent that SEVENTHFLT ships would not be endangered by them.[226]

(S) COMSEVENTHFLT then set about to review the whole series of incidents of 15-17 June "during which mutual interference occurred between friendly forces operating in the DMZ." He recommended that:

> In order to provide additional uniformity in emergency visual recognition signals and emergency action procedures for friendly seaborne units during darkness and reduced visibility . . . that:
>
> a. Standardized visual recognition signals be promulgated for interservice use between surface and air units.
>
> b. Emergency code words for usage on guard voice circuits be promulgaged to signal:
>
> (1) Break off attack by aircraft or surface units.
>
> (2) Immediate withdrawal of friendly surface units to predetermined offshore positions in event hostile aircraft are detected approaching DMZ area.

COMSEVENTHFLT then proposed various visual emergency recognition signals and stated that upon receipt of COMUSMACV concurrence he would implement these recommended visual emergency procedures and radio circuit emergency procedures for his naval forces.

(S) COMUSMACV took recognition of this at a 6 July conference held at MACV Hq, Saigon, at which representatives from CTF 115, Cdr, 7AF and COMNAVFORV were present to discuss these proposals. As a result, special visual and radio signals were promulgated and COMUSMACV requested that "COMSEVENTHFLT in coordination with CDR, 7AF and COMNAVFORV implement visual and radio circuit emergency action procedures applicable to SEVENTHFLT and naval forces under COMUSMACV's OPCON."[227]

(S) On 4 August, in discussing the deficiency of the Dong Ha radar to cover the short range area, CINCPACAF, among other corrective proposals, suggested that in the light of the non-availability of secure terrain in the DMZ area CINCPAC consider that a "naval picket be deployed to the area adjacent to the DMZ to provide area overland surveillance and friendly ship locational information to Dong Ha Command Reporting Point and Monkey Mountain (Da Nang) Command Reporting Center." CINCPACFLT commented that:

> While a ship appropriately positioned could provide some coverage, the overland capability of the radar would be limited and surface surveillance being provided by present SEA DRAGON control ship would not be significantly improved. The picket ship would be restricted in its primary missions (NGFS, SEA DRAGON, etc.). The recently directed reduction of PACFLT DD/DEs will ultimately result in drawdown of WESTPAC assets of the type qualified for picket station.
>
> In view of the above, do not recommenced establishing the picket ship proposed (by CINCPACAF).

(S) CINCPAC in his decision reasoned that:

> To provide a slight improvement in low-level radar coverage of the DMZ coastal area by stationing a dedicated picket ship off the DMZ would require a drawdown in forces available from other high priority tasks such as SEA DRAGON, NGFS, SAR stations, etc. Present operating cycles of NGFS and SEA DRAGON units have some of these ships operating in the vicinity of the DMZ . . . . These units are required to provide control centers ashore with information as to their location. When these units are equipped with air search radars that have the MTI (Moving Target Indicator) feature it would not unduly degrade the primary mission to provide air surveillance information to Dong Ha Command Reporting or Monkey Mountain Command Reporting Center.
>
> It is not intended to establish a dedicated picket ship station off the DMZ at this time. Additional radar at surveillance facilities to provide coverage of naval forces operating in the northern I CTZ and

> DMZ area are not deemed necessary. As directed (on 18 July) naval units are to provide information as to their location to control centers ashore.

CINCPAC then went on to direct COMUSMACV and CINCPACFLT to "develop procedures that will allow suitably equipped ships when operating in the DMZ area to provide radar surveillance information to the Dong Ha Command Reporting Point or Monkey Mountain Command Reporting Center." On 13 October it was reported to CINCPAC that procedures had been agreed upon between COMUSMACV and CINCPACFLT to this effect and that they had been implemented.[228]

USS NEW JERSEY (BB-62)

(U) On 1 August 1967 the Secretary of Defense approved the bringing out of mothballs of one Iowa class battleship--USS NEW JERSEY (BB-62)--then moored in an inactive status at the Philadelphia Naval Shipyard. This decision was the culmination of many staff studies and recommendations to this effect by COMUSMACV and CINCPAC as well as many commands in CONUS. USS NEW JERSEY was originally scheduled to begin operating off the coast of Vietnam by April 1968, but due to reactivation delays she did not arrive in WESTPAC until five months later--September 1968.

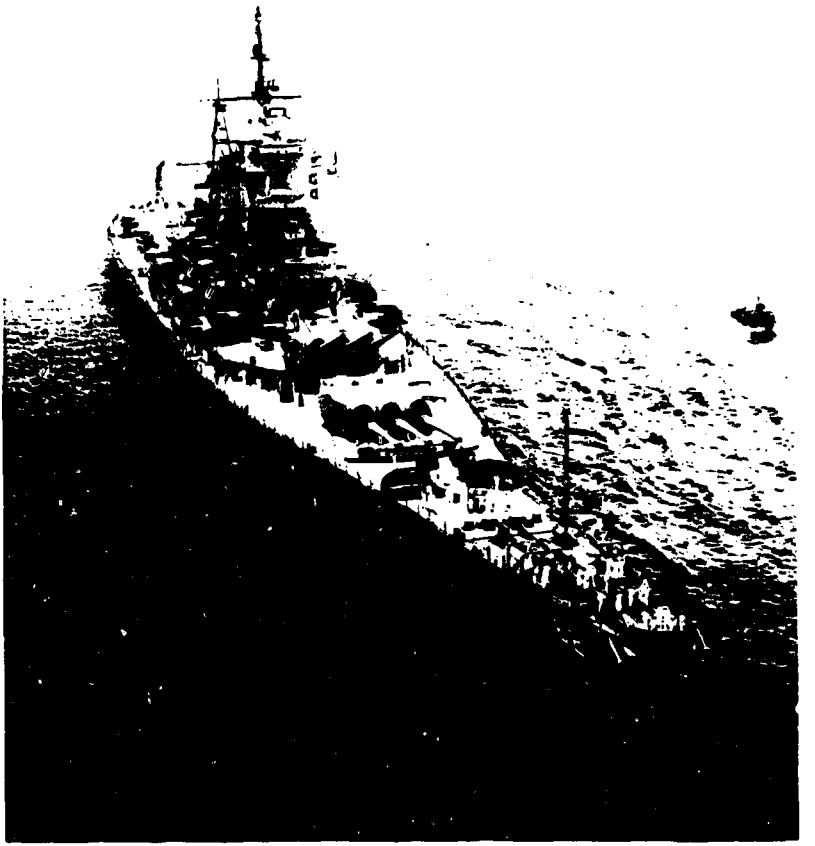
(S) USS NEW JERSEY's operating schedule was handled on a special basis and on a separate priority from that of all other NGFS ships. However, coordination procedures between COMUSMACV and COMSEVENTHFLT/CTU 70.8.9 were the same. Normal assignment of the battleship was planned to be in support of III MAF against hard targets in the area of the DMZ and the extended battle area just above the DMZ, with COMUSMACV determining when her services would be available to other MACV component commanders, all in accordance with the ship's quarterly schedule as established by COMSEVENTHFLT.[229]

(S) When the deployment schedule for USS NEW JERSEY was established as the period from September 1968 to April 1969, SECDEF ruled that the number of heavy cruisers in WESTPAC was concomitantly to be reduced from two to one for this period. In response to a JCS request of May 1968 that an exception be made and that during the Northeast monsoon of the third quarter FY69 two heavy cruisers be allowed on station in addition to the one battleship, SECDEF stated:

> I do not approve more than two major naval gunfire ships (cruiser and/or battleship) in the Western Pacific, unless additional justification in terms of increased effectiveness can be provided. As you will recall, an increase in gunfire capability was not intended when the battleship activation was approved. Rather, it was to provide relief for the large caliber gunfire support ship rotation schedule and to permit the ships to begin essential overhauls. If you desire . . . submit additional justification . . . .[230]

(S) CINCPACFLT, in his answer to a CINCPAC message requesting comments on the above, drew attention to the January 1968 diversion of the northern SEA DRAGON unit to SVN due to the

UNCLASSIFIED



USS NEW JERSEY (BB-62)

UNCLASSIFIED

FIGURE V-24

then existing, and still continuing, emergency situation in northern I CTZ, with the result that only two NGFS ships were normally being assigned to SEA DRAGON and the heavy caliber ships were remaining in an NGFS role in SVN. Also, additional heavy caliber resources were needed during the period of the northeast monsoon, when air activity would be minimal, in order to continue to interdict NVN LOCs. CINCPACFLT saw the battleship as a supplement to the cruisers, not a substitution, as the battleship's 16" guns would be more effective than a cruiser's 8" guns against hardened targets near the DMZ and against LOC targets from a point just south of Thanh Hoa to points above the 20th parallel. In summary, he stated that "this (battleship/cruiser) supplementary and increased major gunship availability during the northeast monsoon season is urgently needed to maintain pressure in order to support troops, especially in the event of an enemy offensive in the South during the period when air strikes are limited."

(S) COMUSMACV concurred in CINCPACFLT's position and reasoning to substantiate the need for three heavy-gunned ships on the line at one time. COMUSMACV went on to state to CINCPAC that:

> There has been an increasing requirement for eight inch naval guns in I CTZ since 1966. The threat has not diminished. The enemy presently has up to 51 combat effective battalions in I CTZ, and lucrative targets existing along the entire littoral of the northern two provinces. Additional enemy areas within range of heavy gunfire support such as Go Noi Island in Quang Nam Province are well entrenched and bunkered. The USS SAINT PAUL while recently firing in this area was able to penetrate and destroy numerous enemy defenses which remained after attempts by smaller caliber weapons were unsuccessful.
>
> The factor of poor weather described (by CINCPACFLT) is equally applicable to I CTZ. The battle for Hue in February 1968 demonstrated the necessity for high velocity naval guns to reduce heavy strong points during a long period of low visibility.
>
> In summary, the enemy in the coastal area of I CTZ and in the northeastern DMZ area continues to occupy strong defense base areas and gun positions. Heavy cruiser gunfire has in many cases been the most effective means for their destruction.

(S) CINCPAC felt that there was ample military justification for the deployment of two 8-inch gun cruisers to WESTPAC concurrently with the battleship USS NEW JERSEY during the 68-69 northeast monsoon season and so stated this and supporting reasons to JCS. He recommended the deployment of USS NEWPORT NEWS (CA-148) during the period November 1968-July 1969 in order to obtain the advantages of two cruisers and a battleship concurrently on station. (As of the end of 1968, a time past the hoped for two-cruiser deployment, no action had been taken by SECDEF on this request.[231]

(C) USS NEW JERSEY arrived off I CTZ on the 29th of September and commenced operations against the enemy in northern I CTZ and the DMZ area on the 30th. During the second week of October she carried out a mission in the region of Vinh, North Vietnam. In the third week of her first month on the line, operations were for a time at a standdown because no aerial observers were available due to foul weather caused by Tropical Storm Hester. This delayed USS NEW JERSEY from accomplishing a series of firings in II CTZ (Phu Yen Province) until the 21st. (For a complete summary of USS NEW JERSEY's operations see CINCPACFLT's monthly publication Pacific Area Naval Operations Review (S).)

(C) The following message is but one example of USS NEW JERSEY's effectiveness:

> 1. The USS NEW JERSEY supported II CTZ operations during the period 26-28 Dec 68. On 26 Dec and in support of the 47th ARVN, in the "hub area" of Tuy Hoa, NEW JERSEY fired a total of 100 sixteen inch rounds and 41 five inch rounds at known enemy staging areas, bunkers and cave complexes. The following surveillance was reported by elements of the 47th ARVN who made a ground sweep of the impact areas:
>
> a. 18 bunkers destroyed
> b. 20 fortified positions destroyed
> c. 6 earth and log bunkers damaged
> d. 1 bunker uncovered
> e. 1 cave uncovered
> f. 5 KIAs confirmed by body count
> g. 600 kilos of rice uncovered
>
> 2. In the "hub area" hard targets invulnerable to artillery fire were selected. Range of main battery targets were in the 19,000 yard to 25,000 yard spectrum. For this range band the spotter observed very little dispersion in the fall of shot. The fact that an unresisted sweep of the area was conducted, the first in months, attests to the secondary effects of the 16" gunfire support--effective neutralization. . . .[232]

Amphibious Ready Group

(S) The SEVENTHFLT's Amphibious Ready Group (ARG), with its embarked Marine Battalion Landing Team (BLT) of some 1,900-2,000 Marine and Navy personnel known as the Special Landing Force (SLF), was established by CINCPAC during the late 1950's as a balanced mobile contingency force to meet requirements throughout the Pacific Command. From the start of the major US commitment in Vietnam the ARG/SLF had played a part in either augmenting forces already ashore or in conducting independent amphibious raids along the length of Vietnam fronting the South China Sea. Starting in April 1967 there were two, rather than the previous one, ARG/SLFs available for operations in RVN; ARG/SLF ALFA and ARG SLF BRAVO, corresponding to TGs 76.4/79.4 and TGs 76.5/79.5. Normally their deployment, as arranged through mutual coordination between COMSEVENTHFLT and COMUSMACV as made available by

CINCPAC through CINCPACFLT, provided for separate and alternating employment of the two groups. However, due to the heightened level of the conflict in northern I CTZ which started in the summer of 1967 and lasted for over a year, the two ARGs and their embarked SLFs were often used concurrently. Also, due to the changed nature of the war in northern I CTZ as 1967 progressed and led on to 1968, the SLFs went ashore more often and stayed ashore longer than was originally envisioned. In such circumstances the ARG stayed offshore in a supporting role, i.e., the helicopter assualt ship (LPH) provided a mobile secure landing field for the SLFs and III MAF's organic rotary wing assets.

(C) The major ships of the ARG were:

1. Amphibious Assault Ship (LPH): designed to transport and land troops, equipment and supplies by means of embarked helicopters.

2. Amphibious Transport Dock (LPD): capable of transporting and landing troops, equipment and supplies by means of embarked landing craft, amphibious vehicles and helicopters.

3. Dock Landing Ship (LSD): designed for transporting and launching embarked landing craft and loaded supplies and equipment for assault across a beach.

4. Tank Landing Ship (LST): designed to transport to and land on a beach embarked vehicles and troops, and laterally used as a floating storage depot (or intracoastal shipping unit in Vietnam).

Additional ships were employed with the ARG as the situation dictated: the APD, a high speed transport to carry UDT and Marine reconnaissance units and the LKA or LPA, attack cargo and troop transports to carry additional supplies and/or troops and, in particular, to augment the ARG with their organic landing craft.

(S) In 1968 all ARG/SLF operations were conducted in I CTZ. All ARG/SLF operations in-country were subject to the approval of COMUSMACV. During the operations the units of the ARG remained under the OPCON of COMSEVENTHFLT. OPCON of the SLF was passed ashore to CG, III MAF when the SLF was firmly established ashore, in accordance with standard Joint Amphibious Doctrine (NWP-22). The reverse was true during the conduct of a planned withdrawal. The termination of such operations was effected by COMSEVENTHFLT with the concurrence of COMUSMACV.

(C) In addition to the above primary mission of the ARG, its assets were used in several ancillary roles in 1968, such as safe havens for logistics resupply craft of the Perfume and Cua Viet convoys (Task Force CLEARWATER) in time of heavy enemy activity or dangerous weather conditions. During the critical post-Tet period ARG cargo bottoms were used to speed the transport of large amounts of supplies from the deep water port of Da Nang to offloading anchorages off northern I CTZ. The assets of the MRF, moved from IV CTZ to I CTZ for TFCW, were transported in amphibious shipping and, subsequently, the well decks and repair facilities of ARG ships were used as floating repair activities. In October and December LPDs were employed in operations involving the repatriation of captured NVN personnel from detention facilities in Da Nang to a point off Vinh, NVN, as mutually agreed upon by the USG and NVN during discussions in Paris.[233]

Hospital Ship (AH) Support for I CTZ

(U) At the start of 1968 there were two hospital ships in commission: USS REPOSE (AH-16) and USS SANCTUARY (AH-17). Both were permanently assigned to duty in the Western Pacific with their crews on a one-year unaccompanied tour aboard ship. The ships were assigned to support FWMAF in I CTZ, and in so doing, at least one ship was scheduled to be offshore in RVN at all times. The ships' schedules were promulgated by COMSEVENTHFLT in coordination with COMUSMACV as was the case of other SEVENTHFLT units supporting forces ashore in RVN.

(U) These two ships were of World War II vintage and had originally been commissioned to serve as hospital transports. When brought out of mothballs for the Vietnam War extensive conversion was done to make them each capable of fulfilling the role of a floating battlefield surgical aid station as well as a recuperative treatment hospital. A major change in each ship's capability was accomplished by the addition of other internal changes to support the increased surgical role required by circumstances in Vietnam.

(S) On 12 December 1967 USARV had requested that a hospital ship be stationed offshore in support of Army operations in the Chu Lai area and, on 2 January 1968, COMUSMACV stated this requirement to COMSEVENTHFLT for the period February-March. This was in addition to the AH on station supporting III MAF in northern I CTZ. On 25 January COMSEVENTHFLT replied that he would provide a hospital ship for the period February-March in support of the Chu Lai area and that the surgical team on the ARG helicopter carrier (LPH) off northern I CTZ would provide support for III MAF as required. To this reply CG, III MAF stated he required full-time hospital ship support in northern I CTZ in view of the intensified tactical situation. On the 26th COMSEVENTHFLT stated that an LPH with its 300-bed capability would be permanently assigned to northern I CTZ. COMUSMACV on 29 January, in reviewing the CG, III MAF recommendation of 25 December 1967 that Army units in the Chu Lai area use the NAVSUPPACT Da Nang hospital stated that "in view of the enemy forces in I CTZ, and current and projected US troop movements, hospital facilities in this area may be severely taxed, and all assets may be required on short notice." This message to COMSEVENTHFLT went on to say:

> The surgical teams embarked on LPHs with the ARGs will be required for immediate resuscitative surgery, but these ships are neither staffed nor equipped to provide support comparable to hospital ships.
>
> COMUSMACV considers that a hospital ship is required off northern I CTZ and concurs with the request of CG, III MAF (to that effect) . . . . Recommend Naval Hospital Da Nang be used to support Army forces in Chu Lai if required . . . .
>
> (Request) that REPOSE (the second hospital ship) be prepared for recall on shortest possible notice.

(S) COMSEVENTHFLT, in reply, noted that in order to provide the maximum possible AH coverage in RVN USS REPOSE's schedule had already been modified to allow only seven days upkeep between late December 1967 and the first week of April 1968. However, he would provide

full-time hospital ship coverage off northern I CTZ (USS SANCTUARY) and make every effort possible to provide Chu Lai coverage in addition. On 7 February COMUSMACV in a message to COMSEVENTHFLT stated that the "current situation in I CTZ warrants immediate recall of REPOSE" and he requested that USS REPOSE be returned to station off I CTZ "ASAP" (as soon as possible). Nine days later both USS REPOSE and USS SANCTUARY were off I CTZ with the latter scheduled to depart RVN for upkeep on 1 March. COMUSMACV then requested of COMSEVENTHFLT that "in view of the current situation in I Corps and the need for supporting hospital beds . . . recommend that hospital ships remain prepared for rapid return to I CTZ and that time off station be reduced to the minimum required for essential upkeep."

(S) Two days later COMSEVENTHFLT answered this request:

> . . . AH patient loading reached its current level 4 Feb when REPOSE and SANCTUARY census were 360 and 415 respectively out of the approx 680 beds avail in each ship. Since this peak was reached censuses have been generally decreasing, despite the fact that REPOSE was off the line from 3 Feb until 17 Feb. SANCTUARY census was down to 270 patients 14 Feb, 11 days after she became the only AH in RVN.
>
> SANCTUARY is currently providing hospital services at Chu Lai and is sked to depart 1 Mar for upkeep at Subic Bay after 45 days on the line in I CTZ to be followed by another sked 45 day line period. REPOSE is providing hospital support to III MAF and is sked to remain in-country until the first of April.
>
> In view current AH utilization and requirement for essential upkeep intend SANCTUARY depart I CTZ 1 Mar as sked. SANCTUARY will be prepared to return to RVN on 24 hrs notice if required. Will continue to review I CTZ AH requirements and will modify ships' schedules as required to meet demands and tactical situation.

(S) The problem of adequate hospital ship support for I CTZ then shifted to studying and justifying the need for a third hospital ship. In a message to CINCPAC COMUSMACV's position was stated thusly:

> The two hospital ships assigned to COMSEVENTHFLT and stationed off I CTZ provide definitive treatment beds for support of US forces committed in RVN. However, simultaneous on-station time for the AHs is limited by their need for maintenance, upkeep, and resupply. Experience indicates that less than fifty percent of the AH resources have been available at any time. During the 267 day period from 8 Jul 67 through 29 Feb 68, the AHs were on-station together only 125 days (forth-eight percent).

Total hospitals beds in I CTZ will provide only marginal support for expected casualties. The loss of half of the hospital ship support beds when one AH is off-station will result in over-evacuation of patients out-of-country.

In order to maintain sufficient available beds on-station continuously, a third hospital ship is required. This would permit adequate rotation of the ships and would insure the constant availability of the definitive treatment beds of two hospital ships.

Recommend a third hospital ship be added to the system, so that a minimum of two ships can be maintained continuously off I CTZ.

(S) On 26 April CINCPACFLT in a message to CINCPAC concurred in the need for additional hospital services in I CTZ. At that point the matter passed out of COMUSMACV's jurisdiction and became a DOD matter, in coordination with CINCPAC and CNO. At the end of the year the matter was still pending.[234]

Cambodian River Crossing

(U) On 20 May, while enroute from Vung Tau to Can Tho via the Mekong and Bassac Rivers, the Philippine-registry, US contract-hire tug BREAM and its logistics barge, with two US MPs on board for security, inadvertently strayed over the Cambodian border. After apprehension by Cambodian authorities the crew and military escort were interned at Phnom Penh by the Cambodian Government (RKG). The tug had entered Cambodia after missing its turn off of the Mekong River some 28 miles from the border. Due to the absence of visible landmarks, such as large towns or large natural outcroppings, it had lost its way. (In June Department of State efforts succeeded in freeing all concerned.)

(U) On 17 July the 5th Heavy Boat Company's (part of 1st Log Cmd) LCU-1577 was similarly enroute from Vung Tau to Can Tho when it too strayed over the Cambodian border and was taken into custody by the RKG. This time, 11 US Army personnel and one ARVN were involved. LCU-1577 also had missed the turning into the Vam Nao River from the Mekong River and had sailed into Cambodia. These personnel were subsequently released by the RKG on 20 December.

(C) On 19 July COMUSMACV requested COMNAVFORV to take adequate measures to ensure safe and expeditious operation of US allied watercraft on the Mekong River system and to provide safeguards against repetitions of inadvertent strayings into Cambodian waters. COMNAVFORV, on 18 July, had assigned TF 116 the task of providing continuous PBR patrols in the area of the Cambodian border to prevent such crossings.

(C) As a result of the newly instituted PBR patrols, four lost US Army LCM-8s were intercepted in the vicinity of Tan Chau (9 miles from the Cambodian border) on 21 July and directed to Can Tho, thus avoiding another incident.

(C) On 28 July, SA, IV CTZ, in an effort to prevent further incidents, requested of CG, USARV "that certain procedures be instituted or published which indicate movement schedules of logistical craft or boats traversing the Mekong/Bassac Rivers to the Can Tho area." Additionally, SA, IV CTZ advised that "action had been taken to alert all forces to be especially watchful for watercraft that may have missed their prescribed course." Other recommendations made included setting up small boat patrols near the border and putting up warning signs on the river bank.

(C) The same day, COMUSMACV reported that:

> . . . the following aids and control measures have been initiated to prevent inadvertent crossing of the border.
>
> 1. COMNAVFORV has four patrol boats (PBRs) on station in the Mekong River in the vicinity of the critical turn at Can Tho. In addition, a mobile base consisting of four barges will be established at this critical turn o/a 29 July 1968.
>
> 2. US advisors at Special Forces Camp A-432 Thuong Thoi have been instructed to maintain continual surveillance of Mekong River and to warn all US watercraft proceeding toward the Cambodian border (of their position).

(C) In addition to the above, COMNAVFORV on 17 August notified all commands concerned that "two warning signs have been . . . installed in the upper Mekong River area to alert craft of approach to the Cambodian Border. Mobile Base Two is located in vicinity Thuong Thoi and displays a sign stating 'ATTENTION CAMBODIAN BORDER 11.6 MILES.' Another sign has been installed on Cu Lao Con Tao Island stating 'ATTENTION CAMBODIAN BORDER 5 KM.'"

(U) As a result of these actions and an intensive crew training program during the remainder of the year there were no more border crossing incidents.[235]

GROUND OPERATIONS - V

1. Bklt (TS), MACJ031, 16 Sep 68, Subj: MACV Command History, 1967 (U), Gp-1.

2. Msg (C), COMUSMACV to Dist, 120631Z Apr 68, Subj: Terms for Operational Reporting (U), Gp-4.

3. Bklt (TS), MACJ031, 16 Sep 68, Subj: MACV Command History, 1967 (U), Gp-1; Msg (TS), COMUSMACV to Dist, 080940Z Jan 68, Subj: Rules of Engagement--Cambodia (U), Gp-3; Msg (TS), COMUSMACV to Dist, 052325Z Jan 68, Subj: Rules of Engagement--Laos (U), Gp-3; Msg (TS), COMUSMACV to Dist, 071051Z Jan 68, Subj: Rules of Engagement--DMZ (U), Gp-3.

4. Ibid.

5. Msg (TS), COMUSMACV to Dist, 080940Z Jan 68, Subj: Rules of Engagement--Cambodia (U), GP-3.

6. Ibid.

7. Msg (TS), COMUSMACV to Dist, 052325Z Jan 68, Subj: Rules of Engagement--Laos (U), Gp-3; Msg (S), COMUSMACV to Dist, 221140Z Feb 68, Subj: Rules of Engagement--Laos (U), Gp-3.

8. Msg (TS), COMUSMACV to Dist, 071050Z Jan 68, Subj: Rules of Engagement--DMZ (U), Gp-3.

9. Ibid.

10. Msg (S), JCS to AIG 7077, 010100Z Nov 68, Subj: Operations Against NVN (U), Gp-3; Msg (S), JCS to AIG 7078, 010108Z Nov 68, Subj: Supplementary Rules of Engagement (U), GP-3; Msg (S), DSA I CTZ Adv Div, 010720Z Nov 68, Subj: Supplementary Rules of Engagement (U), Gp-4; Msg (S), JCS to CINCPAC, 061803Z Nov 68, Subj: Offensive Operations (U), Gp-3; Msg (S), COMUSMACV to Dist, 140156Z Nov 68, Subj: Rules of Engagement--DMZ (U), Gp-1; Msg (TS), JCS to CINCPAC, 202307Z Nov 68, Subj: Classified, Gp-3; Msg (TS), COMUSMACV to CG III MAF, 220325Z Nov 68, Subj: Classified, Gp-1.

11. Msg (S), COMUSMACV to VMAC, 300603Z Dec 67, Subj: Instructions for New Year's Ceasefire Period (U), Gp-4; Msg (TS), COMUSMACV to CINCPAC, 080840Z Jan 68, Subj: Holiday Ceasefire (U), Gp-4; Msg (S), CINCPAC to JCS, 100249Z Jan 68, Subj: Tet Stand-down (U), Gp-4.

12. Msg (TS), COMUSMACV to CINCPAC, 080840Z Jan 68, Subj: Holiday Ceasefire (U), Gp-4.

13. Msg (S), CINCPAC to JCS, 100249Z Jan 68, Subj: Tet Stand-down (U), Gp-4.

14. Msg (TS), COMUSMACV to CINCPAC, 160415Z Jan 68, Subj: Tet Ceasefire (U), Gp-4, Msg (S), COMUSMACV to VMAC, 271205Z Jan 68, Subj: Instructions for Tet Cease-fire (U), Gp-4.

15. Msg (S), COMUSMACV to VMAC, 290910Z Jan 68, Subj: Supplemental Instructions for Tet Cease-fire (U), Gp-4.

16. Msg (C), COMUSMACV to VMAC, 300325Z Jan 68, Subj: Cancellation of Tet Cease-fire (U), Gp-4; Msg (C), COMUSMACV to CMDR 7thAF, 300841Z Jan 68, Subj: Cancellation of Tet Cease-fire (U), Gp-4.

17. Msg (S), COMUSMACV to VMAC, 081220Z Dec 68, Subj: Instructions for Christmas Ceasefire Period (U), GP-4; Msg (S), COMUSMACV to JCS, 261301Z Dec 68, Subj: Twenty-four Hour Summary (U), Gp-4; Msg (S), ADMIN CINCPAC to Dist, 281907Z Dec 68, Subj: Holiday Truce (U), Gp-4.

18. Op. cit. #1.

19. Ibid.

20. Memo (C), Staff from MG Kerwin, 31 Jan 68, Subj: Establishment of HQ MACV (Fwd) (U), Gp-4; Msg (S), COMUSMACV to Dist, 080751Z Feb 68, Subj: HQ MACV (Fwd) (U), Gp-4; Msg (S), COMUSMACV to CINCPAC, 091318Z Mar 68, Subj: PROVCORPSV (U), Gp-4; Rpt (S), DA, 21 Aug 68, Subj: Army Buildup Program Report (U), Gp-4.

21. Msg (C), COMUSMACV to NMCC, 312300Z Jan 68, Subj: Special Telecon (U), Gp-4; Msg (S), CG III MAF to CGs 1st ACT, et al, 010252Z Feb 68, Subj: Opn HUE CITY (U), Gp-4; Msg (C), DIAAP-2 to AIG 7010, 030507Z Feb 68, Subj: INTBUL 33-68 (U), Gp-1.

22. Msg (C), COMUSMACV to NMCC, 120930Z Feb 68, Subj: Special Telecon (U), Gp-4; DF (C), ACofS MACV, 3 Mar 68, Subj: US Mission Council Summary (U), Gp-None; Rpt (S), MACJ341, 9 May 68, Subj: Quarterly Evaluation Report (U), Gp-4.

23. Bklt (TS), MACJ031, 16 Sep 68, Subj: MACV Command History, 1967 (U), Gp-1; Msg (C), COMUSMACV to AIG 7053, 290925Z Jan 68, Subj: Weekly Summary (U), Gp-4.

24. Msg (C), COMUSMACV to NMCC, 222000Z Jan 68, Subj: Telecon (U), Gp-4.

25. Msgs (C), COMUSMACV to NMCC, 070630Z Feb 68, 071215Z Feb 68, 082300Z Feb 68, 232200Z Feb 68, 040001Z Mar 68, Subj: Special Telecon (U), Gp-4.

26. Msg (C), COMUSMACV to AIG 7053, 021200Z Apr 68, Subj: Daily SITREP (U), Gp-4.

27. Msg (C), COMUSMACV to NMCC, 262200Z Jan 68, Subj: Telecon (U). Gp-4; Msg (S), CG III MAF to COMUSMACV, 171610Z Jan 68, Subj: Augmentation of Forces (U), Gp-4.

28. Msgs (C), COMUSMACV to AIG 7053, 260945Z Feb 68, 041023Z Mar 68, Subj: Weekly Summary (U), Gp-4; Msg (S), DEPCOMUSMACV (Fwd) to CG III MAF, 061358Z Mar 68, Subj: Deployments to Offset Threat to Hue (U), Gp-4.

29. Msg (C), COMUSMACV to AIG 7053, 080846Z Apr 68, Subj: Weekly Summary (U), Gp-4; Msg (S), COMUSMACV to NMCC, 301830Z Mar 68, Subj: Future Opns (U), Gp-4.

30. Msg (C), COMUSMACV to NMCC, 171002 Apr 68, Subj: Telecon (U), Gp-4; Msg (C), COMUSMACV to AIG 7053, 220739Z Apr 68, Subj: Weekly Summary (U), Gp-4; Msg (C), COMUSMACV to NMCC, 161000Z Apr 68, Subj: Telecon (U), Gp-4.

31. Msg (C), COMUSMACV to AIG 7053, 200923Z May 68, Subj: Weekly Summary (U), Gp-4; Msg (C), COMUSMACV to NMCC, 032200Z Nov 68, 18100Z Nov 68, 211000Z Nov 68, Subj: Telecon (U), Gp-4.

32. Msg (C), COMUSMACV to NMCC, 312130Z Mar 68, Subj: Telecon (U), Gp-4; Msg (S), COMUSMACV to NMCC, 301830Z Mar 68, Subj: Future Opns (U), Gp-4; Msg (C), COMUSMACV to AIG 7053, 200923Z May 68, Subj: Weekly Summary (U), Gp-4; Msg (C), COMUSMACV to NMCC, 182200Z May 68, Subj: Telecon (U), Gp-4.

33. Bklt (TS), MACJ031, 16 Sep 68, Subj: MACV Command History, 1967 (U), Gp-1; Msg (S), COMUSMACV to NMCC, 030930Z Mar 68, Subj: Telecon (U), Gp-4; Msg (C), COMUSMACV to AIG 7053, 180650Z Mar 68, Subj: Weekly Summary (U), Gp-4; Msg (C), MACV CMD CTR to NMCC, 101000Z Dec 68, Subj: Telecon (U), Gp-4.

34. Msg (C), COMUSMACV to NMCC, 252200Z Nov 68, Subj: Telecon (U), Gp-4.

35. Msg (C), COMUSMACV to NMCC, 272330Z Feb 68, Subj: Telecon (U), Gp-4; Msg (C), COMUSMACV to NMCC, 080835Z Jul 68, Subj: Weekly Summary (U), Gp-4; Msg (S), CG III MAF to CG 1st MAR DIV, 221604Z Feb 68, Subj: Opns to Reopen Route 1 (U), Gp-4; Rpt (S), FMFPAC, n.d., Subj: Operations of US Marine Forces-Vietnam, Sep 68 (U), Gp-2.

36. Msg (C), COMUSMACV to AIG 7053, 150926Z Jan 68, Subj: Weekly Summary (U), Gp-4; Msg (C), COMUSMACV to AIG 7053, 260700Z Aug 68, Subj: Weekly Summary (U), Gp-4; Msg (C), COMUSMACV to AIG 7053, 280951Z Oct 68, Subj: Weekly Summary (U), Gp-4; Msgs (C), MACV to NMCC, 241000Z Oct 68, 242200Z Oct 68, 071000Z Dec 68, Subj: Telecon (U), Gp-4.

37. Msg (C), COMUSMACV to AIG 7053, 150926Z Jan 68, Subj: Weekly Summary (U), Gp-4.

38. Msg (C), COMUSMACV to AIG 7053, 051017Z Feb 68, Subj: Weekly Summary (U), Gp-4; Msg (S), COMUSMACV to CG III MAF, et al., 270113Z Feb 68, Subj: Unit Movements (U), Gp-4; Msg (C) COMUSMACV to AIG 7053, 110938Z Jun 68, Subj: Daily SETREP (U), Gp-4.

39. Msg (C), COMUSMACV to NMCC, 111000Z Apr 68, Subj: Telecon (U), Gp-4; Msg (S), CG III MAF to COMUSMACV, 110034Z Apr 68, Subj: Opn BURLINGTON TRAIL (U), Gp-4; Msg (C), COMUSMACV to NMCC, 121000Z Nov 68, Subj: Telecon (U), Gp-4.

40. Msgs (C), COMUSMACV to NMCC, 142200Z May 68, 132200Z May 68, Subj: Telecon (U), Gp-4; Msg (C), COMUSMACV to NMCC, 121000Z Nov 68, Subj: Telecon (U), Gp-4.

41. Msg (C), COMUSMACV to NMCC, 041000Z Sep 68, Subj: Telecon (U), Gp-4; Msg (C), COMUSMACV to NMCC, 251000Z Sep 68, Subj: Telecon (U), Gp-4.

42. Msg (C), COMUSMACV to NMCC, 201000Z Aug 68, Subj: Telecon (U), Gp-4.

43. Msg (C), COMUSMACV to AIG 7053, 230917Z Sep 68, Subj: Weekly Summary (U), Gp-4; Rpt (S), MACV/RVNAF, n.d., Subj: Weekly PSYOP Report (U), Gp-4.

44. Msg (C), COMUSMACV to NMCC, 192200Z Oct 68, Subj: Telecon (U), Gp-4.

45. Msg (TS), DIA to AIG 925, 172140Z Oct 68, Subj: Watch Report (U), Gp-1.

46. Msg (C), COMUSMACV to NMCC, 232200Z Oct 68, Subj: Telecon (U), Gp-4.

47. Msg (S), MACV to CG III MAF, 261245Z Oct 68, Subj: Opn LIBERTY CANYON (U), Gp-4.

48. Msg (C), COMUSMACV to NMCC, 182200Z, 192200Z Nov 68, Subj: Telecon (U), Gp-4.

49. Msgs (C), COMUSMACV to NMCC, 172200Z Nov 68, 181000Z Nov 68, Subj: Telecon (U), Gp-4.

50. Msg (C), COMUSMACV to NMCC, 282200Z Nov 68, Subj: Telecon (U), Gp-4.

51. Msg (C), MACV CMD CTR to NMCC, 101000Z Dec 68, Subj: Telecon (U), Gp-4.

52. Msg (C), MACV CMD CTR to NMCC, 101000Z Dec 68, Subj: Telecon (U), Gp-4; Msg (S), COMUSMACV to JCS, 100905Z Dec 68, Subj: Daily Summary & Assessment (U), Gp-4.

53. Msg (S), COMUSMACV to JCS, 201137Z Dec 68, Subj: Daily Summary & Assessment (U), Gp-4; Msg (C), COMUSMACV to AIG 7053, 231030Z Dec 68, Subj: Weekly Summary (U), Gp-4.

54. Msgs (C), COMUSMACV to NMCC, 262200Z Dec 68, 272200Z Dec 68, Subj: Telecon (U), Gp-4; Msg (C), MACV CMD CTR to NMCC, 292200Z Dec 68, Subj: Telecon (U), Gp-4; Msg (S), COMUSMACV to JCS, 301040Z Dec 68, Subj: Twenty Four Hour Summary (U), Gp-4.

55. Rpt (C), AMEMB SAIGON, 31 Dec 68, Subj: Weekly Mission, Wk of 23-29 Dec 68, (U), Gp-4.

56. Op. cit. #1.

57. Rpt (S), MACJ341, 9 May 68, Subj: Quarterly Evaluation Report (U), Gp-4.

58. Rpt (S), MACJ341, 9 May 68, Subj: Quarterly Evaluation Report (U), Gp-4; Msg (C), COMUSMACV to NMCC, 122300Z Feb 68, Subj: Not Stated, Gp-4.

59. Msg (C), COMUSMACV to AIG, 120256Z Feb 68, Subj: Daily SITREP (U), Gp-4.

60. Msg (C), COMUSMACV to AIG 7056, 041023Z Mar 68, Subj: Weekly Summary (U), Gp-4; Msg (C), COMUSMACV to NMCC, 302130Z Mar 68, Subj: Telecon (U), Gp-4; Msg (S), CG I FFORCEV to COMUSMACT, 210815Z Mar 68, Subj: Visit of COMUSMACV, 20 Mar 68 (U), Gp-4; Msg (S), COMUSMACV to AIG 7053, 011019Z Subj: Daily SITREP (U), Gp-4.

61. Ltr (C), 173d Abn Bde, 15 Feb 68, Subj: Operational Report-Lessons Learned (U), Gp-4.

62. Op. cit. #1.

63. Embetls (C), AMEMB SAIGON, 6 Feb, 13 Feb, 20 Feb 68, Subj: Mission Weekly of 29 Jan 68 (U), Gp-None; Rpt (C), MACJ341, 9 May 68, Subj: Quarterly Evaluation Report (U), Gp-4.

64. Embtel (C), AMEMB SAIGON, 2 Apr 68, Subj: Mission Weekly (U), Gp-4.

65. Msg (TS), COMUSMACV to CJCS, 131148Z May 68, Subj: Weekly Assessment of Military Position (U), Gp-4; Msg (S), COMUSMACV to CG F FFORCEV, 191131Z Jan 68, Subj: Contingency Planning (U), Gp-4; Msg (S), COMUSMACV to II FFORCEV, 251130Z Apr 68, Subj: Contingency Planning (U), Gp-4; Msg (TS), COMUSMACV to CJCS, 271035Z May 68, Subj: Weekly Assessment of Military Position (U), Gp-4.

66. Msg (C), CG I FFIRCEV to COMUSMACV, 050940Z Jun 68, Subj: II CYZ May Summary (U), Gp-4; Msg (TS), COMUSMACV to CJCS, 171215Z Jun 68, Subj: Weekly Assessment of Military Position (U), Gp-4.

67. Msg (C), COMUSMACV to AIG 7053, 051017Z Feb 68, Subj: Weekly Summary (U), Gp-4.

68. Msgs (C), COMUSMACV to NMCC, 252200Z Oct 68, 101000Z Nov 68, Subj: Telecon (U), Gp-4.

69. Msg (C), COMUSMACV to AIR 7051, 100652Z Sep 68, Subj: SPHINX (U), Gp-4.

70. Msg (C), COMUSMACV to NMCC, 302200Z Aug 68, Subj: Telecon (U), Gp-4; Msg (S), COMUSMACV to CJCS, 140724Z Oct 68, Subj: Weekly Assessment of Military Position (U), Gp-4.

71. Msg (C), COMUSMACV to AIG, 150926Z Jan 68, Subj: Weekly Summary (U), Gp-4.

72. Op. cit. #1.

73. Rpt (C), CG II FFORCEV to COMUSMACV, n.d., Subj: Tet Offensive, 31 January - 18 February 1968 (U), Gp-4.

74. Ibid.

75. Rpt (C), CG II FFORCEV to COMUSMACV, n.d., Subj: Tet Offensive, 31 January - 18 February 1968 (U), Gp-4; Msgs (C), COMUSMACV to AIG 7053, 121022Z Feb 68, 191122Z Feb 68, 111055Z Mar 68, Subj: Weekly Summary (U), Gp-4.

76. Rpt (C), CG II FFORCEV to COMUSMACV, n.d., Subj: Tet Offensive, 31 January - 18 February 1968 (U), Gp-4; Msg (C), COMUSMACV to AIG 7053, 121022Z Feb 68, Subj: Weekly Summary (U), Gp-4.

77 Rpt (C), 25th Inf Div, 14 Feb 68, Subj: Operational Report (U), Gp-4; Msg (C), COMUSMACV to AIG 7053, 260945Z Feb 68, Subj: Weekly Summary (U), Gp-4.

78. Msgs (C), COMUSMACV to NMCC, 161000Z Jan 68, 220744Z Jan 68, 112230Z Feb 68, Subj: Telecon (U), Gp-4.

79. Rpt (C), CG II FFORCEV to COMUSMACV, n.d., Subj: Tet Offensive, 31 January - 18 February 1968 (U), Gp-4; Msg (C), COMUSMACV to NMCC, 191000Z Mar 68, Subj: Telecon (U), Gp-4.

80. Msg (C), COMUSMACV to NMCC, 110900Z Mar 68, Subj: Telecon (U), Gp-4; News Release (U), MACV, 15 Mar 68, Subj: News Release No. 75-68 (U).

81. Ibid.

82. Msgs (C), COMUSMACV to NMCC, 120900Z Mar 68, 170900Z Mar 68, Subj: Telecon (U), Gp-4.

83. Msg (C), COMUSMACV to AIG 7053, 081335Z Apr 68, Subj: Daily SITREP (U), Gp-4.

84. Msg (C), COMUSMACV to NMCC, 082200Z Apr 68, Subj: Telecon (U), Gp-4; Rpt (S), MACJ3, 21 Aug 68, Subj: Monthly Historical Summary, Jul (U), Gp-4.

85. Ibid.

86. Msg (C), COMUSMACV to NMCC, 021000Z Jun 68, Subj: Telecon (U), Gp-4.

87. Msg (C), COMUSMACV to NMCC, 062200Z Jun 68, Subj: Telecon (U), Gp-4.

88. Rpt (C), USARV, n.d., Subj: Operational Report for Period Ending 31 October 1968, RCS CSFOR (R1) (U), Gp-4.

89. Msg (C), COMUSMACV to NMCC, 132200Z Aug 68, Subj: Telecon (U), Gp-4.

90. Op. cit. #42.

91. Msg (C), COMUSMACV to NMCC, 192200Z Aug 68, Subj: Telecon (U), Gp-4.

92. Msg (C), COMUSMACV to AIG 7053, 260700Z Aug 68, Subj: Weekly Summary (U), Gp-4; Msg (C), COMUSMACV to NMCC, 131000Z Sep 68, Subj: Telecon (U), Gp-4.

93. Msg (C), COMUSMACV to NMCC, 212200Z Aug 68, Subj: Telecon (U), Gp-4.

94. Msg (C), COMUSMACV to NMCC, 241000Z Aug 68, Subj: Telecon (U), Gp-4.

95. Msg (C), COMUSMACV to NMCC, 252200Z Aug 68, Subj: Telecon (U), Gp-4.

96. Msg (C), COMUSMACV to NMCC, 292200Z Aug 68, Subj: Telecon (U), Gp-4.

97. Op. cit. #88.

98. Msg (C), COMUSMACV to NMCC, 082200Z Sep 68, Subj: Telecon (U), Gp-4.

99. Msg (C), COMUSMACV to NMCC, 112200Z Sep 68, Subj: Telecon (U), Gp-4.

100. Msg (C), COMUSMACV to NMCC, 131000Z Sep 68, Subj: Telecon (U), Gp-4.

101. Msg (C), COMUSMACV to NMCC, 172200Z Sep 68, Subj: Telecon (U), Gp-4; Msg (C), COMUSMACV to NMCC, 211000Z Sep 68, Subj: Telecon (U), Gp-4.

102. Msg (C), MACV CMD CTR to NMCC, 071000Z Oct 68, Subj: Telecon (U), Gp-4.

103. Msg (C), COMUSMACV to NMCC, 081000Z Oct 68, Subj: Telecon (U), Gp-4.

104. Op. cit. #47.

105. Msg (C), COMUSMACV to NMCC, 141000Z Nov 68, Subj: Telecon (U), Gp-4.

106. Msg (C), COMUSMACV to NMCC, 251000Z Nov 68, Subj: Telecon (U), Gp-4.

107. Msgs (C), COMUSMACV to NMCC, 091000Z Dec 68, 102200Z Dec 68, Subj: Telecon (U), Gp-4.

108. Msg (C), COMUSMACV to NMCC, 182200Z Dec 68, Subj: Telecon (U), Gp-4.

109. Msg (C), CG II FFORCEV to COMUSMACV, 190307Z Dec 68, Subj: Forecast of Operations (U), Gp-4; Msg (S), COMUSMACV to JCS, 191010Z Dec 68, Subj: Daily Summary and Assessment (U), Gp-4.

110. Msg (C), MACV CMD CTR to NMCC, 221000Z Dec 68, Subj: Telecon (U), Gp-4.

111. Msg (S), COMUSMACV to JCS, 301044Z Dec 68, Subj: Weekly Assessment of Military Position (U), Gp-4.

112. Op. cit. #1.

113. Rpt (U), Adv Gp IV CTZ to COMUSMACV, 8 Apr 68, Subj: Tet Offensive, IV CTZ (U).

114. Rpt (U), Adv Gp IV CTZ to COMUSMACV, 8 Apr 68, Sugj: Tet Offensive, IV CTZ (U); Msgs (C), COMUSMACV to NMCC, 161000Z May 68, 281000Z May 68, Subj: Telecon (U), Gp-4.

115. Rpt (U), Adv Gp IV CTZ to COMUSMACV, 8 Apr 68, Subj: Tet Offensive, IV CTZ (U); Msgs (C), COMUSMACV to AIG 7053, 220951Z Jan 68, 191122Z Feb 68, Subj: Weekly Summary (U), Gp-4.

116. Msg (C), COMUSMACV to NMCC, 080930Z Mar 68, Subj: Telecon (U), Gp-4.

117. Msgs (C), COMUSMACV to NMCC, 080930Z Mar 68, 201000Z Mar 68, Subj: Telecon (U), Gp-4.

118. Msg (C), COMUSMACV to AIG 7053, 270850Z May 68, Subj: Weekly Summary (U), Gp-4.

119. Msg (C), COMUSMACV to AIG 7053, 060851Z May 68, Subj: Weekly Summary (U), Gp-4; Msgs (C), COMUSMACV to NMCC, 012200Z May 68, 221000Z Nov 68, Subj: Telecon (U), Gp-4.

120. Rpt (S), MAGJ341, 9 May 68, Subj: Quarterly Evaluation Report, Jan - Mar 68 (U), Gp-4; Msg (C), COMUSMACV to NMCC, 171000Z Jun 68, Subj: Telecon (U), Gp-4.

121. Msg (C), COMUSMACV to NMCC, 312200Z Jul 68, Subj: Telecon (U), Gp-4.

122. Msg (C), COMUSMACV to NMCC, 052200Z Aug 68, Subj: Telecon (U), Gp-4.

123. Msg (C), COMUSMACV to NMCC, 082200Z Aug 68, Subj: Telecon (U), Gp-4.

124. Msg (C), COMUSMACV to NMCC, 151000Z Aug 68, Subj: Telecon (U), Gp-4.

125. Msg (C), COMUSMACV to NMCC, 212200Z Aug 68, 221000Z Aug 68, Subj: Telecon (U), Gp-4.

126. Msg (C), COMUSMACV to NMCC, 222200Z Aug 68, Subj: Telecon (U), Gp-4.

127. Msg (C), COMUSMACV to NMCC, 262200Z Aug 68, Subj: Telecon (U), Gp-4.

128. Msg (C), COMUSMACV to NMCC, 032200Z Sep 68, Subj: Telecon (U), Gp-4.

129. Msg (C), COMUSMACV to NMCC, 142200Z Sep 68, Subj: Telecon (U), Gp-4.

130. Msg (C), COMUSMACV to NMCC, 202200Z Sep 68, Subj: Telecon (U), Gp-4.

131. Msg (C), COMUSMACV to NMCC, 2222000Z Sep 68, Subj: Telecon (U), Gp-4.

132. Msg (C), COMUSMACV to NMCC, 231000Z Sep 68, Subj: Telecon (U), Gp-4.

133. Msg (C), COMUSMACV to NMCC, 072200Z Nov 68, Subj: Telecon (U), Gp-4.

135. Msg (S), COMUSMACV to JCS, 240923Z Nov 68, Subj: Daily Summary and Assessment (U), Gp-4.

136. Msg (C), COMUSMACV to NMCC, 172200Z Nov 68, Subj: Telecon (U), Gp-4; Msg (C), COMUSMACV to AIG 7053, 300850Z Nov 68, 011053Z Dec 68, Subj: Daily Summary (U), Gp-4.

137. Msg (S), SA IV CTZ to COMUSMACV, 110610Z Oct 68, Subj: Concept for Future Operations, IV CTZ (U), Gp-4; Msg (C), MACV CMD CTR to NMCC, 011000Z Dec 68, Subj: Telecon (U), Gp-4.

138. Unless otherwise noted, this section on the Battle for Duc Lap is based on the following document: Rpt (S), HQ I FFORCEV, 24 Sep 68, Subj: Combat After Action Report, Battle for Duc Lap (U), Gp-1.

139. Msg (S), 7AF to COMUSMACV, 091015Z Jan 68, Subj: Assessment for CY67 (In-country) (U), Gp-4.

140. Msg (S), COMUSMACV to CINCPAC, 180508Z Jan 68, Subj: 7AF SW Monsoon Interdiction Plan (U), Gp-4.

141. Msg (S), 7AF to CG III MAF, et al., 260030Z Apr 68, Subj: Air Interdiction Campaign (U), Gp-4.

142. Ibid.

143. Msg (TS), COMUSMACV to CJCS, et al., 120929Z Jun 68, Subj: Operation TURNPIKE Summary (U), Gp-4.

144. Msg (S), CG III MAF to RUMSAW/COMUSMACV, 110112Z Jun 68, Subj: Classified, Gp-4; Msg (S), CG PROVCORPSV to CG III MAF, 141538Z Jul 68, Subj: Prelininary Report--Operation THOR (U), Gp-4.

145. Msg (S), CG PROVCORPSV to CG III MAF, 141358Z Jul 68, Subj: Prelininary Report--Operation THOR (U), Gp-4.

146. Ibid.

147. Ibid.

148. Rpt (TS), 7AF, 29 Aug 68, Subj: COMMANDO HUNT, Ops Plan 544-69 (U), Gp-1. Unless otherwise noted, the remainder of this section on COMMANDO HUNT is based on this document.

149. Msg (TS), CINCPACAF to RUEFHQ/CSAF, 182235Z Nov 68, Subj: Impact of Bombing Halt on Budget Planning (U), Gp-4.

150. Ibid.

151. This section is based on the appropriate portions of the following document: Rpt (TS), HQ PACAF, Jan-Dec 68, Subj: Summary of Air Operations Southeast Asia (U), Gp-1.

152. Unless other wise noted, this section on ARC LIGHT is based on the following documents: Rpt (S), ACofS, J3, Jan-Dec 68, Subj: Summary of ARC LIGHT Activity (U), Gp-1.

153. Msg (S), SAC to JCS, 011908Z Nov 68, Subj: ARC LIGHT Sortie Rate (U), Gp-4.

154. Msg (S), SAC to CINCPAC, 151210Z Oct 68, Subj: ARC LIGHT Sortie Rate (U), Gp-4.

155. Fact Sheet (S), MACCOC, 19 Apr 68, Subj: Chronology, Operation NIAGARA (U), Gp-4.

156. Rpt (S), MACJ341, 9 May 68, Subj: Quarterly Evaluation Report, Jan-Mar 68 (U), Gp-4.

157. Rpt No. 111/68 (S), RVNAF-J2, 27 Apr 68, Subj: Information of the VC Forces at B5 Front (National Highway 9) and the VC Forces encircling Khe Sanh Base (U), Gp-4.

158. Rpt (S), MACJ3, n.d., Subj: Summary of ARC LIGHT Activity 1-29 Feb 68 (U), Gp-4.

159. Rpt (S), 7AF, 11 May 68, Subj: Weekly Air Intelligence Summary (U), Gp-1.

160. Aviation Week (U), 13 May 68.

161. CHECO Rpt (S), 7AF, 12 Aug 68, Subj: Air Response to the Tet Offensive (U), Gp-1.

162. Ibid.

163. Msg (S), CINCPAC to COMUSMACV, 120750Z Feb 68, Subj: C-130 Augmentation of 315th Air Division (U), Gp-4.

164. Rpt (S), 7AF, n.d., Subj: Input to HQ MACV Quartereval Overall Assessment, 1 Apr-30 Jun 68 (U), Gp-1.

165. Ibid.

166. Ibid.

167. Quoted in "Air Rescue Behind Enemy Lines," National Geographic, Sep 68, p. 349.

168. Op. cit. #164.

169. Msg (TS), JCS to CINCPAC, et al., 010150Z Nov 68, Subj: Air Reconnaissance Operations (U), Gp-1.

170. Msg (S), CINCPAC to JCS, 080306Z Jan 69, Subj: Blue Tree Operational Summary (U), Gp-4.

171. Ltr (S), COMUSMACV to Deputy Commander for Air Operations, 8 Mar 68, Subj: Single Management of Strike and Reconnaissance Assets (U), Gp-4; Ltr (S), COMUSMACV to CG III MAF, 7 Mar 68, Subj: Single Management of Fighter Bomber and Reconnaissance Assets (U), Gp-4.

172. Rpt (S), 7AF, 1 Jul 68, Subj: Project CHECO: Single Manager for Air in SVN (U), Gp-1.

173. Msg (S), COMUSMACV to CINCPAC, 180009Z Jan 68, Subj: Single Management in I CTZ (U), Gp-4.

174. Ibid.

175. Op. cit. #172.

176. Msg (S), CG III MAF to COMUSMACV, 181352Z Jan 68, Subj: Single Management in I CTZ (U), Gp-4.

177. Msg (S), CINCPAC to COMUSMACV, 280449Z Feb 68, Subj: Single Management (U), Gp-4.

178. Msg (S), COMUSMACV to CINCPAC, 191239Z Feb 68, Subj: Single Management of Fighter Bomber and Reconnaissance Assets (U), Gp-4.

179. Op. cit. #172.

180. Ibid.

181. Msg (S), CG III MAF to COMUSMACV, 221340Z Apr 68, Subj: Single Management of Strike and Reconnaissance Assets (U), Gp-4. For an extensive and carefully documented treatment of the Marine Corps view, see the following document: Rpt (S), Fleet Marine Force, Pacific, n.d., Subj: Operations of US Marine Forces Vietnam, March 1968 (U), Gp-2.

182. Msg (S), JCS to CINCPAC, et al., 202253Z May 68, Subj: Single Management of Fighter/Bomber/Reconnaissance Assets in SVN (U), Gp-4.

183. Fact Sheet (TS), MACJ53, 27 Mar 68, Subj: MACV Mission and COMUSMACV's Responsibilities (U), Gp-4.

184. Ltr (S), CINCPACFLT to CNO, 13 Jan 68, Subj: Pacific Area Naval Operations Review for Nov 67 (U), Gp-4.

185. Rpts (S), MACJ341, 9 May and 18 Aug 68, Subj: Quarterly Evaluation Report (U), Gp-4; Ltrs (C), COMNAVFORV to CINCPACFLT, 24 May and 29 Jun 68, Subj: VN Monthly Historical Supplement (Jan/Feb 68) (U), Gp-4; Msg (C), COMUSMACV to Various Commands, 210105Z Feb 68, Subj: Measures to Prevent Mutual Interference (U), Gp-4.

186. Rpts (C), COMNAVFORV to CINCPACFLT, 29 Jun and 29 Aug 68, Subj: VN Monthly Historical Supplement (Feb/Mar 68) (U), Gp-4; Rpt (S), MACJ341, 9 May 68, Subj: Quarterly Evaluation Report (U), Gp-4; Msg (C), COMUSMACV to AIG 7051, 060545Z Mar 68, Subj: SPHINX (U), Gp-4; Msg (S), CINCPAC to COMUSMACV, 032254Z Mar 68, Subj: Rules of Engagement (U), Gp-3.

187. Ltr (C), COMNAVFORV to CINCPACFLT, 7 May 68, Subj: USNAVFORV Monthly Historical Summary, Apr 68 (U), Gp-4; Msg (S), JCS to CINCPAC, 242233Z Apr 68, Subj: Possible Violation of MARKET TIME Rules of Engagement (U), Gp-3; Msg (S), CINCPAC to COMNAVFORV, 260115Z Apr 68, Subj: Possible Violation of MARKET TIME Rules of Engagement (U), Gp-4; Msg (S), COMNAVFORV to COMUSMACV, 270805Z Apr 68, Subj: Possible Violation of MARKET TIME Rules of Engagement (U), Gp-4; Msg (S), CINCPAC to JCS, 112301Z May 68, Subj: Possible Violation of MARKET TIME Rules of Engagement (U), Gp-3; Msg (S), CG IFFV to COMUSMACV, 041635Z Apr 68, Subj: Naval Support for ROKFV (U), Gp-4.

188. Rpt (S), MACJ341, 18 Aug 68, Subj: Quarterly Evaluation Report (U), Gp-4; Msg (C), COMNAVFORV to COMUSMACV, 130925Z Jan 68, Subj: Classified, Gp-4.

189. Rpt (S), MACJ051, 13 Nov 68, Subj: Quarterly Evaluation Report (U), Gp-4; Ltrs (C), COMNAVFORV to CINCPACFLT, 4 Aug, 4 Sep and 4 Oct 68, Subj: USNAVFORV Monthly Historical Summary, Jul, Aug, Sep 68 (U), Gp-4.

190. Ltrs (C), COMNAVFORV to CINCPACFLT, 4 Aug, 4 Sep, 4 Oct, 4 Nov, and 8 Dec 68, Subj: USNAVFORV Monthly Historical Summary, Jul, Aug, Sep, Oct, Nov 68 (U), Gp-4; Msg (C), COMNAVFORV to COMUSMACV, 061102Z Sep 68, Subj: Unnecessary Friendly Casualties (U), Gp-4.

191. Ltr (C), COMNAVFORV to CINCPACFLT, 8 Jan 69, Subj: USNAVFORV Monthly Historical Summary, Dec 68, (U), Gp-4.

192. Msg (C), COMUSMACV to NMCC, 130300Z Jan 68, Subj: Telecon (U), Gp-4.

193. Msg (C), COMUSMACV to NMCC, 241000Z Feb 68, Subj: Special Telecon (U), Gp-4; Ltrs (C), COMNAVFORV to CINCPACFLT, 24 May and 29 Jun 68, Subj: VN Monthly Historical Supplement, Jan, Feb 68 (U), Gp-4.

194. Ltr (S), COMNAVFORV to CINCPACFLT, 29 Aug 68, Subj: VN Monthly Historical Supplement, Mar 68, (U), Gp-4; Msg (C), COMNAVFORV to CTF 115, 251107Z Mar 68, Subj: Limpet Mine (U), Gp-4.

195. Msgs (C), COMUSMACV to AIG, 031000Z May 68 and 080847Z May 68, Subj: SPHINX (U), Gp-4; Int Rpt (S), DOD, 10 Jul 68, Subj: Magnetic Influence Mines (U), Gp-4; Rpt (S), MACJ341, 18 Aug 68, Subj: Quarterly Evaluation Report (U), Gp-4.

196. Msg (S), CTG 70.5 to CTU 70.1.1, 031115Z May 68, Subj: Not Stated, Gp-4.

197. Msg (C), COMUSMACV to AIG 7051, 020920Z Jun 68, Subj: SPHINX (U), Gp-4; Msg (C), CDR RIVSECGRP to CTCW, 270142Z Jul 68, Subj: SPOTREP 07-27/2 (U), Gp-4.

198. Msg (C), COMNAVFORV to CNO, 050613Z Nov 68, Subj: Swimmer Counter-measures in RVN, Gp-4.

199. Ltr (C), COMRIVPATFOR to Dist, 26 Feb 69, Subj: CTF 116 Order of Battle (U), Gp-4.

200. Op. cit. #185 and #186.

201. Op. cit. #190.

202. Op. cit. #191.

203. Msg (S), CG III MAF to COMUSMACV, 011840Z Feb 68, Subj: Ambush of Boats in Cua Viet (U), Gp-4; Msg (S), DEPCOMUSMACV FWD to COMNAVFORV, 201455Z Feb 68, Subj: CTF (U), Gp-4; Msg (S), CG III MAF to CG 1st MARDIV, 231512Z Feb 68, Subj: TFCW (U), Gp-4; Msg (S), CTF 117 to COMNAVFORV, 040500Z Mar 68, Subj: MRF Assets for I CTZ (U), Gp-4; Msg (C), COMNAVFORV to USS VANCOUVER, 030914Z Apr 68, Subj: Maintenance Support (U), Gp-4.

204. Ltrs (C), COMNAVFORV to CINCPACFLT, 7 May, 24 May, 5 Jun, 4 Jul and 29 Aug 68, Subj: VN Monthly Historical Supplement (U), Gp-4; Rpts (S), MACJ341, 15 May, 18 Aug 68, Subj: Quarterly Evaluation Report (U), Gp-4.

205. Rpt (S), MACJ3051, 13 Nov 68, Subj: Quarterly Evaluation Report (U), Gp-4.

206. Data Sheet, MACJ343, 9 Nov 67, Subj: Riverine Operations (U), Gp-4; Data Sheet, MACCOC1, 11 Nov 67, Subj: Classified, Gp-4; Bklt (TS), MACJ031, 16 Sep 68, Subj: MACV Command History 1967 (U), Gp-1.

207. Op. cit. #185.

208. Msg (S), COMUSMACV to CG IIFFV, et al., 311157Z Jan 68, Subj: MRF (U), Gp-4; Msg (C), CG IIFFV to COMUSMACV, 010955Z Feb 68, Subj: MRF (U), Gp-4; Msg (S), COMUSMACV to CG IIFFV, et al., 060754Z Feb 68, Subj: MRF (U), Gp-4.

209. Ltrs (C), COMNAVFORV to CINCPACFLT, 7 May, 5 Jun and 4 Jul 68, Subj: USNAVFORV Monthly Historical Summary, Apr, May, Jun 68 (U), Gp-4; Rpt (S), MACJ341, 18 Aug 68, Subj: Quarterly Evaluation Report (U), Gp-4; Msg (S), COMNAVFORV to CTFCW, 040335Z May 68, Subj: Deployment of MRF Craft to I CTZ (U), Gp-4; Msg (S), COMUSMACV to COMNAVFORV 041508Z May 68, Subj: Sea Lift (U), Gp-4; Msg (S), COMNAVFORV to COMUSMACV, 200527Z May 68, Subj: Classified, Gp-4; Msg (S), CG III MAF to COMUSMACV, 230846Z May 68, Subj: Classified, Gp-4; Msg (S), CTF 117 to COMNAVFORV, 241440Z May 68, Subj: Classified, Gp-4.

210. Op. cit. #204.

211. Op. cit. #190.

212. Op. cit. #190 and 191.

213. Interview (C), CDR L. P. BROWN, USN, MHB, with LT S. F. LOTTERHAND, CEC, USN, MACDC, 16 Jan 69, Subj: Not Stated, Gp-None.

214. DF (S), MACDC to MHB, 20 Apr 68, Subj: Quarterly Historical Summary (U), Gp-None; Ltrs (C), COMNAVFORV to CINCPACFLT, 24 May, 29 Jun and 29 Aug 68, Subj: VN Monthly Historical Supplement, Jan, Feb, Mar 68 (U), Gp-4; Rpts (S), MACJ341, 15 May and 18 Aug 68, Subj: Quarterly Evaluation Report (U), Gp-4.

215. Msg (S), CNO to CINCPACFLT, 041840Z Feb 68, Subj: Deployment of Naval Forces to SVN (U), Gp-4; Msg (S), COMCBPAC to COMSERVPAC, 070017Z Feb 68, Subj: Classified, Gp-4; Msg (S), COMSERVPAC to CINCPACFLT, 200357Z Feb 68, Subj: Classified, Gp-4.

216. DF (S), MACDC to MHB, 24 Jul 68, Subj: Quarterly Historical Summary (U), Gp-None.

217. Op. cit. #213.

218. Msg (S), COMNAVFORV to CINCPACFLT, 030751Z Jul 68, Subj: Classified, Gp-3; Msg (S), III MAF to COMUSMACV, 210046Z Jul 68, Subj: Classified, Gp-4; Msg (S), COM-

USMACV to CG III MAF, 061116Z Aug 68, Subj: Classified, Gp-4; Msg (S), CG III MAF to COMUSMACV, 210900Z Aug 68, Subj: Classified, Gp-4; COMUSMACV to CG III MAF, 271049Z Aug 68, Subj: Classified, Gp-4.

219. Msg (S), COMNAVFORV to CINCPACFLT/COMUSMACV, 180053Z Sep 68, Subj: Seabee Personnel Strength in RVN (U), Gp-4; Interview (C), CDR L. P. BROWN, USN, MHB, with LT S. F. LOTTERHAND, CEC, USN, MACDC, 16 Jan 69.

220. Op. cit. #213.

221. Rpt (S), JCS, 1 Aug 68, Subj: Review and Appraisal of Naval Gunfire Support Operations (U), Gp-3.

222. Msg (TS), COMUSMACV to CINCPAC, 140550Z Jan 68, Subj: Request for Air and Naval Support/COFRAM Approval (U), Gp-4; Msg (TS), CINCPAC to COMUSMACV, 200400Z Jan 68, Subj: Additional Air and Naval Support for I CTZ (U), Gp-4; Msg (S), COMUSMACV to COMSEVENTHFLT, 241117Z Jan 68, Subj: NGFS Augmentation for I CTZ (U), Gp-4; Rpt (S), JCS, 1 Aug 68, Subj: Review and Appraisal of Naval Gunfire Support Operations (U), Gp-3; Ltrs (C), Sub-Unit ONE, 15 Apr and 19 Jul 68, Subj: Command Chronology, 1st and 2d Qtrs, CY68 (U), Gp-4.

223. Msg (C), COMUSMACV to COMSEVENTHFLT, 170048Z Jun 68, Subj: In-country NGFS Distribution Priorities (U), Gp-4.

224. Msg (C), COMUSMACV to CTU 70.8.9, 041150Z Aug 68, Subj: In-country NGFS Distribution Priorities (U), Gp-4.

225. Msg (C), COMSEVENTHFLT to COMUSMACV, 060122Z Sep 68, Subj: In-country NGFS Distribution Priorities (U), Gp-4; Msg (C), COMUSMACV to COMSEVENTHFLT, 161330Z Sep 68, Subj: In-country NGFS Distribution Priorities (U), Gp-4.

226. Msg (S), CTG 77.0 to CINCPACFLT, 170138Z Jun 68, Subj: Unident Helo Incident (U), Gp-4; Msg (S), CINCPAC to SECDEF, 200223Z Jul 68, Subj: Attacks on US Navy and Australian Navy Units (U), Gp-4; Msg (S), COMSEVENTHFLT to CINCPACFLT, 180216Z Jun 68, Subj: Air Attacks (U), Gp-4.

227. Msg (S), COMSEVENTHFLT to COMUSMACV, 040816Z Jul 68, Subj: Operational Procedures (U), Gp-4; Msg (S), COMUSMACV to COMSEVENTHFLT, 120915Z Jul 68, Subj: Operational Procedures (U), Gp-4.

228. Msg (S), CINCPACAF to CINCPAC, 040414Z Aug 68, Subj: Operational Procedures (U), Gp-4; Msg (S), CINCPACFLT to CINCPAC, 090542Z Aug 68, Subj: Operational Procedures (U), Gp-4; Msg (S), CINCPAC to CINCPACFLT, 292327Z Aug 68, Subj: Operational Procedures (U), Gp-4; CINCPACFLT to CINCPAC 130012Z Oct 68, Subj: Operational Procedures (U), Gp-3.

229. Bklt (TS), MACJ031, 16 Sep 68, Subj: MACV Command History, 1967 (U), Gp-1; Interview (S), LCDR P. S. FROMMER, USN, MHB, with LCDR W. HIGGINS, USN, MACCOC1, 23 Oct 68, Gp-None; Msg (S), CG III MAF to CG IV CTZ, 270254Z Sep 68, Subj: Classified, Gp-4.

230. Msg (S), JCS to CINCPAC, 212341Z May 68, Subj: Cruiser Battleship Deployments (U), Gp-4.

231. Msg (S), CINCPAC to CINCPACFLT/COMUSMACV, 242154Z May 68, Subj: Cruiser Battleship Deployments (U), Gp-4; Msg (S), CINCPACFLT to CINCPAC, 022141Z Jun 68, Subj: Cruiser Battleship Deployments (U), Gp-4; Msg (S), CINCPAC to JCS, 121939Z Jun 68, Subj: Cruiser Battleship Deployments (U), Gp-4.

232. Msg (C), CG IFFV to various commands, 040810Z Jan 69, Subj: After Action Report of USS NEW JERSEY's Firing in II CTZ (U), Gp-4.

233. Dir No. 525-23 (S), MACV, 1 Feb 68, Subj: ARG/SLF (U), Gp-3; Interview (S), LCDR P.S. FROMMER, USN, MHB, with MAJ L. HUGHES, USMC, MACCOC1, 20-21 Oct 68, Gp-None.

234. Msg (C), COMUSMACV to CG USARV, 170055Z Jan 68, Subj: Hospital Ship Support for Southern I CTZ (U), Gp-4; Msg (S), COMUSMACV to CG III MAF, 290101Z Jan 68, Subj: Hospital Ship Deployment (U), Gp-4; Msg (S), COMSEVENTHFLT to COMUSMACV, 291432Z Jan 68, Subj: Hospital Ship Deployment (U), Gp-4; Msg (S), COMUSMACV to COMSEVENTHFLT, 071325Z Feb 68, Subj: Hospital Ship Deployment (U), Gp-4; Msg (S), COMUSMACV to COMSEVENTHFLT, 160256Z Feb 68, Subj: Hospital Ship Deployment (U), Gp-4; COMSEVENTHFLT to CINCPACFLT, 181434Z Feb 68, Subj: I CTZ Medical Support (U), Gp-4; Msg (S), COMUSMACV to CINCPAC, 251137Z Mar 68, Subj: Hospital Ship (AH) Requirements (U), Gp-4; CINCPACFLT to CINCPAC, 262113Z Apr 68, Subj: Hospital Ship Requirements (AH) (U), Gp-4.

235. Msg (C), SA IV CTZ to CG USARV, 280700Z Jul 68, Subj: Precautionary Measures against Cambodian Border Crossings (U), Gp-4; Msg (C), COMUSMACV to CG USARV, 280710Z Jul 68, Subj: Control of Mekong River (U), Gp-4; Msg (C), COMUSMACV to COMNAVFORV, 281745Z Jul 68, Subj: Navigation of Mekong River (U), Gp-4; Msg (C), COMNAVFORV to CG 1st LOG CMD, 171103Z Aug 68, Subj: Cambodian Border Warning (U), Gp-4.

CHAPTER VI

PACIFICATION AND NATION BUILDING

INTRODUCTION

(C) As Revolutionary Development (RD) moved into 1968, the momentum of the previous year's efforts gave hope to all concerned that a workable solution to the problem of Pacification had at last evolved in the concept of Project TAKEOFF, a management tool designed to bring maximum Pacification assets to bear on the most important problems. This priority oriented program was embraced by the Thieu-Ky government as a cornerstone in its efforts to gain the allegiance of the vast rural Vietnamese population that, up to this time, had been rather neutral in its attitudes toward the struggle going on in the Republic.

(S) The first six months of 1968 were crowded with important events. The two major developments were the Tet attacks and successful efforts to open talks with Hanoi. These stimulated or at least accelerated, other significant developments: general mobilization, the founding of the pro-government political organization known as the Lien Minh, and the May - June attacks, particularly on Saigon.

SUMMARY

(U) Using experience gained in 1967, Civil Operations & Revolutionary Development Support (CORDS) re-studied Project TAKEOFF. This resulted in no significant changes, but priorities were realigned to enable the bulk of pacification resources to be aimed at those programs of the highest potential return. The lower priority programs were pushed concurrently with the higher priority, but they did not receive as much emphasis.

(U) For 1968, three categories of tasks were developed. The first category was the improvement of territorial security, the attack on the VC infrastructure, the refugee problem, and rural economic revival. The second category encompassed the corruption issue, improvement of the RD Cadre program, and budget problems in the Vietnamese government's support of pacification. The third category dealt with government manpower and mobilization policies, enhancing the image of the Saigon government in the countryside, and further improving the RVNAF's contribution to pacification. [1]

(C) The first half of 1968 was, for pacification in SVN, a period of unprecedented turbulence. As a result of the VC Tet Offensive, pacification suffered a sharp setback, though found subsequently not to have been so extensive or so damaging in detail as was first feared. The drop in relatively secure population from 67.2 percent in January to 59.8 percent in February cancelled all the population gains of 1967. Hamlet Evaluation System (HES) returns reflected a subsequent constant, gradual upward trend in March (61.0%), May (62.1%) and June (63.3%).

(C) Territorial security forces increased in size and a multifaceted program was implemented to increase their effectiveness through improving their weaponry, additional advisory effort, improvements in equipment and training, etc. By the end of June, the RF/PF numbered 358,000 and began to display new operational vigor.

(C) The attack on the VC Infrastructure, heretofore hampered by a lack of understanding and direction of the program by the Vietnamese, received a tremendous boost on 1 July with the signing of a presidential decree establishing PHUNG HOANG (All Seeing Bird) as a major government program. A joint US/Vietnamese operation to neutralize the Infrastructure, PHUNG HOANG was known by the US as the PHOENIX Program. (Discussed at length under section entitled " ATTACK ON THE VC INFRASTRUCTURE").

(C) Considerable pacification effort during the first half of 1968 was given over to recovery from the Tet attacks. Primary attention went to the care for and reestablishment of the nearly 900,000 suffering people left in the backwash of the violent fighting and to revival of the nation's disrupted economy.

(C) In the wake of the Tet Offensive, President Thieu, in response to US initiatives, created a high-level GVN task force, with US participation, to direct and coordinate the activities of GVN and US agencies in speeding civil recovery. Ministries were brought together to react quickly on basic recovery problems. The effort proved effective in getting Project RECOVERY underway. Some 797,000 persons were given temporary relief and returned to their homes, or received commodities to help them build new ones.

(C) By July, the rural economy was practically back to pre-Tet conditions in I, II, and III Corps. Curfews were eased, major LOCs reopened, and commerce approached pre-Tet levels. This brought a decline in prices from the February inflationary peak to only slightly above the pre-Tet levels. In IV Corps, where the VC were making a determined effort to discourage movement of commodities to and from the Delta, the rural economy had not fully recovered by July.

(C) Involvement of the population through RD remained a key objective of the pacification program. The RD program suffered to a lesser degree than initially expected from the Tet Offensive, except in its developmental aspects, as funds, commodities, and leadership attention were diverted to Project RECOVERY and refugee relief. However the Tet Offensive resulted in increasing numbers of civilians and civic organizations in urban areas appealing to the GVN for arms to defend themselves, their families, and their property from VC attack. At the end of June, the population was, in effect, ahead of the government in terms of its willingness to participate actively in self-defense, but the government seemed finally to be pulling together a program to exploit and support this popular attitude.

(C) In summary, the outlook for pacification by July was favorable, barring a sharp drop in SVN morale or new attacks of the Tet magnitude. Lagging administrative reform, defensive-mindedness, and the need to share pacification assets between city and countryside were persistent problems. Yet, the possibility of an almost 70 percent relatively secure population by the year's end seemed good. RF/PF expansion and improvement continued to pay off, the attack on the VCI and the Chieu Hoi rate both accelerated, and refugee and recovery burdens declined, though solid gains were slow to materialize. [2]

(C) The decline in enemy activity during July contributed to a sharper upward trend in pacification programs. The Hamlet Evaluation System (HES) figures showed that the relatively

secure population increased by 1.6 percent (340,000) during the month. That was the largest advance up to that time. The contested population dropped 1.2 percent (199,200), and the VC controlled population decreased 0.4 percent (62,500).

(C) The 15-point program designed to upgrade RF/PF made good progress. All RF and PF units in the CMD received M16 rifles. Other aspects of the weapons upgrading program also moved ahead. The increased attention boosted RF and PF morale and their effectiveness and agressiveness progressed slowly.

(C) GVN decree and detailed instructions on PHOENIX/PHUNG HOANG increased organizational and operational activity. The number of higher level VCI who were killed, captured, or rallied to the GVN increased more than 10 percent in July. [3]

(C) During August, territorial security in SVN continued the stead, improvement underway since the termination of the Tet Offensive. In spite of a series of enemy attacks launched in each CTZ, the population in relatively secure hamlets rose to 65.8 percent of the total GVN population. That was only 1.4 percent less than the end-January level. Other pacification indexes also were favorable. RF and PF operations increased in number as well as in effectiveness as shown by large increases in the number of enemy KIA and weapons captured. The increased effectiveness of territorial forces was partially attributable to the progress in weapons upgrading. The PHOENIX program accounted for 1,117 VCI cadre killed, captured, or rallied during August for a total 8,486 for the year. August was designated as Self-defense Month by the GVN and received a great deal of high level emphasis. The number of self-defense groups doubled. Large numbers of weapons were allocated to provinces and cities, but few of these were in the hands of self-defenders. Returnees who rallied under the Chieu Hoi program totaled 1,451. [4]

(C) During September, territorial security in SVN attained a level almost equal to that which existed at the end of January 1968 with 66.8 percent of the total GVN population in the relatively secure HES category. That figure was only 0.4 percent below the end-January level. Of the 1,121 VCI cadre eliminated during September, 348 were operating at district level or higher, as compared to only 133 for August. Self-defense seemed to be taking hold, with the majority of the province chiefs getting behind the effort. Reports of self-defenders informing on VC, reporting arm caches, and participating in active defense against the enemy increased. [5]

(C) By October urban recovery was largely complete and resources and management attention were returned to pacification. Mobilization had strengthened the RF/PF. An improvement program further increased their capabilities. Other pacification resources, such as National Police, RD Cadre, Armed Propaganda Teams, etc., were also more numerous and capable. At President Thieu's insistence, field commanders and province/district chiefs slowly began to increase their pacification efforts. Opportunities were greater than anticipated as enemy main forces avoided contact and left the rural population alone. President Thieu seized upon these opportunities and launched, on 1 November, an Accelerated Pacification Campaign. The campaign goals were: [6]

1. By 31 January 1969, to upgrade at least 1,000 contested hamlets to relatively secure ratings on the HES scale.

2. To neutralize at least 3,000 VCI cadre each month during the three month campaign (1 November 1968 - 31 January 1969).

3. To induce at least 5,000 Hoi Chanh to rally under the Chieu Hoi Program.

4. To expedite organizing 1,000,000 self-defenders and arming at least 200,000.

5. To conduct an information campaign to demonstrate to the people and the enemy that GVN has seized the initiative and is moving rapidly toward the end of the war.

(U) Just as the Accelerated Pacification Campaign was being announced, an important change took place at the highest level of the American pacification effort. Mr. William E. Colby, who had been ACofS, CORDS, was elevated to the position of Deputy for CORDS to COMUSMACV with the rank of Ambassador, replacing AMB Robert W. Komer who had held the post since May 1967 and under whose careful guidance pacification in SVN had became a top priority program. AMB Komer departed SVN to become US Ambassador to Turkey.

(C) By 13 November, the Accelerated Pacification Campaign was off to a good start. PHOENIX/PHUNG HOANG results were exceeding the high rate achieved in October, with I and IV Corps leading in VCI neutralized. Except for II CTZ, the "1,000 Hamlet Campaign" was ahead of schedule, with RF/PF redeployment to target hamlets taking place smoothly. The Peoples' Self-defense effort continued at the excellent pace developed in September and October although weapons distribution was still too slow. Chieu Hoi returnees totaled 2,381 for October and, by 15 November, was holding at the same high level--447 during the week of 3-9 November and 519 during the following week. The refugee picture was good, with a significant movement of refugees back to occupied APC target hamlets. October HES data reflected an increasing rate of improvement in territorial security which continued into November. The regular 1968 RD Program was not abandoned nor had the effort slacked off noticeably. [7]

(C) The components of the Accelerated Pacification Campaign, at the end of November, showed varying degrees of progress as the effort continued to receive top priority GVN and US attention. Pressure on the VCI intensified as many US units targeted on guerrillas and infrastructure. The enemy did not react against the 1,000 Hamlet Campaign except in a few isolated areas. Popular Self-defense Force membership increased by almost 31,000 to a total of 845,000 during the first 15 days of November. Chieu Hoi returnees for the week ending 23 November totalled 650. PSYOP support gained momentum, and the first meeting of the newly organized Central Pacification and Development Council (CPDC) was held on 20 November. [8]

(C) The Accelerated Pacification Campaign (APC) continued to show good progress in December with little specifically directed enemy reaction noted, although Liberation Radio and Radio Hanoi devoted more broadcast time to denouncing it. More than 77 percent of target hamlets were entered and more than 15 percent of the RF/PF units were redeployed to provide improved security to the target hamlets. Thus, a main objective of expanding GVN presence in contested areas was being accomplished. VCI neutralization increased markedly--3,725 unverified VCI cadre were neutralized in the 30-day period ending 19 November and 1,450 more were neutralized in the two-week period from 20 November to 3 December. The Chieu Hoi rate hit a new high since that of April 1967 when, in the week ending 30 November 1968, 658 ralliers returned. Preliminary figures for the week 1-7 December showed 582 Hoi Chanh. Peoples' Self-defense forces expanded, although provision of arms did not keep pace with this expansion. PSYOP activity increased significantly with good coverage of the APC by national media. President Thieu devoted considerable personal attention to the campaign by attending the 28 November Central Pacification and Development Council meeting and making day-long visits to III CTZ and IV CTZ to review the campaign's status. [9]

1969 Pacification and Development Guidelines

(C) Completed guidelines were signed by 16 GVN Ministers (including the Prime Minister) and heads of programs on 17 December. Representatives from each province were briefed by the Central Pacification and Development Council staff and Ministries on 28 December to start the 1969 planning process. Provinces were required to complete plans, following a simple planning format consisting of a series of overlays, by 15 January. A schedule of visits, possibly by President Thieu, was set up between 15 and 31 January to review and approve province plans. For the first time, integrated guidelines covering all major aspects of pacification and development had been issued and a single integrated plan was called for to guide pacification and development in each province during the year. [10]

(C) HES results for the end of December revealed a 3.0 percent increase in relatively secure population to 76.3 percent of the total. The December total of 3,148 ralliers was the second highest monthly count since the Chieu Hoi Program began in 1963. People's Self-defense groups expanded substantially during the month of December as total organized strength exceeded one million and arms distributed topped 100,000. Enemy action against APC target hamlets increased, but no systematic effort to disrupt the campaign was noted. More than any other factor, the low level of enemy opposition allowed the campaign to proceed at an encouraging pace--a pace which was not expected by many province officials and advisors. [11]

(C) However, by the end of December, there was mounting evidence that enemy reaction to the APC was increasing. The enemy's propaganda campaign against accelerated pacification was, by late November and early December, being constantly disseminated throughout the entire country. The principal means of this wide promulgation was Liberation Radio. Enemy propaganda intensity increased as APC implementation grew and it was stressed where the program was being particularly emphasized - in IV CTZ. Harassment of the GVN local administrative structure was evident in Quang Nam Province. Propaganda, in the form of threats and warnings, was prevalent throughout I CTZ. In Binh Dinh, the "newly elected" Province Revolutionary Committee called upon the people to smash the APC. More frequently, Communist propaganda was zeroing in on the APC as a threat to their own revolutionary committees. The APC was equated to the worst "fascist crimes" of the Diem period and daily enemy broadcasts listed the numbers of people burned, raped, or buried alive as part of the pacification campaign. A spot report from the 9th Inf Div stated that the enemy was taking extreme actions to counter the APC in Thu Thua District of Long An Province. There were 59 enemy-initiated incidents in the district during December. In one case, a village chief in an APC area was tortured by the VC. In another case, a VC platoon entered an APC hamlet and instructed the People's Self-defense group to surrender their weapons or else their familes would be killed. The group gave up 6 rifles, 10 carbines, and 7 shotguns. [12]

PACIFICATION TRENDS

Analysis of Hamlet Evaluation System (HES)

(C) The Hamlet Evaluation System (HES) was a monthly computer assisted measurement process designed to develop and maintain data which would effectively measure pacification

progress in more than 12,000 urban and rural hamlets. The hamlets were grouped in three broad categories: secure (A, B, or C rating), contested (D or E rating), and VC controlled (V rating). The specific evaluations were made by subsector advisors who used a standard worksheet that had 18 indicators and eight problem areas.

(C) The Tet aftereffect showed a substantial loss of population in the GVN category and corresponding increases in the contested and VC population category. The HES results indicated that the GVN controlled population of 67.2 percent for January had dropped to 59.8 percent in February (a 7.4 percent decline). The contested population of 16.3 percent in January increased to 22 percent in February and the VC controlled population rose from 16.4 percent to 18.2 percent. During the following four months, the GVN controlled population rose to 63.3 percent by the end of June, while contested population dropped to 19.4 percent and VC controlled population declined to 17.3 percent.

(C) A, B, and C rated hamlet population of 58.5 percent was susceptible to regression as the result of the potential VCI activity. (Hamlet ratings: A-Adequate security, VC eliminated; B-Not immune to VC threat but security is organized and partially effective; C-Subject to infrequent VC harassment.) III Corps A, B, and C hamlet population of 72 percent was in this category. Over one third, 36 percent, of the total A, B, and C hamlet population had marginal security. [13]

(C) The end of July HES results showed a modest acceleration in the steady strengthening of security in Vietnam. During July, the population in relatively secure hamlets increased by 340,400. This population gain, when figured together with the increase in national population reported during the month (78,000), represented a net advance of 1.6 percent to 64.9 percent relatively secure population. This was the largest monthly advance recorded as of that time. Contested population declined by 1.2 percent to 18.2 percent and VC controlled population declined by 0.4 percent to 16.9 percent. [14]

(C) III Corps, particularly Gia Dinh Province, accounted for the bulk of the overall July gain. At the end of July, about 250,000 more people in Gia Dinh lived in relatively secure hamlets as compared to the previous month. The other major advance was made in Thua Thien Province in I Corps (plus 38,000).

(C) Viewed separately, the trend of security in rural areas continued to show the same pattern. In July, the total population in rural hamlets rated as relatively secure increased by 1.3 percent to 49.4 percent. The population in contested rural hamlets declined by 0.4 percent to 24.4 percent and that in VC controlled rural hamlets decreased by 0.9 percent to 26.2 percent during July.

(C) The improvement was probably due in part to the heavy enemy losses, the depletion of guerrilla forces to fill up enemy battalions, and the decline in VC activity. [15]

(C) HES reports for August showed further improvement in the security situation. Population in relatively secure hamlets (HES ratings of A, B, and C) increased by 159,000 during the month, representing a net advance of 0.9 percent to 65.8 percent of the population (urban and rural) living under conditions of relative security. That level was 1.4 percent below the high of 67.2 percent on 31 January, just before the Tet Offensive. Population in contested hamlets rated D and E (a D hamlet is contested but leaning toward GVN; an E hamlet is contested with GVN programs non-existent or just beginning) declined by 0.8 percent in August to 17.4 percent and that in VC controlled hamlets declined by 0.1 percent to 16.8 percent. (31 January figures were 16.5 and 16.4 percent respectively.)

(C) Results in the rural areas showed the same trend. Relatively secure rural population increased by 0.7 percent in August to 50.1 percent of the countrywide population (as compared to 52.8 percent on 31 January). Contested rural population declined by 0.6 percent to 23.8 percent and the VC controlled rural population decreased by 0.1 percent to 26.1 percent. [16]

(C) HES reports for September continued to show further improvement in the security situation. Population in relatively secure hamlets increased by 1.0 percent in September to 66.8 percent in the countrywide population of 17,481,500 (urban and rural). That level was 0.4 percent below the high of 67.2 percent recorded on 31 January just before the Tet Offensive. Population in contested hamlets declined by 1.0 percent in September to 16.4 percent and that in VC controlled hamlets remained at the same level as August. [17]

(C) Results in the rural areas showed the same trend. Relatively secure rural population increased by 1.2 percent in September to 51.3 percent, as compared to 52.8 percent on 31 January. Contested rural population declined by 1.0 percent to 22.8 percent and the VC controlled rural population decreased 0.2 percent to 25.9 percent. Four hundred eleven hamlets progressed to a higher security status while 218 regressed, for a net gain of 193. [18]

(C) Pacification gains, as reflected by the October HES data, were the most significant since the inception of HES in January 1967. Relatively secure population reached a new high, surpassing the pre-Tet figure, and the contested and VC controlled population dropped below previous lows. There was general improvement in territorial security in all corps areas as strengthened RF/PF expanded their area of influence and increased the level of protection. Developmental aspects of pacification also marked gains, although somewhat less than security factors. October relatively secure population (A, B, and C categories) for the country was 69.8 percent of a total population of 17,447,477. That represented a 3.0 percent improvement in the relatively secure population over September and a 2.6 percent increase over the pre-Tet high in January 1968 of 67.2 percent. Countrywide contested population (D and E categories) dropped from 16.4 percent (September) to 14.9 percent, which was 7.1 percent below the post-Tet high of 22.0 percent and an improvement over the previous low in January 1968 of 16.3 percent. VC controlled population also declined by 1.5 percent (from September) to an HES low of 15.3 percent, which represented a movement of 264,000 people to the relatively secure and contested categories. That was a decline in VC controlled population from the February 1968 high of 18.3 percent and the January 1968 low of 16.4 percent.

(C) For the month of October, all CTZs showed substantial expansion of population in the relatively secure category as indicated below:

	New Relatively Secure Population	Percent Relatively Secure of Total CTZ Population
I CTZ	132,500	61.3%
II CTZ	62,100	77.4%
III CTZ	103,300	83.4%
IV CTZ	207,500	58.2%
TOTAL	505,400	

(C) HES October security only evaluations led the overall figures with the relatively secure population category gaining 672,700, while contested and VC controlled categories declined 467,200 and 264,100, respectively. In particular, the loss in the VC category represented 321 hamlets re-evaluated as contested or abandoned.

(C) Countrywide rural population progressed during October, with the relatively secure category increasing to 55.5 percent of the total rural population. That represented an improvement of 4.2 percent over September and a net gain of 470,200 relatively secure population. The contested and VC controlled categories declined 222,600 (to 20.8%) and 241,500 (to 23.7%), respectively. Gains by CTZ were as follows: [19]

	Additional Relatively Secure Rural Population	Percent Relatively Secure of Total CTZ Rural Population
I CTZ	158,400	50.4%
II CTZ	62,500	69.7%
III CTZ	109,600	60.5%
IV CTZ	139,700	50.6%
TOTAL	470,200	

(C) Pacification expansion, as reflected by the December HES data, showed a slight gain over the November rate, but continued the favorable trend started in October. Relatively secure population increased by 3.0 percent to 76.3 percent -- a net addition of 537,300 people to the relatively secure category. This was a gain of 9.4 percent during the year and was 16.5 percent higher than the post-Tet low. By corps, the gains were as follows:

	Increase in Relatively Secure Population	Percent Relatively Secure of Total Corps Population
I CTZ	99,900	69.3% (up 3.5%)
II CTZ	51,300	81.7% (up 1.5%)
III CTZ	161,400	90.1% (up 2.7%)
IV CTZ	224,700	64.5% (up 3.7%)
TOTAL	537,300	

(C) The contested population dropped from 13.3 percent in November to 11.4 percent. During December, the contested population decreased by 323,100. The VC controlled population declined by 1.1 percent from November to a HES figure of 12.3 percent.

(C) Security only evaluations, by which progress of the APC was measured, indicated that 574,000 people were added to the relatively secure category while contested and VC controlled population decreased by 360,400 and 186,000, respectively. Relatively secure rural population increased during December to 65.0 percent -- 4.3 percent over that of November and a net gain of 485,200 people. The contested and VC controlled categories declined by 271,100 (16.1%) and 183,500 (18.9%), respectively. [20]

Territorial Security

(C) By the end of April, territorial security had been re-established in much of the previously lost ground. Although I and III CTZ still faced the threat of major engagements with enemy main force units, the remainder of the country was well on the way toward regaining the ground lost during the first two months of the year.

I CTZ

(C) By the end of March, most of the Tet territorial losses had been regained. There was physical damage that could not be repaired for a very long time, especially in Hue, but civil life fully resumed its pre-Tet pace. Of foremost importance was the attempt to re-establish security in the cities and to open the main LOCs. Security was sufficiently restored to begin reconstruction of pre-Tet economic life throughout the Corps area. Partly due to the massive infusion of foodstuffs and building materials, critical supply shortages did not occur and prices remained stable. [21]

(C) By the end of July, territorial security had generally improved in all areas except Quang Nam Province. VC attacks against RD cadre groups decreased significantly in the northernmost provinces, although they increased slightly in the southern provinces of the Corps. Assassinations, abductions, and mining incidents decreased, but terrorist activity against refugee camps increased, particularly in Quang Nam. In general, major VC/NVA units continued to avoid contact; however, the threat of attack remained high. Da Nang, Hoi An, and Quang Ngai received attacks by fire at the end of the month and the latter two locations experienced small ground probes. Main LOCs were open from Da Nang to the provincial capitals permitting the flow of commercial traffic. The enemy build-up in Quang Nam and the possibility of attacks against Da Nang or any of the other cities in Quang Nam continued to cloud the I CTZ picture. This had adverse effects on the RD program as well as on other pacification activities. [22]

(C) In September, enemy action persisted in Quang Nam and Quang Ngai, causing a further deterioration in rural security. Combined US/GVN forces inflicted heavy casualties on VC/NVA units during three major attacks in Quang Tin Province. In Quang Tri and Thua Thien, aggressive friendly operations resulted in substantial enemy casualties and the capture of a number of large food and weapons caches. Security improved in Quang Tri and Thua Thien. [23]

II CTZ

(C) Pacification and RD ground to a virtual halt in the midst of the first offensive but, in general, RD projects in the countryside were left relatively untouched. The exceptions were in

Ninh Thuan (although Phan Rang was not attacked at all) and Binh Dinh (where the priority districts of Tuy Phuoc and An Nhon suffered marked setbacks).

(C) When major Allied forces were deployed to evict enemy forces entrenched in major population centers, deterioration of security in the rural areas was inevitable. Although many of these units returned to their original positions, a significant number still remained behind to guard provincial and district capitals. In April and May, the enemy situation in II Corps was characterized by the introduction of new enemy forces in western Kontum Province, continued development of the staging area west of Polei Kleng, an increase in attacks by fire, interdiction of LOCs, and attempts to disrupt RD efforts. After the failure of the enemy's May-June Offensive, these forces withdrew to sanctuaries in Laos.

(C) In general, despite the slackening pace of enemy effort in II Corps, recovery of pacification momentum was slow. [24]

(C) Through September, enemy activity was mostly limited to terrorism, with the exception of an attack on the Hoa Da District Headquarters in Binh Thuan and several other similar enemy actions. In the highland provinces, the situation approximated that of August, with the presence of VC/NVA units preventing expansion of territorial security by GVN forces. [25]

III CTZ

(C) In certain areas of III Corps -- Phuoc Long, Binh Long, and Hau Nghia, for example -- the situation during the spring was very discouraging. In Hau Nghia, the VC openly proselytized 15 to 18 year-olds, with an announced goal of 2,000 recruits. In Binh Long, confirmed reports revealed the operations of VC training cadre at work. Phuoc Long presented a unique situation as the entire province was used as a staging area by the VC. In these provinces, only the provincial capitals and the district towns were marginally secure and the situation was subject to further deterioration; whereas in Long An, Gia Dinh, Tay Ninh, Phuoc Tuy, and Binh Duong Provinces, the presence of US/GVN military forces was substantial and offered partial deterrent to the free movement of enemy forces, even though the enemy retained the capability for selective terrorism.

(C) The much-heralded Second General Offensive began in the early days of May. In many respects the enemy operations repeated those of the Tet Offensive, supported by indiscriminate rocket/mortar attacks on Saigon and other population targets. In contrast to other months, the enemy concentrated on the RD cadre teams during May, hitting hard with 45 attacks which resulted in 51 RD personnel KIA and 87 WIA. [26]

(C) By July, action was light and sporadic as the enemy avoided major contact, while continuing minor harassing ground attacks and attacks by fire. Friendly forces continued to concentrate on attacking VC base areas and interdicting enemy infiltration routes into Saigon. Numerous caches of rockets and mortar ammunition were uncovered and enemy attacks-by-fire on Saigon were stopped, except for shellings on 20 and 21 August and 1 November. [27]

(C) Enemy activity decreased significantly during September. There was, however, continued enemy pressure on Tay Ninh City and on Loc Ninh and An Loc Districts in Binh Long Province. [28]

IV CTZ

(C) Territorial security increased during the spring with the arrival in March of the new Corps Commander, MG Thang. GVN forces took the offensive and began regaining the losses suffered during the Tet Offensive. Particular emphasis was directed toward the major LOCs: Highway 4, the Mang Thit-Nicholai Canal, and Cho Gao Canal. RF/PF units largely returned to their territorial security missions. ARVN emphasis was directed towards offensive activities.

(C) The VC concentration during April on LOCs and outpost harassment throughout the corps -- though largely unsuccessful -- seemed to reinforce the theory that that was a period of VC consolidation. The expected attacks against urban areas did not materialize in April, but apprehension about them did force a greater measure of concentration in defense of cities.

(C) In May and June, the overall security situation in the Corps area continued to improve. GVN military operations remained at a high level, preventing the VC from gaining the initiative in most provinces. Most provinces continued to experience low-level harassment by small VC elements, with particular focus on LOC and RD areas. [29]

(C) The level of enemy activity in July dropped significantly. The number of enemy incidents was at the lowest monthly level since the start of 1968 and only 60 percent of the number in June. VC actions were principally terrorism, to include attack of ARVN recruiting facilities, and guerrilla harassment of, among other targets, ARVN training centers. Deltawide, the amount of commercial highway traffic was estimated to be about 80 percent of the pre-Tet level. The VC pressure on Route 4 eased and fewer mining incidents occurred. Because of lack of confidence in the canal's security, large commercial barges still were not using the Mang Thit-Nicholai Canal despite the fact that it was open. [30]

(C) By 15 November, US field commanders estimated that nearly half of their operations were in support of APC. These operations, many of which were combined GVN-US efforts involving both civil and military elements, were an essential aspect of the campaign. Examples were: [31]

1. Operation DARING ENDEAVOR in I CTZ -- a combined GVN/US attack on the VCI that terminated on 10 November.

2. A combined operation in I CTZ involving the 1st Bde, 5th Inf Div (Mech) and GVN civilian and military elements targeted on the VCI.

(C) Operation MEADE RIVER used the "soft cordon" technique and involved six USMC battalions, two ARVN battalions, two ROK companies, and a spectrum of local civil and military elements. The enemy, trapped inside, made several unsuccessful attempts to break out. People inside the cordon were evacuated and housed in temporary centers before the cordon was squeezed. After VCI cadre were screened out and trapped enemy forces were eliminated, the population was returned to their homes. Results were 1,019 enemy KIA and 71 positively identified VCI screened from over 3,000 people questioned. [32]

(C) Reporting by CTZ, as had been done for the first nine months of 1968, was discontinued on 1 November with the launching of the Accelerated Pacification Campaign. Under this new concept, reports were submitted bi-monthly and emphasized the five goals of the Campaign.

TERRITORIAL SECURITY FORCES

RF/PF Analysis Based On The Territorial Forces Evaluation System (TFES) -- Progress and Problems

(C) During the period 31 January to 30 June, the RF/PF expanded rapidly. Total personnel strengths at the end of June were 197,714 RF and 164,284 PF or, in terms of field units, 1,050 RF companies and 4,560 PF platoons. During the last half of 1968, the RF and PF continued to expand. In addition, a force structure increase of 39,000 for the RF was approved in November 1968. This authorized an additional 278 RF rifle companies and other TO&E space increases. As of 31 December, 1,197 RF rifle companies and all 4,861 authorized PF platoons were organized.

(C) The Joint General Staff implemented a program in September which ›ned for achievement of 100 percent RF officer and NCO strength by 31 December 196 ›ased on September's authorized RF strength, the established goals were exceeded. ! ›ever, in November 1968 a force structure increase of 39,000 was approved for the RF, which increased the requirements for officers and NCOs. The assigned officer and NCO strength for the RF continued to increase through December and by the end of the year there were 14,207 officers and 38,802 NCOs assigned to the RF. Increased emphasis was placed by the JGS on improving the assigned strength of PF platoon and squad leaders during the last two quarters of 1968. The assigned strength of platoon leaders exceeded 100 percent by 31 December 1968. The squad leader assigned strength has been rising and is expected to reach 100 percent by the end of January 1969.

(C) The major deficiencies in RF/PF and percent of units affected, according to TFES, were:

1. Resupply slow or undependable, 56 percent of RF and 62 percent of PF.
2. Insufficient in-place training, 91 percent of RF and 93 percent of PF.
3. Insufficient operational radios, 78 percent of RF and 63 percent of PF.
4. Firepower inferior to enemy's, 39 percent of RF and 55 percent of PF.

(C) By July, RF/PF deficiencies had not been corrected to any great extent. However, the importance of RF/PF to territorial security was shown by the fact that two-thirds of the hamlets that experienced pacification regression during Tet had no assigned RF/PF units.

(C) Issue of additional M2 carbines and BARs as an immediate measure, pending the issue of M16 rifles, proceeded rapidly during April, May, and June. Plans were to issue M16 rifles to all RF/PF, with priority by geographical area. Initial issues to RF/PF began 30 June 1968. RF/PF units were critically short of M79 grenade launchers. As of 30 June, 18 percent of the authorized M79s were on hand. Full issue of M16 rifles and M79 grenade launchers to combat units was scheduled for completion by the last half of FY70. [33]

(C) The 15-point program to improve RF/PF weapons progressed rapidly during July. Initial issue of 12,000 M16 rifles to RF/PF units in Gia Dinh Province was completed. During the month, the conversion of 30,000 M1 carbines to M2 models was completed. As of 31 July, 98 percent of the M2 carbine and 73 percent of the BAR requirements for RF and PF had been filled. The distribution plan for M16 rifles was modified to insure that highest priority RF/PF units in each Corps received these weapons first. This plan provided for initial issues to be made to priority units within geographical areas as follows:

100 percent of the combat units in Capital Military District (CMD)
70 percent of the combat units in IV CTZ
60 percent of the combat units in I CTZ
50 percent of the combat units in III CTZ
40 percent of the combat units in II CTZ

CMD issues began in June and were completed in August. Issues to IV CTZ were completed in December and issues began in I CTZ. As of 31 December 1968, 115,000 M16 rifles had been issued to the Regional and Popular Forces.

(C) Lack of leadership had been a long-standing RF/PF problem. One means of overcoming this deficiency was the assignment of five-man US advisory teams - - Mobile Advisory Teams (MAT) -- to assist with the training and improvement of RF/PF units in the field. As of 31 July, 212 of these teams were deployed. The goal was to deploy 253 by the end of September and 353 by the end of December. The selection of which RF or PF units received a MAT was one means to indicate clearly to GVN officials what US priorities in territorial security were. The presence of the MAT added to the morale of the RF/PF involved and was one of the factors in boosting their aggressiveness and effectiveness. The presence of the MAT also helped bring additional ARVN command emphasis to RF/PF.

(C) US and FWMAF units working with RF/PF units were very successful in cordon and search operations and other operations in populated areas. Where RF/PF participated, a greater number of caches were uncovered and a lower casualty rate from mines and booby-traps resulted. The RF/PF indigenous to the area provided the US/FWMAF with a better knowledge of the terrain and a familiarity with the local populace. The US/FWMAF in turn, provided the RF/PF with more firepower and support than they were accustomed to receiving. During July and August, 88 RF companies and 134 PF platoons were activated, raising the total to 1,134 RF companies and 4,698 PF platoons. [34]

(C) As a result of M16 rifle issues to RF and PF units and a subsequent reduction in M2 carbine authorization, a 100 percent fill of RF and PF M2 carbine requirements was achieved in August. With the continuation of the BAR redistribution program and receipt of 2,639 BARs during August, a 71 percent fill of requirements was issued to province administration and direct support logistic companies. Final issue of M16s to RF and PF in the CMD was completed in August. M16 distribution within IV CTZ began with a token issue to RF and PF training centers. By the end of August, 14,075 M16s had been issued. [35]

(C) During September, 20 RF companies and 83 PF platoons were activated, raising the total to 1,154 RF companies and 4,781 PF platoons; 34,500 M16 rifles had been issued to RF and PF combat elements compared to 14,000 at the end of August. There was a continuing shortage of BARs and M79 grenade launchers. The GVN announced that RF officers would henceforth be

selected for promotion in accordance with ARVN promotion selection criteria. In addition, ARVN and RF officers and NCOs would be assigned to existing vacancies in ARVN and RF units without regard to basic component, a move that promised substantial gains in RF leadership.[36]

(C) 1,000 Hamlet Campaign: One main purpose of designating target hamlets for the APC was to get more RF/PF deployed in contested areas. Results by mid-November were significant as shown by the following table listing RF companies and PF platoons redeployed to protect target hamlets.[37]

CTZ	RF Companies	PF Platoons
I	14	127
II	44	160
III	48	116
IV	68	276
TOTAL	174	679

(C) As of 5 December, 859 hamlets had been entered out of 1,120 targeted (an increase of 122 in two weeks):

CTZ	Targeted	Entered
I	140	140
II	285	226
III	256	256
IV	439	237
TOTAL	1,120	859 (77%)

(C) More than 15 percent of the total RF/PF units had been redeployed since the outset of the APC:

CTZ	RF Companies	RF Platoons	PF Platoons
I	23	4	114
II	44	7	154
III	60	0	118
IV	63	15	198
TOTAL	190	26	584

(C) President Thieu, during a visit on 4 December, praised III CTZ for having occupied more hamlets than had been planned. On a IV CTZ trip, he commented that by phasing entry into target hamlets, the IV CTZ Commanding General would encounter a risk since his units would only have a short time to work on hamlets started in late December or early January. He requested the IV CTZ Commanding General to review this situation and enter the entire group of target hamlets as soon as possible.

(C) In III CTZ, over 250 self-help projects were started in target hamlets and 204 hamlet chiefs -- 63 elected and 141 appointed -- were working in target hamlets. In III CTZ, 91 hamlet officials completed an administrative training course. [38]

(C) Troop strength in APC hamlets, as of December, averaged more than one platoon per hamlet. In a large majority of cases, the forces were located within the boundaries of the hamlet. In a few places, forces were centrally located to respond to several target hamlets which were clustered. Hamlet chiefs were appointed by the GVN in roughly 80 percent of the target hamlets entered. Where there were previously elected chiefs, they simply returned to their hamlets as security was upgraded. Where no chiefs existed, officials were appointed, often from among RF or PF soldiers or RD cadre. PF soldiers appeared most popular with the people, whereas province officials seemed to feel safer with RF soldiers. [39]

(C) By the end of December, the "1,000 Hamlet Campaign" reflected the following status:

CTZ	Target Hamlets	Entered	Relatively Secure (End-December)
I	202	202	100
II	285	273	177
III	279	279	204
IV	566	566	361
TOTAL	1,332	1,320	842

(C) Functioning local governments were located in 84 percent of the target hamlets. The breakdown by corps was as follows: [40]

CTZ	Target Hamlets	Elected Admin	Appointed Admin	Percent w/Admin
I	202	47	92	69%
II	285	162	109	95%
III	256	89	155	95%
IV	473	159	211	78%
TOTAL	1,216	457	567	

National Police

(C) Even though there were shortfalls in terms of attaining specific goals, National Police (NP) capability definitely increased after 1 January 1968. Their successful performance during the May VC/NVA Offensive earned them more respect from the population which was evidenced by a greater number of people providing information to them.

(C) The recruitment program for the first six months survived the two VC offensives and remained on schedule. NP force strength on 1 January 1968 was 70,291; the end of June goal of 78,500 was slightly surpassed with a total force strength of 79,729. The NP Mobilization Law seriously restricted NP recruitment as it limited men eligible for NP service to those 25 years of age or older, with only 50 percent of recruits allowed from the 25-33 age bracket.

(C) In January, approximately 20 percent of the NP force strength was serving at district level and below. As a result of the VC Tet Offensive, the majority of NP were pulled into the province capitals. Advisory efforts were aimed toward returning the police to the rural areas. The end-of-year goal was to assign 30 percent of the total force strength to the countryside.

(C) A Resources Control Program called for relocating certain fixed checkpoints from secure areas to the fringe areas of contested or VC-dominated zones, eliminating 40 percent of the static checkpoints and increasing the operation of mobile checkpoints by 50 percent. The goal for the period was not achieved. Although sufficient manpower was allocated and trained for the program, the need for additional vehicles to replace the static checkpoints continued to be a problem.

(C) A program to expand prison facilities called for construction of a total of 9,500 spaces (5,000 temporary) by the end of 1968. Two thousand spaces of a planned 5,000-space temporary tent prison camp were completed at the National Correction Center, Con Son Island. Construction of 4,000 permanent spaces on Con Son Island began in July 1968.

(C) A police detention expansion program called for the construction of 8,500 new detention spaces by the end of 1968. Construction at the An Tuc Detention Facility in II Corps was completed by that time.

(C) NP, in August, continued to provide major support to pacification. Since the VC Tet Offensive, most NP had been on 24-hour alert status performing civil duties during the day and maintaining a military posture at night. The morale and the efficiency of the police remained high in spite of that dual function. The majority of NP continued to maintain a defensive posture guarding urban areas. Main force enemy units would have to be cleared from the countryside before the program to increase the number of NP in rural areas could regain its momentum. The progressive development of PHUNG HOANG, which required deployment of NP to district and village levels, had a marked effect on the extension of the police presence in rural areas. Emphasis on assigning 80 percent of the Marine Police to the Delta continued. Sufficient personnel were assigned and trained. Boats and communications equipment were operational and 36 additional boats were received during August. The first Marine Police Base was commissioned at My Tho and work progressed on obtaining additional bases.

(C) NP showed improvement during September. Anti-VCI operations increased by 12 percent over that of August as a result of improved intelligence and targeting. The number of VCI suspects killed and apprehended increased by 34 percent. By the end of the month, there were 32,360 spaces available in correction centers for the 32,407 detainees in custody and the situation continued to improve. Nine police detention facilities, located adjacent to the Province Interrogation Centers and four larger facilities, were in operation. Nearly 3,300 new confinement spaces had been made available since January.

(C) Two factors continued to inhibit police recruitment--lack of funds and restrictions embodied in the mobilization law. Although 5,820 police applicants had been processed, no recruits could be employed as funds had not been provided by the GVN. Some progress was made in deploying police to the countryside to implement the PHUNG HOANG Program. An experiment was conducted in I and IV Corps where "police teams" were assigned to hamlets where RD teams were operating. The police team was composed of three men, two uniformed officers and one from the Special Police Branch. They were assigned full time and, as RD teams moved on, the police teams remained to prevent a resurgence of VC influence.

(C) NP strength remained relatively constant and, as of the end of October, strength then stood at 79,080 - 12,925 Special Police, 11,960 NPFF, 1,435 Marine Police, and 52,760 regular police. NP efforts to require fingerprints to improve their ability to identify enemy and criminals began to pay off. On 1 December, a countrywide drive was launched to fingerprint all RVNAF soldiers and National Police. Fingerprints of civil servants were not required although it was recommended they be included in the drive.

(C) During the month of October, 365 prisoners were transferred from various correctional centers to Con Son. Over 5,000 were transferred in 1968 and approximately 2,500 spaces were available. The 1,600-man Regional Detention Camp at Can Tho was in operation with 400 detainees which were moved in on 18 November.

(C) By the end of November, about 17,000 NP were routinely functioning in district towns, villages, and, in some cases, hamlets. III CTZ reported 48 percent of its police strength at district and below. IV CTZ had approximately the same deployment, but had established a goal of 60 percent of available police to be assigned in rural areas.

(C) The National Identification Registration Program (NIRP) forged ahead. In the week ending 21 December, the registration rate by 77 teams in the field reached 62 percent of the quota as registrations topped 40,000. During the previous week, the teams achieved only 49 percent of their goal. The improvement reflected greater command attention by GVN officials, which resulted partly from repeated advisory pressure. The project to gather fingerprint data on all government employees, including the RVNAF, was beginning to function properly. The National Police Records Center (NPRC) received 4,000 fingerprint cards on RVNAF personnel with many more in various stages of processing. By the end of December, 86 registration teams were functioning in all four corps and they had issued almost 329,000 cards.

(C) The provinces reported considerable progress in carrying out orders to deploy at least 50 percent of the uniformed police at district and below, excluding NPFF, Special Police and Marine Police. All provinces were planning to extend police presence down to village level during 1969 as required by the 1969 Pacification and Development Plan. Some provinces included several policemen in teams being used in APC target hamlets, with the intention that

the police would remain permanently. Because of relatively good results in provinces where this was tried, more provinces included the concept in their 1969 pacification plans.

(C) In December, a NP Detention Bureau was created. Bui Do Ha, a graduate of the International Police Academy in Washington, was named Commissioner. This new bureau had the responsibility for all unsentenced prisoners held by the NP and it improved and tightened up handling of prisoners, especially VCI who were captured. [41]

PROJECT RECOVERY

Introduction

(C) Project RECOVERY completed its mission to oversee the national urban recovery from the Tet and May Offensives by October 1968. Together these offensives left 13,000 civilians dead and 27,000 wounded, created over one million refugees, and destroyed an estimated $173.5 million in property (over 170,000 houses damaged or destroyed plus extensive damage to small industry). In particular, the Tet Offensive administered a psychological shock which could have led to an overwhelming government paralysis.

(C) As the crisis in February deepened, GVN forces withdrew from the countryside to district and provincial towns, commerical life came to a standstill, city food supplies became scarce and expensive, port operations snarled, schools were closed, and -- most immediate -- the refugee problem assumed critical proportions.

(C) In retrospect, it was doubtful that the GVN would have pulled itself together as quickly as it did without the formation of the Central Recovery Committee (CRC). The performance of government officials in the days following Tet varied from very good to terrible, which was not surprising in a country whose governing skills had been inadequate to begin with and whose administrative apparatus had suffered grievous attrition through long years of guerrilla warfare and terrorism. What the country needed and got was a catalyst to focus its resources on its most critical problems. CRC was primarily responsible for the far reaching recovery that took place.

Formation of the Central Recovery Committee

(U) On 2 February 1968, at the height of the Tet crisis, President Thieu announced:

> The President of the Republic of Vietnam has decided that a high-level committee should be created immediately to direct and coordinate the activities of all GVN agencies, both civilian and military, in expediting civil recovery from the enemy's treacherous Tet campaign. This task force will receive full and immediate support from all US agencies, civil and military.

(C) Vice President Ky was put in charge; the Prime Minister was his Assistant. Ambassador Komer was charged to direct US activities in support of the program. The Vice President's Central Committee was composed of the Ministers of Interior, Refugees, Defense, RD, Health, Economy, Public Works, Information, and the Director General of NP. Under the Central Committee, a coordinating staff was formed to coordinate all required actions.

(C) Recovery organizations were promptly set up at Corps, Province, District, Village, and Hamlet levels.

(C) Vice President Ky established a round-the-clock coordinating center at Independence Palace with General Thang in charge. The coordinating center directed the activities of four GVN/US coordinating staffs drawn from senior officials of the Joint General Staff, civil ministries, and MACV/USAID. The four staffs were Requirements and Allocations, Resource Availability, Information and PSYOP, and Popular Participation.

(C) A US operations center was set up in CORDS at Hq MACV to follow the latest developments in the crisis and relay requests for assistance.

(C) The Central Committee decided that the most urgent tasks they faced were:

1. The return of Saigon, provincial capitals, and district towns to a normal situation at the earliest possible time.

2. The institution of special and immediate measures to open, secure, and, if necessary, repair major lines of communication to permit normal economic activity.

3. The development of a national spirit of unity to accomplish recovery measures. This included mobilization of youth groups to assist in local cleanup and repair operations, inspiring government employees to work without holidays and weekends off until the needs of the people were served, and encouraging persons not affected to share with and assist victims.

4. Special measures to put radio stations back in operation and begin an immediate and intensified information campaign.

5. The protection of personal and property rights of citizens by the prevention of looting and other maltreatment.

6. The provision of food, clothing, and shelter for Tet victims.

Immediate Countermeasures

(C) As the major LOCs were cut, internal trade was coming to a halt. In Saigon/Gia Dinh, commercial life came to a standstill as a result of far-reaching curfew restrictions. Port activity came to a halt and the prospect of an overwhelming shipping backlog became a problem of almost crisis proportions.

(C) In order to alleviate potential food shortages in Saigon, seven rice distribution points were opened on 3 February, a number of which expanded rapidly thereafter. The GVN then released stocks of frozen pork on 8 February. The combination of rice and pork distribution broke the price spiral.

(C) In the meantime, great pressure was brought to bear on the GVN to lift the curfew to the greatest extent possible by Vietnamese business interests that were suffering economic loss due to the curtailed business hours. A red/blue area concept was devised for Saigon to facilitate, as soon as possible, a shift from the priority focus on military security to emphasis on civilian recovery. The 24-hour curfew was lifted in Districts 1 and 2 (the commercial heart of Saigon) on 7 February. The curfew was progressively shortened thereafter, allowing normal commercial activity, although the curfew never resumed its pre-Tet hours.

(C) JGS and MACV placed a high priority on the reopening of roads. Route 4, the lifeline to the Delta, was reopened in early February after some essential repairs. The lack of security, however, prevented a normal flow of goods, and trade was still at a virtual halt. By the middle of February, CRC was successful in establishing armed convoys from Saigon to and from the Delta, allowing a revival of the flow of food and POL. The armed protection was provided by ARVN and US units. In addition, armed barge convoys were started to and from the Delta to Saigon. Both measures were vital -- and effective -- factors in the normalization of internal trade.

Port Operations

(C) One of the most serious problems that confronted the GVN was the curtailment of port operations. Because of curfew restrictions and the absence of personnel, the Port of Saigon was operating at one third capacity by mid-February. The storage capacity of the port was 40,000 tons, plus 30,000 at Petrus Ky, for a total of 70,000 tons. The merchandise in port by mid-February was 12,000 tons, with room for an additional 56,000 tons. The port was discharging cargo at the rate of 5,000 tons a day. By the end of February, there would have been a backlog of 76,000 tons, with another 180,000 tons due in March. The backlog by the end of March would have been 110,000 tons rather than a normal backlog of 30,000 - 40,000. Unless immediate relief was forthcoming, the shipping backlog would have reached unmanageable proportions and present problems similar to those of a year before.

(C) In the face of a mounting logistical crisis, CRC managed to push through the following 12-point program:

1. Bulk cargo to be discharged only from ship's anchored in the river, leaving berth services open for ships carrying general cargo.
2. Removal of restrictions on movement of barges engaged in normal work. Police instructed not to interfere with normal barge movements.
3. Director General of the Saigon Port empowered to take any measures necessary to employ idle barges.
4. Security measures taken for barges transporting commodities to the Delta.
5. Curfew restrictions relaxed in order to permit a full days work at the Port.
6. Saigon Port empowered to permit stevedores to remain in the Port area and work overnight.

7. Additional contracts negotiated by the Central Procurement and Supply Authority (CPSA) with stevedore contractors for the discharge and delivery of rice.
8. CPSA and the GVN General Supply Office directed to transport rice by barge to several additional locations.
9. Importers whose factories and warehouses were destroyed and who had cargo arriving in Saigon were assisted by the GVN in arranging financing and storage areas outside the main port area.
10. Importers with no legitimate excuse for failure to pick up their cargo promptly were to be penalized. If cargo was not picked up in a reasonable time, it was to be seized by the GVN and sold at auction.
11. Customs Bureau directed to keep all transit warehouses in the port area open 24 hours.
12. National Police instructed to take all necessary measures in order to facilitate the free flow of traffic into and out of the Saigon Port area.

(C) In addition, the Saigon/Bien Hoa Railway was reopened to expedite the transshipment of goods, and USAID turned over its Thu Duc warehouses for extra storage capacity. These actions, plus concerted effort on the part of port workers, averted what could have been a major crisis in supply.

Between Offensives

(C) Although great initial strides were made, the momentum of Project RECOVERY faltered during April and May. Resettlement, reconst[illegible]n, and economic revival measures had been taken, but after the first few weeks of action and hustle, the GVN showed signs of bogging down under the strain. There was a critical decline in effectiveness when the program should have been gathering even greater momentum.

(C) There were three principal reasons; first, there was no money because the $VN 600 million allocated for Project RECOVERY had been exhausted; second, there were no people because the Defense Ministry's mobilization procedures were "gutting" the civil ministries; and third, there was no leadership below the Saigon level, since the Corps Commanders no longer had civil responsibilities and government delegates had not been appointed.

(C) The first problem was solved by amending the US/GVN counterpart agreement to shift one billion piasters from the American Chapter portion of the GVN RD budget to the Special Trust Fund; the billion piasters was turned over to the CRC. No Assembly action was required. The second problem was never fully resolved, but under considerable pressure from the Mission a coherent GVN Mobilization Plan was put into effect which averted the disaster that could have resulted from the original GVN measures. Meanwhile, under pressure from the Mission, the Corps Commanders were told in no uncertain terms that whatever the anomaly involved in exercising authority, recovery was not to wither on the vine. This solved the third problem. Significantly, the CRC was sufficiently well organized and coordinated that even the turmoil following the introduction of a new cabinet in May did not interfere with its operations.

The May Offensive and Its Aftermath

(C) The May Offensive again galvanized the GVN. Hardest hit was Saigon/Gia Dinh, where the fighting caused extensive damage. The Saigon economy came to a near halt. All road and water traffic stopped and all schools closed.

(C) Fortunately, the CRC -- still in existence -- served again as the catalyst for GVN/US action. By mid-May, Project RECOVERY could point to a record of considerable achievement since Tet. CRC provided care for a peak number of 750,831 homeless evacuees generated during Tet. By mid-May only 286,000 Tet refugees remained, though 140,000 more had been created after 5 May. Over 33,000 metric tons of food, 66,000 tons of construction materials, and 5,000 tons of miscellaneous food, clothing, blankets, etc. were released from Saigon and region warehouses. Over 483 million piasters in relief and resettlement allowances were paid to nearly 60,000 families. Nearly 580,000 bags of cement and nearly 634,000 sheets of roofing were distributed to nearly 64,000 families.

(C) Various Ministries, the Saigon Mayor, and US agencies cooperated to build temporary housing for about 2,400 families in District 5 while constructing permanent apartments for about 4,000 families. Funds and commodities equivalent to about 738.8 million piasters were donated by 24 foreign countries, the Red Cross, UNICEF, the Vatican, and the World Health Organization (WHO). Even more significant as an indication of local Vietnamese response were the donations from individuals and private organizations which amounted to 510 million piasters.

(C) After the May Offensive the recovery effort moved ahead more quickly and efficiently than was predicted based upon the events of March and April.

Refugees

(C) The number of people requiring temporary relief as a result of the Tet Offensive was reassessed several times; primarily because of a variety of bookkeeping procedures used in the field. The peak number of refugees at any one time (about 5 March) was considered to have been 750,831 although the two offensives together produced well over one million evacuees.

(C) Following the early days of Tet, 150 temporary centers were set up to provide food, money, blankets, medical care, and other items to Tet evacuees. The CRC was determined that the Tet and May Offensive victims would not remain uncompensated or become permanent additions to the refugee rolls. This determination paid off. The number of Tet evacuees declined quickly after February, rose again in May, and then dropped dramatically to a total of about 37,000. Of these, only about 9,000 were in temporary camps while 28,000 were with friends, relatives, or in other self-arranged housing. A refugee statistical summary follows:

	Tet Evacuees			Regular Refugees	
CTZ	Peak Number	In Camp	Out of Camp	In Camp	Out of Camp
I CTZ	167,530	2,017	0	374,887	278,901
II CTZ	169,458	896	1,000	130,666	123,800
III CTZ	183,799	4,910	21,895	45,423	13,756
IV CTZ	230,044	1,200	4,873	6,533	82,775
Saigon				17,043	
National Totals	750,831	9,023	27,768	574,552	499,232

(C) When the immediate problems of temporary shelter, food, and medical care had been addressed, the CRC decided that the relief of Tet (and later May) victims would be of two forms:

1. Relief payments to families whose members had suffered death or injury.

2. Cash (resettlement payments) and commodity allowances to families whose homes had been damaged or destroyed.

(C) Relief payments were made on the basis of $VN 4,000 for every family member over 18 who was killed and $VN 2,000 for those under 18. Benefits in compensation for those who were wounded were fixed at $VN 2,000 for those over 18 and $VN 1,000 for those under 18. By October, the GVN had made about 12,000 payments. In addition, a relief payment of $VN 3,000 was made to each family whose house was more than 50 percent destroyed and a $VN 1,500 payment for those whose homes were less than 50 percent damaged. Eighty-six thousand payments were made.

(C) Resettlement allowances were more complex. The CRC decreed that every family whose house was more than 50 percent destroyed was eligible to receive a $VN 5,000 resettlement payment ($VN 10,000 in Saigon and Hue), ten bags of cement, and ten sheets of aluminum roofing (20 in Hue). There was no commodity assistance or resettlement allowance for families whose homes were less than 50 percent destroyed; they were entitled only to the $VN 1,500 emergency relief payment.

(C) Considerable leeway, however, was left to provincial recovery organizations and local authorities in interpreting the regulations governing the distribution of cash and commodities. For example, while the national CRC decreed that all families with houses destroyed 50 percent or more were eligible to receive the $VN 5,000 resettlement allowance, the provincial authorities could -- and sometimes did -- restrict the payment to those whose houses were damaged considerably more than 50 percent.

(C) In May, it was decided by the CRC to allow cash payments in lieu of cement and roofing. This procedure was used initially in cases where the delivery of commodities to outlying rural areas was too difficult because of the lack of transport or the lack of security. The procedure was extended to include situations where shortages in the supply pipeline would mean an inordinate delay in compensation.

(C) Although nearly all the required commodities were sent to the provinces, the distribution of cash and commodities was slower than desired. Nevertheless, about one million sheets of aluminum roofing and more than 780,000 bags of cement (more than 80% of the original requirement) were distributed.

(C) The chief policy innovation in Project RECOVERY was the provision of cash and commodities to the people so that they themselves could rebuild.

(C) In effect, the reconstruction program launched by the GVN, with cash and commodity assistance, was a national self-help program and a successful one. The quick implementation of the program, the follow-up procedures, and the joint GVN/US post-audit was an almost unique example of how effective the GVN could be when given the proper stimulus.

(C) Moreover, in Saigon and Gia Dinh a public housing program of considerable proportions was launched. A number of temporary housing centers were set up in the immediate aftermath of Tet to accommodate evacuees. There was a danger that these centers might become permanent sites unless continual pressure was brought to complete the permanent housing under construction. The housing consisted basically of GVN and USAID constructed apartment units (some high-rise) of considerable size. The first of these units was ready for occupancy before the end of the year.

Operation DONG TAM

(C) Since the May Offensive was considerably more destructive than Tet, in Saigon special measures were taken to reconstruct large tracts of Districts 8 and 6 and parts of suburban Gia Dinh. This crash GVN/US program to rehouse the victims of the May Offensive, called Operation DONG TAM, was approved by President Thieu in May. It called for:

1. CRC to provide overall policy guidance and coordination.

2. The Ministry of Social Welfare and Refugees to provide technical guidance.

3. Other CRC members to provide support in technical fields. (Ministry of Public Works, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Public Health).

4. The Saigon Mayor and the Gia Dinh Province Chief to execute the program.

5. US/ARVN engineers to clear, develop sites, build some houses, and help with others.

(C) The main US effort was in District 8 (500 units) and Phu Tho Hoa in Gia Dinh (1,000 units). The main ARVN effort was in District 8. The MPW effort was in Thi Nghe (across the canal from the Zoo). There was a joint effort to clear roads, install drainage facilities, sewers, utilities, and otherwise help with reconstruction.

(C) The effort was a significant one for the people of Saigon and Gia Dinh and the units were constructed in record time. The US Army provided a prefab housing plant. (See Chapter IX Logistics for additional information).

Economic Revival

(C) The Tet Offensive had a devastating impact on the healthy economic picture evident at the beginning of 1968. Major LOCs were cut (especially harmful in the Delta), as a result of which urban food supplies from the countryside declined drastically and prices in the cities rose sharply. Conversely, the shipment of POL to the countryside dwindled as the lack of security prevented any significant outward movement. In short, internal trade dwindled. Paddy prices fell by nearly 50 percent, new plantings were threatened, and work on rural investment projects ceased. The revival of economic activity was an immediate objective.

(C) The shortening of curfews, the securing of Route 4, the use of armed convoys, the unsnarling of the port of Saigon and wide tactical sweeps by friendly forces preserved the nation's economic lifelines and provided the impetus for an economic revival.

(C) By April, the country had returned to near pre-Tet levels. Shipments of vegetables from Dalat to Saigon, however, were still only about one third that of the pre-Tet volume and arrived sporadically. Hog shipments from the Delta to Saigon were exceptionally high, with almost 700 head per day transported via truck across the My Thuan ferry. During the summer, the economy was partially stagnant as the country braced itself for the third enemy offensive.

(C) There was still a significant amount of VC harassment along major lines of communication and inter-provincial roads were cut continuously in many parts of the country. Goods were generally available, but prices continued to rise. The Delta rice situation, despite some improvement, was still unsatisfactory. There was a high degree of liquidity in the economy. Nevertheless, progress was made in a number of areas. The War Risk Insurance Legislation was passed by the National Assembly. A 20 percent surtax, receipts from which were to be used for reconstruction, was promulgated. Internal tax receipts were up for the first half of 1968, and transportation obstacles to and from the Delta were diminished.

(C) An Industrial Reconstruction Fund was established to repair and rebuild war-damaged equipment and facilities. Loans were provided at 3 to 4 percent interest for up to ten years. The fund was administered by the IDC and was funded with $VN 1 billion granted by the National Budget and $ 10 million granted by USAID. The first loan of $VN 80 million was made to the Vietnam Cotton Industry Co. (Sicovins).

Financial Summary

(C) The cost of Project RECOVERY was estimated at 4.0 to 5.0 billion piasters in addition to PL 480 commodities, construction materials (cement and roofing), US engineer support for Operation DONG TAM, and various supplies provided the GVN from US sources. Piasters were required to pay cash relief and resettlement allowances and to pay local currency construction cost of urban housing.

Summary

(C) The facts justify an overall verdict that Project RECOVERY was a major success. Without this special action program, and the GVN/US joint CRC machinery which sparked it, the GVN might have been plagued with an unmanageable refugee burden, economic chaos, and serious political problems in the cities. Many mistakes were made, efficiency was often lacking, but the overall GVN performance in reestablishing over a million refugees and renewing urban viability was one of the bright spots of 1968. [42]

ATTACK ON THE VC INFRASTRUCTURE

PHOENIX/PHUNG HOANG Program

(C) The purpose of this program was to coordinate and increase the efforts of both the GVN and US in identifying and capturing, or eliminating, the Viet Cong Infrastructure (VCI) throughout SVN. The PHUNG HOANG (All-Seeing Bird) Program was known as PHOENIX by the Americans assisting in the program.

(C) From the beginning of 1968, the GVN showed a new spirit of resolution in pressing the attack on the VCI. Yet the effectiveness of the PHUNG HOANG Program depended largely on the interest of local officials and the ability of US PHOENIX coordinators. Only in II CTZ was a concerted effort made at regional level to give proper GVN support and impetus to the program.

(C) During the Tet Offensive, District Intelligence and Operations Coordination Centers (DIOCC) were, in many areas, the primary sources of intelligence information. This fact, together with the inadequacy of local efforts by GVN officials to neutralize VCI abetting the attacks, focused new attention on the PHOENIX/PHUNG HOANG Program. Because of the GVN's reluctance to admit the existence of an internal threat, it was not until 1 July that persistent US efforts culminated in the signing by President Thieu of a PHUNG HOANG Decree directing coordinated employment of military and police resources against the VCI.

(C) Some significant local measures antedated publication of the Presidential Decree:

1. The I CTZ Commander formed a combined PHOENIX/PHUNG HOANG working group for planning and coordination and a Corps PHOENIX/PHUNG HOANG Committee to direct anti-infrastructure operations.

2. The II CTZ PHUNG HOANG Committee activated new DIOCCs, such as those in Phu Bon and Ninh Thuan, even though US advisors were not available.

3. The IV CTZ Commander established a Regional Intelligence Coordinating Center, ordered that each District Chief activate a DIOCC, and published instructions for proper civil-military inter-agency coordination in pursuit of PHUNG HOANG objectives.

(C) The III CTZ Commander was reluctant to employ military forces in support of PHUNG HOANG. Still, the obvious need for an energetic program prompted instances of strong local action. For instance, in Gia Dinh, the rate of infrastructure neutralizations quadrupled in May and June over its previous level.

(C) A large viable PHOENIX/PHUNG HOANG organizational and data base existed when the presidential decree was finally signed. By 30 June, there were 189 DIOCC and 32 Provincial Intelligence and Operations Coordination Centers (PIOCC). City Intelligence and Operations Coordination Centers (CIOCC) existed in Da Nang, Cam Ranh Bay, and Vung Tau. A PHOENIX/PHUNG HOANG element was incorporated into the new CMD (Saigon and environs) structure, established during June.

(C) PHOENIX/PHUNG HOANG accounted for 6,078 identified VCI personalities killed, captured, or rallied by 30 June. District and province-level infrastructure killed or captured were steadily rising. [43]

(C) With the signing of the PHUNG HOANG Decree by President Thieu on 1 July, and the issuance of the basic PHUNG HOANG SOP # 1 by the Minister of Interior on 23 July, one of the major obstacles impeding expansion of the PHOENIX/PHUNG HOANG Program was eliminated, i.e., confusion and indecision on the part of local GVN officials stemming from the lack of national policy and guidance. As a result, there was increased organizational and operational activity at all levels during the month of July. A national level Central PHUNG HOANG permanent office was established and opened for business on 27 July.

(C) CG, I CTZ, held a PHUNG HOANG meeting on 20 July, reiterating his full support and ordering those concerned to get moving in accordance with the national decree. The existing mechanism in the field closely conformed to that prescribed in the decree with very little need for alteration. A successful program was underway in Quang Tri where elements of the 1st Cav Div (AM) combined with district forces to conduct VCI-targeted operations every other day.

(C) In II CTZ, anti-VCI operations reached a new high (1,436) that indicated renewed emphasis on program directives. However, the number of VCI captured, killed, or rallied was low for the second straight month. This downward trend may have been attributed to the fact that many of the more vulnerable low-level VCI were apprehended and to intensified security safeguards by the remaining infrastructure members.

(C) With the formation of the PHUNG HOANG Committee in III CTZ during July, all four Corps had committees. The following is a breakdown by Corps of the total number of Province PHUNG HOANG Committees established by the end of July:

	PHUNG HOANG Committees
I Corps	5
II Corps	12
III Corps	8
IV Corps	16
TOTAL	41

(C) Following is the breakdown by Corps of established District Intelligence and Operations Coordinating Centers (DIOCC):

CTZ	ACTIVATED	W/ADVISORS
I	23	23
II	43	42
III	48	45
IV	77	47
TOTAL	191	157

(C) PHOENIX/PHUNG HOANG accounted for 7,369 VCI killed, captured, or rallied by 31 July. Of the 1,291 eliminated in July, three were Regional level, 34 Province level, 122 District level, and 1,132 were Hamlet or Village level.[44]

(C) PHOENIX/PHUNG HOANG had accounted for 8,486 VCI killed, captured, or rallied by 31 August. Of the 1,117 VCI eliminated in August, five were Regional level personalities, the highest monthly total to that time. The VC region is an echelon of command roughly equivalent to the GVN corps. Twenty-eight province level, 100 district level and 984 hamlet and village level VCI were also eliminated. VCI eliminations are tabulated below:

CTZ	Killed	Captured	Rallied	Aug-Total
I	29	177	52	258
II	25	85	15	125
III	22	335*	26	383

CTZ	Killed	Captured	Rallied	Aug-Total
IV	69	110	86	265
CMD	7	73	6	86
TOTAL	152	780*	185	1,117

*Includes 108 VCI actually captured in earlier months, but not reported.

(C) Activities in I CTZ emphasized the operational aspects of the PHOENIX/PHUNG HOANG Program. An integrated corps-wide, military/civil PSYOP campaign directed against the VCI political organization was launched on 26 August. The program got under way with a concerted radio, TV, poster, and leaflet campaign to publicize objectives and identify the "Top 15" most wanted VCI in each of the provinces. A Combined Psychological Operations Order was promulgated jointly by CG, III MAF and CG, I CTZ indicating that PHUNG HOANG continued to get top level support in I Corps.

(C) In II CTZ, the PHUNG HOANG Decree and SOP generated, at least on the surface, an improved atmosphere of cooperation and cohesiveness on the part of concerned GVN agencies. On 24 August, the CG, II CTZ, ordered all province chiefs and mayors to actively support the PHUNG HOANG Program. One part of the order, especially forceful, stated that a II CTZ inspection team was to visit each province and district and that province chiefs would be held directly responsible for any shortcomings in the program.

(C) Following is the breakout by Corps of established DIOCC:[45]

	ACTIVATED	W/ADVISORS
I Corps	26	24
II Corps	44	42
III Corps	42	42
IV Corps	80	45
CMD/Gia Dinh	6	6
Saigon/NP Precincts	9	9
TOTAL	207	168

(C) VCI eliminations during October numbered 1,457. CTZ totals were:

I CTZ	-	393
II CTZ	-	224
III CTZ	-	160
IV CTZ	-	585
Saigon/CMD	-	95
TOTAL		1,457

(C) I CTZ Province Chiefs, in response to national guidance, focused on the VCI in target hamlets and "liberation committees". Quang Tin PRU netted 25 VCI during the period, and operations in Quang Ngai resulted in the capture of a number of liberation committee members, to include one entire hamlet committee. Known "liberation committee" members neutralized countrywide totaled 72.

(C) Province Chiefs in II CTZ also concentrated their anti-VCI effort on target hamlets. In III CTZ, during October, the Corps PHUNG HOANG Committee took the initiative and launched several large operations. The most successful was in Hau Nghia Province against the 83d VC Rear Services Group which netted over 50 members, five 5-ton trucks, and large quantities of other materiel and supplies. IV CTZ reported good results against VCI in target hamlets during the first two weeks of November. [46]

(C) During November, a record number of 2,338 members of the VCI were neutralized -- 60 percent more than in October. CTZ totals were:

CTZ	Killed	Captured	Rallied	TOTAL
I	179	521	70	770
II	51	215	29	295
III	51	398	47	496
IV	128	429	220	777
TOTAL	409	1,563	366	2,338

(C) By the end of 1968, the breakout of established DIOCCs was as follows:

	ACTIVATED	W/ADVISORS
I Corps	30	30
II Corps	49	49
III Corps and CMD	62*	62*

	ACTIVATED	W/ADVISORS
IV Corps	87	68
TOTAL	228	209

* Includes one DIOCC advisor for each of the 9 police precincts in Saigon/Cholon.

(C) VCI neutralization for the year totaled 15,776, including 2,255 killed, 11, 291 captured and 2,230 rallied. Of the total, about 13 percent (2,050) served in positions at district level or higher. The remaining (about 87 percent) served at hamlet and village echelons, and most were functionaries who probably were easily replaced. [47]

(C) Minister of Interior Khiem made field trips in December to I and II Corps and met with all the province chiefs and their staffs to show direct Saigon-level interest in the anti-VCI effort. He was able to praise I Corps as a leader in the campaign and exhorted II Corps, which had not achieved good results, to improve. More emphasis was given to targeting specific VCI as the enemy became more wary and many easy targets had been hit and eliminated or scattered. The Minister pointed out the need for better training of DIOCC personnel. To this end the PHOENIX course for newly assigned advisors at Seminary Camp in Vung Tau was highly beneficial. Minister Khiem was invited to observe the course in anticipation that the GVN would organize a similar training facility for personnel associated with PHUNG HOANG. The Minister pushed inspections of field operations to raise the quality of the PHUNG HOANG effort and his trips were part of his overall plans to upgrade the attack on the VCI. [48]

CHIEU HOI

(C) The purpose of the Chieu Hoi (open arms) program was to encourage VC/NVA personnel to defect to the GVN. It included receiving, quartering, training, indoctrinating, motivating, and, in some cases, employing those who did defect. An individual who came over to the GVN under this program was called a Hoi Chanh (one who returned to the path of right).

(C) During 1968, 18,171 former North Vietnamese and Viet Cong became citizens of the Government of Vietnam through the Chieu Hoi program. In 1967 and early 1968, the Chieu Hoi rate declined steadily, with reports by returnees of increased internal security and specific counter Chieu Hoi measures being taken by Viet Cong and NVA forces. Many returnees also reported extensive indoctrination and training in preparation for increased military activity.

(C) In conjunction with the Tet holiday, allied and GVN psychological operations elements prepared to launch the 1968 Chieu Hoi Tet Campaign to increase inducement efforts during the holidays. In prior years the Tet campaigns had been highly successful and had resulted in a substantial increase in the number of Hoi Chanh. In spite of this, the enemy's Tet Offensive and the period of confusion and uncertainty which followed reduced the March monthly rate to 599, the lowest monthly figure since April 1965. It was from this low point that the program was to make an impressive recovery for the remainder of the year, culminating with 3,148 returnees during December.

(C) During the Tet Offensive, Chieu Hoi returnees distinguished themselves on numerous occasions in defense and relief operations, often heroically. The Armed Propaganda Teams of the Chieu Hoi Ministry, lightly armed groups of Hoi Chanh whose primary mission is to spread the Chieu Hoi message in rural areas, acquitted themselves very well in combat with VC/NVA forces, particularly in Long An, Vinh Long, Go Cong, and Ba Xuyen.

(C) As a result of the enemy offensive, Chieu Hoi facilities at Quang Tri, Thua Thien, Kontum, Pleiku, Vinh Long, and Kien Hoa provinces suffered extensive damage and required reconstruction.

(C) During the year, the numbers of Armed Propaganda Team (APT) members increased substantially from 2,664 in January to 3,854 at year's end. In addition, the use of APT accompanying regular forces on operations became common practice and increased face-to-face inducement efforts were instrumental in maintaining a steady influx of returnees. Coordinated efforts by military and civilian elements in the selection of potential Hoi Chanh areas and the execution of civic action projects deserve a good deal of credit for the post-Tet recovery and steady increase in the number of ralliers. Toward the end of the year, over 30% of all ralliers had been at least partially induced to return because of APT efforts.

(C) Prior to the enemy's May offensive, Col Tran Van Dac rallied bringing with him detailed information on planned tactical operations. Much of this information was used to thwart the enemy offensive. LTC Phan Mau of the 165th Viet Cong Regiment also returned and provided substantial exploitable intelligence. Other high ranking returnees included the Deputy Commander of the VC Quyet Thang Regiment, the Deputy Commander of the Phu Loi Battalion, and the Deputy Commander of the Tay Do Battalion. On 4 June 1968, the largest single unit defection occurred when 140 odd members of the Quyet Thang Regiment turned themselves in to Vietnamese Marines near Saigon.

(C) Other Hoi Chanh provided significant information leading to the capture of the 22d NVA Regiment Hqs in Thua Thien province. Two VC ordnance officers led 9th ARVN Division troops to an arms workshop and cache in Bac Lieu province on 10 August 1968. This operation led to the capture of 10 tons of ammunition, 200 rifles, one pack howitzer, and a large rocket launcher. Most of the large finds of 122mm rockets located by US units around Saigon were uncovered as a result of the work of Kit Carson Scouts and Armed Propaganda Team members. Numerous arm caches, food stores, and military equipment supplies were captured by Allied forces led by Hoi Chanh volunteers.

(C) In July 1968, Minister Nguyen Xuan Phong was succeeded by Minister Nguyen Ngoc An. The Ministry for Chieu Hoi made significant progress during the year in improving administrative techniques in most phases of the program, particularly those in provincial operations. The capacity of Chieu Hoi centers increased from 6,610 to 11,960 during the year. The number of resettlement hamlets also increased with 9,616 families residing in such hamlets in December compared with 7,525 in January. The Ministry also paid out awards to Hoi Chanh who either led friendly forces to arms caches or brought arms with them totaling over 23 million piasters, an all time high in the history of the program.

(C) In addition to employment as Armed Propaganda Team members, many thousands of Hoi Chanh contributed to the defense of their country in RVN military and paramilitary organizations. As the result of the GVN mobilization, the deferment for Hoi Chanh was reduced from one year from the time they entered a Chieu Hoi center to six months from the time they left a center. Former returnees were integrated into the RVNAF as ordinary recruits with no stigma or discrimination involved.

(C) In the Kit Carson Scout program, many Hoi Chanh volunteered to serve as guides with Allied forces. This effort expanded during the year as the demand for scouts increased. There were 244 scouts at the start of January compared with 1,517 at the end of the year. As an indication of their military activity, KCS suffered 310 casualties since the program began until the end of 1968 - of this, 71 were KIA. The contributions of these former enemy in pointing out booby traps, common enemy techniques, possible ambush sites, and arms caches saved many lives. The actions of the scouts and the devotion they have repeatedly shown their new comrades-in-arms have not been surpassed by any other military organization in the Vietnamese War.

(C) The exploitation of Hoi Chanh for intelligence and psychological operations increased during the year reflecting a greater recognition of the value of the program by RVNAF and Allied forces. Reports indicated that Hoi Chanh consistently cooperated freely with friendly forces in providing valuable intelligence and frequently led operations which resulted in great losses of resources for enemy forces. Shortly after coming in, many returnees wrote leaflets and made tapes appealing to their friends to join them through the Chieu Hoi program. Quick reaction facilities often permitted such appeals to be disseminated to enemy areas within a few hours.

(C) Enemy forces reacted strongly against the program in several ways in an attempt to reduce its effectiveness. Propaganda lists spread elaborate stories of the torture and death of Hoi Chanh by their "cantors." Over twenty attacks on Chieu Hoi centers and hamlets were recorded during the year, (and assassinations of former Hoi Chanh). Delta provinces reported the VC slogan that "killing one Hoi Chanh is better than killing seven Americans." Internal security was increased to such a degree that in some units weapons were issued only before an operation and individuals were required to have their other two cellmates with them at all times. Political indoctrination sessions were often solely devoted to counter Chieu Hoi effort.

(C) In spite of these obstacles the rate continued to rise with highest monthly input being 3,148 for December, a remarkable recovery from the 599 reported in March 1968.

(C) The Accelerated Pacification Campaign, which started 1 November 1968 contributed to the increased input, providing inducement efforts with more potential ralliers. Armed Propaganda Teams and Vietnamese Information Service Teams were very active during the campaign in face-to-face inducement efforts with the friends and family of potential ralliers. In most provinces there was a close correlation between areas recently pacified and sources of returnees.

(C) The success of Chieu Hoi operations and the APC program vividly demonstrated its value in many ways. The strong recovery from the Tet Offensive and continued progress illustrated that the Chieu Hoi program had not only shown its value among the Vietnamese and their allies but that it had become a strong institution within Vietnamese society for reconciliation and rehabilitation. 49

ECONOMIC REVIVAL

(C) The economic picture in Vietnam changed radically during the first half of 1968. On 12 February, a check showed the retail price index 58 percent above that of 27 January. This peak was followed, however, by an almost uninterrupted decline over the following seven weeks as supply conditions in Saigon were gradually restored. By 18 March, the index approximated the 27 January level. Then the VC May offensive and the subsequent rocketing of Saigon resulted in a second set-back to the gradually recovering economy. Thus at mid-year, the Vietnamese economy still presented a picture of sluggishness. New investment activity was limited and some capital flight took place. The main problem was to help the private sector to recover and keep going despite the risks and uncertainties of war. To help, the Lower House passed the War Risk Insurance Bill, and began consideration of the Industrial Reconstruction Loan Fund. [50]

(C) On 4 July, President Thieu signed into law the War Reconstruction Surtax Bill. It was expected that this 20 percent surtax measure would bring the GVN 1.5 billion piasters in additional revenue in 1968. Legislation was signed on 12 July authorizing the War Risk Insurance System, a reform strongly supported by the US Mission. A special insurance fund was established to cover material losses and damage by acts of war to industrial and commercial enterprises considered vital to the national economy. Loss of human life was not covered under the plan, and eligible enterprises were required to pay a premium set by the GVN in order to obtain the insurance. All industrial and commercial enterprises granted reconstruction loans were required to apply for and participate in the insurance scheme. The issuance of policies under this insurance system was carried out by commercial insurance firms designated by the Minister of Finance. [51]

Piaster Expenditure Reduction Program, FWMAF

(U) This program had been established to assist in controlling the inflationary impact of large numbers of US and other Free World Forces on the economy of SVN and to help foster a healthy economic environment which enhanced Free World combat successes. It established policies and procedures and assigned responsibilities for an aggressive program to reduce piaster expenditures by DOD agencies. It included reducing both official and personal piaster spending by military and civilian personnel without degrading military effectiveness. DOD, through the JCS, established an annual piaster expenditure limitation controlled in semiannual increments. CINCPAC managed this program and issued limitations to MACV.

(U) Piaster expenditures during the January to March quarter were the lowest in the history of the program. The overall expenditures were 7550 billion piasters compared with the 8680 billion for the previous quarter. Operation and maintenance expenditures were up 110 million piasters during the period for a total of 4662 billion piasters. Construction expenditures were up 90 million from the last quarter of 1968 to a total of 889 million piasters but continued to remain considerably lower than the 1032 billion quarterly average of 1967. Personal piaster expenditures dropped to the lowest point ever, accounting for the overall decrease in the quarterly piaster expenditures. The total expenditures in this category were 1999 billion, down 1332 billion from the previous quarter. The per capita expenditures, when converted to US dollars were $12.64 in January, $7.51 in February, and $9.09 in March. The drastic decrease

in personal piaster expenditures was directly attributable to the Tet Offensive and the curfew that remained in effect for some time.

(C) Piaster expenditures during the 2d quarter of 1968 were 8.317 billion piasters compared with 7.550 billion for the previous quarter. Decreased tactical activity, extended curfews, and increased security accounted for these increases. Operation and maintenance expenditures were up 508 million piasters during the period for a total of 5.170 billion piasters. Construction expenditures were up 149 million to a total of 1.039 billion, slightly higher than the quarterly average of 1967. Personal piaster expenditures increased only 109 million piasters from the 1st quarter of 1968. Although personal expenditures were up from this period, they were still considerably lower than any quarter in 1967. The per capita expenditures were $3.84 for April, $10.03 for May, and $10.79 for June.

(C) Piaster expenditures during the 3d quarter of 1968 were 9.136 billion piasters compared with 8.317 billion for the previous quarter. Operation and maintenance expenditures were up 631 million piasters during the period for a total of 5.801 billion piasters. Construction expenditures were up 7 million to a total of 1.146 billion, the highest since the 1st quarter of 1968. Personal piaster expenditures increased only 64 million piasters from 2d quarter of 1968. Although the personal expenditures of 2.171 billion piasters were up for this quarter, they were considerably lower than any quarter in 1967. The per capita piaster expenditure data (in dollars) for the 3d quarter 1968 was as follows:

Month	Military	Civilian	Total Population
July	$7.62	$194.35	$10.49
Aug	5.99	293.76	10.48
Sep	5.26	202.34	8.42

(U) Piaster expenditures for the last three months of 1968 were 9.056 billion piasters, a slight drop from the previous quarter. The MACV piaster expenditure ceiling for the period 1 July to 31 December 1968 had been established at 18.20 billion piasters; expenditures for the period totaled 18.19 billion piasters. Operations and maintenance expenditures increased to 6.160 billion piasters while construction expenditures dropped some 117 million to 1.047 billion piasters. Personal piaster expenditures decreased to a new recorded low of 1.846 billion piasters. The per capita piaster expenditure date (in dollars) for the 4th quarter 1968 was as follows:

Month	Military	Civilian	Total Population
Oct	$5.07	$198.77	$8.30
Nov	5.36	231.07	9.23
Dec	4.29	181.75	7.40

The military and total population expenditure for December was the lowest recorded. Expenditure data was recorded separately by military and civilian since October 1967. [52]

REVOLUTIONARY DEVELOPMENT PEOPLE'S GROUPS AND URBAN SELF-DEFENSE GROUPS

(C) During the Tet Offensive, and immediately thereafter, increasing numbers of civilians and civic organizations in urban areas appealed to the GVN for arms to defend themselves, their families, and their property from VC attack. During the brief period when the Vice President had charge of the program, a directive was issued to all province chiefs and city mayors authorizing them to develop programs. This resulted in almost immediately in the initiation of a wide variety of programs in urban areas, limited in effectiveness by the very small number of weapons released. At the national level, all of these efforts were allowed to go undirected and uncoordinated. The only significant project involved two weeks of training for about 2,000 cadre for assignment in Saigon neighborhoods to organize the people for self-defense to include the mobilization of the people into self-help projects and participation in neighborhood self-defense groups. This project was to serve as a model for adoption in other cities, but died on the vine. It was roughly estimated by the GVN that the total number of people involved in urban civil defense activities of one kind of another, as of the date of the Mobilization Law, was about 176,000.

(C) Since 1967, RD cadre had the task of organizing and training self-defense groups in RD hamlets. Province chiefs failed in most cases to provide weapons needed to complete the program. A rough estimate was that, as of the date of the Mobilization Law, only about 6,000 arms had been provided to about 23,000 people organized and trained to use them. [53]

(C) On 11 July 1968, the Prime Minister issued a decree creating a National People's Self-defense Committee, chaired by himself and with the Interior Minister as Secretary General. This decree gave to a single agency (the Interior Ministry) the authority needed to develop and execute an effective program and insured the program support it required from other agencies. The Interior Minister moved effectively to organize, train, and arm the maximum number of People's Self-defense Groups especially in Saigon and other large cities.

(C) In cities, the basic component of the People's Self-defense Groups was a neighborhood force of 35 to 50 men which stood guard duty at night against the threat of small groups of VC seeking access. The force had a capability to call a police or military reaction force to defend against larger attacks. The force also had the role of defending against terrorism by possible clandestine VC apparatus residing inside the city. In rural hamlets near the city's boundaries, the force had the mission of alerting friendly security forces to the movement of major enemy units.

(C) In addition to the neighborhood force, a People's Self-defense Group had two other components -- groups of people engaged in emergency planning and groups engaged in neighborhood improvement projects. The program added an increment of security to the neighborhood or hamlet, where none existed, and had the broader objective of identifying an involving the people with the government and the national defense effort.

(C) The program moved ahead rapidly and gained momentum. The Defense Ministry made an initial allocation of about 55,000 weapons for the national program and agreed to follow these with additional allocations, as needed. The first allocation under the new program was distributed principally to Saigon and other large cities. [54]

(C) August was designated as "Self-defense Month." Top GVN leaders displayed their interest and enlisted popular support at 34 ceremonies kicking off local programs with the issuance of weapons for self-defense groups. Talks by key GVN officials over radio and TV underscored top-level interest in the program. During the month, the number of members of Self-defense groups rose to 421,706 from 200,370 at end-July. Self-defense groups gave an increasingly good account of themselves in action. Examples: during enemy attacks in I CTZ self-defense members killed 70 enemy and wounded 70 others in 10 separate engagements; self-defense groups gave the first warning of the enemy attacks on Tay Ninh; and in Da Nang they contributed to the defense of the city during the 23 August attacks.

(C) During the month, Minister of Interior Khiem requested weapons for People's Self-defense Groups based on an original plan of 2,000 weapons for each province and autonomous city, and 10,000 for Saigon. This would establish the national total at approximately 110,000 weapons. However, new priorities that stressed urban defense had been developed, resulting in more than the 2,000 maximum being allocated to large provinces and more than 10,000 being allocated to Saigon.

(C) Of the 600,000 programmed participants, about 100,000 did not receive weapons. They were involved in first aid (girls), firefighting, ammunition supply, and communications. The Ministry applied a formula of one weapon (on a rotational basis) for every three arms-bearing members; of the 500,000 members able to bear arms, there was a long-run program requirement for 167,000 weapons. By August, about 134,000 members had received training and close to 40,000 self-defense members (both rural and urban) had been armed. These figures reflected an increase of 20,000 civilians armed during August and a large increase in total membership.

(C) In spite of the wide publicity given the program and the significant number of weapons allocated to provinces and cities, the distribution of these weapons to self-defense forces by some province chiefs and mayors was very low. For example, in Saigon, a high priority target of the program, only 354 were distributed to self-defense forces during August. [55]

(C) National membership increased by more than 110,000 to 931,000 during November. Trained self-defenders rose by 99,000 to 432,000. President Thieu re-emphasized the responsibility of the province and district chiefs to develop People's Self-defense and said they should go ahead without waiting for detailed instructions from Saigon. He also noted that the province chief must decide between the two risks of being criticized for not handing out arms or being criticized if some of the arms were misused later. He urged the province chiefs to accept the latter risk and to get on with the job. [56]

(C) Expansion of the People's Self-defense Force received considerable attention during December with emphasis on getting more arms to organized and trained groups in hamlets. End-of-year figures showed that membership totaled 1,008,000 with 517,000 people trained and 251,000 armed. Some 173,000 weapons had been allocated with 107,000 actually distributed. The GVN issued arms on the basis of one weapon per three men on the theory that members were on part-time duty and would pass weapons from one man to the next as they relieved each other. People's Self-defense losses since the beginning of the program to 31 December totaled: 201 killed, 295 wounded, 93 missing, and 133 weapons lost. [57]

REVOLUTIONARY DEVELOPMENT CADRE AND SONG TAN RD

(U) Revolutionary Development (RD) Cadre were Vietnamese nationals who were trained at the Revolutionary Cadre Training School at Vung Tau and became members of 59-man teams. The RD teams were sent out into the countryside to live in the hamlets and villages to train and gain support of the rural people in favor of the Saigon Government. Song Tan (mountain) Cadre were Montagnards who were given special training dealing with problems relating to the Montagnard people and sent to work among their ethnic group.

(C) During the first six months of 1968, the RD Cadre program experienced a number of serious strains and faced substantial obstacles to any early achievement of 1968 pacification goals. Statistically, the program showed some gains, with an increase in the number of RD groups from 555 to 669 and a corresponding increase in field strength from 29,120 to 35,626. An additional 9,912 cadre were in training at the National Training Center.

Cadre Strength

	RD Cadre		Song Tan (Mountain)	
CORPS	Teams	Strength	Teams	Strength
I	157	9,183	10	654
II	181	9,607	85	4,976
III	102	5,683	13	714
IV	229	11,153	0	0
Subtotal	669	35,626	108	6,344
In Training		9,912		667
TOTAL		45,538		7,011

(C) The VC/NVA continued to maintain pressure on RD groups in the countryside as evidenced by the increase in the number of VC incidents involving RD groups. For example, 1,015 incidents occurred during the first six months of 1968 with 516 KIA, as compared to 803 incidents during the last six months of 1967 with 378 KIA. Higher casualties, plus high desertion rates, frustrated the battle to cut back on attrition, which remained at approximately 31 percent. [58]

(C) The number of RD groups increased by 21 in July to 690. The actual field strength increased by 1,819 cadre. Song Tan Revolutionary Development groups remained at 108, but the total number of cadre increased by 231 to 6,575. RD desertions, at 403 in July, were the lowest since February. Only 11 of the RD and Song Tan Revolutionary Development groups

were not working in hamlets at the end of the month but in many areas the security situation was such as to preclude cadre from performing other than a security role, and many groups withdrew to outposts at night.[59]

(C) The number of RD cadre groups increased by 14 in August to 704. Song Tan RD cadre remained constant with 108 groups. The average strength of the RD groups was 52, and of the Song Tan groups, 60. During August, many groups reported that they had finished their assigned tasks and were ready to move on. The wisdom of this move into second-phase 1968 hamlets was debated in some provinces, where both Americans and Vietnamese felt that the progress made had been mostly "paper progress", and that there was a genuine need for the groups to remain longer in their present hamlets. The fact that August saw the highest number of VC incidents directed against the RD and Song Tan RD groups--227--reinforced that viewpoint. Eighty-four cadre were KIA, 250 WIA, and three MIA. The Cadre groups were responsible for killing 140 VC and capturing five.

(C) Fifteen Seabee teams, consisting of 13 men each, were deployed in priority provinces in II, III and IV CTZ. In August they worked on a total of 131 projects including provincial maintenance ships, a high school, market places, refugee housing, dispensaries, and elementary classrooms. Based on the success of these teams and their popularity with the rural people, 15 more were requested for 1969 but only three had been approved at this time.[60]

(C) By November, 774 RD groups (59-man type) were functioning. During the same month RD losses were 656 from all causes--the lowest since January 1968. Desertions were low, only nine per month. Song Tan losses amounted to 142 cadre and the desertion rate was 15. A special effort was made to reduce RD desertions in Lam Dong which had climbed to above 80 per 1,000 during mid-1968. There were only three deserters in November, less than one per thousand.

(C) A standard plan for converting 59-man groups to 30-man groups was developed by the Ministry of Revolutionary Development with advisory assistance. Each 30-man group consisted of a six-man command element and three eight-man operational teams. An operational team had two elements--a four-man militia element and a four-man reconstruction element. The militia element was concerned with self-defense and security operations, while the reconstruction element dealt with self-help, self-government, and assisted with village development. Permanent assignement of these smaller groups to villages, and hamlets in the villages, greatly increased the previous GVN capacity to extend pacification and development.[61]

NEW LIFE DEVELOPMENT

General

(U) The New Life Development (NLD) Programs in 1968 were those as developed in the Ministry of Revolutionary Development (MORD) calendar year plan. Under this plan was a broad range of program support for rural areas that included self-help, agriculture, small irrigation, animal husbandry, fisheries, public health, education, and roads and bridges. In 1968, the programmed piaster budget was 4.4 billion.

(U) January 1968 was a month of progress in the NLD program. As indicated by Self-Help projects completed, this was the first year in which the Vietnamese province officials seemed intent on getting the calendar year program off to a good start. However, progress nearly ceased with the onset of the Tet Offensive 31 January 1968. As a result, February and March were months of very little progress in the major NLD programs. Instead, most of the activities, both in the field and in Saigon centered around Project RECOVERY. However, in many provinces, officials from the different technical service offices worked well together on Project RECOVERY Committies, developing to a much greater extent than in the past the cooperative attitudes which CORDS personnel had long tried to foster.

(U) Beginning in April, attention began to be refocused on the NLD program areas. By May and June, despite a shortage of available USAID commodities because of the heavy drain of all commodities to meet Project RECOVERY needs, almost all NLD programs began to move ahead. In general the prognosis at that time was that the major 1968 goals would be met.

(U) In September, the program activities under the CORDS NLD Division were reorganized under several other divisions, with the Self-Help & Seabees program placed under the Revolutionary Development Division. However, for purposes of continuity, the program elements shown below describe the activities for the full calendar year so that this information can be contained under one heading.

Hamlet Schools

(C) Following a slow start, due to the Tet Offensive, the Rural Elementary Classroom Construction Program showed good progress. As of 31 December 1968, GVN province officials had reported 2,036 schools completed and 497 still in progress of the 2,533 programmed by Provvinces. There was no cutback due to the Tet Offensive.

Self-Help

(U) After a serious setback at Tet, which reduced Self-Help program goals from 21,000 to 16,500 projects for the year, the Self-Help program slowly picked up momentum, receiving additional impetus and support via the Accelerated Pacification Campaign. An increased sophistication of evaluation techniques resulted in the adoption of new indicators of program progress. People's contributions constituted about 40% of total project value for 1968. Total value of completed projects exceeded one billion piasters, with eleven million beneficiaries. At end of December there were ten thousand completed projects and five thousand still in progress. These unfinished projects will be completed as a part of the 1969 Village Self Development Program.

Provincial Roads and Bridges

(C) The MORD Roads and Bridges program for 1968 got off to a poor start, and it appeared that during May and June the situation would get worse before it got better. The four main reasons for poor performance of this program, in the order of their importance, were: inadequate security, loss of manpower due to mobilization (ten Provincial Public Works Chiefs were mobilized in IV Corps alone), the high prices and scarcity of road materials (rock), and equipment country-wide. At year's end, despite some efforts made towards solving some of the major problems, this activity was less than acceptable country-wide. Roads and bridges remained for 1969 a major priority area and will receive considerably more support than 1968.

Military Support of Pacification

(U) The Military Support of Pacification AIK budget available to CORDS in 1968 totaled $VN 1,500,000 of which $VN 1,113,000 was expended as of 31 December. These expenditures were used to support pacification programs in the areas of Refugee, Chieu Hoi, Detainee, Attack on VC Infrastructure, PSYOPS, Health, Education, Agriculture, Public Works and Village/Hamlet Administration. This budget first became available in September of 1967 and has proven to be very useful in supplementing the funds made available by the GVN to support their development programs in the field.

Civic Action

(U) During the period January through December, the pacification program was supplemented by the U. S. Military Civic Action Program. The military contributed 605,043 man-days, materials valued at 466,720,891 piasters, and voluntary contributions of 77,393,959 piasters. Approximately 19% of the total man-days and 36% of the total value of materials contributed directly assisted refugees.

Over View

(C) By the end of July, pre-Tet levels had generally been regained in most of the NLD program areas. During the balance of the year, however, all programs suffered increasingly from shortages of key Vietnamese personnel due to mobilization. Additional problems which emerged as areas requiring remedial action were:

1. Social attitudes and institutions too inflexible to cope simultaneously with both the complex requirements of a modern society and an intensified war effort;

2. Inadequate capabilities in the field of transportation, communications, and capital management;

3. Excessive bureaucratic controls and government involvement in a broad range of economic activities which properly were a function of private enterprise.

(C) Rice shipments from Delta provinces were down for July. The main reason for slow shipment and the holding of large stores of rice by Delta merchants was more a matter of low market prices rather than poor LOC security. As long as there was a large stockpile of imported rice in Saigon, prices remained low. The Ministry of Economy attempted to increase rice shipments to northern provinces in order to ease the glut in Saigon and to build up provincial stocks to a three-month level of supply. Of more long-range concern was the drop in hectarage under rice cultivation during the planting season. In most provinces rice planting was down, in some drastically. Dinh Tuong province reported a major drop in the amount of riceland under cultivation. The situation there was said to be the result of destruction of irrigation canals by military operations, low rainfall rates (which could have been compensated for if irrigation systems had been made workable), and low market prices.

(U) At year end, the overall program accomplishments were approximately 80% of those planned. The impetus gained after May continued through the balance of the year and was capped

by the Accelerated Pacification Campaign (APC) that began in November, 1968 in which over 1000 hamlets were upgraded, and in which over 1500 APC Self-Help projects were accomplished in the three month period between November 1968 and February 1969. [62]

PSYCHOLOGICAL OPERATIONS

(C) There was extensive damage to communications media (both property and equipment) resulting from the Tet Offensive. Even the most confirmed pessimist had to be gratified at the surprising tempo of recovery of some of the institutions involved. In some cases, radio stations were again on the air only hours after their transmitters had been silenced. Recovery from material losses progressed at a satisfactory rate and there were some additions to or improvement of installations which remained intact during Tet. During this period, aid to the Vietnamese Information Service (VIS) was massive. Ironically however, no sooner had most losses been made up when the new draft law was promulgated resulting in great inroads on VIS staffing patterns and a resultant loss of momentum in many areas. [63]

(C) Though the people of SVN were inured to fluctuations in the military situation, the increase in territorial security and the decrease in enemy activity brought a significant improvement to the psychological environment. Of course, concern over the possibility of a new and major VC/NVA offensive was dominant in the populous area of III and IV Corps. Continuing suspicions of US intentions were observable in I and III Corps, but a lessening of such suspicions was reported elsewhere. The intensive PSYOP campaign conducted to inform the people about the Honolulu Conference brought favorable reaction in II and IV Corps and mixed reaction elsewhere. [64]

(C) By mid-November, GVN radio and TV programs gave increasing time to APC themes and activities. Major attention was devoted to instilling people's confidence in ultimate victory in response to the Information Ministry's "Determined to Win" campaign. The Ministry also sent a directive to the VIS Chiefs urgently ordering all their information actions to be combined under the APC and maximum use to be made of the mobile information-propaganda teams to participate in joint operations with local security forces in the hamlets. VIS chiefs also were directed to reduce the number of information cadre behind desks at province and district level, and assign them to mobile teams. JUSPAO produced material in support of APC which flowed steadily into provinces from stocks prepositioned earlier at corps. [65]

(C) A system to measure physical aspects of PSYOP in target hamlets was set up by JUSPAO and CORDS based on seven criteria:

1. NEC radio (which had community address capability) in place.
2. Community TV in place.
3. Information office established.
4. VIS or VIS-trained cadre assigned.
5. Hamlet bulletin board set up.

6. Province or district newsletters circulated.

7. Posters and leaflets distributed.

As of 6 December in target hamlets, 47 NEC radios were in place, 29 TV sets in place, 137 information offices established, 185 VIS or V... trained cadre in action, 188 hamlet bulletin boards, 584 hamlets receiving newsletters, and posters and leaflets distributed in 698 hamlets. 66

(C) PSYOP activities were hard to measure in meaningful terms. In part, the increased Chieu Hoi rate resulted from better PSYOP. There was, since the start of the APC, a significant increase in face-to-face communication by government officials as visits to target hamlets became an expected part of province and district chief duties. All four RVN Corps Commanders frequently visited pacification activities in the field in the latter half of 1968 -- much more so than in the past. In fact, there were complaints from the field about too many visitors. Field trips by GVN Ministers became much more commonplace as Ministers had to move fast to keep up with President Thieu.

(C) To overcome inadequacies in the VIS budget for field activities, CORDS made 28.4 million piasters available from AIK funds for PSYOP activities at province and below -- 7.6 million were spent in November and December. Those funds, added to the AIK pacification fund already available through field advisors, spurred information and psychological efforts. Pacification fund expenditures for PSYOP during November and December totaled 18 million piasters.

(C) By end of December, target hamlets had 173 information offices completed, 123 TV sets installed, 306 bulletin boards erected, and 633 VIS cadre assigned. Newsletters, posters, and leaflets continued to be distributed to provinces and districts, with 30 hamlets receiving all input items. 67

GVN LEADERSHIP

(C) Perhaps the most serious -- and telling--flaw in the GVN/Allied effort was the conspicuous shortage of good Vietnamese leadership (both civil and military) at all levels of command. The problems of GVN leadership centered around charges of corruption and incompetence. The anti-corruption program was an integral part of the pacification guidelines of 1968. While the program emphasized measures to be taken to combat various areas of corruption and systems within which corrupt practices existed, its main stress was on the selection of the best possible leaders. Prime Minister Huong stated to the press that he saw corruption as the major problem facing the government.

(C) A list of 44 province and district level officials removed during the period January through June 1968 is analyzed below.

Corps Breakdown

CTZ	Province Chief	District Chief	Total
I	1	7	8
II	5	2	7
III	2	8	10
IV	8	11	19
TOTAL	16	28	44

Reasons for Removal

	Province Chief	District Chief	Total
Corrupt/Inefficient	12	5	17
Reassigned	1	6	7
Died	1	3	4
Poor Health	1	0	1
Discharge	0	1	1
Unknown	1	13	14
TOTAL	16	28	44

No officials from Corps, large cities, or Saigon appeared on the list; however, a few officials below district level indicated the broad scope of the GVN anti-corruption campaign. Nineteen officials reported as relieved for cause from IV Corps was the highest number for any Corps area. Of the 44 officials relieved country-wide, 17 were engaged or suspected to be engaged in corrupt practices.[68]

(C) During July, one more province chief and 26 district chiefs were relieved for cause. None of the district chiefs were reassigned to other positions of responsibility; all received retraining at various ARVN training centers. During August, 24 district chiefs were replaced.[69]

(C) In August, the Ministry of Interior started placing a great deal of emphasis on the strengthening of village administration and requested a full-time training advisor and a local taxation advisor to help in formulating specialized training programs in local taxation and security. At a cabinet meeting on 28 August, the Prime Minister underlined the emphasis on strengthening local government and village development in a "two-phased program emphasizing security and development" as part of the pacification guidelines for 1969. Special programs were

developed in several provinces throughout the country to build up the village as the basic unit of local government. Agreement was reached to deploy RD cadre by village, under village administrative control, and progressively to return PF to their villages of origin for local defense.

(C) As part of the program to improve territorial security and provide additional support to local government, the existing village/hamlet radio system was expanded by more than 15,000 radios to a total of 27,000 radios. This system was operated by the Combined Telecommunications Directorate with support from the Public Safety Division of MACCORDS.

(C) A Saigon Civil Assistance Group was formed to apply single management to US assistance in the capital city. Priority programs of Saigon Civil Assistance Group included: providing guidance for the self-defense program; unification of self-help and civic action programs under an orderly and responsive administrative structure; identification of unregistered refugees and development of a responsive relief capability; and support for local community development programs, especially in the field of housing. In addition, Saigon Civil Assistance directed its efforts toward improvement of administrative efficiency and responsiveness and continued work on such critical problem areas as garbage collection, bus service, and other public services unique to urban areas.

(C) On 5 August, the Ministry of Information distributed a decree emphasizing the necessity for Province and District VIS elements to guide and assist village and hamlet information cadre. The decree criticized weak information programs in villages and hamlets and pointed out that they did not meet the needs of a fast-changing political situation, nor were they effectively combatting the ever-present enemy propaganda. That decree, intended to mobilize the information effort at village and hamlet level, constituted a noteworthy Ministry initiative stressing the importance of a grass-roots information program and the integration of VIS into the pacification effort. [70]

(C) During September, the GVN initiated a program for village development, stressing:

1. The training of village cadre.

2. Increased authority and prestige for village councils and chiefs.

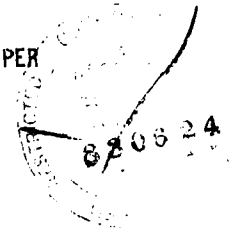
3. Free elections for village council members and village chiefs.

4. Promotion of village security (noting that this should encourage a movement of population back to the villages).

5. The attack on the VCI.

(C) The MOD placed educational inspectors, specialists, and school teachers on detached service with the Ministry of Youth, Education, and Cultural Affairs. School teachers serving in the armed forces in officer status could apply. NCOs and EM were to be considered at a later date. As of 12 October, 723 of the 839 teachers serving in the armed forces had been released to return to their teaching duties, while 117 were retained in RVNAF because they were in an illegal draft status at the time of their call up. [71]

REGRADED UNCLASSIFIED
ORDER SEC ARMY BY TAG PER
830621
CONFIDENTIAL



OUTLOOK FOR 1969

(C) Pacification results during November and December had been remarkably good. A new strategy of rapid expansion was tried and progress had come more easily than anticipated. Most provinces planned to expand at about the APC rate in 1969. In fact, the Central Pacification and Development Council announced a planning goal of upgrading 1,200 hamlets to C category or better in the first three months of the 1969 campaign -- February through April. But further expansion in 1969 would require thinning of territorial security forces, even with the 278 RF company add-on, and replacing them with much less capable People's Self-defense Forces. If the enemy mounted another large-scale attack, pacification status -- as measured by HES -- would be expected to show a dip from the high level of relative security that had been attained. On the other hand, the military estimate was that if the enemy tried, the US/FWMAF could hold him off far short of his Tet Offensive gains, with the result that territorial security would not be expected to dip as much as after Tet. Thus, continued pacification success depended on preempting enemy attacks or turning them back early, plus changing old GVN habits of forgetting one area as pacification moved to a new one. Essential pacification permanence would largely come through a combination of leaving some territorial security in place and bolstering the local community itself by organizing, training, and arming the People's Self-defense Force, engaging the people in self-help, holding local elections, and developing a community spirit. The aim was also to have mutual support between areas by enlisting the whole nation in the effort against the enemy.[72]

REGRADED UNCLASSIFIED
ORDER SEC ARMY BY TAG PER
8306211

PACIFICATION AND NATION BUILDING - VI

1. Memo (S), MACJOIR to Dist, 18 Jan 68, Subj: Pacification Guidelines for 1968 (U), Gp-4.

2. Msg (C), COMUSMACV to CINCPAC, 060050Z Aug 68, Subj: Pacification in SVN, Jan - Jun 68 (U), Gp-4.

3. Msg (C), COMUSMACV to CINCPAC, 030817Z Sep 68, Subj: Pacification in SVN, Jul 68 (U), Gp-4.

4. Msg (C), COMUSMACV to CINCPAC, 080136Z Oct 68, Subj: Pacification in SVN, Aug 68 (U), Gp-4.

5. Msg (C), COMUSMACV to CINCPAC, 050510Z Nov 68, Subj: Pacification in SVN, Sep 68 (U), Gp-4.

6. Ltr (C), ACofS, CORDS to ACofS, J3, 1 Dec 68, Subj: Year-End Review of Vietnam, 1968 (U), Gp-None.

7. Msg (C), COMUSMACV to CINCPAC, 201212Z Nov 68, Subj: Pacification in SVN, 1-15 Nov 68 (U), Gp-4.

8. Msg (C), COMUSMACV to CINCPAC, 261130Z Nov 68, Subj: Pacification in SVN, 16-22 Nov 68 (U), Gp-4.

9. Msg (C), COMUSMACV to CINCPAC, 111002Z Dec 68, Subj: Pacification in SVN, 23 Nov - 7 Dec 68 (U), Gp-4.

10. Msg (C), COMUSMACV to CINCPAC, 261305Z Dec 68, Subj: Pacification in SVN, 8-21 Dec 68 (U), Gp-4.

11. Msg (C), COMUSMACV to CINCPAC, 160720Z Jan 69, Subj: Pacification in SVN, 22 Dec 68 - 11 Jan 69 (U), Gp-4.

12. Ibid.

13. Op. cit. # 2.

14. Op. cit. # 3.

15. Ibid.

16. Op. cit. # 4.

17. Op. cit. # 5.

18. Ibid.

19. Msg (C), COMUSMACV to CINCPAC, 120810Z Nov 68, Subj: Pacification Status, Oct 68 (U), Gp-4.

20. Op. cit. # 11.

21. Op. cit. # 2.

22. Op. cit. # 3.

23. Op. cit. # 5.

24. Op. cit. # 2.

25. Op. cit. # 5.

26. Ibid.

27. Op. cit. # 3.

28. Op. cit. # 5.

29. Op. cit. # 2.

30. Op. cit. # 3.

31. Op. cit. # 7.

32. Op. cit. # 8.

33. Op. cit. # 2.

34. Op. cit. # 3.

35. Op. cit. # 4.

36. Op. cit. # 5.

37. Op. cit. # 8.

38. Op. cit. # 9.

39. Op. cit. # 10.

40. Op. cit. # 4.

41. DF (C), ACofS, CORDS to SJS (Mil Hist), 3 April 69, Subj: MACV 1968 Command History (U), Gp-4.

42. Msg (C), AMEMB SAIGON to SECSTATE, 050345Z Oct 68, Subj: Project Recovery (U), Gp-None

43. Op. cit. # 2.

44. Op. cit. # 3.

45. Op. cit. # 1.

46. Op. cit. # 11.

47. Msg (C), COMUSMACV to CINCPAC, 231105Z Jan 69, Subj: Pacification in SVN, 12-19 Jan 69 (U), Gp-4.

48. Op. cit. # 11.

49. Op. cit. # 41.

50. Op. cit. # 2.

51. Op. cit. # 3.

52. Rpts (C), MACCO, n.d., Subj: Historical Summary, 1 Jan - 31 March 68, 1 Apr - 30 Jun 68, 1 Jul - 30 Sep 68, 1 Oct - 31 Dec 68 (U), Gp-4.

53. Op. cit. # 2.

54. Op. cit. # 3.

55. Op. cit. # 4.

56. Op. cit. # 9.

57. Op. cit. # 11.

58. Op. cit. # 2.

59. Op. cit. # 3.

60. Op. cit. # 4.

61. Op. cit. # 10.

62. Op. cit. # 41.

63. Op. cit. # 2.

64. Op. cit. # 3.

65. Op. cit. # 8.

66. Op. cit. # 9.

67. Op. cit. # 8.

68. Op. cit. # 2.

69. Op. cit. # 3.

70. Op. cit. # 4.

71. Op. cit. # 5.

72. Op. cit. # 11.